

## Numbers 20 New American Standard Bible

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### **Death of Miriam**

Then the sons of Israel, the whole congregation, came to the wilderness of Zin in the first month; and the people stayed at Kadesh. Now Miriam died there and was buried there.<sup>2</sup> There was no water for the congregation, and they assembled against Moses and Aaron.

<sup>3</sup> Then the people argued with Moses and spoke, saying, "If only we had perished when our brothers perished before the Lord! <sup>4</sup> Why then have you brought the Lord's assembly into this wilderness, for us and our livestock to die here? <sup>5</sup> Why did you make us come up from Egypt, to bring us into this wretched place? It is not a place of grain or figs or vines or pomegranates, nor is there water to drink!"

<sup>6</sup> Then Moses and Aaron came in from the presence of the assembly to the entrance of the tent of meeting and fell on their faces. And the glory of the Lord appeared to them; <sup>7</sup> then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,

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### The Waters of Meribah

<sup>8</sup> "Take the staff; and you and your brother Aaron assemble the congregation and speak to the rock before their eyes, that it shall yield its water. So you shall bring water for them out of the rock, and have the congregation and their livestock drink."

<sup>9</sup> So Moses took the staff from before the Lord, just as He had commanded him; <sup>10</sup> and Moses and Aaron summoned the assembly in front of the rock. And he said to them, "Listen now, you rebels; shall we bring water for you out of this rock?" <sup>11</sup> Then Moses raised his hand and struck the rock twice with his staff; and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their livestock drank.

<sup>12</sup> But the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "Since you did not trust in Me, to treat Me as holy in the sight of the sons of Israel, for that reason you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them." <sup>13</sup> Those *were called* the waters of Meribah, because the sons of Israel argued with the Lord, and He proved Himself holy among them.

<sup>14</sup> From Kadesh Moses then sent messengers to the king of Edom *to say*, "This is what your brother Israel has said: 'You know all the hardship that has overtaken us; <sup>15</sup> that

our fathers went down to Egypt, and we stayed in Egypt a long time, and the Egyptians treated us and our fathers badly.

<sup>16</sup> But when we cried out to the Lord, He heard our voice and sent an angel, and brought us out from Egypt; now behold, we are at Kadesh, a town on the edge of your territory. <sup>17</sup> Please let us pass through your land. We will not pass through field or vineyard; we will not even drink water from a well. We will go along the king's road, not turning to the right or left, until we pass through your territory."

<sup>18</sup> Edom, however, said to him, "You shall not pass through us, or I will come out with the sword against you." <sup>19</sup> Again, the sons of Israel said to him, "We will go up by the road, and if I and my livestock do drink any of your water, then I will pay its price. Let me only pass through on my feet, nothing *more*." <sup>20</sup> But he said, "You shall not pass through." And Edom came out against him with a heavy force and a strong hand. <sup>21</sup> So Edom refused to allow Israel to pass through his territory; then Israel turned away from him.

<sup>22</sup> Now when they set out from Kadesh, the sons of Israel, the whole congregation, came to Mount Hor.

### **Death of Aaron**

<sup>23</sup> Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron at Mount Hor by the border of the land of Edom, saying, <sup>24</sup> "Aaron will be gathered to his people; for he shall not enter the land which I have given to the sons of Israel, because you rebelled against My command at the waters of Meribah. <sup>25</sup> Take Aaron and his son Eleazar, and bring them up to Mount Hor.

<sup>26</sup> Then strip Aaron of his garments and put them on his son Eleazar. So Aaron will be gathered *to his people* and will die there." <sup>27</sup> So Moses did just as the Lord had commanded, and they went up to Mount Hor in the sight of all the congregation. <sup>28</sup> And after Moses stripped Aaron of his garments and put them on his son Eleazar, Aaron died there on the mountain top. Then Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain. <sup>29</sup> When all the congregation saw that Aaron had died, the whole house of Israel wept for Aaron for thirty days.

### **We will use five tools on our expedition that are built around five questions**

What questions were provoked within you?

Did anything confuse you?

Did anything move you emotionally?

Did God instruct you to do something?

Did you gain any insight into God's character?

### **Pauls Observations and insights**

1. As a congregation they travelled to Zin, a wilderness desert, and so they stayed at Kadesh.
2. Moses sister, Miriam, died and was buried in Kadesh; she was the sister who put Moses in a basket in the river Nile in the hope of Pharaoh's daughter adopting Moses.
3. The gathered community of people were thirsty, they had nothing to drink, there was no water in the wilderness. The people moaned and groaned at Moses and Aaron.
4. They vent their complaint by recalling regret at not dying with the rebellious, who had died at the rebellion previously.
5. The people say 'if only'. How many times have we said these words? but what is the point of regret? It won't help anyone.
6. The people bring into question Moses and Aaron's leadership and their ability to take charge of the people.
7. How quickly a house will fall when a family turns in on itself.
8. They moan about the lack of blessings, what they don't have and they hark back to the benefits they had in their slavery.
9. There are many people who would rather stay in the bondage of Egypt than make the journey across the desert into freedom.
10. We need to remember in life there is 'no gain without pain'. Sadly for some, letting go of the darkness is too hard to do.
11. Moses and Aaron, having faced the anger of the people, came back into the tent of meeting into the presence of the Lord.
12. When everyone is against you a wise person will come before the Lord to find fresh recovery and direction.
13. Romans 8:31 says 'if God is for us who can be against us?'
14. Why did Moses and Aaron fall on their faces before the Lord, in the tent of meeting.
15. What is the glory of the Lord that fell upon them.
16. Notice God spoke to Moses.
17. God instructed Moses to act with a clear plan to fulfil His will, but Moses put some add-ons.
18. The rod he was given by God is the rod of authority, as a shepherd of God's people.
19. God had instructed Moses to speak to the rock, not to strike it twice.
20. Provision will come no matter what, it doesn't matter what mess you are in, if you put your trust in the Lord, provision will come.
21. Moses and Aaron gather the people at the place of the rock, but Moses vents his anger, he calls the people 'rebels and beasts' and then strikes the rock.

22. A wise leader will follow God's instruction to the letter. Why didn't Moses do what God had instructed?
23. As a result of this outburst God passes judgement on Moses and Aaron, Aaron for his part in the rebellion of the golden calf and Moses for not doing exactly what God said.
24. The judgement for these two brothers was that they would not take the people into the Promised Land; this would be done by Joshua.
25. Moses accepts his judgement and continues on the journey through the wilderness.
26. I wonder how he feels knowing when he gets to the Promised Land, he himself is not going in?
27. Moses brokers with Edom to get safe passage through his land, but Edom refuses to let the people of God pass on the Kings highway.
28. Moses prevailed to no avail. Edom refuses Moses and the people the right to enter his land, despite the fact Moses gives Edom a chronological history of their journey thus far.
29. In fact Edom becomes aggressive and threatens Moses with war, despite the fact Moses offers to pay for the privilege. Still Edom will not let him pass through.
30. So Moses goes by another way, but one day in the future a judgement would fall on the nation.
31. At Mount Hor God spoke to Aaron and Moses, passes judgement on Aaron to go up to the mountain, have his priestly garments removed, place them on Eliazar, his son, and die.
32. Eliazar takes Aarons place as priest of the people.
33. How did Aaron die on that mountain top, only Moses and Eliazar came back down to the people?
34. The people wept and mourned for 30 days.
35. How long should we mourn the life of a loved one?