

Chukat - Bamidbar - Numbers (19-22.1)

God just confirmed that among the Levite family the Kohens were selected to be priests while the rest would be helpers to them and caretakers of God's Sanctuary. God spoke to Moses and High Priest Aaron, "Tell the people to find a pure red cow which has never had a yoke on it and give it to Eleazar the priest to offer it to Me outside the camp. Afterwards the ashes are to be kept outside the camp in a clean place. This will be a keepsake for the entire Israelite community and a means of purification. Anyone who comes in contact with a corpse are unclean for 7 days and must purify before entering God's holy Sanctuary."

The Israelites continued to journey and camped at Kadesh. There, Moses and Aaron's sister Miriam died and was buried. But they found no water in Kadesh and the Israelites were mad at Moses and Aaron. They said, "Why did you take us from Egypt to bring us to a place with no water?"

Moses and Aaron went to the Tent of Appointed Meeting and God spoke to Moses, "Take your rod and gather the people before the rock. Then you and Aaron are to speak to the rock to bring water out of it. Afterwards the people and their animals can drink."

So Moses and Aaron gathered the Hebrews before the rock. Moses said, "Listen now, you rebels, must we bring water for you from this rock?" Then Moses struck the rock with his rod twice and out came the water and the people and animals drank. But then God said to Moses and Aaron. "Because you did not make Me holy before the people you shall not bring them to My promised land. These are the waters of contention, the waters of quarrelling at Kadesh where you disobeyed Me."

The Hebrews then went to Mt. Hor where God told Aaron it was his time to die. As God said, Aaron gave his High Priest clothes to Moses who put the special clothes on Eleazar, Aaron's son. Aaron died there on Mt. Hor and the community wept for 30 days.

When the Israelites journeyed again, the Canaanite king began to battle them but with God's help they survive. Later, along the Sea of Reeds, the Hebrews began to complain about being hungry and thirsty and God sent poisonous snakes until the people came to Moses and said "We have sinned by speaking against God and you. Pray to God and save us." After Moses prayed God said, "Make a copper snake. Whoever has been bitten will look at it and live." And they did.

The Israelites then tried to walk peacefully through the land of the Emorites and later the Amorites. Instead they made war upon the Israelites. With God's help they win and take their lands before making camp in the wastelands of Moab on the other side of Jericho.

Questions: 1. How did Moses and Aaron disrespect God at the rock in Kadesh? 2) Why are the consequences of their disobedience not being able to enter the Promised Land? 3) How often do you complain? How can you practice gratitude?

Illustration Ideas: The red cow...Moses hitting the rock to bring water...Aaron giving his priestly clothes to his son....The people crying over Aaron's death.. God blessing Israelites with victory.