

water from the rock

why was Moses, after all he'd been through, punished and disqualified from leadership for getting angry and striking the rock?

story of God, story of salvation, is taking what you thought you knew, what you thought you understood, what you thought you had figured out and making it something completely different, something completely new, something you couldn't have imagined or figured out on your own.

Moses was drawn to the burning bush "will turn aside to see this great sight" not because the bush was burning but because it kept burning instead of just flashing up and dying down and because it "wasn't consumed by the fire." He'd seen lots of burning bushes, but not one like this. God got his attention by taking something he thought he knew, understood, etc. and making it something new

"behold I am making all things new, old has passed away." "eyes have not seen, ears not heard, not can the mind of man imagine what God has planned for those who love him."

Moses had thought he knew how to liberate his people from Egypt but he wound up in exile for 20 years. Now God took what was a fairly common dessert sight that God changed into something he'd never seen or imagined and used it to tell him about how he'd actually free the people, in a way he'd never imagined or considered.

Now they're in the desert and the people are complaining about the lack of water. Moses is told to strike the rock with his rod. He does and enough water gushes out for all the people and their livestock. Once again, this was something familiar. It was common knowledge that you could strike one of the porous rocks in the area and get a little water to flow out. But look closely. The text describes this as a hard or flinty rock. You don't get water out of this type of rock. The people got enough water to satisfy them. Remember how many people and livestock there were. You don't get that much water out of a rock. Once again, taking what you thought you knew and understood and had figured out about your world and changing it into something new, something you couldn't have imagined or figured out on your own.

The next time Moses was told to speak to the rock and water would come out, but he got mad at the people and in his anger struck the rock instead of speaking to it. For this transgression he couldn't enter the promised land after forty years of waiting.

Why? He'd gotten mad at the people before. Isn't this awfully harsh? He was punished not for his anger but because he struck the rock a second time after being told to speak to it.

Primary method of interpreting scripture is to see what other scripture has said about it.

Paul said that the rock was Jesus and he also said that "these things happened for our benefit and instruction," so what can we learn from the rock that gave water.

1) the water gushed forth from the rock when it was struck, giving life to the people. Jesus said that he was the source of the living water that would give life to the people. The source of that living water was the cross where he physically and spiritually shed blood and water.

2) The NT emphasizes that this was a one-time sacrifice. Something that couldn't be repeated or be done by anybody else in any other way.

3) Because of His sacrifice, the NT says that God has not only raised him up but also has honored him and glorified him as he glorifies himself.

4) The NT also says that God will not be pleased with anyone who rejects Jesus or messes with his message.

5) The NT says that all who call upon the name of the Lord will be saved.

6) Just like Jesus, the rock gave living water after it had been struck, after it had been wounded. It was a flinty rock and Jesus was said to have set his face like flint as he was determined to go to Jerusalem, knowing what waited on him there.

7) Just like all who call upon the name of the Lord will be saved and as He is gracious and willing to forgive our sins and that He will give streams of living water to all who ask, Moses was to speak to the rock after it had been struck and that would have been enough to make the living water come forth.

8) Instead, he struck the rock, symbolically recrucifying Jesus, just as is talked about in Hebrews 6, where the people are warned against turning back after having partaken of salvation.

Putting it all together. The story of the water from the rock is the story of our salvation and new life. The rock is struck and living water comes forth and saves the people. After it's been struck once Moses just has to speak to it again to get the same living water. It didn't take any action on his part, just faith to call upon the rock and let God do the work.

Our salvation is the same. The rock has been struck for our benefit and has given forth streams of living water. It doesn't take any action (not by works, lest any man should boast) on our part, the one-time act was sufficient (Hebrews, Peter) and couldn't have been done by anyone else. All we have to do to get this living water is to ask and accept the gift, to speak to the rock.

Moses wasn't taken out of leadership because he got mad and hit a rock he'd been told to speak to. He was disqualified because his actions dishonored Christ, crucified him again of his own account (Hebrews 6). His action messed with the message of salvation. His action was one of works, not faith.

Just like the burning bush, the rescue of the Israelites and water from the rock, our salvation is yet another instance where God takes what you thought you knew, what you thought you understood, what you thought you had figured out and making it something completely different, something completely new, something you couldn't have imagined or figured out on your own. Just like Moses tried to liberate the people on his own and had failed and given up on the dream for twenty years before a common sight was transformed into a message from God and his dream of freedom was renewed, changed and restored; just like the common knowledge of getting water from a rock was transformed into something so different and so massive that only God could have done it; just like God took the common sight of a crucified man's dead body and changed it into a glorified body of life that never dies again and brings like to the world; so does God take what we thought we knew and could figure out on our own and make

something completely different of it. We knew that we needed salvation from our sins, from our world, from our alienation, from ourselves. We'd tried many ways to achieve it on our own. We'd given up because nothing seemed to work and had gone on with our routine lives. Then God gets our attention and transforms a common sight into a miraculous sign. He takes death and give us life. He takes what you thought you knew, what you thought you understood, what you thought you had figured out and making it something completely different, something completely new, something you couldn't have imagined or figured out on your own. But it isn't a bush or a rock or a drink or a body on a cross. What he takes and changes and makes into something new that we'd never have imagined or figured out or done on our own is us ourselves and our lives. So quit playing with your own matches around the bushes, stop hitting rocks with a stick, stop trying to earn what you can't afford, stop trying to figure out what you can't understand; just stop trying so hard and don't get angry or frustrated, just speak to the rock.