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3-10-2022

THE LIFE OF MOSES – LESSON 36

MOSES' PERSEVERANCE AND HIS FAILURE

We now fast-forward to the final year or two of wanderings. They had settled in at Kadesh-barnea in the Wilderness of Zin. It was the first month of their 40th year. It was here that Miriam died and was buried (Exodus chapter 20).

There was no water at their particular location here at the southern border of Canaan. This caused the people once again to come against Moses and Aaron due to thirst. As Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before God in the tabernacle, the glory of Jehovah appeared to them. God told them to take the rod and gather the assembly of the people. They were to take them to the rock so they could personally witness God's miracle provision of water from a dry well, the rock.

God told Moses to simply speak the word to the rock. He did not. Perhaps it was due to the anger from the people's murmuring, and his remembrance of having struck the rock at Sinai to get water that caused him once again to strike the rock twice instead of speaking to it. As he struck it with the rod water came forth. The people witnessed this faith-building miracle. Nevertheless, Moses had disobeyed God's specific instruction to only speak to the rock. Because of his sin of disobedience, God denied him of the opportunity to enter Canaan. Moses named the place "Meribah" meaning "strife" because the people had not trusted God or His leader Moses.

They now broke camp and came to Mount Hor, near Edom, to the southeast of the dead sea. It is here that Aaron died. It was here that the people again complained (Ex. 21:5-9) that they had neither food nor water. The LORD punished them by sending many poisonous fiery serpents (snakes) to bite them. Many of them died from these bites.

When the people confessed to Moses for their sin against Jehovah, God answered with a remedy. He told Moses to craft a brass image of a fiery serpent and set it up onto a pole. Everyone who came to that pole and looked at the brass fiery serpent while it was lifted up received healing from the fiery serpent bites.

Who else was lifted up that we might be delivered? Yes, Jesus was lifted up about 1,500 years later. Moses had endured much murmuring and complaining, numerous accusations, and two rebellions, yet his faith and trust in Jehovah did not fail. This meek man endured all these hardships to the very end.

When we go through hardships, take inspiration from Moses who was bombarded with these challenges for forty years. Put your trust in the LORD and do not despair.