

# Church of God Sunday School

## MOSES SINS AGAINST GOD

Numbers 20:1-29

The Israelites had been wandering in the wilderness for forty years. They could have gone right into the Promised Land, but they believed the evil report of the ten spies. Because they complained and disbelieved God, Israel had to wander around in the wilderness until the complainers had died and their children were grown.

During all those years, God provided for the children of Israel. Yet, once again, the people began to complain. Only this time it was the grown children who were complaining. Why were they complaining? They had no water to drink. They had not learned that God would provide for them, even though He had kept their clothes and shoes from wearing out for those many years (Deuteronomy 29:5).

The people gathered together and went to Moses with their complaints: "Would God that we had died when our brethren died . . . why have ye brought up the congregation . . . into this wilderness, that we and our cattle should die there? And 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." On and on went their complaints!

Moses and Aaron went to the tabernacle and fell on their faces at the door of the tabernacle. God spoke to Moses there. He said, "Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and *speak* ye unto the rock [a certain rock] before their eyes." God promised that water would come from the rock, and the people and their animals would have water.

So Moses took the rod, and he and Aaron went to do as God had said. But Moses did *not* do something that was very important to God! Moses and Aaron gathered the people together, yes—but Moses did not

magnify God or lift up His name or sanctify Him in the eyes of the people as he should have done. Moses may have been impatient and angry with the people for complaining, but he still should have glorified God and done exactly as God said.

Moses was supposed to speak to the rock. But instead of speaking to the rock, Moses spoke to the congregation. He said, "Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? [Neither Moses nor Aaron could, in their own strength, bring water out of a rock!]"



Then, Moses lifted his hand and *struck* the rock—not once but twice. Water did come out of the rock! There was enough water to quench the thirst of that whole multitude of people and their animals. God called that place of the water Meribah (*MER-ih-bah*), or the Water of Strife, because the Israelites had argued with Him.

Sadly, Moses had not obeyed God! Moses had SINNED! *God's own chosen leader* of the Israelite people *committed sin by not doing what he knew to do!* Moses did not put God's Word and will first. Moses did not follow *every* Word of God.

Moses knew that God is *omnipotent*, or all-powerful. His great and mighty power had been seen time and time again by Moses. He knew how much God hates disobedience, or sin. He also knew God punishes the one who sins. But just knowing these things did not keep Moses from sinning. Moses could think for himself; he had a will of his own. Moses' mind was not programmed as a computer or a robot.

Moses did not take time to think how he might reap for his actions or he would not have behaved as he did. Moses' impatience with the people led him to sin. He acted too quickly. If we do things our own way instead of doing things God's way, we will get into trouble every time!

Since Moses did not obey God in all that he knew to do, he had to reap God's judgment and be punished. God told Moses that because he had disobeyed, he would not be able to enter the Promised Land with the Israelite people! But God was merciful. He would allow Moses a view of the land of Canaan from Mount Pisgah (*PIZ-gah*), but he would have to die on this side of the Jordan River.

The Lord also punished Aaron. He, too, would not enter into the Promised Land. Aaron would die on Mount Hor. Eleazar (*el-ee-AY-zuhr*), his son, was chosen by God to take his place.

How sad that after so many years of leading Israel through the wilderness, Moses and Aaron could not go into the Promised Land. They were so close, but they

failed to obey every word of the Lord. They failed to give God glory.

Have you failed to be obedient to God? You are being obedient to God when you read the Bible and do what it says. You are also being obedient to God when you obey your parents (Ephesians 6:1; Colossians 3:20). If you have not been obedient, there is sin in your heart. Just as sin kept Moses and Aaron out of the Promised Land, sin will keep you out of Heaven.

Psalm 66:18 says, "If I regard [allow any] iniquity [sin or wickedness] in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." If you want Jesus to hear your prayers, you must ask Him to forgive your sin and to help you do what is right.

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**MEMORY VERSE:**

*"Because ye trespassed against me . . . thou shalt not go thither unto the land which I give the children of Israel."*  
—Deuteronomy 32:51-52  
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