

burnt heifer, and on the seventh day he should wash and be clean. All this would impress upon the people the nature of death (cf. note on Nu.v.1), would provide hygienic protection, ;and would picture to their minds the future provision through the sacrifice of Christ as the only possible means of release from the guilt and power of sin (Heb.ix.11-14).

XIII. INCIDENTS ON THE WAY TO THE PLAINS OF MOAB. xx.1-xxiii.1

a. The death of Miriam (xx.1)

The date of this event is uncertain. Some Bible students take the first month (1) as referring to the beginning of the fortieth year, at the end of the long period of wandering. Others insist that it means the first month of the third year, and that this and the following incident occurred prior to the crisis at Kadesh-barnea. There are interesting arguments on both sides, but the Bible does not give us data on which to decide with certainty. The importance of these events is not affected by our uncertainty as to the time when they occurred.

The people abode in Kadesh (1). Kadesh seems to designate an entire region, rather than a small area. During the thirty-eight years of wandering the people doubtless roamed through the desert, staying at one place until the forage gave out and then moving to another section. Perhaps they passed through Kadesh several times. The long period of wandering began and ended in this neighborhood.

b. The sin of Moses and Aaron (xx.2-13)

Moses ranks as one of the godliest and most able men who ever lived. Therefore this passage is important, to keep us from elevating him too far. Despite his greatness, he was human, and he sinned. God punished him for sin, depriving him of the fulfillment of his great desire to enter the Promised Land. Great as Moses was, apart from the grace of Christ he was lost, deserving eternal punishment for his sin. God saved him, as He saves all who trust in Christ.