

Numbers Chapter 11

V: 1 the people's complaining displeases the Lord.

- If you're looking for application, there it is in the first verse:

"Snivel, sniveling" (Webster's)

1. to weep or cry with sniffing.
 2. to affect a tearful state; whine.
 3. to utter with sniveling or sniffing.
 4. weak, whining, or pretended weeping.
 5. a hypocritical show of feeling.
- Constructive criticism has its place with man, but when it comes to the things of God, that which He is doing – there is no room for complaining.

Hebrews 13:5 "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have, for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."

1 Timothy 6:6 "But Godliness with contentment is great gain."

- It has been said that until we are content in Christ Jesus, we won't be content in anything.

"... the Lord heard it..."

- Of course, He is the God who hears:

Psalms 34:15 "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are open unto their cry."

- God's anger was kindled and the Lord burnt / consumed those that were in the outermost parts of the camp.
- This answers that question which asks how far can I go away from God, and still be ok
- I've always thought that was a bad question anyway, the real question is how close can I get to being in the center of God's will, how can I best please Him today!
- The answer to that question is found in a living, thriving, abiding, and obedient relationship with Him.
- Closer to God is better, safer; farther from God, being on the periphery is dangerous.

V: 2-3 The people cry to Moses, Moses intercedes for the people to God, God stops the fire, it is quenched.

James 5:16 "... The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

- The place where this happens is called "Taberah" = "Burning".

V: 4 We don't have a particular sense of time here, but in context – the people snivel and complain; God gives them a reason to complain, people get burned, they cry to Moses, Moses prays to God, God is merciful and stops the burning – the fire is quenched.

- Having learned that valuable lesson, what is the next thing they do – they start complaining again.
- It starts with the "mixed multitude" and seemingly spreads to the "children of Israel."

1 Corinthians 15:33 "Be not deceived: evil communications / company corrupt good manners / habits."

- There is a mixed group of people that are not on the same page, part Egyptian, part Hebrew, or not Hebrew at all, just along for the ride – initially with a common purpose: get out of Egypt.

V: 5 This is a testimony to short memories: "oh it was so good in Egypt..."

- They seemingly have forgotten about their bondage, the rigour under which they served.
- Looking back to Egypt is like looking back to our old worldly ways:

1 John 2:15-17 ¹⁵Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world, if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. ¹⁷And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever."

Leviticus 18:2-4 ²Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, I am the Lord your God. ³After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do: and after the doing of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do: neither shall ye walk in their ordinances."

- In other words; don't look back, and don't look around.

- Neither the old life, nor the culture around us, can guide us in our walk with the Lord.

Luke 9:62 "... no man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

V: 6 In a way they are saying the old life in the world, in bondage was better than their new life in the Lord who was caring for them and leading them to the land of promise:

- We have to be careful about sharing our testimonies of salvation, that we don't glorify the old life.

Isaiah 5:20-21 ²⁰Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter. ²¹Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!"

- Worse than that – they despised the manna which the Lord had provided:
- The manna was a picture of Jesus.
- The manna is literally bread from Heaven; it represents the True Bread of Life; Jesus Himself.
- This is the reason we see God respond so firmly with the people; they aren't just rejecting God's cooking... they are rejecting a representation or a type of their Savior.

John 6:48-51 ⁴⁸I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. ⁵⁰This is the bread which commeth down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. ⁵¹I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

V: 7-9 Manna: "what is it"

Exodus 16:15 "And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, it is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, this is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat."

- Since God gave it, we know that it is good, and that it meets their need.
- Their claim is that they are lacking in something; that they've been denied something good; that their needs haven't been met.

2 Peter 1:2-3 “²Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, ³according as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue.”

Galatians 6:10 “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”

- We have to know that God is already, always doing this very thing.

V: 10 God never changes, He is the same yesterday, today, and forever – and He still doesn't like complaining. He hasn't changed His mind since verse 2.

V: 11-15 Moses is at the end of himself, and here Moses is crying out to God, which even though it's not always pretty, is pretty much the right thing to do.

- What have I done to deserve this?

V: 12 These aren't my kids...

V: 13 I can't feed all these people – recognizing his inability to do anything.

V: 14 “... *it is too heavy for me.*”

Matthew 11:28-30 “²⁸Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. ³⁰For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.”

Psalms 51:17 “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.”

- Herein is the difference between Moses crying out to God and the people's complaining.
- The people complained or murmured amongst themselves, to each other, about God, and about Moses.
- Moses went straight to God with his issues.

Philippians 4:6-7 “⁶Be careful / anxious for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. ⁷And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

V: 15 Lord if this is how it's going to be, just take me home – take me out Lord.

- Can anybody relate to this?

Proverbs 30:8-9 “⁸Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: ⁹lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, who is the LORD? Or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.”

V: 16-30 God responds to Moses' issue first, then to the people's.

V: 16-17 **Regarding Moses' issue:** Gather 70 elders of Israel that they may stand with Moses, and share the responsibility of leadership.

- God will take of the self same Spirit that is upon Moses and give a portion to the elders.
- The appointing of these 70 men is the basis for what would later become the “Sanhedrin” or ruling council during the time of Jesus.

V: 18-20 Have the people sanctify / cleanse themselves – get cleaned up for dinner.

- They are going to have meat for 30 days, until their sick of it, it's going to be coming out of your nostrils.
- Because they despised the Lord; which He takes personally.
- How did they despise the Lord? They despised His provision, His gift, His will.
- They said they were better off in Egypt!

Jesus said:

Matthew 10:40 “He that receiveth you receiveth Me, and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me.”

V: 21-22 He we see the root of Moses' issues: this is something that many leaders struggle with:

- He's trying to figure it out, in a way he's trying to help God.
- God wasn't asking...
- Seeing with his eyes, Moses presents two options: lamb chops or fish, at that moment he is doing the opposite of what the Apostle Paul declares:

2 Corinthians 5:7 “For we walk by faith, not by sight.”

- At that moment Moses is walking by sight, not by faith.
- God wasn't asking Moses what to do anyway.

V: 23 As the Lord asks this rhetorical question of Moses, it is if to say “have you forgotten who I am?”

V: 24 Moses didn't understand everything that God was about to do, but what he knew to do he did. He gathered the elders as instructed.

V: 25 The Lord takes of the same Spirit given to Moses and gives Him to the elders as well.

- The elders then begin to exercise the giftings of the Spirit, prophesying and exercising wisdom, counsel, and administration.

V: 26-30 Two of the elders didn't get the memo, they weren't at the meeting, but they had received the Spirit of God and were out using it. God recognized them as elders.

- Eldad = “God has loved”.
- Medad = “Loving” – “Affectionate”.
- Even though they weren't part of that group, God was still using them.

1 Corinthians 12:4-7 “⁴Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. ⁶And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. ⁷But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.”

- Like Moses, we need to be gracious with those who might not be in the same theological camp, or do it the way we do – if they are being used of God, speaking His word – we praise the Lord.

V: 31 The Lord comes out of left field, not cattle, not fish – quail!

- A days journey from the camp – 10-20 miles, 2 cubits deep (36”)
- This is the answer to that question – **V: 23** “*Is My hand short...?*”
- God likes to show us what He is capable of and what small thinkers we are!

Isaiah 55:8-9 “⁸For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. ⁹For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”

V: 32 They began to collect all that day, and all night, and all the next day.

- Sounds greedy, gathering more than they could eat.
- 1 homer = 86 gallons. 10 homers = 860 gallons. Figuring about 1 ½ gallons to a bucket, that would be over 500 family sized buckets of KFC chicken.

V: 33-35 Some speculate that it was their greed, their covetousness, their over indulgence that brought about the judgment, the plague that killed a bunch of the people. Which could be so.

- Kibroth Hattaavah = “grave of lust”
- Hazeroth = “settlement” or “encampment”.
- Another factor or possibility is that the people rejected what they had first been offered; the bread from Heaven, truly the bread of life.

Jesus said:

Matthew 12:31 “Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.”

Acts 4:12 “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

- To non-believers: Receive the witness of the Holy Spirit because rejection of God’s offer = death.

Acts 4:12 “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

- Believers / application: be content, receive God’s perfect will, not our own.

Commentary on Numbers:

Psalms 106:13-15 “¹³They soon forgot His works; they waited not for His counsel: ¹⁴But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert. ¹⁵And He gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul.”