

ANGER'S COST

Numbers 18:1- 20:29

After the Lord showed to the whole camp of Israel once and for all that he had chosen Aaron and his family to be the priests for the people, the Lord told Moses how all those who worked in the Lord's service would be provided for. All of the children of Israel were to receive property in the promised land, except those people who were of the tribe of Levi. They were to devote their lives to the Lord's service in the tabernacle, and would not be given land of their own to work. Therefore, they would have no way to earn their living. The Levites were to depend completely on the Lord for all their needs. God provided for their needs by having a portion of the sacrifices and offerings that the people brought to him set aside for the Levites' and their families' use.

The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron telling them how to purify the people if they become unclean by touching something that was dead or some other unclean thing. This was to teach the people the holiness of God, and their own sinfulness. A special water was to be used in the ritual of purification which was made with the ashes of a red heifer that had been sacrificed. Any person of Israel who did not follow God's provision to be purified when they had become unclean was to be separated from the rest of Israel. This cleansing was part of the Old Covenant that God made with the children of Israel to show them that they were a people different from all the other people's of the earth, and had a special relationship with him. But when the Lord Jesus came to earth and died for our sin, that old covenant was put aside, because Jesus met all the requirements necessary to purify us from our uncleanness and sin. Today, all those who put their trust in Jesus are under a New Covenant made by the blood of Jesus on our behalf.

After this, the children of Israel came into the heart of the desert of Zin. They stayed in Kadesh where Miriam died and was buried. At this place there was no water for the people, and they gathered themselves together against Moses and Aaron. Once again they spoke against Moses and Aaron. They said, "We wish to God that we had died when our brothers died before the Lord! Why have you brought us into this wilderness, that we and our cattle should die here? Why have you brought us out of Egypt to this evil place? This is a place of no seed, no figs, no vines, no pomegranates, neither is there any water to drink!"

Then Moses and Aaron went from the people to the tabernacle where they fell on their faces. There the glory of the Lord appeared to them. The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Take your rod. Gather the assembly together, you and Aaron your brother, and speak to the rock before their eyes. Then the rock will give forth water, so that the whole congregation and their animals will be able to drink."

Then Moses took his rod as the Lord commanded. He and Aaron gathered the people together before the rock, and he said to them, "Now listen you rebels, do we have to get you water out of this rock?" Moses struck the rock twice with his rod and water flowed out abundantly. All the congregation drank, and their animals also.

Now the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, "Because you didn't believe me when I told you to speak to the rock, so that I would be honored by the people of Israel, you two will not lead these people into the promised land which I have given to them."

After this the congregation needed to travel through the land of Edom. Moses sent messengers to the king of Edom asking for safe passage through their land. Moses told the king that the congregation would stay only on the road and would not take anything that belonged to the people of Edom. But the king of Edom refused Israel passage through his land, saying that if Israel tried to cross Edom he would attack them with his armies. So Edom refused to allow Israel passage through their land and the Lord later brought judgment on Edom because of this wickedness.

Again the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron in mount Hor by the border of Edom, saying, "Aaron will be gathered to his fathers (he will die). He shall not enter the land which I have given to the children of Israel, because you rebelled against my word at the water of Meribah. Take Aaron and Eleazar his son, and bring them into mount Hor. Take the priestly robes off of Aaron and place them on Eleazar. Then Aaron will die there.

So Moses did as the Lord had commanded, and the three of them, Moses, Aaron, and Eleazar, went up into the mountain. There Moses put the robes of Aaron upon Eleazar and there Aaron died. After this Moses and Eleazar came down from the mount together.

When all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead they mourned for him thirty days.

The Bible tells us to be angry without sinning. When Moses allowed his anger to control him, rather than he controlling it, Moses sinned. In his great wrath against the people for their continuous rebellion against the Lord, Moses himself disobeyed God. In anger he struck the rock saying that he would give the people water. Moses took the credit that belonged to God for giving the people water.

Even though Moses struck the rock and spoke angry words, the Lord still brought forth water for the people. But Moses' disobedience at this place called Meribah caused him to lose his chance to enter the Promised Land.

It is important for each of us to think about the high cost that a fit of anger may bring and ask the Lord to help us control those urges to anger that each of us feels from time to time.

LEARN: Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:

For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

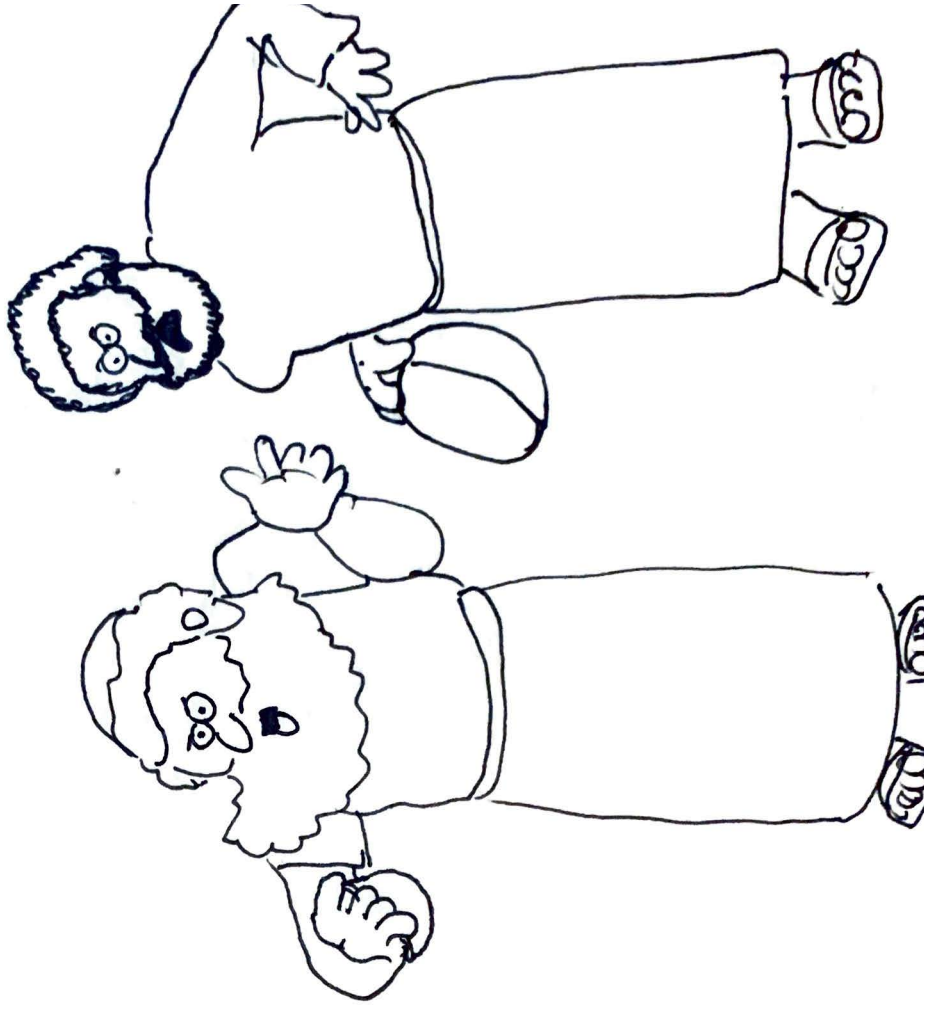
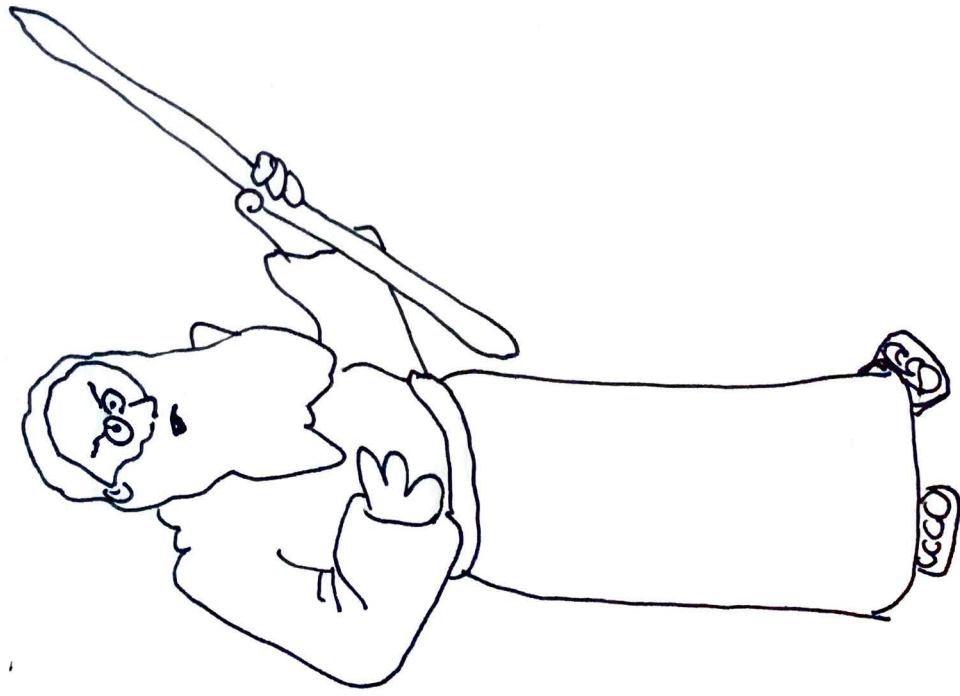
James 1:19,20

Color Moses and angry men - cut them out.

Color scene of mountains, rock and water.

Paste blue + green tissue paper on water in layers for added effect.

Paste Moses and men in appropriate places. - Give Moses a stick for red if you can.



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