

## WHAT EVER YOU DO, DO ALL TO THE GLORY OF GOD

Numbers 20:1–13 (NKJV)

<sup>1</sup>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.

<sup>2</sup>Now there was no water for the congregation; so they gathered together against Moses and Aaron.

<sup>3</sup>And the people contended with Moses and spoke, saying: “If only we had died when our brethren died before the LORD!

<sup>4</sup>Why have you brought up the assembly of the LORD into this wilderness, that we and our animals should die here?

<sup>5</sup>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.”

<sup>6</sup>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.

<sup>7</sup>Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

<sup>8</sup>“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.”

<sup>9</sup>So Moses took the rod from before the LORD as He commanded him.

<sup>10</sup>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?”

<sup>11</sup>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.

<sup>12</sup>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.”

<sup>13</sup>This was the water of Meribah, because the children of Israel contended with the LORD, and He was hallowed among them.

- *In this story of Moses striking the rock, it may appear that God was too harsh and the punishment too severe.*
- *Hebrews 3:5 says, “Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward,” but his error in just one small place prevented him from entering the Promised Land.*

- *Studying this story we can learn some important biblical truths that will empower us to live fruitful and overcoming lives.*

#### **Numbers 20:1–13 (NKJV)**

**<sup>1</sup>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.**

**<sup>2</sup>Now there was no water for the congregation; so they gathered together against Moses and Aaron.**

- *“Now there was no water for the congregation” – We see a pattern in God’s dealings with Israel in the wilderness. They would first experience a lack or an obstacle, then they would have an opportunity to either react to the situation with fear and grumbling, or respond to God with faith and hope.*

#### **Deuteronomy 8:2 (NKJV)**

**<sup>2</sup>And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.**

- *God led Israel on a specific journey through the wilderness for forty years where they experienced lack and also God’s gracious abundant provision.*
- *God was both testing them and preparing them to enter into the Promised Land and all that He had in store for them.*
- *Through our journey in this life we will also experience times of great joy, prosperity, and blessings as well as times of trials, tribulation, and hardship. All these experiences are meant to give us the opportunity to respond in faith with thanksgiving and grow in our relationship with Christ.*
- *“so they gathered together against Moses and Aaron” – Unfortunately Israel quickly forgot all their previous experiences of God’s miraculous provision and care, and reacted with unbelief and grumbling at both their leaders and God Himself.*
- *Every time we are confronted by a difficult or painful experience or situation we can either remind ourselves of God’s faithfulness or allow fear and unbelief to dominate our lives—the choice is ours.*

## Numbers 20

<sup>3</sup>And the people contended with Moses and spoke, saying: “If only we had died when our brethren died before the LORD!

<sup>4</sup>Why have you brought up the assembly of the LORD into this wilderness, that we and our animals should die here?

<sup>5</sup>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.”

- “If only we had died when our brethren died before the LORD!” – *The people were in such a rebellious attitude that they said it would have been better for the Lord to have killed them as He killed their rebellious brothers in the wilderness!*
- *This statement shows a disdain for God’s holiness and righteousness, and a total absence of any fear of the Lord.*
- *They were trying to paint a picture of God as an unrighteous bully instead of the loving Father that He is.*
- “Why have you brought up the assembly of the LORD into this wilderness, that we and our animals should die here?” – *The people were accusing God of bring them out of Egypt simply for the purpose of having them die of thirst.*
- “why have you made us come up out of Egypt, to bring us to this evil place?” – *Not only did Israel complain against God’s provision, they forgot how terrible, painful, and oppressive their slavery had been in Egypt.*
- *While they were in the wilderness, they failed to remember that their final destination was the Promised Land which flowed with milk and honey.*
- *During the dark and difficult times we sometimes experience, we need to remember that God will bring us through hardships and trials to enjoy His blessings in this earthly life. Even more, He will ultimately take us to be with Him to experience the unimaginable beauty and bliss of Heaven for all eternity.*

## Numbers 20

<sup>6</sup>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.

- **“So Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly to the door of the tabernacle of meeting” – *The “so” is a conjunction which signifies what Moses and Aaron’s response was to being confronted by the threats and grumblings of the people. They left the presence of the people and their grumblings and went to seek the presence of God.***
- ***We can either continue to listen to the voices, from within and from without, that will tear us down with fear and doubts, or we can turn to God and hear His Word and His voice.***
- **“and they fell on their faces” – *Moses and Aaron responded by humbling themselves before God and seeking Him and His direction.***
- **“And the glory of the LORD appeared to them” – *Moses and Aaron’s response of turning humbly to God resulted in the glory of God appearing before them. They left the presence of the people and turned to God.***
- ***Moses and Aaron went from a place of hearing negativity and unbelief to experiencing the very presence and glory of God.***
- ***We need to constantly be aware when negativity is trying to influence our thoughts and immediately turn to God.***
- ***Carnal Christians just think, but spiritual Christians think about what they are thinking about, and make appropriate changes if needed.***

## Numbers 20

<sup>7</sup>Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

- ***Only when Moses and Aaron turned away from the voices of the people and turned to God, could God speak to them. Otherwise, all the voices of the people would drown out the voice of the Holy Spirit.***
- ***It is only when we turn our attention to the Lord and away from the negativity and unbelieving voices of this world that we will be able to clearly hear God speaking.***

- *Daily as we spend time reading the Bible, mediating on what we are reading, and waiting on the Lord in prayer with praise and thanksgiving, does God's voice become understandable.*

### Numbers 20

<sup>8</sup>“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.”

- “Take the rod; you and your brother Aaron gather the congregation together” – *God instructed Moses to return to face the people, but this time they had the word of the Lord to give an answer to the people's complaints and the solution to their needs.*
- “Take the rod” – *The rod symbolized the authority God had given Moses. It was the same rod with which Moses confronted Pharaoh and all Egypt succumbed to the plagues and released Israel, the same rod that Moses stretched over the Red Sea and it divided to provide their miraculous escape from the pursuing Egyptians.*

### Numbers 20

<sup>9</sup>So Moses took the rod from before the LORD as He commanded him.

<sup>10</sup>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?”

<sup>11</sup>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.

- *Moses did as the Lord commanded him by taking the rod and assembling the people together, but from this point on it was all downhill for Moses.*
- *Instead of speaking to the rock as the Lord had commanded Moses, he struck the rock twice with his rod.*
- *It appeared that although Moses did not follow the Lord's command, his actions were vindicated, because water gushed out of the rock in abundance.*
- *However, in the following verse the Lord had the final word.*

<sup>12</sup>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.”

- *God’s rebuke to Moses was stern and unrelenting; because Moses had disobeyed the commandment of the Lord he would not enter the Promised Land.*
- *“Because you did not believe Me” – Outwardly Moses’ actions seemed to exude faith when he boldly stood before the people and proclaimed, “must we bring water for you out of this rock?”*
- *Not only did Moses speak confidently but his actions even produced miraculous results with abundant water gushing from the rock for all the people and cattle to drink!*
- *If Moses didn’t exhibit doubt or hesitation then why did the Lord say, “Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel.”*
- *“Hear now, you rebels!”– Moses spoke words out of frustration and instead of speaking to the rock he began to rant and rail at the people.*
- *Instead of exuding a peace that comes with encountering God, Moses got in the flesh and totally misrepresented God to the people.*
- *Instead of Moses walking toward the people with an attitude filled with the awe of just having encountered God’s glory and presence, he walked up to the people and began to yell at them in frustration, anger, and impatience.*
- *Moses’ actions diminished in the eyes of the people how awesome and wonderful it is to actually encounter God and fellowship with the Almighty.*
- *We, as followers of Christ, are to carry the presence of God with us with an attitude of thankfulness, joy, and godly fear and if we don’t, we misrepresent Christ to this world.*
- *Moses spoke as if he was at the end of his rope and implied that even God wasn’t enough for Moses to have hope that God could change the people.*

- *“Must we bring water for you out of this rock?” – Not only did Moses respond with frustration, he obstructed the people’s view of God’s glory by saying, “Must we bring water” as if he was the one actually doing it and by striking the rock, and even striking it twice, it may even have appeared as if somehow his striking the rock actually caused the rock to gush water.*
- *The word “we” excluded God from receiving the glory. Moses was striking the rock with human strength. God wanted Moses to speak to the rock to reveal His divine strength and provision.*
- *Moses’ actions short-circuited God’s desire to demonstrate a miracle to raise the faith of the people so they could enter the Promised Land. Speaking to the rock would have been a greater miracle than striking it and thus showing the power of speaking God’s Word.*
- *Instead, Moses became an example of unthankfulness, and instead of glorifying and praising God for the miracle, he diminished both God and His power by manifesting frustration and generally a bad attitude.*
- *The question then arises, “if Moses was both disobedient and operating in the flesh why did God still provide the miracle of water coming from the rock?”*
- *First, God wanted to meet the needs of the people. The people and their animals were in need of water and God wanted to meet their need even if Moses was not faithful.*

**Romans 11:29 (NKJV)**

<sup>29</sup>For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

- *Second, God’s gifts are not taken back even if the person He has given the gift to is not living as he or she should.*
- *There are many examples in the history of the Church of preachers or evangelists who secretly backslid, but continued, for a time to preach powerfully even though they had hidden sin.*
- *Although many people benefitted from their ministry, when their sins were exposed it brought confusion to the Body of Christ and shame to the name of the Lord.*

- *By God allowing backslidden Christians to continue to operate in their gifts results in it becoming a source of judgment upon them. They deceive themselves into thinking that their hidden sins are not really a problem, because they are still being used by God.*
- *In the eyes of the people Moses' actions were justified, because a miracle resulted, but God judged Moses with the result that he lost out on the reward of entering the Promised Land.*
- *Signs and wonders or preaching wonderful sermons do not validate a person's lifestyle. God is looking for lives that are pure and lived according to His Word.*
- *Another question arises from Exodus 17, when Israel was first confronted with a shortage of water. Israel murmured against Moses and God, and God instructed Moses to strike the rock so that water would come forth. Why did God want Moses to strike the rock the first time, but only to speak to the rock the second time?*

#### **1 Corinthians 10:4 (NKJV)**

**<sup>4</sup>and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.**

- *The Rock in the wilderness represents Jesus Christ, the One who provides us with living water.*
- *The first time Moses struck the rock and water came forth, prophetically represents Jesus Christ's humiliation, suffering, and death at the cross of Calvary which opens the way for us to drink freely from the fountain of eternal life.*
- *"Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink." (John 7:37). Jesus alone is the living water.*
- *However, the second time when the Lord commanded Moses to speak to the Rock, prophetically pictures Christ having already paid the price for our redemption and thus He generously says, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts." (Revelation 21:6 (NKJV))*



- *Moses brought open shame to God by striking the Rock the second time, because Christ died for us once and for all and He no longer needs to suffer for our redemption because “it is finished.” (John 19:30).*
- *When we as believers in the risen Christ complain against God and the provision He has given us through Jesus’ redemptive work at the cross we bring shame to Christ, the Rock of our Salvation.*

## Numbers 20

<sup>13</sup>This was the water of Meribah, because the children of Israel contended with the LORD, and He was hallowed among them.

- *Although Israel complained against God and Moses disobeyed God’s commandments, God’s holiness is still seen in this example by those who are willing to see God’s character as both Holy, but also merciful to provide water for the people in spite of their unfaithfulness.*
- *When we read and understand the story in Numbers 20 and we see God’s faithfulness, then God is hallowed in our hearts as we respond with faith and thanksgiving as we resolve in our hearts to trust God even when we are in a dry place.*
- *However, another question may arise to trouble us as we study this story about the judgment that came on Moses. If Moses was described as the most humble man who lived and was called faithful, but because of one failure forfeited the reward of entering the Promised Land, what about us who fail numerous times?*
- *Moses himself was under the Levitical Law, which demanded justice, himself being from the tribe of Levi.*
- *Why did God choose the tribe of Levi, of all the twelve tribes, to be the priests and the ones that were entrusted to carrying out and fulfilling all the services, ceremonies, rituals, and ordinances of the Law?*
- *Some may think that God chose the tribe of Levi because they were more zealous for the things of God or because they were more consecrated, but the Bible actually paints quite a different picture.*
- *As Jacob lay on his bed preparing to die he spoke a prophetic word over each one of his sons regarding God purpose for their lives and for their descendants.*

**Genesis 49:5–7 (NKJV)**

<sup>5</sup>“Simeon and Levi are brothers; Instruments of cruelty are in their dwelling place.

<sup>6</sup>Let not my soul enter their council; Let not my honor be united to their assembly; For in their anger they slew a man, And in their self-will they hamstrung an ox.

<sup>7</sup>Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce; And their wrath, for it is cruel! I will divide them in Jacob And scatter them in Israel.

- *Simeon and Levi are associated with “instruments of cruelty” and Jacob goes on to say, “cursed be their anger, for it is fierce and their wrath is cruel!”*
- *The result was that God told the tribe of Levi, “I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel.”*
- *The Levites were not given an inheritance in the Land but as those that served before God in all the rituals and ordinances of the Law they were scattered throughout the entire Land of Israel just as Jacob prophesied.*
- *“For in their anger they slew a man, And in their self-will they hamstrung an ox” – This refers to an event recorded in Genesis 34.*
- *Jacob’s daughter Dinah had been violated by Shechem, a son of the prince of the Hivites, and then Shechem, having fallen in love with her wanted to marry her.*

**Genesis 34:13–31 (NKJV)**

<sup>13</sup>But the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father, and spoke deceitfully, because he had defiled Dinah their sister.

<sup>14</sup>And they said to them, “We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one who is uncircumcised, for that would be a reproach to us.

<sup>15</sup>But on this condition we will consent to you: If you will become as we are, if every male of you is circumcised,

- *The sons of Jacob, specifically Simeon and Levi, had hatched a plan to extract vengeance because their sister Dinah had been defiled.*
- *They made a condition for Shechem to marry Dinah—all their males had to be circumcised.*

<sup>16</sup>then we will give our daughters to you, and we will take your daughters to us; and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people.

<sup>17</sup>But if you will not heed us and be circumcised, then we will take our daughter and be gone.”

<sup>18</sup>And their words pleased Hamor and Shechem, Hamor’s son.

<sup>19</sup>So the young man did not delay to do the thing, because he delighted in Jacob’s daughter. He was more honorable than all the household of his father.

<sup>20</sup>And Hamor and Shechem his son came to the gate of their city, and spoke with the men of their city, saying:

<sup>21</sup>“These men are at peace with us. Therefore let them dwell in the land and trade in it. For indeed the land is large enough for them. Let us take their daughters to us as wives, and let us give them our daughters.

<sup>22</sup>Only on this condition will the men consent to dwell with us, to be one people: if every male among us is circumcised as they are circumcised.

<sup>23</sup>Will not their livestock, their property, and every animal of theirs be ours? Only let us consent to them, and they will dwell with us.”

<sup>24</sup>And all who went out of the gate of his city heeded Hamor and Shechem his son; every male was circumcised, all who went out of the gate of his city.

<sup>25</sup>Now it came to pass on the third day, when they were in pain, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah’s brothers, each took his sword and came boldly upon the city and killed all the males.

<sup>26</sup>And they killed Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah from Shechem’s house, and went out.

<sup>27</sup>The sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and plundered the city, because their sister had been defiled.

<sup>28</sup>They took their sheep, their oxen, and their donkeys, what was in the city and what was in the field,

<sup>29</sup>and all their wealth. All their little ones and their wives they took captive; and they plundered even all that was in the houses.

<sup>30</sup>Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, “You have troubled me by making me obnoxious among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites; and since I am few in number, they will gather themselves together against me and kill me. I shall be destroyed, my household and I.”

<sup>31</sup>But they said, “Should he treat our sister like a harlot?”

- *Simeon and Levi were not known for their mercy, compassion, or for their special consecration unto God, but for their ruthlessness to see judgment come upon those who transgressed. They used circumcision to weaken all the men so they could easily overpower and kill each one mercilessly.*

- *The very act of circumcision is what Simeon and Levi used to make it impossible for the men to defend themselves for through the Law no flesh is justified but all are condemned.*

#### Hebrews 10:28 (NKJV)

<sup>28</sup>Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.

- *“dies without mercy” - So we see that Levi was chosen to be priests of the first covenant because of his unbending desire for judgment and vengeance without mercy and thus reflecting the attitude of the Levitical Law.*
- *Moses was under the Levitical Law that decreed that the consequences of each transgression had to stand and because of his one transgression he was denied entrance into the Promised Land.*

#### Galatians 3:10 (NKJV)

<sup>10</sup>For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.”

- *The prophecy spoken over Levi in Genesis 49 was, “cursed is your anger for it is fierce.” We see under the Levitical Law everyone who breaks any part of the Levitical Law is under a curse to suffer the full consequences and punishment without mercy.*

#### Hebrews 8:6 (NKJV)

<sup>6</sup>But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.

- *The good news of the Gospel is that we under the new covenant, which is a “better covenant” which is established on “better promises.”*

#### Galatians 4:4–5 (NKJV)

<sup>4</sup>But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,

<sup>5</sup>to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

- *Jesus came and died for our sins so we would no longer be under the Levitical Law, which demanded judgment and condemnation and instead through His sacrifice we are under the New Covenant and through adoption have become children of God.*

**Hebrews 7:12–14 (NKJV)**

<sup>12</sup>For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law.

<sup>13</sup>For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar.

<sup>14</sup>For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood.

- *Under the New Covenant there came a change in the Law and a change in the priesthood, Jesus being our High Priest.*
- *Under the Levitical Law the priest all had to come from the tribe of Levi, but Jesus, our High Priest of the New Covenant, was not born from the tribe of Levi, but from the tribe of Judah.*
- *While Levi depicted judgment and wrath, Judah means, “praise.”*
- *We have been called to a New Covenant where we have been redeemed from the curse that the Law brings because of sin, to receive the blessings that Christ brings through His sacrifice at Calvary.*

**Romans 8:28–29 (NKJV)**

<sup>28</sup>And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

<sup>29</sup>For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

- *The New Covenant does not eliminate the consequences of our sins and wrong choices, but it does provide forgiveness and the way to have those consequences redeemed so they no longer cause harm but are transformed into a blessing if we are willing to walk with God through the process of repentance and restoration.*