

3 Bonus

On this long road to repentance there were some 'strange' events that Joseph's brothers encountered. Why was each of the events in

the following list very 'strange' to the brothers? Is there a lesson for us?

43:17; 43:23; 43:27; 43:29; 43:33; 44:17.

"[Joseph's brethren] had come to understand that the most important things in life revolved around the welfare of their brethren, their families and their father".

"As we grow and mature in the Truth we become aware that the world does not revolve around us and our desires. There must be compassionate concern for others who are sometimes greatly dependent on us for sustenance, guidance and protection".

Teenagers of the Bible, pp. 76,96

Moses: earth's meekest man

30. Aaron's goodbye

John Mitchell

The time had come for the children of Israel to make their way to the borders of the Promised Land. Rebuffed by the king of Edom, they took a more devious route. During the journey their high priest Aaron died and was succeeded by his eldest son, Eleazar.

WHEN THE children of Israel left Kadesh after the death of Miriam, they did not go north into Amalek territory where their fathers had been so signally defeated, but eastward towards what they assumed would be the friendlier lands of their relatives, Edom, Moab and Ammon. Guided, no doubt, in this direction by God, Moses first sent messengers to the king of Edom, asking permission for Israel to pass through their countries. He said:

"This is what your brother Israel says: You know about all the hardships that have come upon us. Our forefathers went down into Egypt, and we lived there many years. The Egyptians ill-treated us and our fathers, but when we cried out to the LORD, He heard our cry and sent an angel and brought us out of Egypt. Now we are here at Kadesh, a town on the edge of your territory. Please let us pass through your country. We will not go through any field or vineyard, or drink water from any well. We will travel along the king's highway and not turn to the right or to the left until we have passed through your territory".*


But the children of Esau, true to their ancient hostility towards Jacob, would have none of it. Their king replied, "You may not pass through here; if you try, we will march out and attack you with the sword".

Rebuffed, but still patiently suppliant, Moses made a second attempt to obtain their goodwill, emphasising once more Israel's harmless intentions: "We will go along the main road, and if we or our livestock drink any of your water, we will pay for it. We only want to pass through on foot—nothing else". For a second time, however, there came a blank refusal: "You may not pass through"; and, to back it up, the Edomites marshalled a large and powerful army on their border. Reluctantly, therefore, the children of Israel turned away to the south and began a long and painful detour down the border of Edom towards the eastern tip of the Red Sea, where, at Ezion Geber (the Giant's Backbone), they could cut through to the desert road of Moab.

The death of Aaron

The journey was rendered all the more distressing for Moses and for the people when God made it known that the time had come for Aaron's tenure of the priesthood to end. At Mount Hor, near

* Quotations, which are from Numbers 20 unless stated otherwise, are from the NIV with one stated exception.



The mountains of Edom near Petra.

Picture: © iStockphoto.com/
Stefan Tordenmalm

the border of Edom, the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "Aaron will be gathered to his people. He will not enter the land I give the Israelites, because both of you rebelled against My command at the waters of Meribah. Call Aaron and his son Eleazar and take them up Mount Hor. Remove Aaron's garments and put them on his son Eleazar, for Aaron will be gathered to his people; he will die there".

The exact location of Mount Hor has been much debated. Geikie places it near Petra, well into Edomite territory,¹ but Edersheim, basing his location of it on a combination of narratives from the books of Numbers and Deuteronomy, places it at Moserah, outside Edom (Num. 20:1,22,23; Deut. 10:6).² The place does not matter; of far greater import is what happened there.

Moses did as the Lord commanded, and he and Aaron, in his priestly robes, went up the mount in the sight of the whole community. On the top of the mountain, Moses then divested Aaron of his garments, as laid down in the Law, which said, "Aaron's sacred garments will belong to his descendants so that they can be anointed and ordained in them" (Ex. 29:29), and he put them on Eleazar, Aaron's son. And there, in the company of the two men nearest to him, and secure in the knowledge that his son was to succeed him, Aaron died at the age of 123.

For Moses the parting must have been very grievous, because Aaron had generally been his

confederate and support dating back to their joint struggles against Pharaoh in Egypt. And, though a lesser man than his younger brother, he had nevertheless served his people to the best of his ability as the first to fulfil the office of high priest. The fact that in sharing leadership with Moses at the 'waters of strife' he had also shared in the sin that led to his early demise must have added to Moses' grief, and given him a sad and solemn reminder that his own departure could not be far away.

A continuing office

Nevertheless, the ceremony on the top of the mount had to be performed to show that the office of high priest was intended to continue without intermission, though the bearers of the office could not. And the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews develops this very point in contrast to the priesthood of the Lord Jesus, which was after the order of Melchisedec, when he says, "And they truly were many priests [after Aaron], because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: but this man [Jesus], because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him" (Heb. 7:23-25, AV).

1. Cunningham Geikie, *Hours with the Bible*, Vol. 2, p. 350.
2. Alfred Edersheim, *The Exodus and the Wanderings in the Wilderness*, p. 189.

As for the children of Israel at the foot of Mount Hor, whose eyes were fixed on the summit waiting for the outcome, there must have been shock and sadness when only two figures, those of Moses, and of Eleazar, robed in what had been his father's garments, appeared. It was for them the end of an era that the oldest among them could remember from start to finish, beginning with the first time Moses and Aaron had appeared among them as their God-appointed leaders, and moving on through the plagues of Egypt, their liberation from Pharaoh, their Exodus journeys and the giving of the Law in which Aaron had become the central figure. Now he was dead, and, despite the times they had distressed and even rebelled against him, or perhaps because of them,

they fell to mourning for him, and halted in their southward march for thirty days.

When they did move on, the army of Israel was made to prove its mettle after an unprovoked attack, presumably upon their rearguard, by the Canaanite king of Arad from the Negev, or south country, who had heard of Edom's refusal to let them through his territory, and in some way felt threatened by them. In his attack he managed to take some prisoners, but Israel, vowing that if God would grant them victory they would destroy the Canaanites and their cities, turned upon him and defeated him.

It was the first of a series of battles the Israelites would have to face before this new generation could enter the Promised Land.

[\(To be continued\)](#)

“Behold the man!”

The titles and descriptions of Jesus of Nazareth

9. A holy man

Greg Palmer

IN THIS ARTICLE we will examine the holiness of Jesus of Nazareth. The titles are all very similar, though some differing points are made. More is being said about Christ than that he was separate and godly.

The most Holy

This expression is used of the Messiah in Daniel 9:24, where we read: “Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy”. The Hebrew expression “most holy” often refers to the most holy place or to things connected with it. It was there that Yahweh met with the high priest, and atonement for sin was made. It is fitting that words which most usually apply to the place of atonement should be focused upon Jesus.

The words, in the context of Daniel 9, refer to Messiah, and do not have a definite article as do references to the most holy place. The concept of the anointing of the most Holy is very appropri-

ate. We read in Acts 10:38 that “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy [Spirit] and with power”. From Daniel 9 we understand that Jesus was to be anointed some time between the sixtieth and seventieth prophetic week periods of seven years. This fits in with the timing of the anointing and baptism at the beginning of Jesus’ ministry. Neither the temple nor Jerusalem could be described as ‘anointed’ at that time. In fact it was not many years afterwards that they were totally destroyed.

Holy One

This title is found in Psalm 16:10, which is quoted in Acts 2:27. The word used in Psalm 16 is translated in many different ways. The Hebrew has the idea of being pious and religious but also kind and merciful. We sometimes associate in our minds the ideas of austerity and intolerance with religious piety. This was not the case with our Lord. For him, holiness of mind and action did not breed a spirit of superiority and impatience, but he is kind and compassionate. This is seldom seen among men. We tend to be one or the other but not both. In this way, Jesus’ character is seen