

September 18th

THE NAIL IN THE COFFIN OF REBELLION

“But on the next day all the congregation of the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and against Aaron, saying, “You have killed the people of the LORD.” And when the congregation had assembled against Moses and against Aaron, they turned toward the tent of meeting. And behold, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the LORD appeared.”

NUMBERS 16:41-42

Repeat, repeat, repeat. We do tend as God's people to take a long time to learn from our mistakes. It's like repeating the laundry rinse cycle to erase a grease stain, but the second cycle still can't get the grease stain out. Here we find that the people continue to grumble. Just a few moments earlier, things didn't end very well for Korah and his cronies. Nothing like getting swallowed up by an earthquake! The people continue to grumble, even after seeing people getting swallowed by the ground. What does God do to finally put a stop to the grumbling and what does this mean for us today?

It's important to recognize that this grumbling has compounded from the earlier complaining. Before it was two groups that were grumbling against the leaders. Now, we have the entire nation of Israel grumbling about what had happened. Even further, their complaining happened on the next day! Evidently, it's not enough to see people swallowed up by the ground. You can also see how skewed their perspective is on what had happened. Instead of seeing Moses and Aaron as God's chosen people, they call the people that died “the people of the Lord.” While that is technically true, they have missed the rebellion that they had against God. How does God respond to this new attack on His men? He calls down a plague on the people and 14,700 died. The only reason that more people didn't die is because Aaron goes to work to atone for the people. Think about it. The plague would be highly contagious, and Aaron still goes and offers atonement among the people by spreading the incense on them. Indeed, Aaron took great risk to save people that didn't want him in the first place! We've seen Moses meekness in the pages of this book, now we can get a good glimpse of Aaron's humble service.

How does God put an end to the grumbling? He has each tribe put forward their staffs to have them see which staff will bud with sprouts. Guess which one sprouts? That's right...Aaron's staff buds. The people can easily see that Aaron is God's chosen instrument as priest. God is making a point here men. Iain Duguid wisely points out that God takes dead sticks and makes them fruitful. God doesn't need people to accomplish His purposes. Instead, He chooses to use His people as the means to fulfil His plans. Men, God's grace is on you also. As we walk this road on this sinful earth, we have far too easily carried the dust from the world. We get pulled into so many directions that cause us to drift from God's call on our lives. This story of grumbling and God's mark on Aaron shows us that God gives grace every day to be used by Him. Remember, God even showed grace to Aaron. It wasn't that long ago that Aaron and his sister were grumbling against Moses. Indeed, he's the one that organized the worship of the golden calf! If God will mark Aaron as a tool for His glory, why not you? Be encouraged that the same grace showed to Aaron He also shows to you by marking you to be a blessing to others. How will you respond?

Spend some time praising God that He marks you for His purposes. Ask Him for more of His grace to stay faithful to His call.

For Further Reading: Numbers 16:41-17:13