

# MOSES DISOBEYS GOD

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: NUMBERS 20



*Moses sinfully judged God.*

## The STORY

Pray with children to start class.

### Teaching Points for Class Discussion:

**The people grumbled against Moses and Aaron again** – The complaining of Israel is recorded here in Numbers 20. When the Israelites ran out of water they assembled themselves against Moses and complained. They called their location evil and they longed for the fruits of Egypt. Rather than considering that their suffering might be their own fault, they refused to trust God to bring them to the fruitful the Promised Land. Instead, they charged Moses and Aaron and thereby shook their fists against God. To call the place where God dwelt with them evil was an insult against God.

**Moses went to the Tent of Meeting and God spoke** – Moses and Aaron left the crowd and went to the Tent of Meeting where the glory of the Lord appeared to them. Unlike many of the other passages where Moses interceded on behalf of the people, here all he could do was fall before the Lord. Though the people had called the place evil, God intended to show that it was holy because His presence was still with them. God instructed Moses to speak to the rock and He would provide water for the people and their livestock.

**Moses disobeyed and struck the rock** – Moses, still angered by the people's sin and probably angry at God for making him endure a stubborn people, struck the rock twice. Not only that, but Moses and Aaron attributed the provision of water to themselves saying, "Shall we bring water for you?" The staff Moses used was the staff of judgment. Moses took things into his own hands and sinfully judged God and misrepresented God. This was no simple sin of anger; Moses was rebelling against God and misrepresenting God to the people. Rather than bringing God's message, Moses delivered his own. He put himself in the place of God and in anger brought the rod of judgment down upon the rock (the rock represents Christ - see 1 Corinthians 10:4). Moses without realizing it was like the people of Jesus' day who struck and crucified Him in their anger. God corrected this serious error by prohibiting Moses from leading the people into the Promised Land (Numbers 20:12). By correcting Moses in this way God shows us that no amount of good deeds can save us. Even Moses, the great leader, needs a Savior.

## MOSES DISOBEYS GOD

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: NUMBERS 20

### WHERE IS JESUS?

*Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.*

Instead of speaking to the rock to draw forth the water, Moses struck the rock in his anger. Here we see that Moses is an imperfect, fallible savior. Moses was a fallen mediator, unable to stand in the gap for the people without sin. Jesus is the only perfect mediator.

Jesus gave them this answer: "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. (John 5:19)

Unlike Moses, the imperfect mediator, Jesus, though tempted, did not sin. He intercedes for us yet today. His blood covers all our sins and He continually stands before God the father testifying to our redemption.

### ON THE ROAD TO EMMANUS

**Read the following Bible passage from the Old Testament. Use the following questions to help the children understand how this passage points to Christ in the New Testament.**

**Bible Passage: Daniel 9:26**

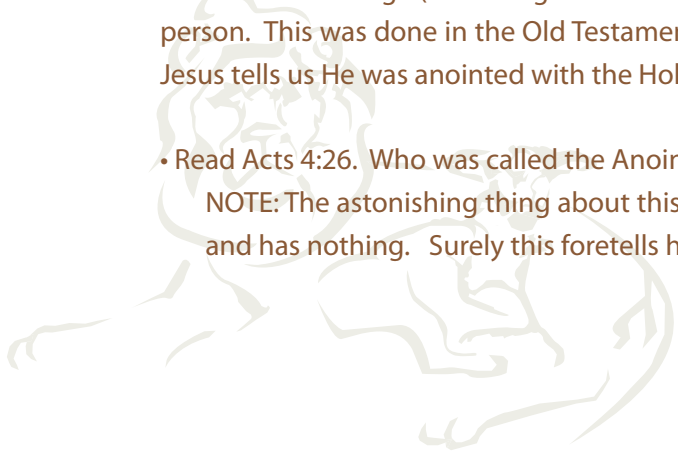
#### **Connecting the passage to Christ:**

Jesus is the anointed one that is cut off and has nothing.

#### **Questions for reflection:**

- What is anointing? (Anointing in the Bible is a passing of God's presence and authority to another person. This was done in the Old Testament by the pouring of oil over the head of a king. In Luke 4:18 Jesus tells us He was anointed with the Holy Spirit.)
- Read Acts 4:26. Who was called the Anointed One? (Jesus is called the Lord's Anointed One.)

NOTE: The astonishing thing about this passage in Daniel is that the one thus anointed was cut off and has nothing. Surely this foretells his crucifixion!



## MOSES DISOBEYS GOD

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: NUMBERS 20

### SWORD BIBLE MEMORY

#### BE A DOER OF THE WORD

*Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.*

### ACTIVITIES & OBJECT LESSONS

*Use the following activities for practical application and discovery of this lesson. For the younger children, review the preschool questions and use them to help the children relate to the passage. For older children, ask them why they think this passage is in the Bible for us today. How is it supposed to affect our lives?*

#### AGAIN AND AGAIN

##### Supplies

white board and markers

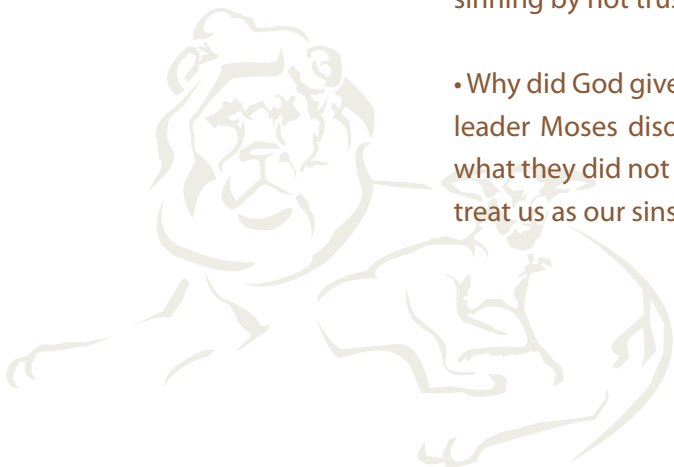
The object of this exercise is to help the children see that they are more like Israel than they realize.

Ask the children to think of the sin that they commit most often (you can use the white board to list some of the common sins). Ask for volunteers to share their sin. They are likely to offer items like disrespecting their parents, getting angry with their siblings, etc.

Ask them to think for a minute and tell you how many times they have done this sin. Ask the class if anyone else has repeated this sin several times.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- Who are we most like in the Bible story? (We are most like Israel who kept on sinning by not trusting God.)
- Why did God give Israel water even though they were complaining and even their leader Moses disobeyed? (The answer is grace! God was merciful to give them what they did not deserve. Psalm 103:10 tells us that the character of God is to not treat us as our sins deserve.)



## MOSES DISOBEYS GOD

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: NUMBERS 20

### DON'T FOLLOW MY EXAMPLE

#### Supplies

- drop cloth
- mop
- 3 bottles of sugar-free soda

We learn in 1 Corinthians 10:1-13 that Israel's mistakes are recorded to help us not do the things that they did. The warning comes to us that we should be careful and learn.

Take the bottle in your hands and ask them what will happen if you shake it up. They will of course tell you that it will fizz over. Explain to them that although that has happened to you before you heard that there is a secret to keeping the bottle from fizzing over. Someone told you that if you tap the top it will keep it from fizzing over. Explain to them that you are going to do it because you think that it will work.

Shake it up real well. Tap the top then shake it some more and then tap it again. Play this up. Tap it again then open it quickly to let out some (but not all) of the soda on your hands.

Explain to them that you think you did something wrong. Repeat the same exercise again, then finally a third time.

Read 1 Corinthians 10:13.

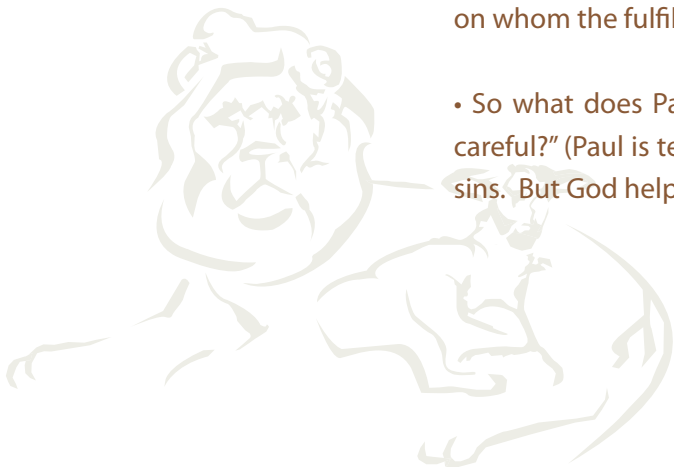
Then ask the class the following questions:

- What can you learn from my experiment with the soda? (We can learn not to shake a soda and then try to open it. We learn that tapping a soda does not stop it from fizzing over, etc.)

- Why did God record the stories of the mistakes of the people in the Old Testament?

(1 Corinthians 10:11 tells us that God recorded these mistakes as an example for us on whom the fulfillment of the ages, Jesus, has come.)

- So what does Paul mean when he says, "If you think you are standing firm be careful?" (Paul is telling us that we are a lot like the Israelites. We often repeat our sins. But God helps all true Christians to put aside more and more sin.



## MOSES DISOBEYS GOD

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: NUMBERS 20

### A DESERT OR A FERTILE LAND

#### Supplies

- a small prickly cactus
  - an African violet plant
- (choose a cactus with big needles, not small ones, as the small ones can easily come out and stick to the children's fingers like splinters)

Use the two plants as an illustration of the difference between the land to which Israel was going versus the desert where they were currently wandering.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- Have the children touch the two plants and describe which one they like better. The idea is to get the children to express the idea that the cactus is less desirable because it is dry, prickly and uncomfortable.
- How do you think Israel felt about wandering in the desert rather than going into the Promised Land? (They probably regretted not being able to be in the land due to their unbelief.)
- What does the Promised Land represent? (The Promised Land represents a land of rest where the people could enjoy all that God has given them. The Promised Land is a picture of heaven.)
- What can we learn from Israel? (Those who were delivered from Egypt didn't have faith in God's plan and so they missed out on sharing in the land of promise. If we have faith in God's plan – which is the Gospel – we can share in the rest that God will bring us with Christ in heaven.)

## PRAYER

Pick several children to pray based on the day's scripture passages.

## IN CLASS PROJECT

The first and second grade children can use the preschool coloring sheet and questions. Have the older children draw a picture of Moses striking the rock.



## MOSES DISOBEYS GOD

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: NUMBERS 20

### FOR OLDER GRADES

Have the children look up 1 Corinthians 10:4. Remind them that the first time the Israelites complained to Moses for lack of water they were in the same location. They charged Moses and were prepared to kill him. God instructed Moses to strike the rock rather than judge the people. That was a foreshadowing of God receiving the judgment for our sin.

Now, Moses takes it upon himself to disobey God. Rather than speak to the rock, he strikes the rock in anger twice. Rather than tell the people God is the one providing water, Moses tells them that he and Aaron will bring the water out of the rock.

Ask the children the following questions:

- Why do you think God saw Moses' disobedience as serious enough to keep him out of the Promised Land? (By striking the rock, Moses was judging Christ, who God intended the rock to represent.)

In John 4:7-14, Jesus told the woman at the well that she should ask Him for a drink of water and that He would provide for her an endless supply. The religious rulers refused this kind of teaching and took it upon themselves to judge and crucify Jesus.

- Is Moses more like the woman at the well or the Pharisees that were angry and crucified Jesus? Why? (As special as Moses was, he was still a sinner and needed a Savior. Here, Moses acts more like a Pharisee than the woman at the well. She believed and was changed; the Pharisees did not believe and ended up judging Christ.)



## MOSES DISOBEYS GOD

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: NUMBERS 20

### A LITTLE BIT MORE

**Believe** – Believe is the word which means to trust. God judged Moses because he did not believe (Numbers 20:12). Romans 10:10 tells us that we believe with our hearts. To believe is to agree that something is true and be willing to place your trust in that truth. Believing in Jesus is how we are saved from our sins.

