

The Smitten Rock, Moses and Aaron's sin.

Num. 20:7 And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,

8 Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and ***speak ye unto the rock*** before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink.

9 And Moses took the rod from before the Lord, as he commanded him.

10 And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, ***Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch*** you water out of this rock?

11 And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod ***he smote the rock twice:*** and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also.

12 And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, ***to sanctify me*** in the eyes of the children of Israel, ***therefore ye shall not bring*** this congregation into the land which I have given them. *Ex 17:5,*

Num. 20:24 Aaron shall be gathered unto his people: for he shall not enter into the land which I have given unto the children of Israel, ***because ye rebelled against my word at the water of Meribah.***

Ps. 106:32 They angered him also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes:

33 Because they provoked his spirit, ***so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips.***

Due. 34:4 And the Lord said unto him, ***This is the land*** which I swore unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: ***I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither.***

5 So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. 6 And he (the Lord) buried him (Moses) in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.

Then it was that, on the very border of Canaan, Moses, the servant of the Lord, committed the sin which prevented him from entering the goodly land. The rock had once been smitten, and the Lord told Moses to gather the assembly of people, and to speak unto the rock before their eyes, and it would give forth water. Moses, who had borne patiently with their murmurings so long, now became impatient, and said, "Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?" 12 He

then smote the rock twice, and water gushed forth. {1914 SNH, CIS 269.1}

God is no respecter of persons, and although He had highly honoured Moses, *yet He punished him for his sin. When Moses smote the rock the second time, he ignored the great event of which the smitten rock was a type. Christ died once for the sins of the world*, 13 and all who speak to Him, confessing their sins and claiming pardon, will receive the healing waters of salvation. Thus not only did Moses disobey God, but *he marred the beautiful* symbol which had been placed before the Israelites during all their desert wanderings. {1914 SNH, CIS 269.2}

The refreshing water flows by every encampment. All can freely drink of the life giving stream, flowing from the Rock *smitten once* upon Calvary's cross. "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely" 18 Do you long to drink? Remember the Rock has been smitten for you. *Do not make the mistake of Moses, and think you must smite it again.* "Speak ye unto the Rock, . . . and it shall give forth His water." 19 Tell Him you are weary of sin, that you long to accept his righteousness. Give Him your sins, and He will clothe you with His Righteousness. 20 {1914 SNH, CIS 270.1}

Patriarchs and Prophets

The Smitten Rock

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The two brothers went on before the multitude, Moses with the rod of God in his hand. They were now aged men. Long had they borne with the rebellion and obstinacy of Israel; but now, at last, even the patience of Moses gave way. "Hear now, ye rebels," he cried; "must we fetch you water out of this rock?" and instead of speaking to the rock, as God had commanded him, he smote it twice with the rod.

The water gushed forth in abundance to satisfy the host. But a great wrong had been done. Moses had spoken from irritated feeling; his words were an expression of human passion rather than of holy indignation because God had been dishonored. "Hear now, ye rebels," he said. This accusation was true, but even truth is not to be spoken in passion or impatience. When God had bidden Moses to charge upon Israel their rebellion, the words had been painful to him, and hard for them to bear, yet God had sustained him in delivering the message. But when he took it upon himself to accuse them, he grieved the Spirit of God and wrought only harm to the people. His lack of patience and self-control was evident. Thus the

people were given occasion to question whether his past course had been under the direction of God, and to excuse their own sins. Moses, as well as they, had offended God. His course, they said, had from the first been open to criticism and censure. They had now found the pretext which they desired for rejecting all the reproofs that God had sent them through His servant.

Moses manifested distrust of God. "Shall we bring water?" he questioned, as if the Lord would not do what He promised. "Ye believed Me not," the Lord declared to the two brothers, "to sanctify Me in the eyes of the children of Israel." At the time when the water failed, their own faith in the fulfillment of God's promise had been shaken by the murmuring and rebellion of the people. The first generation had been condemned to perish in the wilderness because of their unbelief, yet the same spirit appeared in their children. Would these also fail of receiving the promise? Wearing and disheartened, *Moses and Aaron had made no effort to stem the current of popular feeling. Had they themselves manifested unwavering faith in God, they might have set the matter before the people in such a light as would have enabled them to bear this test.*

By prompt, decisive exercise of the authority vested in them as magistrates, they might have quelled the murmuring. It was their duty to put forth every effort in their power to bring about a better state of things before asking God to do the work for them. *Had the murmuring at Kadesh been promptly checked, what a train of evil might have been prevented!* *By his rash act Moses took away the force of the lesson that God purposed to teach. The rock, being a symbol of Christ, had been once smitten, as Christ was to be once offered. The second time it was needful only to speak to the rock, as we have only to ask for blessings in the name of Jesus. By the second smiting of the rock the significance of this beautiful figure of Christ was destroyed.*

More than this, Moses and Aaron had assumed power that belongs only to God.

The necessity for divine interposition made the occasion one of great solemnity, and the leaders of Israel should have improved it to impress the people with reverence for God and to strengthen their faith in His power and goodness. When they angrily cried, "Must we fetch you water out of this rock?" *they put themselves in God's place, as though the power lay with themselves*, men possessing human frailties and passions. Wearing with the continual murmuring and rebellion of the people, Moses had lost sight of his Almighty Helper, and without the divine strength he had been left to mar his record by an exhibition of human weakness. The man who might have stood pure, firm, and unselfish to the close of his work

had been overcome at last. God had been dishonored before the congregation of Israel, when He should have been magnified and exalted.

Moses's lesson of Repentance!

Deu. 8:14 Then thine heart be lifted up, ***and thou forget the Lord thy God***, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; 15 Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; ***who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint***; 16 Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end; 17 ***And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth.*** 18 ***But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth***, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day. 19 And it shall be, ***if thou do at all forget the Lord thy God***, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, ***I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish.***