

## 20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning Week 43 (October 16-22, 2016)

I love the story of the Jews as they leave their life of slavery and head toward the Promised Land. It closely parallels our walk from a life of being slaves to sin to a life controlled by God. This week, we will focus on Joshua as God prepares him for a leadership role in this exodus.

**Sunday**, October 16 (read Numbers 14:17-25)

*The Lord is slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin and rebellion. Yet He does not leave the guilty unpunished; He punishes the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation. (Numbers 14:18)*

Moses continues his intercessory prayer on behalf of the Israelites, reminding God of His infinite goodness, love and compassion. He acknowledges, however, that God **does** punish evildoers and allows their sins and habits to be passed along to three or four future generations (v. 18). The Lord pardons their sins, but He also makes a declaration that none of the adults will be allowed to enter the Promised Land (v. 20-23). The only exceptions to His ruling are Caleb and Joshua, as we will see in tomorrow's devotion (v. 24; see also v. 30). These two men never wavered when the rest of the spies gave a negative report. The Amalekites and Canaanites are entrenched in the valleys, so God, in His **permissive will**, tells the Israelites to turn away from them (v. 25).

**Monday**, October 17 (read Numbers 14:26-35)

*"In this desert your bodies will fall—every one of you twenty years old or more who was counted in the census and who has grumbled against me." (Numbers 14:29)*

In addition to pardoning Caleb and Joshua, God makes an exception for all those who are under twenty years of age. Moses says later that they are too young to know right from wrong (see Deuteronomy 1:39). I have used this concept when dealing with the death of a teenager who has never received Jesus as his/her personal Savior. No one knows for sure what the age of accountability is, but I could build a case from this passage that it may be as high as twenty. At any rate, God is tired of hearing nothing but complaints from the very people that He has blessed with so many miracles (v. 26-30). Their children will suffer forty years of wandering in the desert, but, after that, they will enter the Promised Land along with Caleb and Joshua (v. 30-35). We will see the Lord's judgment on the negative spies in tomorrow's devotion.

**Tuesday**, October 18 (read Numbers 14:36-45)

*Of the men who went to explore the land, only Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh survived. (Numbers 14:38)*

God is love, but He doesn't hesitate to punish those who lead others astray by their negative words. He sends a plague to destroy ten of the twelve spies, leaving only Joshua and Caleb alive (v. 36-38). I often wonder how long He will delay His judgment on those in today's churches who spread bad reports among God's people. If He did it once, He is certainly capable of doing it again! Seeing this judgment on the leaders, the people acknowledge their sin and decide to go into battle against the enemies (v. 39-40). Moses warns them that their mission will fail because the Lord is not going to go out with them (v. 41-43). "Nevertheless, in their presumption they [go] up toward the high hill country, though neither Moses nor the ark of the Lord's covenant [move] from the camp" (v. 44). Of course, because they are fighting in direct disobedience to the Word of the Lord, they are easily defeated (v. 45). Meanwhile, God has anointed Joshua and Caleb to lead these people forward. We will follow their journey in future devotions.

**Wednesday**, October 19 (read Numbers 20:1-8)

*“Speak to that rock before their eyes and it will pour out its water.” (Numbers 20:8b)*

Much earlier in their journey, the people had complained about not having any water to drink. God had told Moses to **strike the rock** and it would pour out water (see Exodus 17:1-7). This pictures the crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ as well as the pouring out of His Holy Spirit. This time, God says simply to **“speak to the rock”** (v. 8). The New Testament teaches us that the rock is actually Jesus Himself (see 1 Corinthians 10:4). Symbolically, Jesus has already been crucified so Moses needs to speak to Him and He will supply all of his needs (see Philippians 4:19). Unfortunately, Moses has had enough of their constant griping and complaining. He is about to lose his temper and sin against the Word of the Lord. We will follow the story in tomorrow’s study.

**Thursday**, October 20 (read Numbers 20:9-13)

*But the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “Because you did not trust in me enough to honor me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this community into the land I give them.” (Numbers 20:12)*

Moses will be a key player in the tribulation, but he loses his right to lead the Israelites into the Promised Land by this one act of disobedience. In effect, he is crucifying the Son of God all over again (see Hebrews 6:4-6). Likewise, God has secured the salvation of those He has called to lead His people, but we can lose our **right to lead** by one disobedient act. Verses 9-11 record the sinful acts of this great man of God. You are probably feeling sorry for Moses, because he has endured so much complaining before he loses his temper, but God demands high standards for those He puts in charge. God is holy! He will not tolerate sinful behavior forever! He will now turn to Joshua to lead His people into the Promised Land.

**Friday**, October 21 (read Numbers 27:12-23)

*So the Lord said to Moses, “Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him.” (Numbers 27:18)*

In today’s text, the Lord reminds Moses that he will see the Promised Land only from a distance. This great man of God loses his right to lead the people because of his rebellion in the Desert of Zin (v. 12-14). Moses pleads with the Lord to supply another leader so that his people “will not be like sheep without a shepherd” (v. 15-17). The Lord appoints Moses’ assistant, Joshua, to the job. The young man is to stand before Eleazar the priest, and Moses is to lay his hand on him and pray over him. He is then commanded to delegate some of his current authority to Joshua. Following this act of obedience, Joshua will be able to obtain decisions from the Lord through the priest (v. 18-21). Moses obeys God this time and commissions his assistant for the tasks ahead (v. 22-23).

**Saturday**, October 22 (read Deuteronomy 3:21-29)

*“But because of you the Lord was angry with me and would not listen to me.” “That is enough,” the Lord said. “Do not speak to me anymore about this matter.” (Deuteronomy 3:26)*

Moses is delivering a summary of the Israelites’ journey thus far. In today’s text, he has already sent Joshua out to win battles along the way (v. 21-22). Moses tells them how he begged God to allow him to enter the Promised Land with his people, but the Lord repeats His final decision (v. 23-26). I find it interesting that he blames the Israelites for his failure (v. 26). God clearly told him how to produce water from the rock simply by speaking to it. No one made him strike it twice in anger! He has no one to blame except himself! God will allow him to see the Promised Land with his own eyes, but Joshua will be His chosen vessel to lead His people into the land. Do you think David would like to undo his night of lust and sin with Bathsheba? Do you think Moses would like to have another chance to speak to the rock that held the water? Do you remember a time in your life where you wished you had acted or spoken differently? Our merciful God has something to say to you!