

## For the Sake of God's Elect

(Numbers 20:7-13)

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Note: The text below was prepared for oral delivery rather than for publication in print. As such, be aware that sentence fragments are intentionally used and that this document has not been edited to correct the errors in grammar, sentence structure, etc.

### I. Introduction ó

A. Why did God not allow Moses to enter the promised land? I am going to bring a message this morning from Numbers chapter 20 if you want to be turning there. I have read through this passage in times past and this message was prompted by my interest in this particular subject. What is taking place here is the nation of Israel was near the end of their wilderness journey and some events take place, words are spoken and actions taken that result in God telling Moses and Aaron that they would not be allowed to go into the Promised Land. And frankly, I have always wondered, "why did God deliver such a severe punishment?" Here is Moses, whom God had used mightily as the leader of the people who acted, at least in part, from a motive of anger over the people's rebellion. And God took pretty drastic action here, or it seems that way on the surface.

But what we will see is that, in fact, God — as we know he always does — acted very justly in this account. And I believe there are some great lessons to be learned from the record of that in Numbers chapter 20.

B. Title: I have titled the message "For the Sake of God's Elect." And our text will be verses 7 - 13.

II. Read Numbers 20:1-13: But, we will begin back in verse one just to capture this all in context. So read with me there in Num. 20:1 where we see the words: ***Then came the children of Israel, even the whole congregation, into the desert of Zin in the first month: and the people abode in Kadesh; and Miriam [that is the sister of Moses and Aaron] died there, and was buried there. And there was no water for the congregation: and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron. And the people chode [that is, they were striving or contending, murmuring, complaining] with Moses, and spake, saying, Would God that we had died when our brethren died before the LORD! And why have ye brought up the congregation of the LORD into this wilderness, that we and our cattle should die there? And wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us in unto this evil place? it is no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates; neither is there any water to drink. And Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they fell upon their faces: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto them.***

[And then beginning our text for today in verse seven:]

***And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water. [Notice the personal pronoun there ascribed to the rock, the personification of that rock.] It shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink. And Moses took the rod from before the LORD, as he commanded him. And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also. And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.”***

III. The Rock ó A clear picture and type of Christ. If we are to gain a senseô as I think I did in my studyô of why God is telling Moses and Aaron here they can't go into the Promised Land, we need to first consider the central figure in this story, that is, this rock. It is important that we grasp the gravity of the consequences that Moses and Aaron endured here, not being able to realize their dream of taking the people into the Promise Land, into the land of Canaan. To do so, we need to understand what is represented by this rock.

Be turning with me to Deuteronomy, the next book over, chapter 32. And as you do so I want to suggest to you right up front that this rock is representative of the Lord Jesus Christ, the rock of our salvation, Christ the once smitten rock. And you may recall that actually this figure of the rock had been presented or recorded back in Exodus chapter 17, earlier in the pilgrimage of the wilderness journey of Israel. Shortly after they crossed the Red Sea, they had just begun their journey and the peopleô as they often didô went through this cycle of murmuring, complaining, chiding as we read here. And God commanded Moses to take the rod that he had smote the river with back in Egypt, and thereby turn the water into blood. This was one of the plagues that played a part in Pharaoh's ultimate decision to let the people go out of slavery and bondage there. And he told Moses to take that same rod and to smite the rock. This story is recorded for us back in Exodus 17. There we read how the water gushed forth from that rock.

And whether or not that rock mentioned in Exodus 17 and the one recorded here in Numbers 20 are one and the same (or two different rocks) ó In either case they are both representative of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A. Deut. 32:1-6: Look with me beginning in verse one of Deuteronomy 32: ***“Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass: Because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.”*** You see, he is speaking here of the God-man. ***“...just and right is he.”*** And his very work of satisfaction to justice he says was without iniquity just as we read in the New Testament. He, Christ, the God-man, was ***“,,made under the law...”*** that he might ***“redeem them which were under the law...”*** (Gal. 4:4-5). And it says of him that he was made of a woman. We needed a representative, see, that was suitable to us. He had to walk on this earth taking into union with His deity, humanity. But yet it says he was like unto us in all ways except what? Without sin. (Heb. 4:15). Just as we read here in verse four, He was ***“without iniquity, just and right is he.”*** This is speaking of the just satisfaction that Jesus Christ made at the cross of Calvary in perfect obedience to all of God’s revealed will, even an obedience unto death. For he did that, as we know, for a people. He was a substitute for a people, the chosen ones. Just as this nation Israel was being delivered into a Promised Land, Christ came for an elect people—spiritual Israel, as the Bible calls them—who are chosen unto eternal salvation in Him. And because they were sinners that he represented, you see, the law had to be satisfied in penalty also. Therefore, he bore their sins and paid a debt they could not pay. That is what the Bible means when it speaks of the very righteousness of God that is revealed in the gospel, the good news of how God saves sinners that we set forth.

Note there in...as it continues in Deuteronomy 32:5, he says, ***“They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of his children: they are a perverse and crooked generation.”*** [So we got sinners here, see? And he says, ] ***“Do ye thus requite the LORD?”*** [That means, ***“Do you think you can make payment for this?”***] ***“O foolish people and unwise? is not he thy father that hath bought thee?”*** [He purchased a people.] ***“Hath he not made thee, and established thee?”***

B. Deut. 32:15b ***“The Rock of our Salvation”***: So we see here in Deuteronomy chapter 32 that Jesus Christ is the rock. He is referred to as a rock. Now, you may say, ***“Well, how do I know that is the rock that is alluded to in Numbers chapter 20 and Exodus chapter 17?”*** Well, we’ll look at that in just a second.

But for now look on over in verse 15 at the latter part of that of Deuteronomy 32. Speaking of Jeshurun he says, *“Then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed [what?] the Rock of his salvation.”* So there we have that reference to Christ, the rock of his salvation.

C. I Cor. 10 Reference: I don’t want you to turn there yet because we are going there later, but in 1 Corinthians 10 we have it set forth very specifically there. There Paul is relating to the Church at Corinth about the nation Israel in their wilderness journey. And he talks about the manna that came down from heaven and he speaks of the water that flowed from the rock and he says very specifically there, *“And that Rock,”* [in verse four,] *“was Christ,”* the very rock that we are looking at in Numbers chapter 20 today.

D. Now I established that backdrop because I don’t think we can fully appreciate what took place here and the gravity of the consequences of what Moses and Aaron did in a moment of unbelief here if we don’t keep in mind the picture that was represented there. You see, for if in fact God took such severe consequences based on a picture and a type, we dare not think that he will at all relinquish anything pertaining to his glory in the rock of our salvation the Lord Jesus Christ. Otherwise, the consequences would seem disproportional ó after all ó Moses was acting in anger over the rebellion, perhaps he just misunderstood we might offer as an excuse. No, its importance is in that which is pictured itself ó Christ, the rock of our salvation.

E. So to help us understand I want us to just first consider some aspects of:

1. The nature of the sin ó this folly, this failing of Moses and Aaron. And then I want us to look and í
2. Consider the Consequence ó some aspects of the consequences that were meted out by God.

IV. The Nature of the Sin: First the nature of the sin.

A. Disobedience: If you look back in Numbers, chapter 20, at verse eight, you will see that God’s instructions were very specific. He said, *“Speak ye unto the rock before their eyes.”* And then in verse 10 we see that contrary to those very specific instructions:

1. Moses spoke to the people rather than to the rock.

2. And instead of speaking to the rock he smote the rock. And he didn't smite the rock only once as God had commanded him to do back years earlier when they first began their wilderness journey, but he smote the rock twice. And we will look at the significance of that in a moment. But for now I want us to see that on the surface we have a sin. And the sin is one of just plain disobedience. Moses and Aaron here did not follow God's very specific instructions.

B. Unbelief, possibly by way of Doubt: Secondly, it is a sin of unbelief. Now, how do we know that?

1. Look down in verse 12. He says, "***Because ye believed me not...***" Unbelief. There's two ways we can look at that unbelief.
2. Some believe that it was unbelief by way of lacking confidence or expressing doubt in what God would do here. They conclude that by virtue of the fact that in verse 10 he says that, "Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of ***this rock?***" that that phrase, "***must we fetch you water out of this rock,***" might be construed to mean, "Can we fetch you water out of this rock? We'll see. Almost as if in doubt. I don't believe that is the connotation given the context and other Scriptures that we will look at that pertain to this event here. But if it is and I could be mistaken if it is, that is certainly unbelief, to doubt whether God could or would do what he said he would do.

C. Unbelief by way of Misdirection: Directing men elsewhere other than exclusively to the sole source of water and life ó the Rock alone. I believe that this unbelief here is by way of misdirection. And let me explain that. Here we have this great man Moses, (Moses who not only was chosen from among this nation to lead this nation, God's chosen people temporally into a land of Promise, but Moses ó who was one of the very elect of God from all nations chosen unto eternal salvation as the Scriptures attest to us. Christ himself said, "***Moses wrote of me.***" (Jn 5:46). So we know Moses was a believer. And yet he had a moment of weakness here. And I believe that what he was doing here ó whether intentional or not ó by his very words he was directing men or misdirecting men away from looking exclusively to the soul source of water and life, the rock which he was commanded to speak to.

1. Note in verse 12 that the description of unbelief is a little more specific than just because you believed me not. He said, "***Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel...***" ó to set me apart in their eyes.
2. We vs. God: And I believe that when Moses says, "***Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?***" He is contrasting himself, out of anger ó out of an anger that really might seem justifiable to us for these were indeed rebels.

We have recorded throughout Scripture how God continued to bless them, but they didn't do a thing to earn it. They continued to murmur, continued to complain. And they were being rebellious. And so Moses here, disgusted with that, in anger, provoked by those very words, he says, "Now, you rebels, must we fetch you water out of that rock?" In other words, "You are not like me, you rebels. And do I have to do this for you?" so to speak. You see, even though we know Moses knew better, at this moment he was really striking at the glory of God because, you see, God is not going to share his glory, not in the deliverance of a people for this is to be found exclusively in the rock, eternally speaking, in Christ Jesus from whose side the water of life flowed freely in His substitutionary death on the cross.

3. Meek Moses, with sinful pride that plagues us all (Num. 12:3): As we consider the nature of this sin keep in mind who was committing this sin, who's folly we are looking at. We are looking at Moses, Moses who God said of in Numbers chapter 12, "Now *the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.*" And yet Moses, the meekest of all, in a moment of anger provoked by the people ó we see him display a sin of unbelief, of sinful pride that plagues all of us as sinners.

And, you know, I think back on my own experience and I know ó more so in years past and hopefully even less so in years future ó but I was often prone when I would share the gospel ó in particular with family or friends that I really cared about ó and sharing that gospel that I knew to be a reasonable message - [God says it, doesn't he? "Come and let us reason together."] - And I would wonder why men couldn't see what I could see. I actually knew why they couldn't, but in the heat of an argument, a debate ó (which we shouldn't get into ó but in trying to persuade men as we should try to do), about the truth of the gospel if you take your eye off of the cross and how you are blessed in Christ there is a sense where I often would think, "Well, if I had just said this...If I could have just put it this way, why there is no way he or she could argue against that ó Why it would be so clear." And, you know, when we fall into that kind of thing it is like we are saying, "We can fetch you some water. If I had only said it a little better it would have made a difference."

We forget, momentarily anyway, that you see something that seems so reasonable to you now, but the reality is you didn't see it before either. Why? Because we were dead and dead men can't see. And the Bible says that is the way we all start out, spiritually dead, void of all spiritual faculties. So who made me to differ?

We forget...I had no more to do with being born spiritually than I had to do with being born physically. When did you decide you would be born? You didn't have a thing to do with it, did you? And neither do any of us. And yet sometimes we forget that. And we perhaps inadvertently, (but not to diminish the seriousness whether inadvertently or not), we might point men to look to us, to our eloquence, our debating skill, our logical argument. And so we dare not do that. It makes me want to make my mantra that of Paul's in 1 Corinthians 2:2 when he says, ***“I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.”***

4. An Act of Rebellion (Num. 20:23-24): We also see here in Numbers 20, over in verse 23, Aaron is going up into Mount Hor to die because he is not going to go into the Promised Land. And if you look there it says: ***“And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in mount Hor, by the coast of the land of Edom, saying, Aaron shall be gathered unto his people: for he shall not enter into the land which I have given unto the children of Israel, because ye rebelled against my word at the water of Meribah.”*** Here is Moses and Aaron saying, “You bunch of rebels, do we have to fetch you water?” And God says, “Well, you are not going in the land because you rebelled.” So we begin to see something of the seriousness of their failings here, of their folly. Even Moses was a man of clay just like the rest of us.

V. Consequence ó Why so severe / Why so serious/ Why this Consequence? Depriving Moses of what was probably his greatest earthly dream. So why was the consequence so severe? Why was Moses deprived probably of his greatest earthly dream? I mean, God had taken Moses, appointed him to lead this people out of bondage in Egypt, had used him mightily all this time. And here they are on the threshold of going in the Promised Land and Moses takes his eye off of the rock and smites it twice and God says, “Moses, because of your unbelief in not setting me apart in the eyes of the people you are not going in.”

A. For the Sake of God's People:

1. Well, notice again there in Num. 20:12, the latter part, He says, “Moses you did not sanctify me before the eyes of the people. You didn't set me apart.” And yet see in verse 13 how that in God's actions here he still was sanctified. He was set apart, see, as the sole source of the sustaining water of life. These people would possess a land, as he said, that he had given them. And they would do so without their leader, Moses or Aaron. God is seeing to it that they see He is giving them that land.

2. Read Deut. 3:23-26 “...*for your sakes...*” In Deuteronomy 3 there is a verse (along with another) from which I derived the title of this message: “For the Sake of God’s Elect.” In Deuteronomy 3, Moses is approaching God once again after this event and he is asking him to let him go on into the Promised Land. And in verse 23 we read, “*And I besought the LORD,*” Moses here doing the talking. He says, “*I besought the LORD at that time, saying, O Lord GOD, thou hast begun to shew thy servant thy greatness, and thy mighty hand: for what God is there in heaven or in earth, that can do according to thy works, and according to thy might?*” You see, this isn’t a “put down or pile on Moses sermon.” Oh, we see Moses knew. He knew that it was all of God’s might. And so he says in verse 25: “*I pray thee, let me go over, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon.*” And look what he tells the people, though. He says, “*But the LORD was wroth with me for your sakes, and would not hear me: and the LORD said unto me, Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter.*” It is as if God is saying “That’s enough, Moses. I don’t want to hear about it anymore.” But he goes on in verse 27 and says, “*Get thee up into the top of Pisgah [Mount Pisgah], and lift up thine eyes westward, and northward, and southward, and eastward, and behold it with thine eyes: for thou shalt not go over this Jordan.*” You see, Moses as one of the elect, the chosen unto eternal salvation, he is going to go over another Jordan, so to speak, into a land of Promise, to the heavenly kingdom itself. So this is a small consequence when compared to that of the consequence of him being kept out of this earthly land. But we see here, I believe, is...and by the way you need to know this.

It is noteworthy here as it pertains to verse 26 where Moses says, “*The LORD was wroth with me for your sakes...*” that some translate that to mean “and it is properly translated” “for your account” or “on your account.” Well, some armed with that phraseology then take it a step further and believe that here God is saying that the Lord was angry with you on account of what you did. But I don’t believe that is the connotation “and as we look further I think you will agree with me on what is meant here.

But isn’t it good to know that our mistakes, our folly here will not thwart God’s purpose to receive all glory and all honor. He turns this folly, this failing of Moses into an example of the certain and unfailing, absolute, certain faithfulness of God to deliver his people to salvation in the smitten rock, the Lord Jesus Christ who was smitten at the cross of Calvary.



Psalms 106:32-33: Turn to Psalms 106 and we will see this, as I said, in another place. In Psalms 106 we have recorded the story of the nation of Israel, of their rebellion over and over and over again. And we have a series of the instances such as this cited. We have set forth God's goodness and his mercy, a beautiful picture of the fact that shows us that we cannot merit our deliverance eternally no more than they merited their deliverance into the Promised Land of Canaan. You see, it is not by our merit at all, but it is a product of God's grace and goodness. And in verse 32 we have cited here what took place in Numbers chapter 20. It says, *“They angered him also at the waters of strife,”* that is at Meribah, *“so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes”* ó for the sakes of his chosen people here. *“Because,...”* you see, *“they provoked his spirit.”* Now if we stopped there we would say, *“Oh, it went ill with Moses because of what they did, because they provoked the spirit.”* But it doesn't stop there. *“So that he spake unadvisedly with his lips.”* So that Moses spoke unadvisedly. In fact, I considered titling this message, *“Speaking Unadvisedly.”* For we see here this is a serious thing that took place. When we speak unadvisedly... it is no small thing to direct peoples attention away, to distract them away from the rock of our salvation, from the cross of Christ and what was accomplished then and there ó when He was smitten, look, once. When we speak of the once smitten Savior we are speaking of the completeness, the finishing. It was done. As the book of Hebrews tells us in chapter nine, *“He entered in once into the holy place,”* and what does it say after that, *“...having obtained eternal redemption.”* It is done. That took care of it. There was a finishing then and there.

- B. Not men, but God alone ó Who in Christ, fetched us water, the water of life. We see in this, I think, a lesson as we consider the consequences here, that we are not to look to men, but we are to look to God alone, God who in Christ fetches us the water, the source of life.
1. So as great a leader as Moses was, they weren't going to be delivered into that land by him. And so we see we should not follow men. We should be like Paul who said, *“You follow me only as I follow Christ.”* (I Cor. 11:1). And God acted in Christ, see, just as he acted here for the sake of his people for all eternity at the cross of Calvary.
  2. We also see here that we ought not to look to types, but rather what is typified. You know, it appears that most of the nation of Israel looked to all of the ceremonies that God had commanded Moses to observe, which the New Testament tells us was to be a picture, a school master to teach them of Christ. (Gal. 3:24) And yet they took confidence in them.

For many, their confidence was in the blood of bulls and goats which Hebrews tells us could never take away sin instead of that which was typified by that sacrifice or that unblemished animal, the sinless, spotless Savior. And so we shouldn't look to the types either. We take of ordinances today as God commanded his Church; the Lord's Table and baptism. There is no saving power in that little glass of wine or that unleavened bread, but oh there is wonderful power in what we remember therein in his broken body and blood that was shed. And there is no saving, washing away of sins that takes place in this baptismal pool back here either. But oh there is a washing away by what is represented there. That is a profession of what Christ did when we were buried with Him and when we were risen with Him based upon the very merits of what He accomplished being imputed, accounted to us. So we don't look to the types. Moses and Aaron were wonderful types; Moses the law, Aaron the first high priest, typifying Christ our high priest. But we don't look to the types. You see, the types didn't deliver them. I am reminded of what Bill told us last week. I love that example he gave about on his way to Ashland when they would get there and the kids would see the sign, "Ashland, KY, so many miles." He said, "We didn't stop at the sign. No, we were going to Ashland." And that is what God's preachers are to be, is just signs pointing them to Christ. And here in a moment of folly Moses misdirected their attention away from the rock.

3. But do you see in all this how great God is? His counsel, his purpose shall stand, (Isaiah 46:10). And just because God sovereignly uses means such as allowing things to go ill with Moses for their sakes, it is not a sanction of our actions. God does not only use believers, those who have been justified, but he also uses evil men. He used King Cyrus, a pagan king, to deliver the nation of Israel out of Babylonian captivity. He used Judas to betray Christ. And it says in the New Testament, Judas didn't do anything except that which God had ordained. But, now do we credit Judas with that? No. It said, "Judas did it out of the evil of his own heart." He wasn't doing it to try to fulfill God's secret purposes.

And that is good news. It is good news to know that as servants of God, as we proclaim the gospel to people it is good to know that it is not in our hands at all, that we can't botch it. And, of course, if we could it wouldn't be grace anyway, would it?

So we don't justify our sin even when God brings out things that are good for the good of his people. In fact, when you think about it as Winston mentioned Romans 8:28 back in the 10 o'clock hour. ***“All things [ultimately] work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”*** So based on that if we took the notion that, “Well, if God is going to use it for my good in anything I do,” well, we would be just fine sinning all the while I guess. No. We know better than that.

4. Serves as both a great caution and a great comfort: But what we see in this story...or what I glean and I want to share with you is that I see both a great caution, but also a great comfort.
  - (a) First, there is a caution here. We see the seriousness of speaking unadvisedly, of directing men's attention away from the cross and what took place there.
  - (b) But we also...we can take great comfort. And, frankly, if all I knew was how serious it was to direct men whether intentionally or not away from the cross, I couldn't stand up here. But I take great comfort in knowing I can't botch it.

God's purpose shall stand and that is a wonderful comfort.

### C. Twice Smitten:

1. You know, we might consider that Moses here simply misunderstood, in consideration of the Ex. 17 account). I know that until I started studying this...and if we forget about the picture of Christ as our rock we might say, “Well, wait a minute. Now God had already told him one time years earlier to smite the rock. He instructed him to do that. How could this be so bad? He just got it a little wrong. Maybe he just didn't hear him right? But he is still smiting the rock. He is angry with the people because they are such rebels.” But, you see, not only did he (1) disobey in not speaking to the rock, but rather striking it, but (2) he struck the rock twice, inconsistent with the command of Exodus 17.
2. You see, in smiting the rock not once, but twice, I believe we have pictured an aspect of unbelief by which men deny the efficacy, the sufficiency, the certain accomplishment of what took place based solely on Christ at the cross in his death once for all of the elect.

3. We see here a vivid example of:
  - (a) God's jealousy for his own glory and we see
  - (b) why speaking unadvisedly, distracting men away from that rock is such a big deal.
4. You see, when we distract or misdirect men away from Christ, the once smitten Savior, what we are doing is we are either
  - (a) putting something in place of what Christ alone accomplished in the salvation of sinners then and there. Or else
  - (b) we are adding something to it. And that something in place of or something added in addition to it is always the work of man. It is something we imagine that God does in us, by us or through us so that we imagine that we do something that would distinguish us and play some part in our deliverance. We imagine we fetch ourselves some water here.

## VI. Summary: (Where do you find deliverance?):

### A. Natural man ó

1. Natural man, in his religion, the religion we all start off with, sadly professes an interest in Jesus Christ, at least those considered a part of so-called Christendom. They profess an interest in Christ, in his death on the cross. And yet they smite the rock twice so to speak. They do so when they imagine that what Christ did on the cross is not enough, that when he cried out, "It is finished," that it truly wasn't finished, but rather that there remains something to be done by me, the sinner, in order to appropriate that blessing that Christ merely made possible when he was first smitten. You see, that "something more" is a second smiting, so to speak. Something needs to be added. And that something is what takes place in the religion of works, that is, salvation conditioned to some degree, in some way on me, the sinner.
2. And so here Moses we know knew better. But in this moment of sin, of distraction his actions (I believe in unbelief here) ó they typify the actions and the faults of men and women who sadly remain in unbelief, who remain deceived into thinking that salvation somehow is conditioned on the sinner. Here is how it takes place usually or here is how it often is voiced: When you share the good news of how God saves sinners based on that perfect satisfaction Christ made and that alone they go, "Yeah, I agree with everything you say. But you got to believe." That is how they put it. And a lot depends on what you mean when you say, "You have got to believe."

- (a) You see, believing is absolutely necessary, but only as an evidence, not as a cause or a ground of God's blessing. And to get those backwards is fatal.
- (b) Sadly there is often a failure to recognize that true, God given faith, true belief in Christ as the rock of our salvation, is a fruit and effect of his being smitten once on the cross of Calvary – in other words, that he really got the job done completely so as to make sinners stand just before God, not guilty.
- (c) Instead men imagine that they acquire for themselves what Christ didn't quite finish acquiring. And so they add something. They call it grace, but they have really made it no grace at all. They smite the rock again is what they do.

B. Well, there is good news in this passage, too. And the good news is the certainty of salvation in Christ, based upon Him and His work alone. Why would we want to cling to some idea that something I do or something done by me makes a difference, a sinner, when I can have the impeccable perfection of the Lord Jesus Christ as my own? You see, if it was made my own that is what He will (by God given faith) reveal to me as a fruit and effect of having completed all of that work at Calvary.

1. I Cor. 10:1-6, 11-13: Turn to 1 Corinthians 10. I told you we would look there and I want you to see that passage real quickly. Paul here talking to the Church at Corinth and here he talks about this rock that is mentioned in Numbers and in Exodus, I believe. In verse one he says, *“Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea.”* He is talking about the nation of Israel now. And he says: *“...were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat [speaking of the manna that fell from heaven] And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them.”* Some believe that that rock that he struck in Exodus 17, the rock actually followed them as they meandered through the wilderness. Some believe that it was the waters that gushed out that followed them during much of their journey. I don't know, but the important thing is the last phrase of verse four. *“And that Rock was Christ.”* He goes on and says: *“But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples”* Let you think I am making up a picture here that we are not to attend to, no, he says these things were examples to us, *“to the intent we should not lust after evil things [unlawful desires], as they also lusted.”* And he continues there listing things. *“Neither be ye idolaters...”* And he goes on down and in verse 11 he says, *“Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples.”* That is, samples or types as your notes may tell you. *“And they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”*

Why, Moses the meekest of all, you see, suffered the consequence of sin. We all are in need of a righteousness that we absolutely have no chance of producing. ***“There hath,”*** in verse 13 *good news here, **“no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”*** And that way of escape is in that rock, the Lord Jesus Christ as we are brought back to him. If we have already been given the gift of faith to look to him and him alone we continually are brought back to look there for our only hope and our certain hope of salvation.

2. Deut. 32:4: And that is good news for sinners such as we are, for me and for you, for even Moses. As we read in Deuteronomy 32, ***“He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.”*** You see, that is why it is certain. Justice was satisfied. Just as sin demands death, righteousness demands eternal life.
3. Num. 20:11b: In Numbers chapter 20, in our text, at the end of verse 11, even after Moses had spoken unadvisedly to these bunch of rebels, still we read, ***“the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also.”*** And then at the end of verse 13, as I pointed out earlier, we read that, ***“He was sanctified in them.”*** Now consider the certainty that rebels such as these, rebels such as we, would be blessed by water that flowed from this rock. As a song writer put it, *“Let the water and the blood from thy wounded side which flowed be of sin the double cure. Save from wrath and make me pure.”* You see, that would be my just punishment apart from Christ. I needed Christ to put my sins away to save me from wrath and make me pure. You see, I need that perfection before him, too, so that, as the Scriptures put it, I am *“accepted in the beloved.”* I stand before him unreprouable, holy, me a sinner, Moses, who shamefully directed people away from the rock contrary to God’s instructions on this one occasion stands before him unreprouable, unblameable. Wow. Isn’t that good news?
4. Revelations 21:5-6: You don’t have to turn there. John is writing and he is speaking of Christ in verse five and he says, ***“And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, [to John, he said] Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me...”*** This is what he told him to write. He got his attention. He says, *“Now you write this.”* And this is what he said, *“It is done.”* There is no smiting of the rock twice. He said, ***“I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end [the finish]. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.”***

5. Isa. 55:1: And I know that that passage will bring to mind for many of you that famous passage in Isaiah where God is speaking through the prophet in chapter 55 and he says, *“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters.” And who comes to the waters? “He that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.”* In that same hymn I mentioned, there is a phrase in there that says, *“In my hand no price I bring, but simply to thy cross I cling.”*
  
6. You see, that is what it is to look solely to Jesus Christ and salvation conditioned on Him alone ó the once smitten Savior, the rock of our salvation, smitten for the sake of God’s Elect.

Footnote from the author: While this sermon was prepared and delivered by me, I often utilize the commentaries, study helps, and teachings of others to supplement my own prayerful study of the scriptures. Since this document was not originally prepared for publication in print, please excuse and recognize that it was unfeasible to properly identify and credit all of the various original sources used to develop the content herein. Ultimately, it is my sincere and foremost objective to accurately present the gospel of God’s grace found in the only infallible source, God’s word itself ó the Bible.

*Randy Wages*