

**A Man Named Moses**  
**"A God Who is Trustworthy"**

**Introduction:** Today, as we continue to journey through the life of Moses, we approach a sad narrative yet one that will challenge us all.

Each message has revealed a unique aspect of God's character.

- Birth of Moses (A God Who is Present)
- Early adulthood of Moses (A God Who is Active)
- Burning Bush (A God Who is I Am)
- Exodus and Crossing of the Red Sea (A God Who is Fighting for Us)
- Golden Calf rebellion and the Glory of God (A God Who is Grace-Giving)
- Complaining of Israel—A God Who Chastens

Today...Water from the rock, part 2—A God Who is Trustworthy

NOTE: There is no one like our God

*Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me. Isaiah 46:9 NKJV*

A unique and familiar story will reveal that we can and should rely on God.

**I. The Backdrop**

A. Second travel section of Numbers

*From Kibroth Hattaavah the people moved to Hazeroth, and camped at Hazeroth. Numbers 11:35 NKJV*

*And afterward the people moved from Hazeroth and camped in the Wilderness of Paran. Numbers 12:16 NKJV*

B. The generation that left Egypt is dying off

1. They watched the 10 plagues unleash
2. They witnessed the waters roll back and then drown out the entire Egyptian fleet
3. They were recipients of the Sinai covenant and the law
4. They encountered God's provision

Yet...

5. They complained constantly

*Now when the people complained, it displeased the Lord; for the Lord heard it, and His anger was aroused. So the fire of the Lord burned among them, and consumed some in the outskirts of the camp. Numbers 11:1 NKJV*

*Now the mixed multitude who were among them yielded to intense craving; so the children of Israel also wept again and said: "Who will give us meat to eat? 5 We remember the fish which we ate freely in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic; 6 but now our whole being is dried up; there is nothing at all except this manna before our eyes!" Numbers 11:4-6 NKJV*

6. Miriam and Aaron—Spiritual leaders—rebel

*Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married; for he had married an Ethiopian woman. Numbers 12:1 NKJV*

7. People revolted following the spies report which ushered in serious consequences

*Because all these men who have seen My glory and the signs which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have put Me to the test now these ten times, and have not heeded My voice, 23 they certainly shall not see the land of which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who rejected Me see it. Numbers 14:22-23 NKJV*

NOTE: Chapter 20 begins with a large portion of the first generation gone

- C. This is the second “water from the rock” narrative involving Moses

**READ:**

*Then all the congregation of the children of Israel set out on their journey from the Wilderness of Sin, according to the commandment of the Lord, and camped in Rephidim; but there was no water for the people to drink. 2 Therefore the people contended with Moses, and said, "Give us water, that we may drink." So Moses said to them, "Why do you contend with me? Why do you tempt the Lord?" 3 And the people thirsted there for water, and the people complained against Moses, and said, "Why is it you have brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?" 4 So Moses cried out to the Lord, saying, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me!" 5 And the Lord said to Moses, "Go on before the people, and take with you some of the elders of Israel. Also take in your hand your rod with which you struck the river, and go. 6 Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink." And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. 7 So he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the contention of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?" Exodus 17:1-7 NKJV*

1. Some try to argue it's the same occurrence
2. Yet the differences are striking
  - a. Exodus—Moses only, Numbers—Moses and Aaron
  - b. Previous death of “brothers” (20:3) refers likely to death of rebels in Korah’s day (Numbers 16:31-17:14)
  - c. Rod Moses is instructed to take in Numbers likely Aaron’s which was “before the testimony”.

*So Moses took the rod from before the Lord as He commanded him. Numbers 20:9 NKJV*

*Now it came to pass on the next day that Moses went into the tabernacle of witness, and behold, the rod of Aaron, of the house of Levi, had sprouted and put forth buds, had produced blossoms and yielded ripe almonds. Numbers 17:8 NKJV*

d. Methodology—strike vs. speak

- D. This event happens during the 40-year wandering in the wilderness
- E. The complaining of the Israelites ushered in this story

## II. The Story (Numbers 20:1-12)

NOTE: On the surface, this text provides insight as to why the first-generation leaders were not allowed to enter Canaan.

- A. Wilderness wanderers stop at Kadesh

*Then the children of Israel, the whole congregation, came into the Wilderness of Zin in the first month, and the people stayed in Kadesh; and Miriam died there and was buried there. Numbers 20:1 NKJV*

1. This was the location where their wanderings began
2. Return to Kadesh indicates their journeying is nearing its end—move toward plains of Moab

*Now the children of Israel, the whole congregation, journeyed from Kadesh and came to Mount Hor. Numbers 20:22 NKJV*

*Then the children of Israel moved, and camped in the plains of Moab on the side of the Jordan across from Jericho. Numbers 22:1 NKJV*

3. Miriam dies and is buried here
  - a. No commentary surrounding her death
  - b. First of three leaders from the first generation to die

- c. Her last appearance was Numbers 12 in the rebellion she instigated against Moses

## B. The people complain and revolt against their leaders

*Now there was no water for the congregation; so they gathered together against Moses and Aaron. 3 And the people contended with Moses and spoke, saying: "If only we had died when our brethren died before the Lord! 4 Why have you brought up the assembly of the Lord into this wilderness, that we and our animals should die here? 5 And why have you made us come up out of Egypt, to bring us to this evil place? It is not a place of grain or figs or vines or pomegranates; nor is there any water to drink." Numbers 20:2-5 NKJV*

- 1. The basis of their complain is noted twice

- a. Vs. 2—"No water" (narrator)
- b. Vs. 5—"No water to drink" (people)

## 2. People "assembled themselves together against Moses and Aaron" (20:2)

- a. Idiom used previously

*Now when the people saw that Moses delayed coming down from the mountain, the people gathered together to Aaron, and said to him, "Come, make us gods that shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him." Exodus 32:1 NKJV*

*They gathered together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "You take too much upon yourselves, for all the congregation is holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the Lord?" Numbers 16:3 NKJV*

- b. The outcome is never favorable and always brings some form of punishment

*So the Lord plagued the people because of what they did with the calf which Aaron made. Exodus 32:35 NKJV*

*Now it came to pass, as he finished speaking all these words, that the ground split apart under them, 32 and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all the men with Korah, with all their goods. Numbers 16:31-33 NKJV*

## 3. The people "contended" with Moses (20:3)

- a. Direct their attack against their leader
- b. Place blame on Moses for their lack of water
- c. Waters named after the "contention"

*This was the water of Meribah, because the children of Israel contended with the Lord, and He was hallowed among them. Numbers 20:13 NKJV*

#### 4. Offered a series of familiar and common complaints

*"If only we had died when our brethren died before the Lord! 4 Why have you brought up the assembly of the Lord into this wilderness, that we and our animals should die here? 5 And why have you made us come up out of Egypt, to bring us to this evil place? It is not a place of grain or figs or vines or pomegranates; nor is there any water to drink." Numbers 20:3-5 NKJV*

TRUTH: As kingdom people, when life becomes rocky, our expectations are not met, and our circumstances don't make sense, we should not default to complaining but instead to thanksgiving—thank God for His faithfulness, His presence, and His peace

*Do all things without complaining and disputing, 15 that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world. Philippians 2:14-15 NKJV*

#### C. The leaders seek God's counsel

*So Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and they fell on their faces. And the glory of the Lord appeared to them. Numbers 20:6 NKJV*

1. Reacting to an issue without relating to God will create a misguided response
2. Leadership requires receiving revelation from God on a regular basis

#### D. God instructs Moses and Aaron how to respond

*Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 8 "Take the rod; you and your brother Aaron gather the congregation together. Speak to the rock before their eyes, and it will yield its water; thus you shall bring water for them out of the rock, and give drink to the congregation and their animals." Numbers 20:7-8 NKJV*

##### 1. "Take the rod"

- a. Whose rod? Moses' (v. 11)? Aaron's?
- b. Likely, Aaron's rod

*"So Moses took the rod from before the Lord..." (20:9a)*

- c. Aaron's rod had been placed before the testimony (God's presence)

*And the Lord said to Moses, "Bring Aaron's rod back before the Testimony, to be kept as a sign against the rebels, that you may put their complaints away from Me, lest they die." Numbers 17:10 NKJV*

d. Purpose was to simply indicate Moses' authority

2. "Assemble the congregation"
3. "Speak to the rock before their eyes."

NOTE: This demonstration is to be done in the presence of the people for a purpose: hold Him holy "before the eyes of the children of Israel" (v. 12).

4. Moses was God's chosen instrument through which these miraculous events were to be performed.

*Speak to the rock before their eyes, and it will yield its water; thus you shall bring water for them out of the rock, and give drink to the congregation and their animals." Numbers 20:8b NKJV*

E. Moses follows SOME but NOT ALL of God's instructions

*So Moses took the rod from before the Lord as He commanded him. 10 And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock; and he said to them, "Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?" 11 Then Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their animals drank. Numbers 20:9-11 NKJV*

1. Took Aaron's rod
2. Assembled the people
3. Spoke to the people harshly—"rebels"
4. Struck (not spoke) to the rock twice

NOTE: Scripture indicates often "Moses did everything just as the Lord commanded, but this time that can't be said.

*Thus Moses did; according to all that the Lord had commanded him, so he did. Exodus 40:16 NKJV*

*So Moses did just as the Lord commanded, and they went up to Mount Hor in the sight of all the congregation. Numbers 20:27 NKJV*

*Thus did Moses; just as the Lord had commanded him, so he did. Numbers 17:11 NKJV*

*"Inexact obedience...is the same as disobedience."—Timothy Ashley*

5. Water came out of the rock

F. The Grievous Sin and its Consequences

*Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them." Numbers 20:12 NKJV*

1. Rebellion against God?

*Aaron shall be gathered to his people, for he shall not enter the land which I have given to the children of Israel, because you rebelled against My word at the water of Meribah. Numbers 20:24 NKJV*

*For in the Wilderness of Zin, during the strife of the congregation, you rebelled against My command to hallow Me at the waters before their eyes." (These are the waters of Meribah, at Kadesh in the Wilderness of Zin.) Numbers 27:14 NKJV*

- a. "Must we bring forth water for you?"
- b. Viewed themselves as "miracle workers" or "source", instead of God—they are simply vessels
- c. Diverted attention away from God instead of making Him famous

*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. Matthew 5:16 NKJV*

2. Disobedience? Strike vs. speak

3. Lack of trust (12)

- a. Trust Yahweh=He is worthy of reliance

*Then Moses answered and said, "But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice; suppose they say, 'The Lord has not appeared to you.'" Exodus 4:1 NKJV*

*Then the Lord said to Moses, "Reach out your hand and take it by the tail" (and he reached out his hand and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand), 5 "that they may believe that the Lord God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you." Exodus 4:4-5 NKJV*

*Thus Israel saw the great work which the Lord had done in Egypt; so the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord and His servant Moses. Exodus 14:31 NKJV*

- b. Israel despite signs refused to rely on Him

*Then the Lord said to Moses: "How long will these people reject Me? And how long will they not believe Me, with all the signs which I have performed among them? Numbers 14:11 NKJV*

- c. Moses and Aaron do the same

Did Moses' familiarity with God's provision in Exodus 17 lead him to treat this occurrence with less care and sacredness? (I've done this before so I don't need help).

**NOTE:** We must guard against treating God's familiar commands with little care and concern

— Took matters into own hands (Hagar and Ishmael)

*He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, But whoever walks wisely will be delivered. Proverbs 28:26 NKJV*

— Depend on personal experience rather than trust in God's faithful provision

4. Failed to "treat as sacred" Yahweh before the people diminishing God's power and holiness (strike vs. speak)

**NOTE:** "Kadesh" root= "to hold as holy" but changed in verse 13

### **III. The Truth**

#### **A. God is ALWAYS trustworthy (reliable)**

1. Despite human failure, God still quenches their thirst

*If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself. 2 Timothy 2:13 NKJV*

2. He can be trusted to fulfill His promises

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. Proverbs 3:5-6 NKJV*

*Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful." Revelation 21:5 NKJV*

3. He can be trusted to provide for your needs

*And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:19 NKJV*

*As His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue. 2 Peter 1:3 NKJV*

4. He can be trusted to comfort you in hurt

*Show me a sign for good, That those who hate me may see it and be ashamed, Because You, Lord, have helped me and comforted me. Psalms 86:17 NKJV*

5. He can be trusted to redeem you

*I waited patiently for the Lord; And He inclined to me, And heard my cry. 2 He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, Out of the miry clay, And set my feet upon a rock, And established my steps. 3 He has put a new song in my mouth — Praise to our God; Many will see it and fear, And will trust in the Lord. Psalms 40:1-3 NKJV*

*I will love You, O Lord, my strength. 2 The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. Psalms 18:1-2 NKJV*

(ILL) Covenant with Abraham

B. God's instructions must ALWAYS be treated with reverence and seriousness

NOTE: When we think we have God figured out and come to the conclusion we can do something on our own, we have reached a dangerous place.

**Conclusion:**

1. Pray daily noting our need of God.
2. Live with confidence that God can be trusted in all things.