

WHEN THERE WAS NO WATER FOR THE CONGREGATION

by John Isaac Edwards

Numbers 20 takes us back to a time when there was no water for the congregation. Some good lessons to be learned from such an occasion:

1) TO CHIDE WITH GOD’S APPOINTED LEADERSHIP IS TO STRIVE WITH THE LORD. The Bible says, *“And the people chode with Moses...”* (v. 3). Verse 13 says, *“...the children of Israel strove with the Lord...”* Moses was God’s appointed leader of the children of Israel (Num. 27:15-17). He communicated the words of the Lord (Num. 24:3, 12; 25:1-2). Today, God has appointed elders to lead the church (Acts 14:23; 20:28; Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 5:1-2). God manifested His word through preaching (Titus 1:3). Like Israel of old, some today chide with elders and preachers. One says, “I’m going to give them a piece of my mind, take them to task, rake them over the coals, ream them out.” You are striving with the Lord when you chide with God’s appointed leadership!

2) TRUST GOD. In their hearts, the children of Israel turned back to Egypt (Acts 7:39). They said, *“...wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us in unto this evil place? it is no place of*

seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates; neither is there any water to drink” (v. 5). They thought they were better off dead! *“Would God that we had died when our brethren died before the Lord!”* (v. 3). We soon forget how blessed we are! The God who sent the plagues and brought them out of hard bondage in Egypt, who parted the Red Sea, rained bread from heaven, sent quails, provided water out of the rock at Rephidim could surely supply water for His people to drink in Kadesh. We need to trust God to supply all our needs.

3) THE WAY OF TRANSGRESSORS IS HARD. There is no doubt the wilderness-wandering way was not easy. Verses 3-5 express the difficulty. Proverbs 13:15 says, *“...the way of transgressors is hard.”* Their wandering was brought on by their sin of complaining (Num. 14). We often bring hardships on ourselves by sins we choose to commit. *“...sin is the transgression of the law”* (1 Jn. 3:4).

4) DO EXACTLY AS GOD SAYS. The Lord instructed Moses, *“...speak ye unto the rock...”* (v. 8). Verse 11 says, *“And Moses lifted up his hand,*

and with his rod he smote the rock twice....” What did God say about smiting the rock? The Lord said, *“Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them”* (v. 12). It’s not that Moses and Aaron did not believe in God. God said they did not believe Him. There’s a difference. To not do what God says is to not believe God. This event shows that we must not add to, take away from or substitute for what God says, but do exactly what He says (Dt. 4:2; Rev. 22:18-19).

5) BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU SAY. This is seen two ways: First, in what the people said. When they said what they did (vv. 3-5), they strove with the Lord (v. 13) and provoked Moses’ spirit (Ps. 106:32-33). Did you know you can strive with the Lord and provoke one’s spirit in an unhealthy way by what you say? It is also seen in what Moses said. When he said what he did (v. 10), *“...he spake unadvisedly with his lips”* (Ps. 106:33). We must be careful what we say, as account will be given thereof in the day of judgment. Jesus taught, *“For by thy words thou shalt be*

justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned” (Mt. 12:36-37).

6) THE GOODNESS OF GOD. The fact that in spite of all this “...*water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also*” (v. 11) underscores the goodness of God. They lacked nothing during this time. Deuteronomy 2:7 records, “*For the Lord thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand: he knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness: these forty years the Lord thy God hath been with thee; thou hast lacked nothing.*” Nehemiah would look back on this period of history saying, “*Thou gavest*

also thy good spirit to instruct them, and withheldest not thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst. Yea, forty years didst thou sustain them in the wilderness, so that they lacked nothing; their clothes waxed not old, and their feet swelled not” (Neh. 9:20-21). As the Psalmist said, “Truly God is good...” (Ps. 73:1).

7) THE SEVERITY OF GOD. Paul taught, “*Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God...*” (Rom. 11:22). Not only is God’s goodness observed, but the severity of God is also seen. Aaron died in Mount Hor (Num. 33:38). The Lord was angry with Moses (Dt. 1:37;

3:23-27). Moses died because of sin. Deuteronomy 32 is the account where the Lord summoned Moses to Mount Nebo with the words, “*Get thee up into this mountain...And die in the mount wither thou goest up...Because ye trespassed against me among the children of Israel at the waters of Meribah-Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin; because ye sanctified me not in the midst of the children of Israel” (Dt. 32:49-51). “The wages of sin is death...” (Rom. 6:23).*

As the Lord provided water for His people from the rock, Jesus offers us living water (Jn. 4:14). We bid you come drink.

A Note Of Personal Thanks From The Edwards

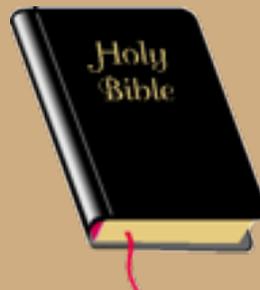
It has been a great pleasure and privilege to work with each of you in 2018. We thank you for all the sacrifices on your part to make the work in Terre Haute what it is, for your faithfulness to the Lord, His word and to one another, for your good examples, for your words of encouragement, for your prayers and for your continual support. We pray the Lord blesses you with a good end to this year, and may 2019 bring you many open doors of opportunity in the Lord’s service. Thank you for who you are, and for all that you do!

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