

# Numbers

## Chapter 20

- I. Introduction
  - a. The chapter before us today brings us late in the 40 year wilderness wandering
    - i. Aaron's death is recorded in this chapter
      1. *"And Aaron the priest went up Mount Hor at the command of the Lord and died there, in the fortieth year after the people of Israel had come out of the land of Egypt, on the first day of the fifth month"* (**Numbers 33:38**)
        - a. So, the events in this chapter must have occurred in the 40<sup>th</sup> year
- II. Commentary
  - a. **Verse 1**
    - i. We can confidently assume this is the first month of the 40<sup>th</sup> year since Aaron dies this same year
      1. Also, the people are back where they started nearly 40 years prior which goes to prove the circle of wandering
    - ii. Miriam died
      1. We know more of Miriam than many children of God
        - a. She watched baby Moses in the basket when Pharaoh's daughter pulled him out (**Exodus 2:4**)
        - b. She arranged for their own mother to be paid to nurse Moses for Pharaoh's daughter (**Exodus 2:7**)
        - c. She led the women in praises for God after the crossing of the Red Sea (**Exodus 15:20-21**)
        - d. She criticized Moses for his marriage to the Cushite woman (**Numbers 12:1**)
      2. At her death, only one verse is afforded it
        - a. She, like the rest of this generation (save Joshua and Caleb) will die in the wilderness
          - i. Her death is merely a reminder of this
      3. Without a doubt, her death had a great affect on Moses and Aaron
  - b. **Verses 2-9**
    - i. This is a continual problem with the children of Israel
      1. If we are honest, we have a great tendency to complain ourselves (**Philippians 2:14**)
      2. Their continued desire to return to Egypt speaks loudly of their unregenerate state (**1 John 2:15-17**)
    - ii. Moses and Aaron once again fall on their faces in prayer to the Lord
      1. It should have been the people praying for forgiveness

- iii. The Lord appeared to Moses and Aaron and supplied a means for water
  - 1. The people didn't deserve water
    - a. But God is gracious
  - 2. Moses was to take the staff and "*tell the rock before their eyes to yield its water*" (**vs. 8**)
    - a. The Hebrew word translated "*rock*" speaks of a high cliff as in a place for a fortress - more than a boulder

c. **Verses 10-13**

- i. Moses and Aaron seem to act as though they would supply the water for the people (**vs. 10**)
  - 1. Oh that Moses would have said what he did at the Red Sea - "*Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today*" (**Exodus 14:13**)
- ii. Moses struck the rock rather than speaking to it like God told him to
  - 1. Jesus was pictured in the rock (**1 Corinthians 10:4**)
    - a. Jesus was only to be struck once (**Hebrews 9:11-12**)
      - i. Striking the rock twice ruined the type
  - 2. The people were at least part to blame (**Psalms 106:32-33**)
- iii. God corrects Moses and Aaron for this act
  - 1. Clearly, Aaron was part of the decision making
  - 2. They did not believe and did not set God apart as holy
    - a. They claimed credit themselves, it appears
    - b. They ruined the type of Christ
    - c. They simply didn't do what God commanded
  - 3. They would not be allowed to enter the Promised Land

d. **Verses 14-21**

- i. Moses asked the Edomites to pass through their land
  - 1. There is some question here as to whether the cloud was leading them this way
    - a. It doesn't appear Moses is here following it
- ii. Some believe **verses 14-17** contain the actual document Moses sent to the king of Edom
  - 1. The Edomites flatly refused and eventually sent their army
    - a. This is the history of Israel and Edom
      - i. One day, Edom will be destroyed for their treatment of Israel (**Obadiah**)
- iii. Israel went another direction

e. **Verses 22-29**

- i. The congregation came to Mount Hor
  - 1. The Lord told Moses and Aaron that Aaron was to die
    - a. Moses, Aaron and Eleazar went to the top of Mount Hor
      - i. Here, Aaron's priestly garments were put on Eleazar and Aaron died
        - 1. This was the result of the earlier sin
- ii. When the congregation heard of it, they mourned for 30 days