

Once, for All Time

For notes and audio, visit the-lamp-lighter.com

Numbers 20

For nearly 40 years, the Israelites roamed the wilderness. The end of their sentence (40 years of wandering) is ending, and once again, we find them lodging complaints against Moses and Aaron. It is a repetition of a previous mistake; however, the focus in Numbers 20 is not on the people, but on Moses and Aaron.

I. The Failure to Learn (Numbers 20:2-5)

- A. The main event of **Numbers 20** is a mirror image of the events in **Exodus 17:1-6** ([read this](#)).
- B. The events of **Numbers 20** are set near the 40th year of the wilderness wanderings (**Numbers 33:38**). The people's quarrel with Moses is the same but amplified by historical grumbling (**Num 20:2-5**).
 - 1. Gunny sacking – a term used to describe the dumping of accumulated grievances or irritations instead of addressing them as they arise. Creates a disproportionate reaction of anger.
 - 2. Catastrophizing – describes where a person automatically assumes the worst possible outcome in a situation, often without sufficient evidence or reason to think things will go so badly.
 - 3. Blame-shifting – a tactic where a person avoids taking responsibility for their own actions, mistakes, or shortcomings by transferring blame onto someone else. It is a deflection of accountability.

II. The Focus on Moses (Numbers 20:6-11)

- A. The right start (**20:6-9**)
- B. The obedience stops (**20:10-11**)
 - 1. The self-exalting speech (**20:10**)
 - a) Moses exalts himself (you rebels) rather than extending God's mercy as instructed.
 - b) Moses emphasizes himself as a deliverer rather than God (Shall we bring water for you).
 - 2. The spotlight-shining actions (**20:11**)
 - a) Moses' instructions were simple: "*Tell the rock before their eyes to yield its water.*" (**20:8**)
 - b) Moses's actions were self-aggrandizing: "*lifted up his hand and struck the rock with his staff twice...*"
 - 3. The past repeated
 - a) Moses intervened and killed the Egyptian (**Exodus 2:11, 12**)
 - b) Called out by fellow Israelites the next day (**Exodus 2:14**)

III. The Figure of the "Rock"

- A. Beginning in **Exodus 17**, the rock was a figure of the Rock and the work of Christ.
 - 1. **Genesis 49:24**, "...by the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob (from there is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel),
 - 2. **Deuteronomy 32:4**, "*The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he.*
 - 3. **Psalms 78:35**, *They remembered that God was their rock, the Most High God their redeemer.*
 - 4. **Isaiah 28:16**; **Ephesians 2:20**; **1 Peter 2:4**.
- B. Moses in Exodus 17, pictures God smiting the "rock" of Christ.
 - 1. **Isaiah 53:4**, *Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. (smitten – to violently lay hands on; strike suddenly)*
 - 2. **Romans 6:10**, *For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God.*
 - 3. **1 Peter 3:18**, *For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit,*

IV. The Faith that Forges Victory

- A. The warning to spur your perseverance, **Hebrews 6:1-6**. (esp. vs. 6, "...since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt. (see **Num 20:11**; **Heb 7:27-28**)
- B. Start your day at the foot of the cross, **Hebrews 9:28**. *So Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.*
- C. End your day at the throne of God, **Hebrews 10:12-18**. Vs. 12, *But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God* (see **Mark 16:19**; **Luke 24:51**; **Acts 1:9-11**; **1 Timothy 3:16**)