

Context. Most of the “40 years” have passed and we’re again on the brink of entering the promised land. Lots of problems of how to act and think as the Lord God’s people were resolved. For example, in the chapter previous, the process by which a ceremoniously unclean person could become clean was outlined.

Numbers 20:1-13. Entre & Exit. Arriving in the Desert of Zin and while staying at Kadesh, Miriam (Yeshua’s mother’s namesake) died. Not gathered to her forefathers, she was buried in the Desert of Zin, at Kadesh where the rebellion occurred which mightily incensed the Lord God Almighty.

Well, it happened again—even though the vast majority of the 20+ year olds were dead. There was no water and again, the people quarreled with Aaron & Moses—

We should’ve died just like our brothers died earlier before the Lord God Yahweh! Why did you bring us here so that we and our livestock will die? There’s no grain, no figs, no grapes, no pomegranates and... There’s no water!

Well, it happened again—Moses & Aaron went to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, falling facedown, and the glory of Yahweh appeared. Yahweh said...

Take the staff and you and Aaron your brother shall gather the assembly; speak to “that rock” right in front of them, and it’ll pour out water so they and their livestock can drink.

Sure enough, Moses took the staff as commanded. He and Aaron gathered the assembly as commanded. They were gathered in front of the rock as commanded. Moses said... *Listen up you rebellious knuckleheads! Must we bring you water out of this rock?*

NUMBERS 20:1-13

In the first month the whole Israelite community arrived at the Desert of Zin, and they stayed at Kadesh. There Miriam died and was buried.

²Now there was no water for the community, and the people gathered in opposition to Moses and Aaron. ³They quarreled with Moses and said, "If only we had died when our brothers fell dead before the LORD! ⁴Why did you bring the LORD's community into this desert, that we and our livestock should die here? ⁵Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to this terrible place? It has no grain or figs, grapevines or pomegranates. And there is no water to drink!"

⁶Moses and Aaron went from the assembly to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting and fell facedown, and the glory of the LORD appeared to them. ⁷The LORD said to Moses, ⁸"Take the staff, and you and your brother Aaron gather the assembly together. Speak to that rock before their eyes and it will pour out its water. You will bring water out of the rock for the community so they and their livestock can drink."

⁹So Moses took the staff from the LORD's presence, just as he commanded him. ¹⁰He and Aaron gathered the assembly together in front of the rock and Moses said to them, "Listen, you rebels, must we bring you water out of this rock?" ¹¹Then Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with his staff. Water gushed out, and the community and their livestock drank.

¹²But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you [plural] did not trust in me enough to honor me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, you [plural] will not bring this community into the land I give them."

¹³These were the waters of Meribah, [Hebrew for *quarreling*] where the Israelites quarreled with the LORD and where he showed himself holy among them.

Moses then struck the rock, twice, with the staff, not as commanded. But the Lord God’s promise of water was fulfilled—enough for the community and their livestock.

The Lord God was not happy with Aaron or Moses—*Because you two did not trust Me, trust Me enough, to honor Me as holy in the presence of the Israelites, you two will not lead the community into the promised land.*

The area was named Meribah which is Hebrew for quarreling. It is not good to pull on Superman’s cape, for there at Meribah the ultimate SuperOne showed Himself to be holy among us. Don’t hit when you’re told to speak.



- Q What is so heart rending about Miriam’s death?
- Q What was the point of getting water out of a rock? That is, why not lead the people to a special spot in the desert, an oasis as it were?
- Q Why did the Lord God command Moses & Aaron to speak to the rock for water?
- Q Why did striking the rock incense the Lord Our God?
- Q Why did the Lord Our God, nonetheless, provide water for us even though we had been kvetching, again, and our leaders had disobeyed?
- Q When have you hit the rock instead of spoken to it?

COMMAND OF THE LORD OUR GOD...	HITTING OR SPEAKING?
1. You shall be baptized—we sprinkle.	
2. Observe the Sabbath ⁸ and keep it holy—we change it to Sunday.	
3. Observe the Sabbath and keep it holy—we work anyhow.	
4. Do not commit fornication—we’re in a committed relationship.	
5. Do not be drunk with wine—we don’t ingest alcohol at all.	
6. Do not put an ox and donkey on the same yoke—but I love him/her.	
7. Feed Me—they don’t work, so no help for them.	
8. Take care of the alien in your midst—no, they’re here illegally.	

⁸See the background paper, an article entitled “THE NINE? COMMANDMENTS OF THE DECALOGUE,” From <http://TheScoop.DThomasPorter.com/?p=256>