



# Spiritual Lessons from the life of Moses

Lesson 22-  
Rebellion and  
striking the rock

Num 15, 16...20

<https://d3h6k4kfl8m9p0.cloudfront.net/stories/PIDbOjryanTSIM9gDRKhQw.jpg>

Continue from last week:

How do we know God's will?

- (a) Reading the bible – Obey all of God's commandments, do the right thing, turn away from evil
- (b) Prayer – Seek God's will in a specific matter
- (c) Holy Spirit – Listen to our conscience guided by the Spirit
- (d) Godly counsel – Consult pastor, mature Christians
- (e) Events and circumstances – Guided by push and pull factors

	<b>Disobedience of the 10 spies and the Israelites</b>	<b>God's punishment</b>	<b>Comment</b>
5.	(1) 'They are stronger than we are'. The 10 spies spread a bad report of the land they had spied on. (Num 13:31, 32)	(2) The 10 spies who spread the bad report were struck down by a plague. (Num 14:37)	How to overcome disobedience and disbelief: trust God's will, not our own will, reasoning and wisdom, Proverbs 3:5,6.

	<b>Disobedience of the 10 spies and the Israelites</b>	<b>God's punishment</b>	<b>Comment</b>
6.	<p>(3) Started choosing a leader to bring them back to Egypt. (Num 14:4)</p> <p>(4) Israelites wanted to kill Caleb and Joshua. (Num 14:10)</p>		<p>How to overcome disobedience and disbelief: trust God's will, not our own will, reasoning and wisdom. Proverbs 3:5,6.</p>

	<b>Disobedience of the 10 spies and the Israelites</b>	<b>God's punishment</b>	<b>Comment</b>
7.	(5) When the Israelites realised God's anger and punishment with them, they changed their minds to claim God's promise of Canaan by attacking the Amalekites in the north.	<p>The claiming of God's promise of Canaan by attacking of the Amalekites was too late. God was no longer with them because of their sin. With their stubbornness, the Israelites attacked the Amalekites and were defeated.</p> <p>(Num 14:41-45)</p>	<p>When God is not with us due to our sin, we will suffer adverse consequences.</p> <p>Be guided by God each step of the way.</p>

## Map of the Exodus:

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<https://www.thebiblejourney.org/find-people-places-maps/find-maps-diagrams/>

(1) Background: God punished the Israelites to wander 40 years in the wilderness.

(2) The area of wandering is the red route in the map.

**The 42 Camp Sites:  
Organized and Illustrated  
for the First Time in History**

- 1 Succoth סוּכּוֹת (Exod 12:37; Num 33:5)
- 2 Etham אֶתְאָם (Exod 13:20; Num 33:6)
- 3 Before Migdol פְּנֵים מִגְדוֹל (Exod 14:2; Num 33:7)
- 4 Marah מָרָה (Exod 15:23; Num 33:8)
- 5 Elim אֵילִם (Exod 15:27; Num 33:9)
- 6 By the Red Sea עַל יַם סוּף (Num 33:10)
- 7 The Wilderness of Sin מִדְבַּר סִין (Exod 16:1; Num 33:11)
- 8 Dophkah דּוֹפְקָה (Num 33:12-13)
- 9 Alush אֱלוֹשׁ (Num 33:13)
- 10 Rephidim רִפְדִּים (Exod 17:1; 19:2; Num 33:14)
- 11 The Wilderness of Sinai מִדְבַּר סִינַי (Exod 19:1-2; Num 33:15)
- 12 Kibroth-hattaavah קִבְרוֹת הַחַטָּאָה (Num 33:16)
- 13 Hazeroth הַצְּרוֹת (Num 33:17)
- 14 Rithmah רִתְמָה (Num 33:18)
- 15 Rimmon-perez רִמּוֹן-פֶּרֶץ (Num 33:19)
- 16 Libnah לִבְנָה (Num 33:20)
- 17 Rissah רִסָּה (Num 33:21)
- 18 Kehelathah קְהֵלֶתָה (Num 33:22)
- 19 Mount Shepher הַר שֶׁפֶר (Num 33:23)
- 20 Haradah הַרְדָּה (Num 33:24)
- 21 Makheloth מַקְהֵלֹת (Num 33:25)
- 22 Tahath תַּחַת (Num 33:26)
- 23 Terah תֵּרָח (Num 33:27)
- 24 Mithkah מִתְקָה (Num 33:28)
- 25 Hashmonah תְּשֻׁמְנָה (Num 33:29)
- 26 Moseroth מִסְרוֹת (Num 33:30)
- 27 Bene-jaakan בְּנֵי יַעֲקֹב (Num 33:31)
- 28 Hor-haggidgad הַר הַגִּידְגָד (Num 33:32)
- 29 Jotbathah יוֹטְבָתָה (Num 33:33)
- 30 Abronah אֶבְרֹנָה (Num 33:34)
- 31 Ezion-geber עִזְיוֹן גִּבְרִי (Num 33:35)
- 32 Kadesh-barnea קָדֵשׁ בַּרנֶּה (Num 33:36)
- 33 Mount Hor הַר הָהָר (Num 33:37)
- 34 Zalmonah צֵלְמוֹנָה (Num 33:41)
- 35 Punon פּוֹנוֹן (Num 33:42)
- 36 Oboth אֹבָה (Num 33:43)
- 37 Iye-abarim עֵי הַעֲבָרִים (Num 33:44)
- 38 Dibon-gad דִּבּוֹן גַּד (Num 33:45)
- 39 Almon-diblathaim אֶלְמוֹן דִּבְלַתְיָה (Num 33:46)
- 40 The Mountain of Abarim הַר עֲבָרִים (Num 33:47)
- 41 The Plains of Moab עֲרָבָה מוֹאָב (Num 33:48-49)
- 42 Gilgal גִּלְגָּל (Josh 4:19)

Oral traditions recounted by indigenous peoples during site visits were taken into consideration for the location of a few camp sites.

# Map of the Exodus AND WILDERNESS JOURNEY

"And Moses recorded their starting places according to their journeys by the command of the Lord, and these are their journeys according to their starting places." (Num 33:2)  
Exod 13:17-19:3; 40:17; Num 10:11-12:16; Deut 1:1-3:29; 34:1-8; Josh 4:19



<https://www.thebiblejourney.org/find-people-places-maps/find-maps-diagrams/>

### (3) Places of wandering:

Rithmah (Kadesh) (start of the 40 years wandering)

Rimmon-perez

Libnah

Rissah

Khelathah

Mount Shepher

Haradah

Makheloth

Tahath

Terah

Mithkah

Hashmonah

Moseroth

Bene-jaakan

Hor-haggidgad

Jotbathah

Abronah

Ezion-geber

Kadesh (end point of the 40 years wandering in Num 20:1)



(4) Num 15 – Supplementary Offerings  
Offerings for unintentional sins  
Sabbath-breaker put to death  
Tassels on garments



(5) Rebellion in the Wilderness:  
Numbers 16:1-19

(v1-2) One day, while wandering in the wilderness, Korah conspired with Dathan and Abiram to incite a rebellion against Moses. Two hundred and fifty popular leaders were involved.

(v3-6) The rebels were dissatisfied of Moses and Aaron for setting themselves as leaders above all of them.

(v6-7) Moses said, 'You, Korah, and all those with you, take your censers tomorrow and light them, and put incense upon them before the Lord, and we will find out whom the Lord has chosen.'



[https://www.google.com/imgres?q=censer%20in%20the%20bible&imgurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.myincensewaterfalls.com%2Fcdn%2Fshop%2Farticles%2FBurning\\_Incense\\_In\\_Bible\\_1600x.jpg%3Fv%3D1646231074&imgrefurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.myincensewaterfalls.com%2Fblogs%2Faromatherapy%2Fwhat-does-the-bible-say-about-burning-incense&docid=ZHSqKuliKXEEDM&tbnid=RIlgWIOF2DPyPM&vet=12ahUKEwivppPb-vWGaxVAzjgGHa1TDRAQM3oFCIIBEA..i&w=1600&h=1068&hcb=2&ved=2ahUKEwivppPb-vWGaxVAzjgGHa1TDRAQM3oFCIIBEA](https://www.google.com/imgres?q=censer%20in%20the%20bible&imgurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.myincensewaterfalls.com%2Fcdn%2Fshop%2Farticles%2FBurning_Incense_In_Bible_1600x.jpg%3Fv%3D1646231074&imgrefurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.myincensewaterfalls.com%2Fblogs%2Faromatherapy%2Fwhat-does-the-bible-say-about-burning-incense&docid=ZHSqKuliKXEEDM&tbnid=RIlgWIOF2DPyPM&vet=12ahUKEwivppPb-vWGaxVAzjgGHa1TDRAQM3oFCIIBEA..i&w=1600&h=1068&hcb=2&ved=2ahUKEwivppPb-vWGaxVAzjgGHa1TDRAQM3oFCIIBEA)

A censer  
for  
burning of  
incense



(v28-31) Moses said, 'By this you shall know that God has sent me to do all these things that I have done... if the Lord does a miracle and the ground opens up and swallows them and everything that belongs to them... then you will know that these men have despised the Lord.'


(v31-33) He had hardly finished speaking the words when the ground suddenly split open beneath them, and a great fissure swallowed them up, along with their tents and families and the friends who were standing with them, and everything they owned.




(v41-42) The very next morning all the people began muttering again against Moses and Aaron, saying, 'You have killed the Lord's people.' Soon a great, sullen mob formed; suddenly, as they looked toward the Tabernacle, the Cloud appeared and the awesome glory of the Lord was seen.

(v46) Moses said to Aaron, 'Quick, take a censer and place fire in it from the altar; lay incense on it, and carry it quickly among the people and make atonement for them; for God's anger has gone out among them—the plague has already begun.

Rebellion against Moses by Miriam and Aaron. Num 12.



Rebellion against Moses by Korah, Dathan, Abiram and 250 leaders. Num 16.



Grumbling against Moses. Num 16:41

## **(6) Spiritual Lessons**

Moses was God's appointed leader. There was an earlier episode in which Miriam and Aaron rebelled against Moses, and Miriam was turned leprous (Num 12:10).

Korah and followers should have learnt from the earlier episode. They were stubborn and rebelled again. Hence God punished them.

Even after God had punished Korah and the 250 leaders, the people grumbled against Moses for killing the Lord's people (Num 16:41).

God destroyed the grumblers - 14,700 Israelites died.

Note: The rebels failed to learn from the past sin of Miriam and Aaron. It was utter foolishness on the part of the rebels.

## What we should do:

- Do not challenge the authority of our spiritual leaders. Naturally, we could give feedback to our pastors and church leaders in a civil manner. But do not usurp their authority. They have been ordained as servants of God.
- Sometimes we do not challenge them openly but we judge and criticise them unjustly in our hearts. We have a judgemental spirit and this is also sinful.
- Guard against falling into the sin of others or repeating our own sins. Examples: being overly critical, seeking self-glory, telling lies, gossiping and slandering others, being boastful, etc.

## What we should do:

- In the midst of a trial or trouble, consider whether there has been any sin or disobedience in our lives. If there is, seek forgiveness and repent.
- Sometimes, there may not be any explicit sin that causes our sufferings. If so, it may be the Lord's way of growing our faith and directing us in our lives. Example: Joseph



(7) Num 17- The budding of Aaron's staff

(8) Num 18 – Duties of Priests and Levites  
Offerings for Priests and Levites

(9) Num 19 - The water of cleansing



(10) The water at Meribah.

Numbers 20:1-12

(v1-3) After wandering for 40 years, the Israelites arrived at Kadesh. There was not enough water to drink at Kadesh.

(v3-5) The people quarreled against Moses and Aaron. A great mob formed, and they held a protest meeting.

(v7-8) God told Moses to speak to the rock and water would pour out.



Moses did not follow God's instructions properly.

(v12) The Lord said to Moses  
“Because you did not trust in me  
enough to honour me as holy in  
the sight of the Israelites, you  
will not bring this community  
into the land I give them.”

## Num 20:7-8

<sup>7</sup> And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

<sup>8</sup> 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.

## Num 20:9-11

<sup>9</sup> And Moses took the rod from before the LORD, as he commanded him.

<sup>10</sup> 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?

<sup>11</sup> 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.

## (11) Waters at Meribah

At Kadesh, they cried out against Moses (Num 20:3-5) for food and drink, complaining that they would die in the wilderness.

God told Moses to speak to the Rock for water. But Moses struck the rock and water gushed out. Moses was wrong:

- He did not do as the Lord instructed. Moses struck the rock instead of speaking to the rock.

- Because Moses was angry, he drew attention to his own authority:

*“Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?”*

Commentators (<https://heritagelutheran.org/2020/07/03/the-lesson-from-the-waters-of-meribah/>) say that Moses should not lecture the people:

*“ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?”*

We? No, the Lord (not Moses) would bring water from the rock by His power, by His will.

- “And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel” (Num 20:12).

## What we should do:

- Do not be stubborn and rebellious like the Israelites. Always check ourselves for sins and seek forgiveness and repent.
- Be diligent and honour God in all that we do.
- Do not draw attention to ourselves when we serve God in positions of authority. **“Not I but Christ”**
- Always humble ourselves in our service.

## What we should do:

- Do not speak down to others or assert ourselves above others. God has the authority over the flock. Church leaders should be humble servants, serving the flock.
- Contrary to the example of Moses at the water of Meribah, we are to follow the commandments of God exactly, without adding to it or taking away from it.
- Even if you have believed in and served God for many years, we may still stumble like Moses.  
Walk close to God every moment!