

TWO STRANGE FUNERALS



Passages to Study:

Read with the class:

Texts for memorization:

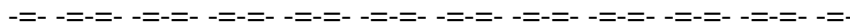
Younger:

Older



OBJECTIVES: To teach that:

1. Though Moses and Aaron were together for 40 years, they did not die together. Each one has to face death alone.
2. Sin leaves its effects throughout the rest of one's life.
3. Despite the sin he had committed, God dealt with Moses in grace.
4. It is in this life that we prepare for what comes after death.
5. Eleazar succeeded Aaron in the High Priesthood and Joshua succeeded Moses



SCENE No. 1. **VISUAL AIDS:** Moses and Aaron, near Mt. Hor. In an upper corner, a figure of Moses and Aaron striking the rock.

DEVELOPMENT:

- 40 years after leaving Egypt, Israel comes once again to the southern border of the Promised Land.
 - Miriam, Moses' sister, dies in Kadesh before the Israelites leave once again on the journey that will take them to the eastern border of Canaan.
 - For 40 years Moses and Aaron have been together leading the people of Israel. Now death brings an end to their labours.
- Apl.** No one lives forever, not even a person as important as these two outstanding men.
- In the life of each one, death enters to put an end to their activities.
- Lsn.** It is only in this life that we have opportunity to prepare for the life to come.
- Cns.** Balaam desired to die the death of the righteous of Israel, but was not willing to live like them. See the previous lesson.
- Aaron is 123 years of age when God notifies Moses that he must die.
 - He reminds them of the reason for which neither of the two will be able to enter the Promised Land.
- Cmt.** (Tell the story) When for a second time the Israelites needed water, Moses and Aaron were to take the rod in hand but not make use of it. They were only to **SPEAK** to the rock. In Num.20:8, "speak" is a plural word. They were both to speak.
- Apl.** There may be times when we do not understand the reason for some requirement of God. True faith submits to what God commands in His Word. True faith is seen in obedience.
- On the first occasion Moses had to strike the rock, which was a figure of the Lord Jesus Christ who would be smitten on the cross of Calvary to bring blessing to all.
 - It was not necessary for Christ to be "smitten" a second time and this is the reason they were given the specific instruction to speak.
- Cns.** Since the first occasion presented a picture of Christ suffering on the cross, the second occasion would teach the privilege of speaking (asking) God for the blessing that would come from the same source.
- Moses paid no attention to the new instructions of the Lord but instead, he struck the rock in anger.
 - With the first blow, nothing happened. He had to strike it a second time before water came out. (Num.20:11)

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Cmt. It would seem that God was giving Moses time to think again.

- Not only did they disobey specific instructions, but they also addressed the people in anger. This is a carnal reaction and dishonours the Lord.
- God in His goodness permitted water to come out of the rock.

Lsn. It was only divine grace that brought forth the water, but this did not indicate that God was pleased with what they did.

Apl. Not all blessings received should be interpreted as divine approval. As in this case, it may be because of God’s mercy that blessings come.

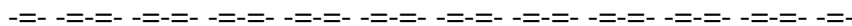
- Due to their disobedience, Moses and Aaron lost the privilege of going over the Jordan River and guiding the Israelites in the last stage of their journey. (Num. 20.12)
- Despite their disobedience, God clothed both deaths with honour.
- Moses’ hands had first clothed Aaron with the robes of the High Priest, and now they are used to clothe Aaron’s son Eleazar.
- The work of the priesthood must continue. The High Priesthood is passed from Aaron to Eleazar.

Cmt. In contrast, the Lord Jesus Christ has no successor or replacement as the Great High Priest.

- Num.20:24 tells us Aaron was “gathered unto his people” . This lovely expression shows that there is life beyond the tomb. See Gen.15:15, 25:8, 35:29; Deut.32:50.

Sug. Ask the students if a person ceases to exist after death. Here we find the answer. They were united to others of their people who had died earlier.

Note: See other verses about this topic at the end of this lesson.



SCENE No. 2. VISUAL AIDS: Figures of Moses and Joshua at the door of the tabernacle, somewhere in the area of Mt. Nebo. Later these are changed for a figure of Moses alone on Mt. Pisgah.

DEVELOPMENT:

Inf. Moses viewed the Promised Land from Mount Pisgah, which was part of the Abiram Range. It sloped down to the Dead Sea. Nebo was a high point on Pisgah, a good vantage point from which to view the land into which Joshua would lead the people of Israel. (Num. 27:12; Deu.32:49; 34:1)

- God gives instructions to Moses to entrust Joshua with the mission of leading the people. (Deu.31:14)
- Having fulfilled what God ordered, Moses climbs alone to the top of Mt. Pisga from which he is allowed to view the promised land.

Apl. Moses could see from afar the place he so desired to reach, but could not go there. He had dedicated his life to a mission that would bring blessing to others without being able to enjoy the privilege himself.

Cns. Despite knowing beforehand that he would not be permitted to take the people over to the other side of Jordan, a privilege that he greatly desired, Moses continued faithful to the end.

- Moses body was buried by God in a valley of Moab, a place unknown to the Israelites. (Deu.34:6).

Cns. It is possible that God wanted to avoid the veneration of Moses so that the people would not commit idolatry.

Cmt. We know what happens to persons who have been made “saints” by a certain religion. The place where this person is buried becomes a place for pilgrimages, is called a sanctuary and becomes a place for business and profit for those who know how to take advantage of the situation.

- Jude 1:9 says that there was a struggle over Moses’ body. We do not know what use the devil would have made of the body of Moses.

