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Why Did Moses Die (Dt 34:1-7)?

People die in this world. People die from time. When people get old, they become weak and parts of their body don't function well. People die from weaknesses. And, of course, people die from diseases.

The Bible says that Moses died. No surprise there. But, it's not for the reasons mentioned above. He didn't die because he was sick. He didn't die because he was weak. No, Moses was 120 years old when he died, yet his eyes were not weak nor his strength gone (Dt 34:7).

So why did Moses die? If he wasn't sick and certainly if he wasn't weak then why did he die? There are three reasons and we find the answers in Numbers 20. But, before we get to them, let's first see what's going on in that time.

Nu 20:1 sets up the scene. Let's check out the time. It was the first month in the fortieth year. It was the last year in the desert. Just one more year and the people's wandering would be done (Num 14:34).

And, the place was in the desert, of course. But, where in the desert? The people of God arrived at the Desert of Zin, and they stayed at Kadesh.

What was the mood of the time? Not good. Once again, they ran out of water. Now there was no water for the community, and people gathered in opposition to Moses and Aaron.

People were sick and tired of Moses and his leadership. Discontent and dissatisfaction were just brewing up to the rim, so to speak. They quarreled with Moses and said, "If only we had died when our brothers fell dead before the Lord!"

Why did you bring the Lord's community into this desert, that we and our livestock should die here? Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to this terrible place? It has no grain or figs, grapevines or pomegranates. And there is no water to drink!"

So, that's the scene. It was in that condition Moses and Aaron went from the assembly to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting and fell face-down, and the glory of the Lord appeared to them (Num 20:6). God told them a command.

"The Lord said to Moses, Take the staff, and you and your brother Aaron gather the assembly together. Speak to that rock before their eyes and it will pour out its water. You will bring water out of the rock for the community so they and their livestock can drink." (Num 20:7-8).

What was the command? *Speak to the rock*. This rather “simple” command wasn’t followed, however. Because of it, Moses had to die. *One disobedience and it costed his life*. What went wrong?

*First, Moses died because he didn’t glorify God (Num 20:12)*. Focus on the word “because” in this verse. God said in Num 20:12 “Because you did not trust in me enough to honor me as holy in the sight of the Israelites!”

Moses failed to glorify God by not trusting His Word enough. *Faith means being “sure and certain” of God*. Heb 11:1 says “Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.” I know you believe. *But, do you trust enough?*

*Second, he died because he disobeyed God’s command (Num 20:8)*. God told Moses to speak to the rock. It wasn’t an opinion. It was a command. “The Lord said to Moses, “Take the staff, and you and your brother Aaron gather the assembly together.”

“Speak to that rock before their eyes and it will pour out its water. Instead of speaking to the rock, Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with his staff (Num 20:11). Thus, Num 27:14 says “both of you disobeyed my command to honor me as holy before their eyes.”

*Third, he died because he spoke rashly (Num 20:10)*. Psa 106:33 says that “*rash words came from Moses’ lips*” when the people rebelled against the Spirit of God. Rash is an adjective, which means “displaying or proceeding from a lack of careful consideration of the possible consequences of an action.”

What rash words? Num 20:10 says “Listen, you rebels, must we bring you water out of this rock?” Who’s we here? You see, it wasn’t Moses nor Aaron who brought the water out the rock. It was God. Only God can do that. God is Almighty. But, Moses lost his patience when the people challenged the will of God.

In that losing temper process he lost something else; his due respect for the Lord. Jas 1:20 says “for man’s anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.” God is angry when we sin. If we are angry, we should be angry for the right reason.

And, even if we are angry for the right reasons we shouldn’t sin. Eph 4:26-27 says “In your anger do not sin. Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.”

Giving the devil a *foothold*, just a little space is enough to influence you in the wrong way whether it’s in the form of greed, ego, pride or something else. So I ask you not to give the devil any time or space.

It may seem like just one mistake. One misstep. But, you know what? *In God's world not even one sin is allowed. God's policy on sin is zero tolerance.* If God were to forgive Moses just this one time, then He has to forgive all who disobeyed Him.

God can't allow a double standard in paradise. Moses had to experience death for his sin. Even though Moses died, there's hope because he died in Jesus. He appeared along with Elijah and talked with Jesus (Mt 17:1-3).

Obedience matters. It matters that you do it. *Because Jesus obeyed.* "He humbled himself and became obedient to death - even death on a cross! Therefore, God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name" (Php 2:8-9).

God is just. God is faithful in His judgement. God is faithful in His love. God is faithful in His salvation. God is just for you and me!