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~ Not only will we attend two funerals in this leg of our Spiritual Safari, but the children of Israel will continue to complain, wail, murmur and mourn - and carry on in a very Godless manner. I think we all make this type of outward demonstration at some point in our lives. This is a sad chapter with a tremendous spiritual application for us. So many messages today are neutral and milky. They do not bring people into the presence of the Living God! They don't face up to the challenge that the Lord Jesus Christ is their Savior. Well, if you don't like strong medicine for what ails you, then you have come to the wrong doctor today – I promise you that. Those of you who do like the potent stuff; I hope you mean that, because that's what you're going to get in this report.

Our first funeral opens this chapter with the death of Miriam, Moses' sister. The second funeral closes the chapter with the death of Aaron, Moses' brother. So, it seems we are book-ended by death in the family and that just doesn't seem like something to be very thankful for. In between the two deaths, we have the sin of Moses and the sin of Edom; and this chapter is SO important, as it marks the end of the wandering in the wilderness for the children of Israel and the beginning of marching, that you will want to learn this account very well and become acquainted with it. Chapters fourteen through twenty all mark incidents that occurred during the wilderness wanderings. There's nothing else to say about that; they're out of the will of God - and have been - for the previous five chapters and remain so in this one. You can talk about them being the chosen and anointed people of God, but they amounted to nothing unless they were in the direct will of God. That's true of me and you, too, friends. Jesus saith, "without Me, ye can do nothing."

When you and I are not functioning in the body of believers and we neglect to exercise the specific gift we have been assigned by the Lord through the power of the Holy Spirit, then we are about as useless as the appendix is in

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a human body; and sometimes it needs to be removed. Well, maybe Miriam's spiritual appendix burst, because only a third of a single verse is given to her death. This was Moses' big sister. She saw Moses float away when he was a baby; and she had taken part in a rebellion against him with Aaron. Moses isn't thinking about those times today, though. The only thing Moses remembered was the best of times - because only love abides. In time of death, we should always try to think about the best in somebody - even if it's not much. There is no long oration and eulogy here for Miriam - no panegyric of praise - she's buried and - the end. And the children of Israel continue to wander at this time....

1 Then came the children of Israel, even the whole congregation, into the desert of Zin in the first month: and the people abode in Kadesh; and Miriam died there, and was buried there.

~ So, thirty-eight years later, we're back at Kadesh after wandering in circles to nowhere as quickly as we could. These wander years were not years of great blessing for the children of Israel. They had many bitter lessons to learn; and the lesson for us in this is that many of us are not marching through this wilderness as pilgrims on a mission following the Lord - we're wandering, lost and confused - and probably without much love - no matter how much we think we have. My friends, if you are reading this, you need to make some mental notes now....

2 And there was no water for the congregation: and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron.

3 And the people chode with Moses, and spake, saying, Would God that we had died when our brethren died before the LORD!

4 And why have ye brought up the congregation of the LORD into this wilderness, that we and our cattle should die there?

~ The children of Israel were not sincere any more than you and I are when we repeat this foolishness; and God doesn't like us repeating ourselves, I'm quite sure. Very few people really want to die. In fact, no one does. What

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we mean is: we don't want to LIVE like we are living any longer. The moment that changes, everyone suddenly wants to live. Death is unnatural for man. However, the children of Israel are complaining and murmuring again for the seventh time and it's about lack of water - again. Friends, we're not going to be in the world for very long, that's for sure. Wherever you are, you aren't going to be there permanently. We are just pilgrims passing through. We ought not spend so much time complaining. Well, Israel has more complaining to do....

5 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.

~ Their complaint was that there was nothing there for them - and they were right! The land God had promised was not in front of them at this time. It should not have been a surprise there was no water for them. Well, as we have seen before: every time the children of Israel murmur and complain, the glory of the Lord appears to them. God is always displeased with their complaining, though. These whining, worrying and whimpering saints were NOT pleasing to God, friends. Do you REALLY trust the Lord Jesus Christ to lead you today and to provide you the water that you need in your life? Or do you constantly complain about your problems? ~

6 And Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they fell upon their faces: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto them.

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.

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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.

~ The "rod" was Aarons rod that budded; but they were never told to smite the rock. They were commanded to speak to the rock. They had smitten the rock before at Horeb; but now they are only to speak to the rock for it to give forth water. Well, the Children of Israel were still busy complaining, but Moses has some complaining of his own to do today - and he smites the rock in anger. I can sympathize with Moses. He has been with these problematic people the entire forty years in the wilderness. Quite frankly, I believe he was a little tired of them and their murmuring and complaining.

Either way, Moses wasn't fetching them water – God was the One Who provided the water! The rock is a type of Christ, and we need to be very careful about the way we act out in anger. Jesus said, "be angry and sin not." This smiting of the rock is something that should not have been done; and this is the single act of disobedience that will prevent Moses from entering the Promised Land. Some say Moses should not have smitten the rock twice; no, he shouldn't have smitten the rock at all. It had already been smitten. Christ suffered ONCE for sins; there isn't going to be a second time. Christ is the rock and that is the picture we have here. Moses should have protected the type and obeyed God! God had told Moses very clearly to only speak unto the rock....

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.

~ How many Christians say they are saved - but they're filled with fear and unbelief? God tells Moses that Moses should have believed Him. How many

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people are just not sure of their salvation? It's a direct reflection on Him when we don't take Him at His Word and don't trust Him. Moses and Aaron just didn't believe God. Now, Moses may not enter the land in his life, but he does appear in the land at the transfiguration! Unfortunately, the land will only be entered into in his death – just as the same group from Kadesh-barnea did. They didn't believe God, so they didn't enter the land alive in this life.

God just so happens to be telling us that there is more to this life than what we see, friends. Canaan is the picture of the place you and I should live today by faith; this is not a picture of Heaven – it is a very definite picture of the world. We live in a world that is a wilderness to us. Nonetheless, we are commanded to enjoy the blessings of Canaan. We can only enjoy those blessings by resting and believing in the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ; and by yielding to God in all aspects of our matters. Moses and Aaron failed to do that....

13 This is the water of Meribah; because the children of Israel strove with the LORD, and he was sanctified in them.

14 And Moses sent messengers from Kadesh unto the king of Edom, Thus saith thy brother Israel, Thou knowest all the travail that hath befallen us:

15 How our fathers went down into Egypt, and we have dwelt in Egypt a long time; and the Egyptians vexed us, and our fathers:

16 And when we cried unto the LORD, he heard our voice, and sent an angel, and hath brought us forth out of Egypt: and, behold, we are in Kadesh, a city in the uttermost of thy border:

17 Let us pass, I pray thee, through thy country: we will not pass through the fields, or through the vineyards, neither will we drink of the water of the wells: we will go by the king's high way, we will not turn to the right hand nor to the left, until we have passed thy borders.

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18 And Edom said unto him, Thou shalt not pass by me, lest I come out against thee with the sword.

19 And the children of Israel said unto him, We will go by the high way: and if I and my cattle drink of thy water, then I will pay for it: I will only, without doing any thing else, go through on my feet.

20 And he said, Thou shalt not go through. And Edom came out against him with much people, and with a strong hand.

21 Thus Edom refused to give Israel passage through his border: wherefore Israel turned away from him.

22 And the children of Israel, even the whole congregation, journeyed from Kadesh, and came unto mount Hor.

~ So, we see the children of Israel make a circuitous route that would not have been necessary had they been given permission by Edom to pass through. Moses had recited a little history to the king of Edom - and Moses had reminded the king that they were brothers. The problem was: Moses is not following the pillar and the cloud, or he would not have had to fight here! Instead of following God, we find Moses asking permission to go the other way! That all means we have yet another mistake by Moses we will be required to account for. This is what we call running ahead of the Lord. So many of us live our lives exactly like this....

23 And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in mount Hor, by the coast of the land of Edom, saying,

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.

25 Take Aaron and Eleazar his son, and bring them up unto mount Hor:

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26 And strip Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son: and Aaron shall be gathered unto his people, and shall die there.

27 And Moses did as the LORD commanded: and they went up into mount Hor in the sight of all the congregation.

28 And Moses stripped Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son; and Aaron died there in the top of the mount: and Moses and Eleazar came down from the mount.

29 And when all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead, they mourned for Aaron thirty days, even all the house of Israel.

~ Our Spiritual Safari concludes this leg of our expedition through the entire Word of God on a very sad note with the death of Aaron; but with precious truths for us being revealed in this chapter. Many people are saved and yet they never enjoy one single fruit of their redemption, and they never experience the joy of their salvation. They sure don't have the fruits of the Spirit in their lives. They do not know what it is to walk in fellowship with God the Father in the will of the Lord Jesus Christ. I typically don't question anyone's salvation, friends - but I am a fruit inspector - and I know good fruit when I see it. Aaron was a rugged man and he had spent many decades out there on the desert, but he never knew what it meant to sit down and enjoy the fruits of the Promised Land. Aaron never saw any milk and honey, friends. I wonder how many people are being robbed of that by Satan right now.

Christ is not a priest after the order of Aaron. Christ is a type of priest after the order of Melchisedek, who had no beginning or ending of days; an eternal priest. We have only met Melchisedek once, in Genesis, and we don't see him again until Hebrews. What we have here with Aaron is pretty sad, indeed. We're going to leave the children of Israel mourning Aaron. Many of those people had been to Aaron with their troubles over the years and they knew him, and he knew them. I think Aaron had comforted many of the children of Israel on many different occasions. Well, Aaron is dead and gone now and they see Eleazar come down off that mountain with his

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father's garments on. Eleazar didn't know these people and the people didn't know him. Our High Priest never changes, and He is after an order not like this – not in human terms – Christ is after the order of Melchisedek. That should be a tremendous comfort and relief to your heart – it is to mine. Christ is always there for us, and we can know Him right now. Knowing Him means life everlasting. To know God means an occupation of service to Him for eternity that will never be changed. That is something we can be thankful for at these two funerals today ~

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