

Water from the Rock

Numbers 20 – 21

by Don Falkos

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The Israelites were moving through a barren place in the wilderness when Miriam, the sister of Moses, died and was buried. There was no water, and the people complained. The Lord told Moses to gather the people by a particular rock. "Speak to the rock, and water will pour out of it, enough for everyone."

Moses gathered the people and said, "You rebels, do we have to bring water from this rock to satisfy you?" He struck the rock twice with his staff, and water gushed out of it.

But the Lord was not pleased. "I did not tell you to strike the rock. I told you to speak to it. Because you did not trust me, you will not lead these people into the land I am giving them."

At the Lord's command, Aaron's priestly garments were given to his son Eleazar. Then Aaron died and was buried. All Israel mourned for him for thirty days.

As the people of Israel moved from place to place they encountered a great deal of resistance from the local inhabitants. They were refused passage through Edom and had to turn back, while there were other lands the Lord allowed them to conquer.

Still, the people became impatient and complained, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt to die in this desert? There's no food; there's no water; and we detest this manna." Then the Lord sent venomous snakes to bite them, and many died. But the Lord instructed Moses to fashion a bronze snake, which was lifted up on a pole. Whenever anyone was bitten, all they had to do was look at the bronze snake and they would live.