

- Remember that back in Numbers 13 and 14 all of spies sent to Canaan (except Joshua and Caleb) got all the Israelites to think they couldn't take the land and then God told them they would have to wait 40 years (one year for each of the 40 days the spies were in Canaan) before they could go in. This chapter starts with the beginning of that last year (year 39).
- A quick lesson in Geography here. This map shows the region after the children of Israel came into Canaan and settled it, so the map is forward in time from the point that we are reading about. However, this map does show The Wilderness of Zin where they are now. It is basically to the far south of Israel. Remember that they were approaching Canaan from Egypt (not shown here, but basically off the map at the lower left), so they were wandering around in this basic area and even back toward Egypt for the whole 39 years. This chapter takes place in the Wilderness of Zin, in the very Southern part of that Wilderness, Kadash. (Numbers 20:1).



130 when she died.

- Miriam was mentioned by God as one of the people who helped Moses and Aaron deliver Israel from Egypt, so let's not discount her importance. God certainly didn't. (Micah 6:4)
- The people start grumbling again when there was no more water for them to drink. (Numbers 20:2-5).
- So once again Moses and Aaron fall on their faces and the Glory of the Lord appears. (Numbers 20:6). "Once again" because of this grumbling the response of Moses and Aaron is exactly like what happened with the spies in Numbers 14.
- God gave Moses very specific instructions to speak to a rock and He would bring forth water from it (Numbers 20:7-8).

- Moses did not follow God's instruction. Instead of speaking to the rock as God commanded, Moses struck the rock with his rod (**Numbers 20:10-11**).
- Notice how Moses says must "we" bring you water out of this rock, as if he and Aaron could do it, not God. Not only did he disobey God, he was verbally putting himself and Aaron at that level.
- God punished Moses and Aaron by telling them they wouldn't lead the Children of Israel into the Promised Land. (**Numbers 20:12**)
- Notice that the Lord specifically told them "because of their unbelief." We can be guilty of that today. God knows when we are just learning and have natural doubts and unbelief. For example, a Gentile father asked Jesus to heal his son of spasms (probably epilepsy) and Jesus said "all things are possible to Him who believes" and he said "Lord I believe, help thou my unbelief" and Jesus healed his son (**Mark 9:17-25**). But Moses and Aaron were very different than this man. They had been communing with God for a long time and had a very mature spiritual relationship. The greater our relationship with God, the stronger will be our belief, and the more God will expect from us. Luke 12:48 tell us that to whom much is given, much will be required. For example, God expects more from me because I am a teacher (**James 3:1**).
- The water itself was called Meribah which means "bitterness" because of the whole incident (**Numbers 20:13**)
- The Edomites refuse passage to the Israelites, even though the Israelites promised not to disturb anything. (**Numbers 20:14-20**)
- God arranged an orderly succession for Aaron before his death. (**Numbers 20: 22-29**)

Questions

1. How many years did Israel have to wander in the desert before they entered the Promised Land?
2. Where are the Children of Israel wandering most of this time?
3. Who was Miriam and why was her death significant to Israel?
4. Why did the Israelites start grumbling in the wilderness?
5. What did Moses and Aaron do when the Israelites started grumbling?
6. How did God tell Moses to get water from a rock?
7. How did Moses actually get water from the rock?
8. What was God's punishment to Moses for disobeying him?
9. Why does God specifically say that he is punishing Moses? What is the significance of the exact language he uses?
10. What does Meribah mean?

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11. What does God do when He know Aaron is about to die?

Originally developed by Madison Laird for high school study at the East Foothill Church of Christ in San Jose, CA following a curriculum outline by Aaron Curtis. Edited by Betty Brown of Jackson, TN. Material may be used free of charge without license or royalty. Questions or comments: madison@madisonlaird.com