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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A1836 ~ Moses Strikes the Rock.

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

Following God's confirmation of Aaron as the High Priest of Israel, chapters 18 and 19 of the Bible book of Numbers list the duties of the God-appointed priests and Levites. The priesthood was a gift of God's grace, given to the Israelites so that they might not die in how they conducted themselves in God's presence. The priests were given the great privilege of being allowed to draw close to God and mediate between God and the people.

To help the priests in their work, God gave the tribe of Levites to be their assistants. But the Levites were only helpers and not apprentice-priests; only the direct descendants of Aaron could hold the rank of priest. For the families of the priests and the Levites to have food to eat, portions of certain offerings were to be brought by the people and given to them.

The Israelites moved the camp again, this time into the Wilderness of Zin, where there was no water for the people or animals. It was now the 40th year since their exodus from hard slavery in Egypt. Miriam, the older sister of Aaron and Moses, died and was buried there.

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In Numbers, Chapter 20, the next generation of Israelites were complaining to Moses and Aaron about the lack of water in the land, just as their parents had done after crossing the Red Sea. The people demanded to know why Moses brought them out of Egypt only to die in the wilderness. Once more, Moses and Aaron went to the Tent of Meeting to enquire of the Lord what they should do. The Lord's glory appeared and they were told to "speak to the rock" in front of the community to provide water for them.

Forty years earlier, Moses had struck the rock with his rod but this time, Moses was told only to speak to the rock. Clearly Moses had lost his patience with this younger generation of Israelites. Whatever was in Moses' heart at that time, he disregarded the Lord's exact command and he struck the rock. Evidently he didn't believe that just speaking to the rock would be enough. He was acting as if the water was going to pour out by his own power rather than by God's.

Whatever was in Moses' mind, he had disbelieved and disobeyed God. And although God allowed water to flow from the rock, He punished Moses by preventing him from entering the Promised Land, and Aaron also. We modern-day people tend to think that God punished Moses far too severely. Just think of all the things Moses had done for God over all those years, and now after one little slip, he won't be able to enjoy the fruit of his labour!

Why was Moses punished in this way? God knows everything. He knows things about people and situations that we don't. He'll always deal with His servants fairly. There is a principle here: the more responsibility and knowledge we're given, the more accountability to God is required of us. Moses dishonoured God by not giving God the glory for this provision of water. The rock represented God's generosity of life-giving water. And in the presence of all the people, Moses not only struck the rock in anger, but he did so twice. His actions didn't follow God's instructions.

In 1 Corinthians, Chapter 10, the Apostle Paul writes that the rock Moses struck represented Christ, and the water flowing out of it represented spiritual water, which is the living water of the Holy Spirit. Moses had unwittingly struck out at the embodiment of God's grace – the rock which was Christ. Some Christians believe that Moses striking the rock 40 years earlier symbolised Jesus' death and the 2nd striking was like crucifying Jesus an unnecessary 2nd time.

You may never have heard of Biblical typology. This is a special kind of symbolism which represents something else. For example, when we say that someone is 'a type of Christ', we're saying that a person in the Old Testament behaved in a way that corresponded to Jesus' character or actions displayed in the New Testament. However, when we say that something is 'typical of Christ', we're saying that an object or event in the Old Testament can be viewed as representative of some quality of Jesus.

The Passover is a type of Christ according to 1 Corinthians, Chapter 5: "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us." The High Priest's entrance into the Most Holy Place of the Tabernacle once a year prefigured the intercession of Christ, our High Priest. The whole sacrificial system is seen as a type of Christ in Hebrews, Chapter 9.

However, there's a difference between an illustration and a type of Christ. A type of Christ is always identified as such in the New Testament. A Bible student finding similarities between Old Testament stories and the life of Christ is only finding illustrations; not types. In other words, typology is determined by Scripture. The Holy Spirit inspired the use of types. For example, many people see parallels between Joseph's life in Genesis, chapters 37 to 45, and Jesus. The humiliation and subsequent glorification of Joseph seems to correspond to the death and resurrection of Christ. However, the New Testament never uses Joseph as a model of Christ; therefore, Joseph's story is properly called an illustration and not a type of Christ, even though no sin is recorded against Joseph.

In Genesis, Chapter 14, Abraham returned wearily from battle after defeating a coalition of four kings. He met Melchizedek, a mysterious king and priest of Salem. His name means 'king of righteousness' and Salem means 'king of peace.' He blessed Abraham and Abraham gave him a tenth of the spoil of the battle, indicating that Melchizedek was more important than Abraham. In Hebrews, we are told that Melchizedek's priesthood is without end but there is no mention of any sacrifice being offered to God. Almighty God made the resurrected Lord Jesus to be an eternal priest in the order of Melchizedek. This priesthood is completely different from the Levites.

Melchizedek is a type of Christ as a royal priest, and being eternal, Christ's priesthood is sufficient for us; we won't depend on human priests any longer. Aaron and his sons, though consecrated as priests by God himself, pointed out the inherent weakness of them being priests for us because they died. But Melchizedek is a priest of an entirely different order than that of Aaron, which passed from father to son. If perfection came through Aaron's priesthood, what further need was there for another priest to arise in the eternal order of Melchizedek?

In the Scriptures, it records that no parents or descendants were listed for Melchizedek. He's a beautiful type of the Son of God, who's been called by God to be "a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." Blessings characterise the Melchizedek priesthood of Christ, for Christ is able to save for ever. He lives to make intercession for us, and this eternal intercession and eternal salvation are for those who draw near to God through Christ.

In Hebrews, Chapter 3, Moses and Christ are compared for 'faithfulness' and contrasted for 'honour'. Though privileged to speak to God face-to-face to see His form as listed in Numbers, Chapter 12, Moses was still only 'a servant' in the house of God. Moses enjoyed a special dignity in his service to God; he's the unique teacher of the law. And yet Jesus' ministry is higher still, for Moses himself pointed out that a greater Prophet would arise and the people were responsible to listen to Him. Again, as Moses was the deliverer from Egypt, Christ as the Son of God is now the greater Deliverer from this present evil world, from the devil and from our sin.

Is there a difference between deliberate sin and careless sin? Moses had been in front of a water-providing rock once before and at that time, he'd been told to strike the rock. In the book of Leviticus, God required different sin offerings depending on whether a sin was intentional or unintentional. Does this mean that God views unintentional or careless sins differently? Not really. Unintentional sin sacrifice related to someone sinning unwittingly or by accident. People who sinned deliberately were punished by separation from the people because they despised the Lord's commands.

While there may have been a distinction in terms of the consequences of unintentional and intentional sins in the Old Testament, the Bible makes it clear in Romans, Chapter 3, that all have sinned and fallen short of God's glory. The offerings of the Old Testament foreshadowed the offering of Jesus Christ Himself as a sacrifice on the cross for our sins. Jesus is the sufficient substitute for forgiveness and eternal life. He died once and He will never die again.

In John's Gospel, Chapter 14, Jesus teaches, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." Though every person has sinned (except for Jesus), we have the opportunity for forgiveness and redemption from all our past, present and future sin through one great sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. By faith in Christ's Lordship and providence for us, salvation is obtained, regardless of our intentional or unintentional sins – and whether a person believes he has sinned a little or sinned a lot.

The emphasis in Scripture is that humanity was created good but became sinful as a result of Adam and Eve's fall from purity in Genesis 3. Regardless of the type or level of sins a person has committed, Jesus is sufficient to forgive and offer eternal life. Those who reject the Gospel, regardless of how much or how little sin they've committed, will be separated from God for eternity and will experience everlasting punishment for their sins. God calls all people to come to Him, for there is no other name under heaven given to people by whom we must be saved. We need to understand our great need for salvation before we ask for Jesus' salvation.

While Moses was standing before the rock to bring water out of it for the thirsty Israelites, Moses needed to 1st give God the praise for being a generous provider. What does this mean for us? In Colossians, Chapter 3, it says: "And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him." Also in 1 Corinthians, Chapter 10, it says: "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."

'Glory' means 'dignity, honour, praise and worship'. Glorifying God means acknowledging His greatness and giving Him honour by praising and worshiping Him, primarily because He, and He alone, deserves to be praised, honoured and worshipped as God Almighty.

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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