

Numbers 20:1-12

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[0:00] Take your Bibles, go into the book of Numbers, Numbers chapter 20. Numbers chapter 20 is where we will be this evening, and we're only going to be in the first 12 verses. This is one of those few passages that we can get to in the Old Testament, especially in the historical books, in which we do not have to read it in its entirety to get it in proper context.

So we're going to be in Numbers chapter 20, verses 1 through 12, and that's where we're going to focus at tonight, at least on our Bible time, and then we'll take some time to pray. I want to thank each one of you for being here.

You notice a lot of these younger individuals who are in the room with us, and they are hanging out with the Simmons and Parker family this at least few days for, this is the Logos Bible, Logos Discipleship Days Camp.

They went and did some work at Miss Sue's house today in the rain, cleaned their gutters out in the rain. That's pretty good, right? Brother Josh was there as well. But they did some work there, and Miss Lynn, you will be happy.

There are some bushes that used to be in front of our fellowship hall that are now missing. Those plants you've been telling me for a couple of years that need to be gone, they are now gone. This group here removed those andinha bushes that I was supposed to pull up a long time ago, according to building grounds.

[1:10] They're now gone, so there we go. Everybody can be happy. I didn't have to do it, and they are missing, but I told them I felt like the building was exposed, so we will have to put some more stuff up there later.

But anyway, I appreciate their work that they've been doing today, and I appreciate you guys for being here. So we're going to be in Numbers chapter 20, verses 1 through 12. Before we get into it, let's just pray together.

Lord, I thank you so much just for allowing us together together. We thank you for the benefit and the blessing it is of coming together as your people, fellowshiping with one another, Lord, being encouraged through our fellowship.

But Lord, also having the opportunity to look at your word together. And we pray, Lord, that you would speak to our hearts. We pray that you would speak to our minds. And Lord, that the truth would be clearly seen. But Lord, that that truth would be so much more than just a gaining of information or a collecting of facts.

Lord, that it would be that which grips our life and changes our hearts and minds and draws us closer to you for your glory and your honor and yours alone. Lord, may all that is done tonight bring you all the glory and the praise.

[2:16] And we ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. Numbers chapter 20, starting in verse 1 and reading down to verse 12. 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. There was no water for the congregation, and they assembled themselves against Moses and Aaron. The people thus contented with Moses and spoke, saying, If only we had perished when our brothers perished before the Lord.

Why then have you brought the Lord's assembly into this wilderness for us and our beasts to die here? Why have you made 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.

Then Moses and Aaron came in from the presence of the assembly to the doorway of the tent of meeting and fell on their faces. Then the glory of the Lord appeared to them. And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, Take the rod, and you and your brother Aaron assemble the congregation and speak to the rock before their eyes, that it may yield its water.

You shall thus bring forth water for them out of the rock, and let the congregation and their beasts drink. Verse 9. So Moses took the rod from before the Lord, just as he had commanded him. And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly before the rock.

[3 : 39] And they said to them, Listen now, you rebels. Shall we bring forth water for you out of this rock? Then Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod.

And the water came forth abundantly, and the congregation and their beasts drank. But the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, Because you have not believed me to treat me as holy in the sight of the sons of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them. Those were the waters of Meribah, because the sons of Israel contended with the Lord, and he proved himself holy among them. Numbers chapter 20, verses 1 through 12.

As we have been making our way through the book of Numbers, ever since we have seen the rebellion and the failure of the nation of Israel to enter into the promised land, we've seen their lack of faith in moving forward.

And we have seen this promise which God stated. And it's a very unique promise that has been leading up to this time. Because God made this very emphatic statement. He said that every individual, 20 years old and upward, would perish.

[4 : 44] And that the only two, the only two males who would enter into the promised land would have been Joshua and Caleb. Now we understand that Joshua and Caleb were part of the 12 spies that went into the promised land.

Ten came back with a discouraging report that, oh, there are giants in the land. The cities are fortified with walls to the heavens were like grasshoppers in their sight. Joshua and Caleb both had faith that God would deliver them.

They did not deny the existence nor the size of the people, yet expressed faith that if God was for them, then they would definitely be victorious. But we've seen in this promise that at that time there were what we would consider four faithful men.

There would have been Joshua and Caleb and Moses and Aaron. Yet God stated that only Joshua and Caleb would go into the promised land. So we're seeing this reality that before we get to this sin which denies them, God knew that they would sin, right?

God knew they would fail because God said, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that Joshua and Caleb would be the only two that would bring them in. So we finally come to the place where we see what God has pronounced being fulfilled.

[5 : 52] And that is Moses and Aaron sinning to a point that God does not allow them to go with the nation into the promised land. I want you to see this evening the devastating sin of God's leaders.

The devastating sin of God's leaders. Devastating in the fact that though they had been faithful for a number of years, in this moment they lose the promise of the promised land.

Now, we see that God's people have been moving forward and we understand this scene seems very familiar to us and we'll kind of flesh it out in just a moment. But yet in this instance we understand their imperfection.

We don't ever want to say that Aaron was perfect because we know that Aaron was present when they built a golden calf. As a matter of fact, it was Aaron who said, bring me all of your earrings and your jewelry. And he fashioned for them the golden calf, right?

Aaron also joined in with his sister Miriam in the kind of rebuke and kind of the doubting that Moses was someone special. We've seen that sin. Even though we understand that Miriam was the leader in that because she was the one that was struck with leprosy.

[6 : 57] So we understand that Aaron has not been perfect and we can kind of wrap our minds around that. But yet Moses seems to be the man that by God's declaration was more humble than any other person that was alive, who was submitting to God's leadership, who was following him in obedience, the man who had interceded for the people multiple times, where God would say, Moses, stand aside, let me annihilate these people, let me wipe them out and I'll make a great nation out of you.

And Moses said, no, Lord, may it not be so because what will people say about you? And he was always bringing the glory back to God. One of the things that amazes me about Moses is after he had been on the mount and had this 80-day fasting and communion in the presence of God and after he had seen the glory of the Lord so many ways supernaturally, he says in the book of Exodus, near the end of the book of Exodus, he cries out, show me your glory, O God.

Here's one who had seen so much of God but yet was crying out to see more of God's glory. And here in this moment, we see this devastating sin which keeps him from having the ultimate goal of going into the promised land.

And we want to see how this comes about. Number one, we see in this devastating sin the difficult timing. The difficult timing. It says in the first verse, Then the sons of Israel, the whole congregation, so that's the whole group of them, came to the wilderness of Zin in the first month.

In the first month. And the people stayed at Kadesh. Now, I told you last time we were together that this was going to happen and now you're going to see it happen. Between chapter 19 and chapter 20, 38 years transpire.

[8 : 44] In the first month. Literally is giving us a reading of it being in the first month of the 40th year. In a couple of chapters.

Well, in Numbers 33, we will find, well, here in just a little bit in this chapter, you find the record of Aaron's death. In Numbers 33, it tells us the timing of Aaron's death. Aaron died on the 15th day of the 5th month.

Okay? So, the 5th month of the last year. The 40th year. Now, we say the 38 years have transpired because it took them 2 years to get out of Egypt to get to Kadesh Barnea. They refused to go into the Promised Land and God says, you're going to wander for 40 years and he was kind of backlogged counting the 2 years that had already taken them to get there.

So, they had 38 more years of wandering. So, for 38 years, they literally had walked around in circles. Now, we can look at a map and see how this happened, but they are finally back to where they were at 38 years ago.

They're back at Kadesh. Kadesh Barnea. And from here, they will go down and they will go through the regions of Moab and Edom and they will get to the other side. So, they're a little south of the Salt Sea.

[9 : 51] If you're looking at a map here, they came out of Egypt. They went across the Red Sea.

They went into this wilderness area because the Promised Land's over here. You have up here the Sea of Galilee, the Jordan River, and the Salt Sea.

Kadesh Barnea is down here at the bottom below the Salt Sea in a region known as the Araba. The Araba is just this desolate wasteland. Okay? There's nothing there. The region of the Salt Sea is so desolate is because there's so much salt and nothing grows there.

And the things below it, the Araba, the wilderness, nothing grows there either. That's where they're at. They're back. So, they're going to be here. They're going to go up and around because the Jordan River's on this side. So, they're going to go around it through all these lands, conquer some people up here, finally through Joshua's leadership, go across the Jordan River and occupy the land that God had promised them.

So, they've been in 38 years of wilderness wandering and we don't know anything about those 38 years. You know what this tells us? That God doesn't mind allowing 38 years to pass which we don't know anything about until he can get us back to the place of obedience.

Because there's really nothing to talk about when we're paying the price of our consequences, right? God says, we're not going to highlight these years of disobedience. We're not going to highlight these years of judgment. But for 38 years, they've been getting in this land, for 38 years, as someone once said, Moses was leading the longest death march that had ever been led.

[11 : 06] For 38 years, they're going through the wilderness and they're burying people and they're burying people and they're burying people. And every time they have a funeral service, they are reminded, God said every one of us would die. God said every one of us would die.

God said every one of us would die. Their younger generation is getting older. The older generation who knows the pronouncement that God said every one of them would perish understand it's a reality and it's a reality they live with each and every day.

And finally, in that first month of the 40th year, Miriam dies. Now, let's not be too hard on Miriam. We know she spoke out of place at one time.

She spoke against her brother. But Miriam is also the whole reason God used Miriam to ensure that Moses would be alive. Right? Miriam was the sister that watched him as he was in the basket among the reeds.

Miriam was the one who went and spoke to the lady who found him and said, you want me to find a nurse for him? And brought her own mother back to nurse. Moses was reared in those formative years by his mother which would have probably been about the first five years of his life before he

went back to Pharaoh's house.

[12 : 09] Miriam was there and met him when he came back in. Miriam was always his helpmate. Miriam was the leading lady of the nation of Israel here. She is the one who sings the great song after they crossed the Red Sea.

She's a very near and dear and important person in Moses' life. And this time, not only have they been walking around for 38 years and we just think of the stress of that, now Miriam dies and they bury her.

And at that moment, the people begin to complain. Let's go ahead and just acknowledge the fact Satan loves to use our difficult seasons to make it easy to sin.

Satan knows when it's hard. And he operates in those difficult times. And those difficulties make it so much easier to disobey.

Now, Moses is experiencing personally what everyone else around him had been experiencing for 38 years. And we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the powers and principalities and the spiritual forces of the air.

[13 : 24] I do not think it coincidental that at that moment the people begin to grumble. Because Satan knows what he's doing when he throws fiery darts.

He knows our moments of weakness. He knows our moments of, you know what the sad reality is? Just, let's just be honest. As a pastor, in those difficult seasons most people pull away from the church instead of pushing into the church.

And we wonder why those darts tend to stick a little bit more during those seasons. So be careful of those difficult times.

The second thing we see are the discontent people. The discontent people because all the nation is there and it says and there was no water for the congregation. So there's no water there. Now this isn't something new. Over and over again they've been in places where there were no water or there was no water fit to drink.

The water was unclean. This is something that we saw in the book of Exodus. This is kind of this repetitive theme that we found in Exodus 17. That's the first place where they cry and said there's no water here.

[14 : 23] There's nothing for us to drink. And God commands Moses to go forth and strike the rock with the staff that is in his hand. And he takes the staff that is in his hand and he strikes the rock and the water comes out. Right? But there's this great picture and we'll kind of get to it in just a moment.

We'll kind of work that out. But we see here that these people now understand there's no water. It says there is no water for the congregation and they assembled themselves against Moses and Aaron.

Now the first thing we need to understand about discontentment. Discontentment always takes its problem to people instead of taking its problem to the provider. The discontent always blame people instead of talking to the provider.

Think about this just for a moment because the scripture says God was with you for 40 years in the wilderness. the sandals on your feet did not wear out. The food did not fail to come.

For 40 years or actually to this point for 39 years behind them and starting their 40th year every day they woke up manna was on the ground except for the Sabbath.

[15 : 26] Every day they walked around their sandals never wore out. Their clothing on their back never wore out. God had been sustaining them and providing them for 39 years.

Don't you think after that length of time if all you needed was water you would cry out to him? If I'd seen it tested for 39 years but not the discontent because the discontent would rather blame people than go talk to the provider.

And they cry out and they gather themselves against Moses and Aaron. And they begin to grumble and they begin to complain. And they said if only we had perished when our brothers perished before the Lord. You know what they're saying here?

We wish we would have died just like the 250 who died instantly. Careful. They said to die would have been better. To die would have been better than to be alive now.

Because this is all pointing back to the things which had taken place during Korah's rebellion and the things which followed. All these chapters tied together. We wish we would have died instead of wandering around for these 38 years.

[16 : 33] Instead of going through this wilderness. Then they would have missed all the provisions. They would have missed seeing everything that God was doing for them. But in this moment of discontentment they said if only we had died.

He says why then have you brought the Lord's assembly into this wilderness for us and our beasts to die here? And this same problem. Here's why the Bible tells us in the New Testament that the man who puts his hand to the plow must never look back.

Right? Keep moving forward. Because the discontent do this. It was a lot better back there. You ever notice every time the people complain the very first thing they start talking about is how good it was in Egypt?

You ever notice in Exodus the very beginning pages of Exodus it wasn't that good in Egypt? Yesterday always looks better in the problems of today. Just like we hear the good old days of the church.

Oh I wish we could go back to the good old days of the church. And I don't mean this to be offensive to anybody so please don't take this to be offending. The best days to be a part of the church is today. I hear people say oh I wish I was alive during the good old days of the church and people who kind of want to kind of prod me with that I remind them that yesterday's good days gave you today's problems.

[17 : 46] And if they were so good then why does the church struggle today? And we don't understand that, right? But it gives us the opportunity now and that problem back there looks so much better here because we don't always look back and see the negatives.

We always want to highlight the positives. And that's what they were doing in their discontentment. They were looking back and going oh I wish Egypt was so good. And look at what he says. He says you have not brought us. They said why have you brought us here?

It is not a place of grain or figs or vines or pomegranates nor is there water to drink. Everything they said that this is not a place of they had taken out of the promised land when they went in and spied it out. They have seen the grain and the vine and the pomegranates and the water yet they failed to go in.

They didn't want to talk about that. They said where we're at now this is not that place. Well sure it's not that place because you wouldn't go in in obedience to that place. Here's the discontent people. They're upset and they're mad and rather than crying out to the Lord they complain against his people.

So you have this difficult timing. You have this discontent people and now we see the third thing and that is the detailed revelation. The detailed revelation. And we need to take note of this because I love what verse 6 says.

[18 : 57] Then Moses and Aaron came in from the presence of the assembly to the doorway of the tent of meeting and fell on their faces. Every time I mean let's just be honest as God's people it's not always sunshine and buttercups and all this stuff right?

Sometimes we have days like today. Sometimes it's difficult and sometimes when we're serving other people because I say we because this is a thing I believe in the priesthood of the believers that each one of us are called to serve and to minister to one another and to others.

It's not always going to be easy but here's the great picture we see in scripture. Sometimes we need to leave the assembly of people and go into the presence of God and fall on our faces. And they left the presence of the people and they went to the Lord and they fell on their faces and this is the humility of Moses.

This is the humility we've seen over and over again. Moses didn't speak. He just left and he went and fell in the presence of God on his face and he cried out to them God I've got a bunch of discontent people out here it's a difficult season up to this point Moses is doing everything exactly right.

He says God it's not working something's going on and God is so gracious he's so gracious look what it says it says then the glory of the Lord appeared to them the glory of the Lord filled that place now understand this the revelation they are about to receive comes straight from the manifestation of God's glory okay he's okay he was asleep on the couch he may still be asleep he has this tendency to walk around every now and then if he gets to talking when he comes in don't worry about it okay we're good everybody's like what's Braden doing he does it at home too it's okay so God's glory revealed himself and then he's going to give them a revelation of what he wants them to do so that is what he is about to say is a direct it comes straight from his glory being manifested and

God gives them very clear directions look at what he says here it says and the Lord spoke to Moses okay the Lord spoke to Moses take the rod pay attention to this take the rod okay take the rod and you and your brother Aaron assemble the congregation and speak to the rock before their eyes that it may yield its water you shall thus bring forth water from them out of the rock and let the congregation and their beast drink very clear right

[21 : 19] God gives this very detailed revelation Moses you're in my presence my glory is all around you this is what I want you to do take the rod pay attention to the words here take the rod go to the rock speak to the rock water comes out that's it very clear very simple because obedience is not a difficult thing and God I love this attribute of God God is a revelation God in that he wants us to know what he's calling us to do we don't serve a God who is hard to find we serve a God that if we humble ourselves and we get into his presence he gives us clearly detailed revelations of what we are called to do and how we are called to obey so we see this perfect storm brewing right it's a difficult season there's discontent people God in his grace and his mercy now think about you want to see how gracious and merciful God is

God knows what's about to happen right but God gives detailed revelations of do this now let's see what went wrong look at the disobedient servant and this is where we really have to work it out the disobedient servant so Moses took the rod from before the Lord question what rod is that Aaron's rod right Moses took the rod the reason we know this is Aaron's rod is because Aaron's rod was before the Lord when it was budded Aaron's rod was before the Lord turn back with me just a page or two number 17 number 17 starting in verse 11 no let's start in verse 10 number 17 verse 10 says now Aaron's rod had already budded he had the other rods that did not bud and God gives Moses very clear directions here but the Lord said to Moses put back the rod of Aaron before the testimony to be kept pay attention to be kept as a sign against the rebels that you may put an end to their grumblings against me so that they will not die what was the whole reason for that rod being there so that it could be brought out shown the people to be a sign this is the man God has chosen it would stop their grumblings it would be a sign of mercy that they may not die in their murmurings it would be validation that Moses and Aaron were the ones God had called to lead right so Moses took the rod from before the Lord he took

Aaron's rod that not only had budded it had blossoms on it and it had ripe almonds all overnight it's an amazing thing so this testimonial stick if you will that had been in the presence of the Lord he took that and we're looking at his disobedience so Moses took the rod from before the Lord just as he commanded him great he's doing good so far and Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly before the rock so far so good and he said to them listen now you rebels shall we bring forth water from you out of this rock then Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod and water came forth abundantly in the congregation and their beasts drank but the Lord said to Moses and Aaron because you have not believed me to treat me as holy in the sight of the sons of Israel therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them where did he fell where did he mess up God's clear instructions take this rod go to that rock speak to that rock water comes out Moses he's been here before he's done this once before right so Moses takes the right rod he takes Aaron's rod he has it in his hand he goes out and rather than speaking to the rock he speaks to the sons he speaks to the nation he says come here he says you rebels

God did not tell him to chastise the people but he did that rod was to be a sign of mercy that the rebels may not die Moses was longing for it to be a testimony of judgment that they may know their faults okay the rod was to be a sign of mercy he says you rebels should I bring forth from you from this rock so he begins not only did he start talking to them rather than talking to the rock he began to put himself in the place of God and then Moses does something that is almost unbelievable he takes the rod that is in his hand which is his rod so he had to be holding Aaron's rod and his his was the one that he walked around with right and he took his rod and struck the rock the rod that God was going to use Aaron's rod Moses wanted to use his own stick because that's what he used before here's the reality there are a lot of interpretations of this passage the Exodus 17 passage is very clear where they don't have any water and God commands

Moses to go and strike the rock but God says something very particular there God says I will go before you and I will stand on the rock so God was going to be there he says I want you to strike the rock strike the place he's standing on and he struck the rock and water came out the second time he was told just go speak to the rock so it's an act of faith some see in this and I'm not necessarily against this I think this is a good interpretation as well some see in this that we do not have to

crucify again Jesus because that when he's already been stricken once it is enough to supply our every need all we have to do is ask and petition the rock was stricken once it did not need to be struck again let alone two more times right so he did not have to do that because all he had to do is by faith ask him but God declares here that his sin is this because you have not believed me because you have not believed me lack of faith what he was saying is Moses trust the fact that I can use that rod that has budded to convict them without you saying a word and that when you talk to that rock it will be enough trust me because you did not believe me and treat me as holy treat me as holy

[27 : 30] God's judgment was going to be to use the rod to remind the nation that he had chosen Aaron and Moses and after convicting them through because he says that rod would be an instrument of conviction when they saw it that's what number 17 says then he was going to extend his mercy and provide to them water to drink out of this rock Moses thought a little bit more needed to be added to that I need to remind them who they are I need to remind them how bad they have sinned I need to remind them how far they have fallen I need to remind them how hard it is I need to show them the strength and the power and all this God just asked him to follow me believe me believe me that when this is what I say you need!

it's! Moses added to what God was commanding him to do sometimes in our walk of obedience God asked us to do very simple easy things the great devastating sin is when we think God needs to do a little bit more and we add to it sometimes God says whoever asks to walk with him one mile! you walk with him two! and while !! I walk with him at second mile I need to also remind him how bad he is sometimes he just wants us to love and extend mercy and extend grace sometimes he wants us to act this way or that way and sometimes he gives us very clear things the great devastating sin of the leaders here is they questioned simple declaration of his word

I had a call today earlier this morning my morning started with questions I've had questions all day but that's great it's just one of those day I had a call today from a young man I had a chance to minister to him a couple of times last year and he called me today he was he recently began! proclaiming the gospel preaching a little bit he said I've got a question never occurred to me that when I started preaching the gospel I would have to preach a funeral he's very young he said do you have any advice what do you say at a funeral he said I've known the person he said what do you say you know what I told him trust that the word of God is enough you don't have to add to it you don't need to know what to say pray fall I don't have funeral sermons stored back I don't keep them I said I pray whatever verses he gives me that's what I proclaim and trust that his word is going to meet the need in that family at that moment don't try to figure it out don't wonder why that's what he wants you to say there I said I've preached some sermons and funerals

[31 : 05] I thought there's no way that's going to minister and I found out later all you have to do is obey what he called you to do the temptation is to try to figure it out and add a little bit to it but God has a specific word for every moment and we need to walk in obedience and just declare that simple word he's called us to proclaim at that moment all Moses was to do if we be honest every one of us have hit the rock every now and then made us feel better I had a neighbor growing up used to say every man needs a rock in his yard I didn't understand what that meant he was an old man he said every man needs a rock in his yard just to go beat on every now and there makes him feel better I got older and I realized to be on the wrong time because he was in the place of getting rid of that stress in the presence of

God and he felt like maybe he needed to vent his anger a little bit more let us not be those people who walk into those devastating sins which would cause us all to stumble in the fall by the way great commentary on this Warren Weersby said this I love it to sin I thought why he said because the law can never take you all the way only grace and mercy can bring you up Joshua is a picture of Christ by the way of grace and mercy Moses is always typed!

Prototype with the law Moses represents the law the law can take you to the edge of the promised land but it can't take you into the promised land because the law always falls short somewhere legalism will break down somewhere and for Moses it broke down at the waters of America it always breaks down by the way Moses did go into the promised land you remember when he joined Elijah and met with Jesus on the mountain transfiguration he made it to the promised land with Jesus that's the first time he stepped foot there and Peter James and John were there to see it he couldn't make it on the power of the law but he could make it in the power of the son let's leave it there and we don't want to be those who enter into that devastating sin of

God's leaders thank you brother so I Thank you.
Thank you.