

# Moses Disobeys God

Numbers 20:1-13

## **MEMORY VERSE**

1 SAMUEL 15:22

“Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice.”

## **WHAT YOU WILL NEED:**

A two-quart pitcher, unsweetened Kool-aid, sugar and two quarts of water.

As many small prizes as the number of children in your class and a list of tasks that requires instruction.

Playdoh, a small medicine bottle, baking soda, blue food coloring and vinegar.

## **ATTENTION GRABBER!**

### **Drink Demo**

Bring a pitcher and a package or two of unsweetened Kool-aid, and some sugar.

Tell the children to watch closely and have one of the children (if they read) to read the instructions step by step as you make the Kool-aid. When it comes to the sugar, just say you don't think it needs sugar, so you will just leave it out. If the kids don't break into an uproar of laughter right then, ask them if they think that's alright. Measuring carefully, try talking them into just settling for less than the recipe calls for.

Ask them why it is important to follow directions. Set the Kool-aid aside for a later activity.

## LESSON TIME!

We have been learning about the wandering in the wilderness by the children of Israel and now they are nearing the end of their 40 years of wandering. Today we will learn of Moses, the servant of God, and how he disobeyed the Lord one day by misrepresenting Him. He didn't obey God completely. We will learn through this lesson, that it is not a light thing to misrepresent our Lord. As Christians, we represent Jesus to this world and we need to be careful that when people see us they see Jesus and His example and not us. **God wants us to obey Him in every detail.**

### NUMBERS 20:1-6

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.

Now there was no water for the congregation; so they gathered together against Moses and Aaron.

And the people contended with Moses and spoke, saying: "If only we had died when our brethren died before the LORD!

"Why have you brought up the assembly of the LORD into this wilderness, that we and our animals should die here?

"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."

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.

The children of Israel have entered into the wilderness of Zin, and here Miriam (Moses' sister) dies. It is not long after that the congregation runs out of water, and they grow thirsty as do their animals. Then once again they start complaining against Moses, Aaron and the Lord. Through the trials in the wilderness and the different tests they just revealed what was in their hearts. Just think, if they had just trusted God completely for a short while longer, God would have revealed Himself and His plan for them without any hindrance.

God most certainly did not bring His chosen people out into a wilderness to make them die of thirst. God loved these people! He just wanted them to trust Him completely. He had been very faithful to them since the journey from Egypt, but they still need to grow in their faith. Also, He was just about to have them enter into the Promised Land.

But did they trust Him? NO! At the first sign of difficulty they fall into unbelief and they turn against the Lord. Unbelief in our lives can cause us a lot of problems, especially if we begin to disobey the Lord. **God wants us to obey Him in every detail.**

The Lord will take us, or our families through trials and tests. And when the way looks impossible, He just wants us to hold on a little longer, to bear the hardship a little longer, stretching our faith and making it grow. For most certainly the Lord will aid us. Is He not in control of such situations? Is the Lord's hand so short so as to not be able to save? Definitely not!

God wants us to trust Him, not just when things are going according to our plan, but He wants us to trust in the hardest situations for He is right there holding us in His arms. We must purge unbelief from our way of thinking. It is a disease that can

easily hold us back from God's perfect plan, but the cure is complete trust in the Lord.

### NUMBERS 20:7,8

Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

"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."

The first thing Moses and Aaron did was to go to the Lord and fall down before Him and His presence. It was very good that they did not answer right away off the top of their heads. But instead, they went directly to God with their problem. A very wise thing! It says in Proverbs 17:28, "Even a fool is counted wise when he holds his peace; when he shuts his lips he is considered perceptive."

God answers Moses and gives Moses specific instructions. He says, "Take your rod and SPEAK to the rock and it will yield its water." God told Moses to speak to the rock. This was different from the previous time when a different rock yielded water to the congregation of Israel. At that time Moses was told to strike the rock one time and water would flow out. **God wants us to obey Him in every detail.**

There is a very serious example in this story. In 1 Corinthians 10:4 we read, "They drank from that spiritual rock that followed them; and that rock was Christ." When we look at the rod that Moses used in Exodus 7:20 as he struck the rock and it brought forth its water we have a type of Christ being struck for us. It was a picture of His dying on the cross for our sins. It pictures His own blood flowing out of Him to cleanse our sins, forgiving us. Through His sacrifice, we are provided "living water." So for Moses to strike the

rock again, as we will see, would be a wrong example or picture for the people. He was to SPEAK to the rock now, not strike it.

After we have a relationship with Jesus we simple come to Him and speak to Him. There is not need for Him to ever die on a cross again for our sins. That was done once and for all. So you can see the importance of this picture. Jesus provided everything we need the first time He died on the cross. Once was enough (read Romans 6:9-10; Hebrews 9:26, 28; 1 Peter 3:18).

Moses was told only to take the rod and speak to the rock. Why was he told to just speak to the rock? Because now that Jesus died on the cross in our place and paid that costly price, we now only have to go to our God of grace and ask for His forgiveness, ask for His blood to cover us and make us new.

And because of the work that Jesus did on the cross, we now have fellowship with Jesus, our Rock through the Holy Spirit. It is very important that when God gives us something to do that we follow the instructions exactly. We may not understand why He tells us to do something a certain way, but we can know that He has a reason. So we need to follow it.

One of the main ways that God speaks to us today is through the Bible. Sometimes you might wonder why God tells us to do something a certain way in the Bible. Maybe you might be tempted to think that you don't have to do it that way, or maybe you can think of a better way; but this lesson teaches us that God has a reason for telling us how to do things, so we need to be careful to do what He says. Moses didn't follow the instructions that God gave him and it caused a lot of problems as we will see. **God wants us to obey Him in every detail.**

## Listen Carefully

Have small prizes ready and set aside.

Quiet the class and give them some specific instructions for different tasks. You may want to explain to them how to play a game or a relay or just give them a list of things to do. The important part will be in your instructions. You can explain to them to do things such as: Touch the dry erase board, shake hands with a friend, pat your head three times, say, "Jesus loves me," then sit down in your place in the circle. For those who did exactly as you said, give them a small prize.

Explain how Moses did not obey exactly and missed out on an enormously important blessing. Something he had been looking forward to his entire life. (At your discretion you may or may not want to share the prizes with the rest of your class after you have made the illustration.

### NUMBERS 20:9-13

So Moses took the rod from before the LORD as He commanded him.

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?"

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.

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."

This was the water of Meribah, because the children of Israel contended with the LORD, and He was hallowed among them.

Do you know what it means to misrepresent God? It means that God wants us to understand who He is and what He is like. As God's servants it is important that we communicate that to others the RIGHT WAY. The danger is that people can get the wrong idea of who God is and what He is like. That is what happened in this story.

Now Moses' sin went beyond misrepresenting a picture or type of Jesus who would come later. He misrepresented God and God's heart towards the people.

When God gave the instructions to Moses, God was not angry with the people at all; but Moses in anger cried out, "Rebels must WE bring water for you out of this rock?" When he said "we," he was equating himself with God and was representing God as an angry God, when nothing could be farther from the truth.

So many times God's servants are given a message to bring to the people, but the way the message is communicated is directly opposite of what God said because people forget that God is a God of love. We must remember that it is just as important to share God's word with His voice, His grace, His love and His temperament as the message itself.

It is a very heavy thing to misrepresent the Lord.—It is a sin. Remember, with all sin, there are consequences. God tells Moses that since he didn't believe Him and didn't honor Him in the eyes of the people, that he would not be able to take the people into the Promised Land.

We must take seriously the position God has given us as Christians to represent Jesus to this world and to each other. We are the only



Jesus the world sees, so do we want them to see these qualities: disobedience, anger, strife, jealousy, pride and self? Or do we desire to show them the qualities of our Lord, the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and self-control?

Let us pray when we wake up each morning to represent Jesus in the right way to everybody with who we come in contact. Also, God's law said Moses couldn't go into the Promised Land, but God's grace took him to a high hill and showed it all to him. Do we not serve a gracious God? Let us purpose in our heart to serve just as graciously. **God wants us to obey Him in every detail.**

## **Water from the Rock**

Let the kids make Playdoh rocks while you make one rock surrounding the neck of a small medicine bottle into which you have put a few drops of blue food coloring and some baking soda before class time. A couple of teaspoons or so of baking soda depending on how big your bottle is.

Your "rock" should be sitting in a tray of some kind to catch the "water" as it comes out. After your rock is made, let the kids watch as you pour in enough vinegar to finish filling your bottle. Blue "water" should come out.

This is just a visual reminder of the miracle that God did in the wilderness.

## **PRAYER**

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to obey the Lord in all of the details of their lives, being careful not to take the things of the Lord for granted. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.