

**Moses Strikes the Rock****INTRODUCTION**

TEXT: Numbers 20:1-13

STORY ELEMENTS:

- **Setting:** approx. 1405 B.C., in Kadesh.
- **Main Characters:** God and Moses
- **Plot:** The new generation of Hebrews is tested like their parents were – with a shortage of water.
- **Key word(s):** “ye \_\_\_\_\_ me not”
- **Climax:** “And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock \_\_\_\_\_: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts *also*.” (20:11)

**BACKGROUND**

1. The Hebrews had been sentenced to wandering in the wilderness for 40 years (until the first generation had died) for their unbelief at Kadesh-Barnea (Num.14:20-25). The bulk of the wandering transpires with little said between Num. 18-19. Num. 20:1 says the people came to Kadesh in “the first month.” Aaron’s death is mentioned at the end of the chapter and, according to Num. 33:38, Aaron died in the fortieth year in the wilderness, therefore we know that this story occurs near the \_\_\_\_\_ year of Israel’s wilderness wanderings.

**MORE MURMURING** (Num. 20:1-5)

2. For most of Israel’s wanderings, their water supply had come from the water which gushed from the rock smitten at Mt. Horeb (Exo. 17:6). The water from the rock formed a river through the desert where the Hebrews wandered. Notice:

**1Co 10:4** *And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.*

We should not understand this to mean that an actual rock followed them, but that the waters which they drank “followed them” or flowed with along a providentially determined path so as to be always accessible to the Hebrews. Paul shows how this water is an illustration of the graciously provided \_\_\_\_\_ that God’s people enjoy.

3. Though the Bible does not explain why the availability of water stopped, we can assume the LORD designed this as a test of the faith of the new generation of Hebrews coming into leadership. The place was called “Meribah,” which means “\_\_\_\_\_” or “strife.” (Num. 20:13)
4. The Hebrews blamed Moses for their suffering and wished for the luxuries of Egypt, just as their parents did. The new generation wished to die as their brethren did “before the LORD” – a reference to the times the LORD had smitten the rebellious in various ways. In other words, they wished for a \_\_\_\_\_ instead of the slow and painful death brought by thirst.

**MOSES’ MISTAKE** (Num. 20:6-13)

5. Moses was instructed to speak to the rock and it would provide water. Instead, he spoke to the people and smote the rock. At first, we may wonder “What’s so wrong about that?” Here’s what:
  - a. Disobedience – Moses was given specific instructions, but he allowed his \_\_\_\_\_ and anger to supplant his obedience.
  - b. Stealing the Glory from God – God desired to be sanctified before the people – or to be exalted in their eyes. Instead of speaking to the rock in the name of YHWH, Moses smote the rock twice and said to the Hebrews, “Must \_\_\_\_\_ fetch your water out of this rock?”