

Numbers Chapter 14

V: 1 The last time the whole congregation wept, it angered God; when they complained about the menu.

Numbers 11:10 “Then Moses heard the people weep throughout their families, every man in the door of his tent: and the anger of the Lord was kindled greatly...”

Vv 11:33 “... and the Lord smote the people with a very great plague.”

V: 2 Snivel fest! Such dramatics – oh that we had died in Egypt! A common refrain amongst the children of Israel – when they are in sin.

Philippians 2:14 “Do all things without murmurings and disputings.”

V: 3 What are they saying about God’s character? What are they saying about His ability to lead them?

V: 4 They add to their sin of faithlessness by inciting rebellion against Moses, ultimately they’re in rebellion to God’s leadership.

- They actually want to go back to Egypt! They are not thinking rationally: God practically destroyed the land, they themselves plundered the Egyptians, God opened the door through the Red Sea, how would the new Pharaoh receive them? What is actually left to go back to?
- They are blinded by their sin and their emotions.

[Like the religious leaders in Peter’s day:](#)

2 Peter 3:5 “For this they willingly are ignorant...”

V: 5 Moses and Aaron fall on their faces, defenseless before the mob – but God is their defense.

- Which way did they fall? Towards the mob or towards the Tabernacle? The Tabernacle to be sure.
- This will come into play in the following verses.

V: 6 Joshua and Caleb step forward, taking a stand with Moses, Aaron, and God: tearing their clothes – grieved at the disbelief and sin of the people.

V: 7 The land is an exceeding good land.

- This statement is in alignment with what God says.
- God only gives good gifts!

James 1:17 “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”

V: 8 If the Lord delights in us, and we know He does! Then victory is certain!

Romans 8:31 “What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?”

- Joshua and Caleb then repeat God’s description of the Land: “...*a land which floweth with milk and honey.*”
- God first used this phrase in speaking to Moses on Mt. Sinai when He told Moses how He would deliver His people and bring them into a land that flows with milk and honey – and He’s used that phrase 7 times up to this point.
- I’ve never been able to totally reconcile this phrase to my conscience until this last trip to Israel. I’ve always looked at it as figurative, describing Israel as a good place, a wonderful place. Because of God’s great love for the land, describing it through the eyes of love as beautiful, seemingly in spite of the fact that it really wasn’t.
- The children of Israel are shepherds, as they enter into the promise land with their flocks and herds, they are going to a well watered place with lots of grazing lands, fields and meadows. Well fed sheep reproduce, the larger the flocks and herds – the more milk that will flow as a result. Flowing with milk from the flocks and the herds.
- The Hebrew word for honey is used both for honey and the honeycomb, and it is used for preserves & jam. As they enter into the land of promise, a well watered and fertile place there will be lots of fruit from the trees and vines. Fruit is preserved in 4 basic ways: with sugar as in preserves and jam; with salt; dried; and in the form of juice. All of these are described at times at honey.
- They are entering into a fertile and productive land of plenty – in a very literal sense.
- I’ve always thought that we should take God’s word literally, now I believe that we should take it even more literally!

V: 9 Don’t rebel against the Lord – they saw it for what it was. The Lord is with us, fear them not!

Proverbs 29:25 “The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe.”

- The other spies only saw giants and failure.
- Joshua and Caleb only saw a giant God, and victory assured!

Hebrews 11:6 “Without faith, it is impossible to please God.”

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

V: 10 How did the people respond to this exhortation? In the flesh; All the congregation began to yell “stone them!”

- At that very tense moment, God enters into the scene, His glory appears and fills the Tabernacle in front of all the people.
- God is not necessarily there to save Caleb and Joshua, even though it looks like it due to the timing of His appearance. They would have been better off to have been stoned and to be with God; which Paul addresses.

Philippians 1:21 “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”

- God’s appearance at this time is related back to verse 5 when Moses and Aaron fell on their faces – they were crying out to God.
- God now appears – dramatically – to defend His own name!

V: 11-12 God addresses Moses: How long will this people provoke Me?

- What will it take for them to believe Me? Moses can’t answer these questions, and God really isn’t looking for answers, He is drawing something out in Moses – a heart of compassion for His people.
- As God describes what the people deserve, God causes Moses’ heart to be stirred unto intercession on behalf of the people, and on behalf of the glory and honor of God.
- The people do deserve the judgment of God, but through intercession they receive His continuing grace and mercy.

V: 13-17 Here again, as with the golden calf incident, Moses intercedes on behalf of the people.

- The basis Moses’ appeal isn’t the worthiness of the people, but on the character of God, and His reputation amongst the people.

V: 17 “*I beseech thee...*”

V: 18-19 Moses quotes God's word back to God, "reminding" God of what He said.

Exodus 34:6-7 ⁶"And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, the Lord, the Lord is God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, ⁷keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation."

- While Moses offers a convincing and logical argument; God's mind isn't "changed" per se.
- What is at stake here is God's holy name. If His word isn't good then neither is His name. This is why the psalmist declares:

Psalm 138:2 "I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name."

- God is the One who initiated the thoughts that Moses is expressing. In this scenario God is eliciting the intercession of Moses which in turn releases the mercy and forgiveness of God as it is applied to this situation.
- We see other examples of this in the history of Israel where God was looking for someone like Moses to intercede:

Ezekiel 22:30 "And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before Me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none."

God is sovereign:

Deuteronomy 32:39 "See now that I, even I, am He, and there is no God with Me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of My hand."

V: 20-21 The Lord responds, the Lord pardons and forgives – the nation is saved.

Psalm 103:8, 10 ⁸"The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy." – ¹⁰"He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities."

- In this, God is glorified, and His glory fills all the earth!
- God is making an oath – "*as truly as I live*" – a day is coming when all the earth shall be filled with His glory – like the waters that cover the seas – completely.

Psalm 72:19 “And blessed be His glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with His glory; amen, and amen.”

- How we long for that day!

V: 22-23 Those who have seen the glory of God and rejected it do not enter into the promise land.

- God is keeping score: 10 times they have tempted Him.

1. At the Red Sea Exodus 14:11-12
2. At Mara Exodus 16:2
3. Wilderness of Sin Exodus 16:2
4. 2 rebellions concerning manna Exodus 16:20, 27, Numbers 11.
5. At Rephidim Exodus 17:1
6. Horeb Exodus 32:7
7. Taberah Numbers 11:1
8. Kibroth Hattaavah Numbers 11:4
9. Kadesh, murmuring spies report. Numbers 14

- Those who rejected God will now know the rejection of God – how terrible.

Hebrews 6:4-6 “⁴For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, ⁵and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, ⁶if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame.”

2 Peter 2:20-22 “²⁰For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. ²¹For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. ²²But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, the dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.”

- This answers that question regarding whether fallen angels can be forgiven or saved, this answer is “no”.

V: 24 “But” – contrast: Caleb has a different spirit, and he will see the promise land.

- What was that “different spirit?”

2 Timothy 1:7 “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”

- Joshua and Caleb had the un-beatable combination of power, love, and a sound mind going for them.

V: 25 They were encamped near Kadesh, near the border to the Promised land.

- Now they are told to turn away from the promise land and go back toward the wilderness towards the Red Sea.



V: 26-31 The Lord was listening and took note of their murmurings, of all that they spoke against the Lord.

- Those that spoke against the Lord, pronounced their own judgment.

Proverbs 18:21 “Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.”

- Everyone 20 years old and older will die in the wilderness because of their lack of faith.
- 650,000 men + women, this will be the longest funeral march in history. Why? Faithlessness...

V: 31 “... *which ye have despised*” – like the manna – had no regard for, didn’t value, looked upon with disgust – God only gives good gifts to His children.

- Only Caleb and Joshua will be spared; because they had a different spirit.

V: 32-33 The little ones who you said would be a prey, they will be the inheritors – yet it will take 40 years to accomplish this judgment.

- “*Whoredoms*” – “Infidelity” NKJV Spiritual un-faithfulness.

V: 34 One year for each of the 40 days of searching out.

Galatians 6:7-8 “⁷Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. ⁸For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”

- “Breach of promise” – “rejection”. NKJV also translated “alienation”.
- The children of Israel aren’t there yet, but later they would have to deal with something referred to as the “**hidden face of God**”.

Deuteronomy 31:17 “Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them; so that they will say in that day, are not these evils come upon us, because our god is not among us? (Ezekiel 39:29 – hide My face no longer.)

V: 35 God’s word will come to pass – it always does!

Joshua 23:14 “And behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.”

- Their sin wasn’t against Moses or Aaron, or Joshua or Caleb – it was against God.

David understood this:

Psalms 51:4 “Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.”

V: 36-37 The Lord takes care of business. Bear in mind, these men were leaders – the bear a greater responsibility.

Romans 12:19 “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.”

Romans 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death, **but** the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.”

V: 38-39 “**But**” the faithful are spared: Moses explains God’s plan to the people.

Romans 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.”

2 Peter 2:9 “For the Lord knoweth how to deliver the Godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.”

V: 40-43 Selective hearing; seemingly some of the people don’t want to deal with reality and they continue in their own course of action – in spite of having been warned.

Exodus 33:14-15 “¹⁴And He said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. ¹⁵And he said unto Him, if thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.”

- There is a huge difference between faith and presumption or folly; they might even be the same action, but the difference or distinction is simply “God’s Word”. Does God say to or not.

V: 44-45 They are once again directly contradicting God’s word – to go back towards the Red Sea – and the result is death.

Deuteronomy 30:19 “I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.”

Romans 10:17 “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

- They thought that they could fix or remedy their own sin issue – and they could not.
- The end of it is that they go out with out God on their side, they’re routed by the Amalekites and Canaanites and driven almost 100 miles to the North to Hormah – where they perish.
- Their sin carried them farther away from God, then they perished.

Up to this point we’ve seen different typologies:

1. **Egypt**: representing the world, the old life in bondage to sin.
2. **The Passover**: the shed blood on the door posts, the cross of Jesus - deliverance and redemption from sin.
3. **Crossing through the Red Sea**: Water baptism, leaving the old life behind, symbolizing a new life in Christ Jesus – walking with Him.
4. Having a conscious of God’s presence in our life, walking in the spirit, denying the lust of the flesh.
5. Then we come to the wilderness.
6. **There are two types of wilderness experience; one is legitimate, the other is illegitimate.**
7. Every Christian goes through a wilderness experience, moving from the borders of Egypt, the old life into the promise land, the rich abundant victorious life that God has for us in the Spirit, in this world.
8. For many there is the illegitimate wilderness experience; spending too much time in the wilderness. Not really going anywhere in your Christian walk or life, seemingly circling in the wilderness.
9. Sometimes seemingly close to the promise land, God is moving in your life, you sense His presence... thinking “Oh this is glorious”but then.
10. Roaming back towards Egypt, suddenly the leaks, the garlic, and the onions of the old life draw us back, their scent blocks out our memory of the hard bondage, our vision is clouded by sin.
11. Not entering into the life that God has for us, striving, struggling, still in the wilderness. Not having entered into God’s rest for us.

- God wants us to cross the Jordan, bringing us into the promise land, reckoning our old man to be dead. It's a step beyond baptism, where it is done figuratively. Coming to the reality of the old man; that I've carried him around too long!
- Time to bury him, to reckon the old life to be dead, entering into the life of the spirit, walking in the spirit.
- Life in the spirit is the blessed life, life in the spirit experiencing God's blessing and power in and through us – victory over the flesh and the things of the flesh. Just as God would later tell Joshua, "every place you put your foot, I have given that to you for your possession."
- Many of us have settled for too little, we've learned to live with our weakness, we've learned to live with our failures. We've learned to excuse them, and accept them, rather than to receive God's victory over them.

Romans 6:6-14 ⁶Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. ⁷For he that is dead is freed from sin. ⁸Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him. ⁹Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him. ¹⁰For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. ¹¹Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. ¹²Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. ¹³Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. ¹⁴For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace."