

WATER

Numbers 20:2-14

Numbers 21:16-18

Numbers 19

KH I thought we might consider the subject of water, a very important commodity. We have all used water today. We all need water to survive, to satisfy our thirst. We also need water for keeping us clean. When the children of Israel were travelling through the wilderness during the 40 years, water wasn't readily available – they couldn't turn a tap on and get it – they had to find water, and water was very important to them. We are not, of course, going to be speaking about natural water today, we're here to speak about spiritual things, and use these Scriptures as types.

The first passage refers to water coming from the rock. The children of Israel clearly were 'fed up,' we might say, on their travels through the wilderness. Despite the fact that God had looked after them for nearly 40 years, they complained there wasn't any water to drink. God then ensured that there was plenty of water for the assembly and their beasts to drink. They did not have to do anything to get that water.

It is wonderful to think about how the Lord Jesus can satisfy our thirst as believers – in fact how He can satisfy the thirst of anyone. Jesus said, when he was here, "If any one thirst, let him come to me and drink," John 7:37. A precious offer repeated right at the end of the Bible – "He that will, let him take the water of life freely," Rev 22:17. The whole of humanity can come to Christ, and be satisfied. But it is also important that we, who have started on the Christian way, keep coming to Christ, so that we continue to be satisfied.

The reason we read verse 14 is that a big problem arose immediately afterwards – how to deal with Edom? And the striking thing is, they deal with this brother – they call him brother – in a way that honoured God. I think the secret of it is that they had drunk of that water. When you drink from Christ, your soul is satisfied, and by His help you can meet all kinds of exigencies.

In chapter 21, there is another reference to drinking water. This time it is not from a rock, it is from a well – water was obtained a different way – it was still good water, excellent water to drink, but people had to work to obtain it. The water didn't just come – the

princes dug it, "The nobles of the people hollowed [it] out at the word of the lawgiver," and there was enough water for them all to drink. I think it indicates what is available in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, but all of us, old and young, throughout our lives, have to make way for the Spirit. The Bereans, in early times, searched the Scriptures to see "if these things were so," Acts 17:11 – that is like digging. The youngest here can start digging, making way for the Holy Spirit. The result is they get down to the water.

And then there's a song. They are not told to sing, but they sang spontaneously. They were so delighted with the water which they obtained from this well. God provided the water but it was made available through the exercises of the princes and the nobles. I think we might consider how we can refresh one another as we travel as pilgrims on our way to glory.

I read Numbers 19 last; it, of course, comes before the other scriptures in Numbers, but it refers to purification. I think you've got to come to Christ first, before you feel the need of continual purification in your life. We initially receive the forgiveness of our sins by repentance and faith in Christ and His blood. But we have the flesh still within us and we have a filthy, wicked world all around, full of man's ideas. There is the continual likelihood of contamination. What's the answer? God provided the answer in the water of purification. The ashes of the red heifer were mixed as needed with this water. The wonderful thing is that if we do get contaminated – and we may very easily do – there is provision through the death of Christ to cleanse us so that we might be able to enjoy the things of God with His people again.

There are references both to an individual availing himself of the water (verse 12), and then to what others can do to assist a defiled person (verse 17). If we look at the epistles, we see what we can do for ourselves – "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins," 1 John 1:9. We see too how to serve one another – "If even a man be taken in some fault, ye who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of meekness, considering thyself lest thou also be tempted," Gal 6:1. The intended result is that we might be able to continue to enjoy the things of God, yet the holiness of God's house be protected. Could we consider these thoughts together?

TRP The woman in John 4 came to that well never expecting that her circumstances would change. She met the one who changed her, didn't she?

KH We have all to come to Christ initially. She wasn't a converted woman, but the Lord worked in her to change her life. He says that the water He would give would become in her "a fountain of water, springing up into eternal life." What a wonderful divine gift! He then speaks about worship.

MJC Does the fact that the people put the water last on their list of grievances indicate anything to us? Do you think they weren't really appreciative of what God could be to them by way of refreshment?

KH It is interesting that water is the last item they mention. They had to reach the promised land to get the figs, the vines and the pomegranates (Deut 8:8). God must have given them water continually through the wilderness, otherwise they would not have survived. Exodus 17 precedes this chapter historically: God provided water from the smitten rock early in the wilderness journey. I think it shows that, whatever failings come in among God's people – as many of us have experienced – God makes provision in Christ to satisfy the needs of every living thing.

DWB Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10:4 that the rock followed them. The rock was the Christ.

KH Yes, that is a good reference. In the wilderness they continued to obtain refreshment from the rock, not from any other source – the rock was the Christ. Paul makes that statement when he was drawing attention to the many moral dangers that beset believers in Corinth. Paul had much to correct there, but he reminds them of that rock.

DWB It was the answer to the idolatry that was present there, wasn't it?

KH Yes, the answer to idolatry, the answer to every difficulty, to every snare, to complaints, to depression; everything we need is available in Christ.

DJB In that connection, what do you understand by it being a *spiritual* rock? The apostle spoke of it that way.

KH In the Old Testament we get types; in the New Testament we get the antitype. So it says, "they drank of a spiritual rock which

followed them (now the rock was the Christ).” For us it is not a literal rock; Roger was telling me about all the springs there are round about Sevenoaks, but it is not *that* that we’re talking about! This is a spiritual rock. But you’ve got a thought.

DJB Well, if it is a spiritual rock, it must supply something for our spirits. I just wondered how you understand the water refreshing the spirit of the believer.

KH I can tell you that I need to drink of that Rock. I need this refreshment every day. Many things happen that try our spirits, difficulties come along the way that may get us down, and we need to draw on this supply from Christ. It’s like what Paul says to Timothy, “Be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus,” 2 Tim 2:1. In our day – when so much has gone wrong in the whole Christian profession, in which we have our part – it is important to realise that there is still in Christ a wonderful supply for us.

AWGS It says in John 7, “If any one thirst, let him come to *me*,” v37.

KH Yes, that’s right. John, having seen something of the failure that came into the early Church, emphasises the Lord personally in John’s Gospel – so it says: “If any one thirst, let him come to me.” And I would encourage everyone here – there’s a number of younger ones here – whatever the circumstances you face at school, or work, or at home, or among friends, or wherever it might be, keep coming to Christ, and get this water. It’s not just reading the Scriptures. Thank God for the Scriptures that help our minds, purify our thoughts and give a standard for our lives, but we want to keep coming to Christ.

AWGS Personally. Sitting down at his feet, maybe, and having a conversation with him?

KH Yes, Mary did that, she sat at the feet of Jesus, and she listened to His word, Luke 10:39. She got something for her soul from Him.

TRP Is the reading of the Scriptures intended, by the Spirit of God, to bring us into the presence of the One that the Scriptures are speaking of?

KH Oh yes, it is, that’s right. But I’m just saying that it is possible just to read the verses mechanically. I think the Spirit of God

normally would give us a touch of Christ to thrill our spirits as we read the Scriptures.

SML There's an interesting comment in verse 13, where it says "The children of Israel contended with Jehovah, and He hallowed Himself in them." I wonder whether you could just say what your thought is about that – it's a very attractive outcome, isn't it?

KH God can turn a disaster into an attractive outcome. For example, "If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart and knows all things," 1 John 3:20. God is greater, and He used the very circumstances of failure here – their complaining, and the failure of Moses and Aaron – to glorify Himself. He provided this large quantity of water freely for everyone to drink.

TRP John 15 illustrates this. The branches have to obtain all their moisture and water from the vine. So the Lord says "Abide in me," v4.

KH Yes, that's good. I think abiding in Him is a bit like obtaining the water that is necessary for fruit bearing.

We should note that following this section they have to deal with the opposition of Edom. Today we all have to face situations that we would rather avoid. But there are supplies from Christ to enable us to meet them.

In Numbers there are several references to the murmuring of the Israelites. I have a lot of sympathy with Aaron and Moses, because the complaints really tried their spirits. Moses, when he refers to this instance in Deuteronomy, speaks of God being angry with him on their account, Deut 4:21. The people spoke against the divinely appointed leaders, Moses and Aaron. There is a lot of rebellion today, even in the Christian profession. But the interesting thing is that, despite that, God still satisfies souls who are genuinely thirsty.

TRP We arrive in our souls at the conclusion that 'The Lord is essential to me.'

KH If you are a Christian, that's the way you start – the Lord is essential to you. The Lord has done for you what nobody else on earth or in heaven could do. He died for you, He has borne your sins, and when you come to Him, you drink. That's why people who are newly converted are normally bubbling with joy, because they have found the answer in Jesus. The problem is during the 40

years – you and I have been in the Christian way a good many years. Have we become jaded, are we like the children of Israel, murmuring, complaining against whatever God has set up? The answer is in Jesus, to keep us fresh until He comes.

TRP It may be that quite legitimate things have come into my life, and I spend less and less time in the company of my Lord.

KH Well, that's a challenge.

LG I was just thinking on similar lines, we have to *set* ourselves, to seek that we may get refreshment constantly. It is easy for other things to crowd in.

KH Well, they obviously felt a need, despite the fact that they were complaining. "Neither is there any water to drink" – they felt a desperate need. Naturally, if you're thirsty, you'll go anywhere to get a drink of water! But then it says, "And the assembly drank, and their beasts."

MJC In connection with what we're saying, our faith being exercised needs to come into all these things, doesn't it?

KH That's right – we don't see the Lord personally. When he was here you could physically go to Him. We can still go to Him, but we need faith to do that.

BED There is no reference here to the people being grateful for what was done. In the New Testament we have "And be thankful," Col 3:15. Is that something to remind us to be thankful for what God has done for us?

KH Thankfulness is a right feature. There is no allusion to them being grateful in Numbers 20, but in Numbers 21 they sing: "Rise up, well! sing unto it." I think there was gratitude in their hearts. We too should be grateful to the Holy Spirit of God for making divine things known to us, linking our hearts livingly with the Man in the glory.

DWB What does the water speak of?

KH Well, it speaks to me of what satisfies my soul. Would you say more?

DWB Yes, I wondered whether the Lord would direct us to the Spirit. Speaking to the rock in order that the water might flow would be a reference to the Spirit, wouldn't it?

KH Yes, John 7:39 would support that – Jesus spoke “concerning the Spirit, which they that believed on Him were about to receive; for the Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified.” It is by the Spirit that the Scriptures come alive to us. We wouldn’t be able to understand the Scriptures without the Holy Spirit, and He is here – He has come, He is a divine Person, come here to guide believers into all the truth, and to glorify Christ, make Him precious to us.

I think that leads us on to the second passage, which in type refers very definitely to the Holy Spirit. The princes dug the well, the nobles of the people hollowed it out at the word of the lawgiver, and the result was that the assembly obtained water to drink. I think it shows the value too, not only of what we might get from the Lord and the Spirit as individuals, but what we can receive when together. There is great value in believers being together – we refresh one another.

MJC Can you say a word or two about the princes digging?

KH It didn’t come automatically, they had to dig. Often people have to dig down a fair distance to reach water. In 1 Corinthians 14:26, Paul says “Whenever ye come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation” – something from God. To get that might need some digging, involving study of the word and communion with God, so that we bring something fresh in among God’s people. And I think the same applies informally too – I have a concern that, in contact with any believer on the Lord Jesus, I might be able to say something that is an encouragement, to be in keeping with the word – “Encourage yourselves each day, as long as it is called To-day,” Heb 3:13. I think that is a service that every brother and sister can do.

MJC It is a *noble* thought, isn’t it?

KH Yes, it is. That is why I alluded to the Bereans, because it speaks of nobility as connected with them. There is a man in the Gospel who said that he was not able to dig, Luke 16:3 – we need to dig. I think we are often too casual, and just drift into congregationalism – each one of us, brothers and sisters, should accept responsibility in relation to the things of God so that we can make a contribution.

PKL As to personal exercise, could you just give us an outline of what they have come through in the previous section – the serpent of brass, Numbers 21:4-9? That is fundamental to this.

KH It is very important, it's just a question to know how much to read! Again, there had been failure on the part of the people, and in verse 5 of chapter 21, the people spoke against God and against Moses. God then sent the fiery serpents which bit the people, and many died. God also provided the answer in the serpent lifted up, and every one that looked intently upon it lived. As you know, Jesus refers to this very scripture in His ministry – "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, thus must the Son of man be lifted up, that everyone who believes on Him may not perish, but have life eternal," John 3:14-15. The death of Christ has dealt with sin 'root and branch,' as it were, and it is only as believing on Him that we are able to live. The water now flows for us as a result of the death of Christ.

PKL This is, do you think, the experience of what we speak of as deliverance – Romans 7? Would it link with this serpent of brass?

KH Yes, and it would include Romans 8 too, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God" through Christ "has condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law should be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to flesh but according to Spirit," Rom 8:3-4. Really, in this chapter, we see them going forward purposefully towards the land. Romans 8 has numerous references to the Holy Spirit.

AWGS Would the digging throughout Romans 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 be a help to us, do you think?

KH Oh yes. We get the teaching of the gospel laid out, don't we, beginning with what is set out objectively in Christ and His completed work, and then what we have to come to, in our own experiences, in deliverance from sin, the world, and Satan, as well as from legality.

AWGS I was just thinking of the deep digging involved in those chapters before we come to the experiences of chapter 8.

KH You are quite right, in order for the Spirit of God to be free in us, we have to go through some real soul exercise. But the wonderful thing is here, if we dig and hollow out at the word of the lawgiver – come under the authority of Christ – blessing results and the water flows.

KHW I was noticing that, when Isaac digs the wells, there are two or three wells that have to be dug first, but he comes to it eventually that there is fruitfulness, Gen 26:18-22. Is that what is in view in the water?

KH I think that's right. There was fruitfulness for God, there was response in song. God wants worship from us. Earlier we alluded to John 4, the water springing up into eternal life – full satisfaction for us; but then Jesus goes on to speak about worship of God – “They who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth,” John 4:24.

TRP The princes took this action because, first of all, they saw a need. Secondly, *love* drove them to do this, that the water might be available to the people.

KH That is good. They saw a need. They didn't just leave it to slaves or the mixed multitude to dig. Princes did it! Think of the digging that Paul did, think of the digging that Peter, John and Jude carried out. They dug, didn't they? We have their wonderful teaching through their digging.

TRP And that water is still fresh today.

KH Yes, but you want to be digging, I want to be digging, so that our meetings are not stale, or dry, but there is something fresh in the power of the Holy Spirit, fresh impressions of Christ to nourish our souls, to occupy us with Jesus, to help us forward in the pilgrim way.

LG It isn't necessary to have gift to do this, is it?

KH No. I think it involves love for Christ, and love for His people. When you come to your reading meeting, you want to have something, don't you? When you meet any brother or sister, you might wonder what you are going to say to them. It would be fine to give them an impression of Christ!

LG Encouraging one another with the encouragement with which ye have been encouraged, 2 Cor 1:4. That is some fruit of experience really, for the benefit of others?

KH Any brother or sister who has come to Christ can become princely among God's people. It is not a question of age, but of experience with God. “With their staves,” I think, indicates they have had experience with God, and use it to provide something fresh.

KHW Say more of what you have got in your mind as to the staves. I'm not sure that I have grasped that fully.

KH Jacob had his staff – “with my staff I passed over this Jordan,” Gen 32:10, and he worshipped leaning on his staff at the end of his days (Heb 11:21). I think his staff indicated his experience with God in all the circumstances of life. I'm not saying you should occupy people with yourself, but you can use what you have learned of God to refresh others, to occupy souls with Christ.

SML One element of this digging would in practice be praying to the Spirit to open our eyes to the Scriptures, to bring His freshness and His life into the time, and we need to realise that we can't do this on our own, don't we?

KH I think that's important, we can't do it on our own, we are just mortal, frail creatures. But the Holy Spirit has come. It is an immense gift. There is nothing like it in the universe. And every genuine believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. We're told in the Bible, “Be filled with the Spirit,” Eph 5:18. That involves that we judge other things – there are certain things we shouldn't do, Ephesians says, “But be filled with the Spirit” – that means that we make way for the Holy Spirit in our lives, which of course leads us to the third scripture, that when evil things defile us we deal with them.

DWB Many have gone before, for whose service and devotion we should be thankful, by whom the truth has been opened out against great opposition. We need to value that, and abide by it, do you think?

KH Yes. We do need to value the opening out of the truth. I think there was a lot of digging done in earlier years. Our brother referred to the wells getting blocked – in Isaac's time wells that were formerly dug were blocked up with earth, Gen 26:15, and they had to be unblocked again. When man's ideas come in, they hinder the enjoyment of the service of the Holy Spirit, and the well needs to be unblocked. In any recovery among God's people that is effectively what has been done. There is no new truth since the days of the apostles, none whatever – it is all set out in Christ in perfection, and we have it in the Scriptures. Think of the truth as to the heavenly calling of the saints, the Church as the body of Christ, as to prophetic teaching, the rapture and so on; these are truths that princes dug from the Holy Scriptures. It is right to value these things and seek to go in for them. Those of us who are older should

set out in our lives that heavenly things are worth going in for, and show that we value them ourselves.

MJC Do you think that each generation needs to do its own digging? You see, if I want to get into life I've got to go in for life. I've got to dig. Even if it means just looking into what has gone before, that is digging, and I think every generation here today ought to be digging. The weakness in the first scripture we read was because they weren't doing anything – and not only did they not do anything, they grumbled. If we are digging, we won't be grumbling, and we will be exercising our faith and will be going in for what is good, and helping to make it available for others.

KH I think every generation has to do it. As soon as souls come to Christ, they start off an experience with God. Sometimes people make very rapid progress, you sometimes see a young brother or young sister, interested in the Lord's things, showing real evidence of digging. We don't need to be 40 or 50 to start digging!

MSB Could you say something as to verse 17, "Rise up, well! sing unto it?" The brethren were greatly helped by this, to see the rightness of addressing the Holy Spirit in worship. [cf. JT vol 64, pp397-399.]

KH That's quite true – it was used, not that I remember that! "Israel sang this song, Rise up, well! sing unto it" – unto *it*, they were responding to the well. They so appreciated this well of water, they sang to it. Although I couldn't find you a specific verse in the New Testament saying that you must address the Holy Spirit, I think it is right to do so. The Spirit of God is a divine Person. In the Acts the Spirit of God is seen objectively as well as subjectively; the Spirit of God is in charge of the testimony of the Lord. I am glad to thank the Holy Spirit for His wonderful service and worship Him, since He is God.

JPW The note to the word "sing" says 'respond.' The word is used in Hosea 2:15, referring to the valley of Achor. I was thinking of our brother's reference to Isaac's wells – that last well must have been a great cheer to Isaac. It would be a great cheer to the Lord. Isaac's servants came and told him that they had found water, Gen 26:32.

KH It is a great thing to find water. I love, when reading the Bible, to find water, something fresh for my own soul. If you have found water, you are thrilled about it! Maybe you get an impression on

the Lord's Day morning at the meeting – you have found water, something just thrills your soul afresh. It has been in the Bible hundreds of years, but it is fresh to you!

We might think about the last scripture. The wonderful thing is that God has made provision for every kind of defilement that might arise. It is a very interesting passage – well worth digging into by all of us! It refers to the red heifer, a special type of the Lord Jesus. There had been different kinds of offerings mentioned earlier on, in Leviticus, types of Christ and His death. But this was a special one that was provided – a unique animal, this red heifer, without blemish, no defect, upon which never came yoke. The animal was taken outside the camp, burnt with its blood, and the ashes kept, then mingled with water when required for purifying persons.

We all need to think about that – “Every one that has this hope in Him purifies himself,” 1 John 3:3, that is our hope of being with Christ. We sang about it at the beginning with that lovely hymn (93, 1962 ed.), ‘Light of the waiting pilgrim’s heart,’ but, while we are still here in the wilderness, we so easily get contaminated with things. We want, personally, to seek to keep the lines of communication clear between our souls and the Lord, and be available to help one and another too.

JPW The thing is, the preparation of the vessel is most important.

KH There is a reference to the vessel in this chapter (v15), the vessel is to be covered – you want to protect your vessel, I need to protect my vessel, and that is important for old and young, to guard our vessels, our bodies – the temple of the Holy Spirit, 1 Cor 6:19. We should look after them, and not go the way of the world with no regard for God.

DJB The red heifer is not quite like the offerings in Leviticus, is it?

KH No – go on!

DJB It is entirely an application of the death of Christ to the individual soul, or, of course, to the company. But it is the death of the Lord brought home to the person rather than presented to God.

KH Yes, that is right. It is not a sacrifice to God. When we do sin, it is a wonderful thing to know that there is provision whereby we can be purified and made serviceable to God. Even when Jesus was here, he spoke about water. He said to the disciples, “Ye are clean”

(except for Judas), John 13:10; but then He used water to free them from defilement, to have part with Him.

DJB In fact, what he says is very strongly put, "Unless I wash thee, thou hast not part with me," John 13:8.

KH Yes, that's right. There are other references, as you know. Ephesians refers to the "washing of water by the word," Eph 5:26, so that we are kept free from defilement, and helped to be free for the Lord.

AWGS Does the total burning of the heifer and everything that is put in the fire show to us the degree to which the Lord went on our behalf so that this purification could take place?

KH It is a reference, in type, to the death of Christ, and the cost of His sacrifice, so that we might be free to enjoy His precious things among God's people.

AWGS Would it help us, therefore, as we draw on that, to make quite sure that we are ready and purified for Him?

KH Well, I think so. I think that is the thought in 1 John 3. Since each believer has a wonderful hope of being with Christ, he will "purify himself, even as *He* is pure." There is also a reference in 2 Cor 7:1 – "Let us purify ourselves from every pollution of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in God's fear."

DWB God has to bring His people back to this in Haggai – He refers to this very scripture. He raises the challenge for them in verses 13 and 14 of chapter 2.

KH Yes, and that passage refers to asking the priests concerning the law (v11). Persons who are spiritual know what are God's standards.

DWB I wonder whether we sometimes inadvertently slip into things, and we need to face up to things at the present time, and what the uncleanness really is.

KH I think that is true. It must have been almost impossible to avoid some of these things happening when going through the wilderness. For example, someone might just suddenly die by you (v16). Yet God made provision for persons to purify themselves. Verses 11 to 13 emphasise personal responsibility. Then, later on, in verses 17 to 20, someone else is to serve the defiled person. One of the things that should mark the Christian circle is that

believers help one another. For example, it says in James 5:19-20, "If any one ... err from the truth, and one bring him back, let him know that he that brings back a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death and shall cover a multitude of sins." Believers should be concerned to serve one another. Skill is needed, but I think it is something that we should be concerned about.

TRP Isn't one of the results of communion with our Lord that the Spirit today will fill our hearts with His love for His Father and His love for the saints?

KH I think that is right. I often think of that verse of hymn 160 – 'Nor what is next Thy heart can we forget.' Every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is precious to Him, and if we can serve one another it can enhance what is for God in this world. When I say 'one another,' I'm not just meaning those that are here this afternoon!

DJB The Lord said, "I have given you an example that, as I have done to you, ye should do also," John 13:15.

KH That was a very precious service, and He showed by example how it was to be done. It was a gentle service – He took water, He went in a lowly way from one to the other, He washed their feet, He wiped their feet with a linen towel – each person would feel very comfortable after that, wouldn't they?

LG "As I have done to you," not '*what* I have done to you' – it would be the spirit of grace in Christ Jesus, would it?

KH I think that is why, if we are in the good of drinking from Christ, we derive resources to work in a right way with one other, that we work with any of the Lord's people and seek to serve them according to our measure.

DJB One of the tests of an older sister in Timothy is if she has washed saints' feet, 1 Tim 5:10, so it isn't a question of public service necessarily, is it?

KH It isn't, that is right. I don't know about you, but I have often been refreshed through the service of sisters.

JPW It is not lost on us, is it, that this is a female animal?

KH That is interesting! It shows it is very much connected with the subjective state among God's people. God wants us for Christ and for Himself.

JPW What I have in mind is that, maybe, if we had the grace to stand by our sisters for a time, and go down, as brothers, we could save the company for the Lord – the advice of the poor wise man, Ecc 9:14-15? Which can only be Philipians 2, can't it?

KH What was said about the way in which Jesus acted is important. What a contrast to the way that Moses and Aaron acted, in saying "Hear now, ye rebels" and hitting the rock with the staff, when God told them to speak to it. If God had not intervened and given the water, they could have done a lot of damage. We have to learn to do things as Jesus did them.

DJB Would it also be true that, although Moses did not treat his people rightly, he didn't in principle recognise that the sacrifice of Christ had been "once for all," Heb 10:10. We draw upon it again, but we can never go back upon it, can we? The rock was smitten once (Ex 17:6), and could never be smitten rightly again.

KH Yes, that is wonderful. The writer of Hebrews draws attention to things like the "heifer's ashes sprinkling the defiled," Heb 9:13, and all the various offerings for sin, and contrasts that with what has been achieved once for all in the death of Jesus.

MJC This water of purification contains two ingredients – ashes and water. Do the ashes represent to us what Christ *has done*? It is the result of His work.

KH It is. But it is made alive in the power of the Holy Spirit. It hits home to you.

Sevenoaks
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