

# Numbers 9-11 • Problems Along the Way

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Numbers, chapter 9. We're about a year into the wilderness. And it says here in verse 1, *"And the LORD spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the first month of the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying, 2 Let the people of Israel keep the Passover at its appointed time. 3 On the fourteenth day of this month, at twilight, you shall keep it at its appointed time; according to all its statutes and all its rules you shall keep it." 4 So Moses told the people of Israel that they should keep the Passover. 5 And they kept the Passover in the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, at twilight, (Or in other words, beginning at sundown, which to them was the beginning of a new day.) in the wilderness of Sinai; according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so the people of Israel did." (ESV)*

So stop there if you would, just for a moment. This is, as I said, the first anniversary observance of the Passover. One year from this time - one year before - they had gone through the original Passover. Which of course you'll remember as that time when the Lord moved powerfully to loose them from the bonds of slavery in Egypt, by causing an angel to go throughout all of Egypt. And to bring death to every home where there was a firstborn male.

The way the Lord made a way for the people of Israel to be safe during that plague of death, was to take a year old lamb, sacrifice it, take the blood from that lamb, and literally paint it on the doorposts and lintel of their homes on the outside. When the angel of the Lord came to that dwelling, he would see the blood of the lamb and pass-over that home. Of course, that's where the name Passover comes from. It's a beautiful picture, lovely picture of what it means to be a believer in Jesus Christ. And to be sheltering under the blood of the lamb.

We sang here tonight, Worthy is the Lamb. Why do we call Jesus, the lamb? Well, a couple of different reasons. You'll remember that John, was the first one to identify Jesus, as the *"Lamb of God,"* other than prophetically. In the New Testament, we hear John the Baptist, as Jesus is walking by, he turns to his disciples, and he says, *"Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"* (John 1:29, 1:36)

And then, of course, later on, the apostle Paul makes reference to that. Let me show you this on the screen from 1 Corinthians, chapter 5. It's beginning at verse 7. It says,

**1 Corinthians 5:7b-8 (ESV)**

*For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*

*For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. (He goes on to say) Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, (or the old yeast, if you will of) the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*

John speaks of Jesus, as the "*Lamb of God.*" Paul makes the connection between the dots of the Old Testament picture of the Passover lamb, and Jesus, our Passover Lamb. I hope that tonight you are sheltering under the blood of the Lamb. That the blood of Jesus, is literally painted on the doorpost of your heart.

And because we know that by this, in the same way that the Israelites were saved from death on that night, we are rescued from death. Death has been defeated as far as we're concerned. Because we are sheltering under the blood of the Lamb. And it really is just an absolutely, beautiful picture of our salvation in Jesus Christ.

And by the way, they were to do this annually, as a way of remembering. It's very similar to what we do with the Lord's Supper. When we go through the elements of the Lord's Supper, we're remembering what Jesus did through His body and blood. They annually would go through this whole process of blood on the doorposts, and taking the lamb, and roasting. And they would even eat the meal with their garment tucked in their belt like they were ready to leave.

And that's the way God wanted them to do it, and by remembrance. He said, eat it in haste. Eat it ready to leave. Because you're remembering how God set you free from your bondage in Egypt. And when the call came to leave, you quickly left the country, and so forth. Remembering is a wonderful and very important thing in the body of Christ, even today. And we need to take very seriously, the call to remember.

Now, as we keep reading, we're going to see some issues arising here throughout these chapters that Moses is going to have to deal with. First of all, there's an issue regarding Passover.

It says, "<sup>6</sup> *And there were certain men who were unclean through touching a dead body, (Could be that they were guys whose job it was to even take care of dead bodies. We don't know. But it says, "so that they could not keep the Passover on that day, (because of the fact they'd been rendered unclean, and so) they came before Moses and Aaron on that day. <sup>7</sup> And those men said to him, "We are unclean through touching a dead body. Why are we kept from bringing the LORD's offering at its appointed time among the people of Israel?" <sup>8</sup> And Moses said to them, (all right,) "Wait, that I may hear what the LORD will command concerning you."*

(And) <sup>9</sup> *The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>10</sup> "Speak to the people of Israel, saying, If any one of you or your descendants is unclean through touching a dead body, or is on a long journey, he shall still keep the Passover to the LORD. <sup>11</sup> In the second month on the fourteenth day at twilight (or sundown) they shall keep it."*

Now, Passover was usually on the first month, on the fourteenth day. God is basically saying, fine, the very next month there will be a special observance of Passover for those who had been unclean previously.

And verse 11, he says, I'm in the middle of verse 11. "*They shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. <sup>12</sup> They shall leave none of it until the morning, nor break any of its bones; according to all the statutes for the Passover they shall keep it."*

And then He gives this warning. "<sup>13</sup> *But if anyone who is clean (in other words, they haven't been rendered unclean in any way) and (they are) not on a journey fails to keep the Passover, that person shall be cut off from his people because he did not bring the LORD's offering at its appointed time; that man shall bear his sin."*

Now, that's fascinating, isn't it? "*...that man... (will) bear his sin.*" Isn't that interesting? Now remember, Passover is a picture of salvation. And this is saying, this is basically saying, if somebody is clean, they're not gone on a journey, they have no reason why they can't participate in Passover, but they just choose not to, what then? He says, they shall be cut off from their people, and they will bear their sin.

What happens if somebody chooses not to accept, or to understand, or to embrace, what Jesus did for us on the cross? That person has to bear their sin. Right? They're not accepting the fact that Jesus bore their sin; they've got to bear it themselves. There's no other option. Right? Do you see how the language

is so perfectly tuned to understanding this as a fulfillment of what Jesus accomplished for us on the cross? There is no salvation. And that's why this is so...

You might think, wow! That's a pretty serious sort of a deal to levy against someone just because they didn't participate in this feast. They're here, but they, I just didn't want to do that. And, it's like, I'm not feeling real well... Or, I just didn't get around to it, or something. No, you don't do it, and you're there, and you're able to do it. You're cut off from your people.

What's that a picture of? You're being cut off from God; cutting off from the community of believers. It basically means, you're not a believer. Because you haven't embraced, you haven't accepted, you haven't laid hold of the salvation that is ours in Jesus Christ. He says, hey, if somebody's able to do it...

And then verse 14 says, *"And if a stranger sojourns among you and would keep the Passover to the LORD, according to the statute of the Passover and according to its rule, so shall he do. (It says,) You shall have one statute, both for the sojourner and for the native."*

So, you even got a Gentile who's making his way through the area. He gets connected to the community of the Israelites there. And he learns a bit about, God - Yahweh, and the deliverance of Yahweh and so on. And he wants to participate in the Passover. God says, yeah.

This is an interesting picture, isn't it? That this salvation is not just for Jews alone. But is also available for those who are open to embrace it. And accept it. This should have been a picture to the Jews even in Jesus's day. This should have helped the believers in the New Testament church understand that God's gospel was available to the Jews.

They should have read passages like this, and said, well, come to think of it... I mean, because they were really tweaked when the Gentiles started coming to faith in Jesus. They had to have a big Church meeting, and go, what's this all about? Are we going to let these people in? I mean, they're Gentiles for heaven's sakes. We grew up believing, that the only reason God made Gentiles was to stoke the fires of hell. What are we going to do with these people that are coming to faith in Jesus Christ?

Somebody should have said, you know what? I recall back in the Old Testament... They wouldn't have called it that of course, but, back under the government of Moses, even when a sojourner came through the community of

Israel and they wanted to keep the Passover, God said, yes, absolutely. Let them shelter equally under the blood of the Lamb. It's a beautiful picture of salvation.

All right, we'll keep reading here. Verse 15 through the end of the chapter deals with how the presence of the Lord, was visible in the camp. And then how the Lord would use that presence, in a cloud and flame, to direct the community whenever they were to leave, or if they were to stay and so forth.

It says, *"On the day that the tabernacle was set up, the cloud covered the tabernacle, (So, from that day on... And it says) the tent of the testimony. (That's another name for it, Or the tent of meeting.) And at evening it was over the tabernacle like the appearance of fire until morning. (God made this really incredible nightlight) 16 So it was always: the cloud covered it by day and the appearance of fire by night. 17 And whenever the cloud lifted from over the tent, after that the people of Israel set out, and in the place where the clouds settled down, there the people of Israel camped."*

Can you imagine, people, living in the wilderness? And having this constant manifestation of the presence of God, constant. Every day, every night, you look toward the tabernacle, which would always be set up in the center of the camp. And there, what do you see during the day? You see a cloud above it. And at night, you wake up, a little insomnia going on, you go over to the opening to your tent. You poke your head out, get a little fresh air. What do you see? The appearance of a flame just hanging in the air above the tabernacle, above the tent of meeting. How cool would that be?

I mean, the constant reminder of God's presence among His people. And, of course, the tabernacle was in the center, so, there's the presence of God in the center of His people. But what a comfort that would have been. Would it not? To wake up and just see the flame, I'm going to go out just, yeah, I'm kind of restless, I'm going to go out and just look at the flame. Wow!

We think it's cool having an eternal flame in a memorial. But it's just a gas pipe coming up through the ground and stuff. This is this supernatural manifestation of the presence of God that's just there for you to look at any time.

See nobody was doing any of this intellectual wacko stuff, I just have some problems with believing in a personal God. That wasn't anything about what they were dealing with. All you had to do was put your head out of your tent, there He is right there. You can see the presence right there, yeah. In fact, go walk over toward that thing. You'll drop dead. Because the presence of God is

so... Filled this area and so forth. You want to know God is real? Open your eyes. How amazing that must have been.

Verse 18 says, *"<sup>18</sup> At the command of the LORD the people of Israel set out, and at the command of the LORD they camped. (What was the command? The lifting of the cloud, the moving of the cloud, the settling of the cloud. It says,) As long as the cloud rested over the tabernacle, they remained in camp. <sup>19</sup> Even when the cloud continued over the tabernacle many days, the people of Israel kept the charge of the LORD and did not set out. <sup>20</sup> Sometimes the cloud was a few days over the tabernacle, and according to the command of the LORD they remained in camp; then according to the command of the LORD they set out. <sup>21</sup> And sometimes the cloud remained from evening until morning. (That's, so it was a real quickie, just an overnight stay) And when the cloud lifted in the morning, they set out, or if it continued for a day and a night, when the cloud lifted they set out.*

*<sup>22</sup> Whether it was two days, or a month, or a longer time, that the cloud continued over the tabernacle, abiding there, the people of Israel remained in camp and did not set out, but when it lifted they set out. <sup>23</sup> At the command of the LORD they camped, and at the command of the LORD they set out. They kept the charge of the LORD, at the command of the LORD by Moses."*

Do you think they could have said that any more ways? Possibly. Just wanted you to know, that "...at the command of the LORD, they set out." And stayed.

Now, interesting as we get into chapter 10. Here's one of those problems that any administrator is going to see when you have a group of people, like somewhere around 2.5 million: How do we get information to these people? I mean, instant messaging doesn't exist. We can't just text everybody's phone at the same time, or send out an email, or something of that nature. How do you take this huge, massive, group of people and communicate to them?

Because there's lots of things that you would need to communicate. For example: it's time to go; it's time to do this; it's time to gather; we all want you to come to the tent of meeting; take out your sword there's an enemy coming. There's a lot of things you would need to communicate to a group of people. They had to come up with a form of instant messaging. And that's what this chapter begins to tell us.

It says in verse 1, that, *"The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>2</sup> "Make two silver trumpets. Of hammered work (and) you shall make them, and you shall use them for summoning the congregation and for breaking camp."*

I'm surprised somebody didn't come up with an instant messaging program called "silver trumpets." Wouldn't that be cool? These trumpets, again, are used to get everybody's attention.

*"<sup>3</sup> And when both are blown, all the congregations (will) gather themselves to you at the entrance of the tent of meeting. <sup>4</sup> But if they blow only one, then the chiefs, (just) the heads of the tribes of Israel, (should) gather themselves to you."*

When you blow an alarm... And by the way, the word alarm doesn't necessarily mean danger. In fact, some of you, if you have a different translation than the one I'm reading, your Bible may not use the word alarm. But it just means, a signal - like your morning alarm. Right? It doesn't mean you're alarmed. It just means, it's a signal for you to get up.

*And, "<sup>5</sup> When you blow an alarm, the camps that are on the east side shall set out. (This was a signal that they should begin to move) <sup>6</sup> And when you blow an alarm the second time, the camps that are on the south side shall set out. An alarm is to be blown whenever they are to set out. <sup>7</sup> But when the assembly is to be gathered together, you should blow a long blast, but you shall not sound an alarm."*

Apparently, an alarm was probably a shorter blast on... We didn't get a chance to hear these. We're just guessing. But there was a difference in the length of the blast, and so forth, to let the people know just exactly what was going on.

*"And (then we're told in verse 8, that) the sons of Aaron, the priests, (are the ones who are supposed to be in charge of this instant messaging process. It says, they) shall blow the trumpets. The trumpets shall be to you for a perpetual statute throughout your generations. <sup>9</sup> And when you go to war in your land against the adversary who oppresses you, then you shall sound an alarm with the trumpets, that you may be remembered before the LORD your God, and you shall be saved from your enemies."*

Oh, I'll never forget a number of years ago, I had a guy call me up here. And this was a long time ago. I don't even know if I had a secretary, yet. That tells you how long that was. But this guy called me up, and he hadn't been, ever been to our church before. And he wanted to know if we blew trumpets. That was his one question.

You guys, do you guys blow the shofar? And I said, you mean the old, the Hebrew trumpet thing? Yeah. Do you guys blow the shofar in church?" And I

was like, no, we don't blow a trumpet. And he was like, okay, I'm looking for a church that blows the trumpet thing.

And I wanted to ask him a little bit, about what he was talking about. Or why that was important. But there have been people, born again Christians, who have been taught, that the Church is the replacement for Israel. That the Church takes over. In fact, it is called, Replacement Theology. And Replacement Theology is the idea, that God, has basically released Israel from His providential oversight. That they are no longer His chosen people. The church is now... And there are different flavors of Replacement Theology, alright, like a lot of movements. But I'm giving you the gist that is behind it.

And because they believe that the church has taken over where Israel left off, there are varying beliefs in how much of the law the Church should adopt. Some is very legalistic. To the point where we meet on the Sabbath, and we literally observe the feasts of the LORD, and we blow the shofar. Some, it's just more of a charismatic legalism where we blow the shofar because we want to usher in the power of God's Spirit, among our meeting, or whatever. And there's all kinds of just weird, wacky sort of things.

Now, of course, you know from reading the Book of Acts, from reading the letters in the New Testament, there's no reference in the New Testament of the church adopting those aspects of Judaism. Because the church is never seen in the Bible as taking over for Israel. That is a theological conclusion that people have come to without real biblical warrant.

We still believe that Israel is a very... Well, we still believe they are the chosen nation of God. America is not. America is very blessed, by the way, nation, within the context of all the nations that have been on the earth. And that is... There is no doubt about that. But America is not the chosen people of God. The Jews continue to be. We continue to pray for the peace of Jerusalem. We continue to look toward Jerusalem and Israel together to guide our understanding of last days.

But we know that Jesus... When Jesus returns to this earth, He's going to... We know exactly where He's going to set his foot down when He returns to the earth. He's going to set down on the Mount of Olives. We know that because it is outlined prophetically. He's not coming to New York, or Los Angeles, or anywhere in between. He's not coming to Mount Ararat, to recover the Ark. He's coming to Israel. And there He will establish His throne.

And the Bible says, that during the Millennial Kingdom, all the nations on earth will stream to Jerusalem to hear His Word. Because there He will be, physically present. And now, the nations of the world will bring gifts and offerings to the people of Israel. And everybody's going to understand at that time their "chosen," sort of a situation. Now it doesn't negate the Church. The Church is the "Bride of Christ." And that is a very special position that we have. We too, are chosen. Okay? But we're not a physical, earthly nation. We are a spiritual nation, if you will, as the Church.

But anyway, we don't believe that the Church has taken over for Israel. And that's why we don't blow a trumpet. A long description of why we don't blow a trumpet. But there you go. So, yeah, even when they go to war.

Verse 10 goes on to say, and he says, also, *"On the day of your gladness also, (And that's always the in-gathering of the feasts and stuff like that; and in-gathering of their harvest. It says) and at your appointed feasts and at the beginnings of your months, you shall blow the trumpets over your burnt offerings and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings. They shall be a reminder of you before your God: I am the LORD your God."*

Alright, now, beginning in verse 11 and following, it's basically just going to tell us how they moved out. Now, we learned this in some previous chapters, so we're not going to take a lot of time here. But this is the order of their progression.

It says, *"In the second year, in the second month, on the twentieth day of the month, the cloud lifted from over the tabernacle of the testimony, <sup>12</sup> and the people of Israel set out by stages from the wilderness of Sinai. And the cloud settled down in the wilderness of Paran. (And) <sup>13</sup> They set out for the first time at the command of the LORD by Moses. (And then we're reminded of the order of their setting out."*

Verse 14 says, *"The standard of the camp of the people of Judah set out first by their companies, and over their company was Nahshon the son of Amminadab."*

And then in verse 15 you have the tribe of Issachar under the leadership of *"Nethanel the son of Zuar. <sup>16</sup> And over the company of the tribe of the people of Zebulun was Eliab..."* You can see how you go down there.

Now, after these first 3 tribes set out, then it says in verse 17, *"And when the tabernacle was taken down, the sons of Gershon and the sons of Merari, who carried the tabernacle, set out. (So the tabernacle goes fourth in line. <sup>18</sup> And*

then you have the standard of the camp of Reuben... , verse 19. "You have <sup>19</sup> ...the company of the tribe of the people of Simeon... In verse 20, you have ...<sup>20</sup> the company of the tribe of the people of Gad... And then after the tribe of Gad...

And then you have "<sup>18</sup> ...*the standard of the camp of Reuben...*" Verse 19, you have "<sup>19</sup> ...*the company of the tribe of the people of Simeon...*" In verse 20, you have "<sup>20</sup> ...*the company of the tribe of the people of Gad...*"

And then after the tribe of Gad, it says, now, "<sup>21</sup> *Then the Kohathites (which are another one of the tribal priests) set out, carrying the holy things, and the tabernacle was set up before their arrival*"

So, you see how they would come to the new location. And by the time the Kohathites got there, the tabernacle was set up. And they could put in the furniture and stuff like that. It was an orderly arrangement for things to work and there wasn't chaos.

And then so after the Kohathites set out, we have, "<sup>22</sup>...*the standard of the camp of the people of Ephraim...*" Followed in 23, by "...<sup>23</sup> *company of the tribe of Manasseh...*"

Verse 24, "...*the company of the tribe of the people of Benjamin...*" And then we have "<sup>25</sup> ...*the standard of the camp of the people of Dan...*" Verse 26 we have "...*the company of the tribe of the people of Asher.*" Over "...*the company of the tribe of the people of Naphtali*" is the last one; and their leader "was *Ahirah...*"

And it says in verse 28, "*This was the order of march of the people of Israel by their companies, when they set out.*"

Last note here regards some personal, relative type stuff. It says, "<sup>29</sup> *And Moses said to Hobab the son of Reuel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, 'We are setting out for the place of which the LORD said, 'I will give it to you.' Come with us, and we will do good to you, for the LORD has promised good to Israel.*"

Now stop there for just a moment. Some of you might be wondering, wait a minute. I thought his father-in-law's name was Jethro. Why are we talking about Hobab here? Well, there are a lot of different explanations for the possibilities that exist. Not the least of which is a lot of people back then had several names.

But there's also an interesting sort of a grammatical explanation. The Hebrew root that is translated father-in-law can, in fact, refer to any relative. And it is believed by many Bible teachers and scholars that rather than father-in-law, this is actually speaking of his brother-in-law. And in the long run, of course, it doesn't matter. But the point is that Moses is offering to his relative to come and travel.

Notice in verse 30, the response is, *"But he said to him, "I will not go. I will depart to my own land and to my kindred." 31 And he (this is Moses) said, "Please do not leave us, for you know where we should camp in the wilderness, and you will serve as eyes for us. 32 And if you do go with us, whatever good the LORD will do to us, the same we will do to you.""* Which is a bit of a promise.

*"33 So they set out from the mount of the LORD three days' journey. And the ark of the covenant of the LORD went before them three days journey, to seek out a resting place for them. 34 And the cloud of the LORD was over them by day, whenever they set out from the camp.*

*35 And whenever the ark set out, Moses (would say) Arise, O LORD, and let your enemies be scattered, and let those who hate you flee before you."* Some of you might have a song going through your mind. There's actually a worship song from many years ago, that's taken from that verse.

And it says in verse 36, *"And when it rested, he said, "Return, O LORD, to the ten thousand thousands of Israel."*

It's interesting, isn't it, that Moses is attempting to get his relative to stick around. Because he says, you know the best place to camp. You know all the KOAs I guess, or something like that along the way. Well, obviously this man was familiar with the area and so forth. But ultimately it wasn't necessary, was it? Because it didn't really matter whether Hobab thought this was a good spot or that's a good spot over there. They weren't going to stop until the cloud stopped anyway.

It's like when you got God as your GPS, Hobab really doesn't cut the mustard anymore. You know what I'm saying? It's like, you don't really need the guy. You might as well cut him loose and let him go back to his own home. Because, we got the best travel set-up that you can imagine. Because God is directing us and telling us where to stop, and so forth.

Alright, Numbers chapter 11. Well, everybody who ever has done any traveling knows that traveling can be exhausting. And when people get exhausted, they

tend to get cranky. And that's pretty much what chapter 11 is about. But you're going to notice that the crankiness goes way over the top here.

*It says, "And the people complained in the hearing of the LORD about their misfortunes, and when the LORD heard it, his anger was kindled,..."*

You see, that's the problem, isn't it, about complaining. God always hears. You can't complain in life without God not hearing you complain. Even if you don't say the words, He still sees your heart. God's always listening.

Now, complaining is bad enough all by itself. Don't you hate to be around a complainer? I mean, somebody who is constantly complaining. Always complaining. Some of you guys know what it's like.

You go to work, you got a coworker or something like that. They live to complain; say bad things, oh, the food around here... And it's always cold," and they're just constantly complaining. And it really drags you down. But the real danger is that it can also, suck you in. It can become very communicable. Just like a cold; you can catch it. And start complaining all over other people as well.

But you know what's interesting about it? What lies behind complaining when it comes to your life as a believer, see that... I can almost give people a pass who don't know the Lord. Because I wouldn't want to live their life, apart from God, cut off from God. Cut off from understanding His love, and protection, and guidance, and direction, and wisdom. And they've got some genuine things, I supposed, to complain about.

But as a believer, you as a believer, me as a believer, think about it when we complain and we've invited Him to be Lord of our lives. And Lord means: director, governor, our guide, our partner, companion. And we've invited Him into that role, literally slid over in the car, let Him get into the driver's seat, heading down the road. And what do we start doing in the passenger seat or in the backseat? We start complaining about His driving. See, that's what we're doing as believers.

You see, as a believer, complaining is giving voice to unbelief. And that's a very important thing to understand for you and I. When we complain, we're basically communicating to God, that we don't believe He has our best in mind. And we're complaining about what's happening. Because we don't like what's happening. And unbelief expresses doubt and criticism of God's ability to properly care for us.

How did God respond to the grumbling of His people? Remember, these are the people who daily can look out and see the cloud above the tabernacle. And the fire above the tabernacle at night - daily - or night. How is God going to respond to a critical spirit of grumbling and complaining going on?

And it says, I'm in the middle of verse one, "*and the fire of the LORD burned among them and consumed some outlying parts of the camp.*" Wow! To show His wrath had been kindled, He allowed fire to actually consume some of the outlying parts of the camp. We don't know whether it had consumed any lives. We don't know. But it was scary enough that it got their attention.

And in verse 2, "*Then the people cried out to Moses, and Moses prayed to the LORD, and the fire died down. <sup>3</sup> So the name of that place was called Taberah, (which means burning) because of the fire the LORD burned among them.*"

You would think, okay, I think we just got spanked as a nation, Right? And it doesn't mean the whole nation is grumbling, complaining. But there's people grumbling. And God's taking care of these people. It's like, hey, I Am the One who's in charge. When you're complaining, you are complaining against Me.

God allows this fire to burn to communicate His wrath. You would think the people would go, okay, we need to watch our P's and Q's here. Let's get this thing worked out so that we have the right attitude."

Well, keep reading. It says, "*<sup>4</sup> Now the rabble that was among them (and I want you to take note of that phrase, *rabble that was among them*) had a strong craving. And the people of Israel also wept again and said, "Oh, that we had meat to eat!"*"

It sounds like the rabble started this groaning and complaining. And the people of Israel, carried it on. By the way, this is what they're complaining about is their diet. And it begins, you'll notice, with the rabble. If you look up the word rabble today, it means disorderly crowd. That's what it'll say. Or, it'll say, a mob. And somebody who stirs up a riot is called a rabble rouser.

But in this sort of a definition, in the context of this word, it points to a mixed multitude. It points to a group of people who are of mixed heritage, non-Jews, maybe even some half-Jews. You got to know that when God set Israel free from their bondage in Egypt, there were probably, people in Egypt who were from other countries who had also been conquered by Egypt, who were living among them as slaves from other countries nearby. Probably saw the

opportunity during the exodus of the Jews from their nation, to just blend in with these folks. And just be gone.

When the nation of Israel moved out of Egypt, it was more than just the nation of Israel. There were other people. Some of... I'm sure there were even some Egyptians among them who left because it's like, "Wow, there's no reason staying here. The land has been devastated. This God, seems to have the power. We're going to follow this thing." But they're not really true believers. They haven't really put their hearts, given their hearts to Yahweh. They become this rabble. Right? There's no genuine faith. They begin to complain. And here's what they're saying. And of course this is passing on to the people, too.

Verse 5. Oh *"We remember the fish (that) we ate in Egypt that cost nothing, (We could just go out and throw our line in and get a fish. Oh, and) the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic. (Made our breath stink, but we loved it) 6 But now our (look at this, but now our) strength is dried up, and there is nothing at all but this manna to look at."*

And then it's going to give us a little go back here, and tell us a little bit about the manna. Just to remind us, *"7 Now the manna was like coriander seed, and its appearance (in other words, it looked) like... bdellium."* Which doesn't help us, visually because we don't even know exactly what bdellium refers to in this passage.

We think that it's an extract that comes from trees that was used to make ointments and perfume smell good. But apparently this thing has a visual. It looks visually like what manna perhaps, looked like when they... I don't know, at some point... Anyway, good question.

But it says, *"8 The people went about and gathered it and ground it in handmills or beat it in mortars and boiled it in pots and made cakes of it. And the taste of it was like the taste of cakes baked with oil. (Which sounds good) 9 When the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell with it."* So the people, of course, would just go out and gather it.

Well, it says, *"10 Moses heard the people weeping throughout their clans, everyone at the door of his tent."* So they literally go to the door of their tent, throw back their heads and howl about their diet. Right? And this manna. And they're so tired of it. *"And (it says,) the anger of the LORD blazed hotly, and Moses was displeased. (And) 11 Moses said to the LORD, (now check out Moses and his little conversation with God) "Why have you dealt ill with your*

*servant? And why have I not found favor in your sight, that you lay the burden of all this people on me?"*

In other words, these crying babies, I've had it up to here. That's what he's saying to God. Right? He's telling Him. I am sick to death of these whining, complaining children of Yours. Right?

He says, look at verse 12. *"Did I conceive all this people? Did I give them birth, that you should say to me, 'Carry them in your bosom, as a nurse carries a nursing child,' to the land that you swore to give their fathers? (He says,) <sup>13</sup> Where am I going to get meat to give to all this people? For they weep before me and (they) say, 'Give us meat, that we (can) eat.', (but) <sup>14</sup> I am not able to carry all this people alone; the burden is too heavy for me."*

Do you hear heart the heart of Moses? And then he goes on in verse 15. I love this. He says, *"If you (are going to) treat me like this, (then just kill me, yeah,) kill me at once, if I find favor in your sight, that I may not see my wretchedness."*

Sometimes you realize there are people in your life that just bring out the worst in you. Have you ever noticed that? Sometimes it's your own children. Hey, if the shoe fits. Right? Well, there's just sometimes, God puts people in our lives to rub us the wrong way and push all of our buttons - our drama buttons. And we start seeing who we really are.

It takes time, many times, for a believer because we like to point the finger at other people and just think to ourselves, if it wasn't for you, I wouldn't act like such a jerk all the time. You're the one that makes me yell. You're the one that makes me get angry. It's because of you that I throw things and punch holes in the wall. Well, what God would...

Moses was such a humble man. He understood that what these people were doing is, they were bringing out the worst in him. And he was saying to God, you know what? I'm constantly having to see my wretchedness, because of these people. And I'm tired of it. I'd like a little peace in my life. I get it. I get it.

Unfortunately, that's just not a prayer, necessarily, that God was going to answer. Because as I said, sometimes God allows us to feel the burden that's going on in our lives. Whatever that burden may be, that we might become more aware that it is our human tendency. It is a failing...

People listen to me, it is a failing of our human tendency to carry burdens that we were never created to carry. Fact of the matter is, Moses could not carry these people. Nor was he called by God, to do so. He was not called to carry these people. God was going to carry these people, not Moses.

And there are times in life when God will allow us to feel the heaviness of the burden. And that heaviness of your burden might be something, well obviously, completely unrelated. Could even not involve people. You could be carrying the burden of your financial welfare. You could be carrying the burden of relationships in your family that, maybe, are not good. You could be carrying other burdens for other people. You might even be burdened for your nation in such a way, that you just, you can't even read the news or watch the TV, when the news comes on just because it's just too, burdensome.

And there are times in life when we are made to look at those things in our lives that just cause us pain. And God is using those situations to remind us of our human tendency to pick up burdens that aren't ours. And God is saying to you and I, I never called you to carry that - that burden. I didn't call you to carry that. Why are you carrying that? It's breaking you.

I have seen couples, particularly married couples, where one or the other is literally, burdened to the point where they're miserable. And they wonder why they got marriage problems. And they're really... They don't really have marriage problems. They got sin problems. And they have issues of carrying burdens that they were never created to carry.

Here's the interesting thing about the burden of the Lord. Remember what Jesus said? He begins by saying, come to me all you who are weary and heavy laden, that means burdened. Take my yoke upon you. For I am gentle and humble in heart. Then he went on to say, My yoke is easy. My burden is light. (Matthew 11:28-30) In other words, take His yoke upon you. The yoke that He gives you. He says, because I will give you also the grace to carry that burden. Right?

If you're carrying a burden tonight, and it's just whacking you out to the point where you're not sleeping at night. Or you're not feeling well; or, you're just, you're a bundle of nerves about something or other. That's not what God called you to do. He didn't call you to live that kind of a worrisome sort of a life.

He called you to: pray, trust Him, and to take His yoke, and His burden upon you. That's easy and light. And that if you're carrying something that isn't easy and light, it's not God's burden. It's your burden. You put it there. Or maybe somebody else put it there. It can also be foisted upon you by someone else.

Don't you know that's your responsibility? Well, maybe, maybe not. Is that something God... Is that a burden that He gave you? You can see here what's going on. Moses is at the end. And this is a... It's really a good thing because God's going to give him some help here.

It says, "<sup>16</sup> Then the LORD said to Moses, "Gather for me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them, and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you. <sup>17</sup> And I will come down and talk with you there. And I will take some of the Spirit that is on you and put it on them, and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, so that you may not bear it yourself alone. <sup>18</sup> And say to the people,..." "

Well, let me stop there for just a moment. Because, do you see God's reaction or God's response to this overwhelming burden that Moses is carrying? He doesn't just say, alright, alright, alright, alright, I get it. You're tired. Go out and get seventy men, train them over a period of about a month and a half; put them through some rigorous training principles; teach them how to be leaders just like you. And then oversee them. That's not going to make his burden any better. Now you're just shifting the thing.

What He basically says is, I want you to pick seventy men who you recognize that are already leaders of the people. They're already elders. And that word elder is a word that means someone who oversees. You see this in them already.

And then what does God say? Then what I'm going to do, I'm going to take my Holy Spirit, I'm going to anoint those men to come alongside you. And you're going to see, that my ability to ordain and to anoint is such that these men are going to help you carry the load. And because, you see, it's My load, it's My burden. It's not yours. I will anoint and I will uplift these men into these positions. Oh, and by the way, we have this complaining to deal with.

Verse 18. "*And say to the people, 'Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, and you shall eat meat, for you have wept in the hearing of the LORD, saying, "Who will give us meat to eat? For it was better for us in Egypt."* (In slavery. Do you see what they're saying?) *Therefore the LORD will give you meat, and you shall eat. (And you shall not just) <sup>19</sup> You shall not eat just one day, or two days, or five days, or ten days, or twenty days, <sup>20</sup> but (for) a whole month, until it comes out (of) your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you, because you have rejected the LORD who is among you and have wept before him saying, "Why did we come out of Egypt?"*"

And this is where God reveals the real heart of this grumbling and complaining about the diet. You see, it's not about food. I mean, He's going to give them what they want. And they're going to be sorry they asked. But that's not the issue. The issue here, is a rejection of the provision of the Lord. That's what's going on here.

It is saying, God, this isn't good enough. What You've done for me here isn't good enough. I don't like it. I want this. And they're saying, I would rather go back and be a slave in Egypt than have to deal with the provision of the Lord. I mean, this is really the heart of these, some of these people, to reject God in this way.

This is closely linked with a passage in Hebrews that I want to show you. On the screen from Hebrews 13:5. Check out this. It says,

**Hebrews 13:5 (ESV)**

*Keep your life free from the love of money and be content with what you have. For he has said, I will never leave you nor forsake you.*

*Keep your life free from the love of money and be content with what you have. For he has said, I will never leave you nor forsake you.*

I love this verse because it's a promise from God's Word that He's going to take care of us. But it also speaks of our responsibility to guard our attitude in light of that promise.

God says, "*I will never leave you nor forsake you.*" So what... How should that change the way you speak - what comes out of your mouth? Well, it depends on whether you believe it, doesn't it?

If you believe that God will never leave you nor forsake you, your speech will be different than if you hear that promise and don't believe it. Because if you don't believe it, you're going to complain and grumble. Simple as that. I don't believe God's... I believe He has forsaken me. You know why? Because I feel like it. And we live in that culture where feelings are the highest reality of truth. Which is... Talk about dwelling on quicksand. Feelings have absolutely no resemblance to truth. And yet we give them our attention.

Verse 21, "*But Moses said, (Talk about unbelief) 'The people among whom I am number six hundred thousand on foot, (And he's talking just about the men) and you have said, 'I will give them meat, that they may eat a whole month!'*"

In other words, Moses is saying, there are 600,000 men and their families here and You're telling me You're going to provide enough meat? How in the world are You going to pull that off?

He says, "<sup>22</sup> *Shall flocks and herds be slaughtered for them, and be enough for them? Or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, and be enough for them?*" (And good grief, they are out in the wilderness) <sup>23</sup> *And the LORD said to Moses, (I love this) "Is the LORD's hand shortened?"* That's an ancient way of God asking the question, "Am I weak? Am I weak?"

Has God ever said that to you? Am I weak? When we look at a situation and we think, no way, there's just no way. And God comes in, really? Am I... When did I get weak? He says, listen, "*Now you shall see whether my word will come true for you or not.*"

<sup>24</sup> *So Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD. And he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people and placed them around the tent. (And) <sup>25</sup> Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the Spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders. And as soon as the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied. But they did not continue doing it.*" In other words, it was a one-off.

<sup>26</sup> *Now two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad, and the other named Medad, (Got to wonder if they're brothers) and the Spirit rested on them. They were among those registered, but they had not gone out to the tent, and so they prophesied in the camp.*"

Now, we're not told why these men didn't come out and gather with the other seventy. We're just... All we know is, they stayed in the camp. But even there the Spirit fell upon them and they began to prophesy, right where they were.

"<sup>27</sup> *And a young man ran and told Moses, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp."*" He apparently felt that was inappropriate or something.

"<sup>28</sup> *And Joshua the son of Nun, the assistant of Moses from his youth, said, "My lord Moses, stop them. <sup>29</sup> But Moses said to him, "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the LORD's people were prophets, that the LORD would put his Spirit on them! <sup>30</sup> And Moses and the elders of Israel returned to the camp.*" Joshua was like, oh, this is your job, bud.

But doesn't that just tell you about the heart of Moses? Man, he says, do you know how much easier my job would be if God anointed the entire camp? And

everybody received the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit. But this had to have been such an encouraging thing for Moses who was feeling that burden of carrying these people, to the point, where he's just ready to give up. Prays to die, if that's the way it's going to keep going.

And then to see the Lord, not only gather these men, but then anoint them with the power of the Holy Spirit in a visible, even audible sort of a way as they prophesy. To show that God's Spirit is moving in their lives in such a way that these men are going to be equipped by the Lord, to accomplish what needs to be done.

(And) *“<sup>31</sup> Then a wind from the LORD sprang up, and it brought quail from the sea and let them fall beside the camp, about a day's journey on this side and a day's journey on the other side, around the camp, and about two cubits above the ground. <sup>32</sup> And the people rose all that day and all night and all the next day, and gathered the quail. Those who gathered least gathered ten homers. And they spread them out for themselves all around the camp. (And) <sup>33</sup> While the meat was yet between their teeth, before it was consumed, the anger of the LORD was kindled against the people, and the LORD struck down the people with a very great plague. <sup>34</sup> Therefore the name of that place was called Kibroth-hattaavah (Which means "graves of craving." That's a very significant name) because (they were buried, or) there (rather) they buried the people who had the craving.”*

Now, let me just remind you of something here. The sin of these people was not just craving meat. The sin of these people was rejecting the Lord's provision, in favor of their own unbridled appetites. In other words, these are people who are simply allowing the flesh to rule. Okay?

We all know what that's about, you guys. There's not one person in this room who doesn't know what it's like to let the flesh rule in our lives. When it happens, we get convicted sorely by the Holy Spirit, and I sure hope that we go to Him and we repent of that outburst of fleshliness.

But there are other people who, that's just the rule of their lives. Paul wrote about this to the Philippian Church. Let me show you from, on the screen. It says,

**Philippians 3:19 (ESV)**

*Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things.*

*Their end is destruction.* (He's talking about these enemies of the cross. Look at this) *"their god is their belly,* (In other words their stomach. And that doesn't just mean what they eat. It means their appetites. Their god is their appetite) *and they glory in their shame,* (because their)...*minds (are) set on earthly things.*

Their god is their appetite. In other words, they live to please their fleshly appetites. Which is, by the way, the definition of debauchery. In case you were wondering what that word in your Bible means, to live after the flesh. I go from relationship, to experience, to event, to relationship, to job, to buying things, to simply please my flesh. My god is my pleasure - is pleasing myself.

And we speak of their god is their belly or their stomach. It's a very bestial kind of a way to live. Anybody who has an animal, you know that your animals live to eat. Right? I mean, that's the way animals are. They live to eat. And they will do anything to eat. And they'll bug you in the middle of the night because they're hungry. They don't care if you're sleeping. Get up and feed me. Right?

We have a cat that makes... Her bowl can be overflowing. We got to walk in there and show her, her bowl is full. She wants to be escorted in there to eat. It's a good thing all I own is a BB gun. Let me tell you sometime. Three o'clock in the morning, and I escort the cat in to show her the plate is full.

But that's that...The idea of being carnal, is the idea of being... It means without the Spirit. Okay? To be carnal or, to live after your carnality, is to live after my flesh.

And okay, a chapter ends, *"<sup>35</sup> From Kibroth-hattaavah the people journeyed to Hazeroth, and they remained at Hazeroth."*