

Numbers 10-11

Good evening and thank you again for joining us. Would you please turn in your Bibles to Numbers 10 please?

Last week we saw the cleansing of the Levites, and the implications that has for us today as we worship the Lord.

Tonight, we're going to study chapters 10-11

The title of tonight's message is CRAVINGS AND COMPLAINTS

Before we begin let's ask for the Lord's blessing.

PRAY

Remember-the nation is mobilized and organized, they're getting ready to go!

1-4

1 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 2 "Make two silver trumpets for yourself; you shall make them of hammered work; you shall use them for calling the congregation and for directing the movement of the camps. 3 When they blow both of them, all the congregation shall gather before you at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 4 But if they blow only one, then the leaders, the heads of the divisions of Israel, shall gather to you.

These trumpets were like bugles. They were to make sounds instructing the nation to break camp, call an assembly, prepare for battle, and summon leaders. Both trumpets summoned the people, and a single trumpet called just the leaders

5 When you sound the advance, the camps that lie on the east side shall then begin their journey. 6 When you sound the advance the second time, then the camps that lie on the south side shall begin their journey; they shall sound the call for them to begin their journeys. The camp broke at the sound of the trumpet.

And we also are listening for a trumpet that will signal for us to break camp. **1 Thessalonians 4:16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.**

Verses 7-10 continue to describe the system of blowing trumpets.

7 And when the assembly is to be gathered together, you shall blow, but not sound the advance. 8 The sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow the trumpets; and these shall be to you as an ordinance forever throughout your generations.

9 "When you go to war in your land against the enemy who oppresses you, then you shall sound an alarm with the trumpets, and you will be remembered before the LORD your God, and you will be saved from your enemies. 10 Also in the day of your gladness, in your appointed feasts, and at the beginning of your months, you shall blow the trumpets over your burnt offerings and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; and they shall be a memorial for you before your God: I am the LORD your God." " So a different blast signaled different events.

11 Now it came to pass on the twentieth day of the second month, in the second year, that the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle of the Testimony. 12 And the children of Israel set out from the Wilderness of Sinai on their journeys; then the cloud settled down in the Wilderness of Paran. 13 So they started out for the first time according to the command of the LORD by the hand of Moses. This is an exciting day. After 400 years of slavery, and an additional year in preparation, the nation is finally on the move! And they're not just going anywhere-they are headed home to the land God promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Can you imagine the anticipation?

Verses 14-28 describe the order of the march.

14 The standard of the camp of the children of Judah set out first according to their armies; over their army was Nahshon the son of Amminadab. 15 Over the army of the tribe of the children of Issachar was Nethanel the son of Zuar. 16 And over the army of the tribe of the children of Zebulun was Eliab the son of Helon.

17 Then the tabernacle was taken down; and the sons of Gershon and the sons of Merari set out, carrying the tabernacle.

18 And the standard of the camp of Reuben set out according to their armies; over their army was Elizur the son of Shedeur. 19 Over the army of the tribe of the children of Simeon was Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai. 20 And over the army of the tribe of the children of Gad was Eliasaph the son of Deuel.

21 Then the Kohathites set out, carrying the holy things. (The tabernacle would be prepared for their arrival.)

22 And the standard of the camp of the children of Ephraim set out according to their armies; over their army was Elishama the son of Ammihud. 23 Over the army of the tribe of the children of Manasseh was Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur. 24 And over the army of the tribe of the children of Benjamin was Abidan the son of Gideoni.

25 Then the standard of the camp of the children of Dan (the rear guard of all the camps) set out according to their armies; over their army was Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai. 26 Over the army of the tribe of the children of Asher was Pagiel the son of Ocran. 27 And over the army of the tribe of the children of Naphtali was Ahira the son of Enan. Noticed what the last three tribes are called in verse 25, “the rear guard”. The nation had to

be wise—they couldn't expect that they wouldn't face any attacks on their way to the promised land.

Jesus said something similar to us—"be wise as serpents and harmless as doves."

28 Thus was the order of march of the children of Israel, according to their armies, when they began their journey.

29 Now Moses said to Hobab the son of Reuel^[fn] 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 treat you well; for the LORD has promised good things to Israel."

Hobab was Moses' brother-in-law, and Moses wants him as a guide for Israel. Why? Hobab was a Midianite, so he was from the region. He could find his way around in the wilderness.

Moses is following God, but he's also hiring a scout. God will set the direction, but Hobab might be able to help out with some details.

30 And he said to him, "I will not go, but I will depart to my own land and to my relatives."

31 So Moses said, "Please do not leave, inasmuch as you know how we are to camp in the wilderness, and you can be our eyes.

32 And it shall be, if you go with us—indeed it shall be—that whatever good the LORD will do to us, the same we will do to you."

33 So they departed from the mountain of the LORD on a journey of three days; and the ark of the covenant of the LORD went before them for the three days' journey, to search out a resting place for them. Notice, the Ark always led the march. God's presence – the Shekinah glory – always led the way.

34 And the cloud of the LORD was above them by day when they went out from the camp.

35 So it was, whenever the ark set out, that Moses said:

“Rise up, O LORD!

Let Your enemies be scattered,

And let those who hate You flee before You.” I love the simplicity of his prayer: "God, go before us and take care of our enemies. It's too dangerous ahead unless You do so!"

What an appropriate prayer for all of us to pray! God has places to lead us-but we need His protection!

36 And when it rested, he said:

“Return, O LORD,

To the many thousands of Israel.” This was the prayer of Moses when God's presence stopped, which you remember meant it was time to setup camp.

Now, although it's shocking, it's not all that surprising, that we once again see God's people complain. We saw this several times in Exodus, and we'll see this play out many times in the next several chapters of Numbers.

Chapter 11

1 Now when the people complained, pause here. Think of what God has done for the nation as a whole. They've been ordered, organized, cleansed, separated, blessed, taught how to give, reminded of God's deliverance, given God's presence, and the tools to advance to the Promised Land. And they're on the march to Canaan - and immediately, the people complained.

it displeased the LORD; Complaining hearts displease God, because it shows little gratitude for what He has done in the past. And our complaining hearts prove our lack faith for what He is doing right now.

Now, we aren't told here exactly what Israel was complaining about. But I want you to think about how a nation begins to complain.

It started with 1 person, who complained to another, who listened to and agreed and probably even added to it, and it just snowballed from there.

The next time you're tempted to complain about the government, or COVID, or gas prices or even facemasks, remember

Philippians 2:14-15 14 Do all things without complaining and disputing, 15 that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,

Complaining is in direct opposition to faith. The world is recognized by it's complaints. It shouldn't be so among Gods children.

Lets continue verse 1...

for the LORD heard it, and His anger was aroused. So the fire of the LORD burned among them, and consumed some in the outskirts of the camp.

2 Then the people cried out to Moses, and when Moses prayed to the LORD, the fire was quenched. It's sad that the people didn't cry out to God themselves, rather they cried out to Moses.

3 So he called the name of the place Taberah,[fn] because the fire of the LORD had burned among them. Taberah means

burning, as a reminder of God's displeasure with the complaining heart.

So they complain, God sends the fire, so surely they are on the right track and aren't gonna complain anymore right?

4 Now the mixed multitude who were among them yielded to intense craving; so the children of Israel also wept again and said: "Who will give us meat to eat? Israel yielded to this intense craving. They gave into the temptation.

unless they cooperated with it. **James 1:12 Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. 13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. 14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. 15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.**

Even as believers there is an attraction to sin. Yet we don't need to give in-we can endure.

5 We remember the fish which we ate freely in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic; 6 but now our whole being is dried up; there is nothing at all except this manna before our eyes!" Exodus 12 tells us that a mixed multitude went out of Egypt. This means that not all of those who came out of Egypt with Moses were Israelites. Egyptians and perhaps other foreigners went with them as they fled Egypt after seeing the power of God.

But it wasn't just a mixed multitude physically, they were also a mixed multitude spiritually -clearly not everyone had faith in God.

This is true of the visible church as well, which Jesus said would contain good and bad until the final harvest in Matthew 13.

Notice the people fell in love with the illusion from the past. They cry out 'oh how great Egypt was.'

And here's the real problem-they're romanticizing the past instead of looking for what God had for them in the future. Remember God was giving them the Promised Land, which was truly a land of milk and honey - all the great food they could ever want!

7 Now the manna was like coriander seed, and its color like the color of bdellium." Manna was grainy and white.

8 The people went about and gathered it, ground it on millstones or beat it in the mortar, cooked it in pans, and made cakes of it; and its taste was like the taste of pastry prepared with oil. The word "pastry" doesn't refer to a crème filled donut. "Pastry" means "cake baked on a hearth".

9 And when the dew fell on the camp in the night, the manna fell on it. Every morning the Hebrews walked outside and gathered that day's portion. And if you recall from Exodus that God commanded they were only to gather enough for one days food.

So the people complain, and cry out, and weep, and now we'll see the complaining impacts Moses too

10 Then Moses heard the people weeping throughout their families, everyone at the door of his tent; and the anger of the LORD was greatly aroused; Moses also was displeased. 11 So Moses said to the LORD, "Why have You afflicted Your servant? And why have I not found favor in Your sight, that You have laid the burden of all these people on me? Moses responded to God the way many of us do in a time of trial. He essentially said, "God, here I am serving You. Why did You bring this upon me?"

Although we know God didn't bring this directly upon Moses, God did allow it.

It's a reminder to us to consider Paul's words in

1 Thessalonians 3:3 That no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this

AND

Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

Moses' complaints to God intensify...

12-15

12 Did I conceive all these people? Did I beget them, that You should say to me, 'Carry them in your bosom, as a guardian carries a nursing child,' to the land which You swore to their fathers? 13 Where am I to get meat to give to all these people? For they weep all over me, saying, 'Give us meat, that we may eat.' 14 I am not able to bear all these people alone, because the burden is too heavy for me.

15 If You treat me like this, please kill me here and now—if I have found favor in Your sight—and do not let me see my wretchedness!" I've never met a leader who didn't complain about the very people they were leading. Yet so often leaders forget that the people we lead often are there to make an impact on us!

16 So the LORD said to Moses: "Gather to Me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them; bring them to the tabernacle of meeting, that they may stand there with you. Moses wasn't to pick men who he thought might become elders; he was to pick men who

were already known as elders because of their wisdom, conduct, and ministry to others.

Elders are recognized by man, but Elders are made by God.

17 Then I will come down and talk with you there. I will take of the Spirit that is upon you and will put the same upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, that you may not bear it yourself alone. The elders were there to help Moses carry the spiritual load - to help him care for and minister to the people, and to be a support for him in the ministry. God's help was going to come to Moses through the support of godly men.

This is a common way that God meets our needs when we're struggling in life-Godly men or women coming along side of us to help lift our arms.

Notice the elders God was giving to Moses would have the same Spirit. This is critical because if the leadership doesn't have the same heart, the same vision, and same Spirit, there would be no agreement among the leadership, and conflict and disaster can result.

18 Then you shall 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 well with us in Egypt." Therefore the LORD will give you meat, and you shall eat. 19 You shall eat, not one day, nor two days, nor five days, nor ten days, nor twenty days, 20 but for a whole month, until it comes out of your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you, because you have despised the LORD who is among you, and have wept before Him, saying, "Why did we ever come up out of Egypt?" ' 'God promised to give the people so much meat they would become sickened by it. God punished

them because they denied and doubted the goodness of God's deliverance.

Satan loves to breed discontent. All is fine with God's provision until the enemy plants a suggestion, "If only you were driving a new car - or if you had just married her – or if you could find another job..."

The Hebrews got what they wanted - then they will realize what they wanted was not what they really wanted.

Real fulfillment comes not from getting more, but from wanting less. **1 Timothy 6:6 Now godliness with contentment is great gain.**

21 And Moses said, "The people whom I am among are six hundred thousand men on foot; yet You have said, 'I will give them meat, that they may eat for a whole month.' 22 Shall flocks and herds be slaughtered for them, to provide enough for them? Or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, to provide enough for them?" How quickly Moses forgot who he was talking too!! Remember Moses was on the top of mount Sinai and conversed with God. And now God promises meat, and Moses says look at all these people, God how are YOU going to provide the meat you just described for all these people?

We laugh, but haven't we all been guilty of this approach with God at one time or another?

23 And the LORD said to Moses, "Has the LORD's arm been shortened? Now you shall see whether what I say will happen to you or not." Has the Lord torn a rotator cuff? Has the Lord injured Himself and become incapable of a miracle?

How big is your God tonight?

So many times we limit God to our own mental capacities! I'm always trying to help God figure out how to solve my problems.

Isaiah 55:9 “For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
So are My ways higher than your ways,
And My thoughts than your thoughts.

The difficulty of a problem must be looked at through the lens of the one who is going to solve the problem. And when I remember that it’s God who resolves my problems, and not me, I can take rest knowing nothing is too hard for Him!

24 So Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD, and he gathered the seventy men of the elders of the people and placed them around the tabernacle. 25 Then the LORD came down in the cloud, and spoke to him, and took of the Spirit that was upon him, and placed the same upon the seventy elders; and it happened, when the Spirit rested upon them, that they prophesied, although they never did so again.[fn]

26 But two men had remained in the camp: the name of one was Eldad, and the name of the other Medad. This is what my kids call me-“Me dad”

And the Spirit rested upon them. Now they were among those listed, but who had not gone out to the tabernacle; yet they prophesied in the camp. 27 And a young man ran and told Moses, and said, “Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.”

28 So Joshua the son of Nun, Moses’ assistant, one of his choice men, answered and said, “Moses my lord, forbid them!” Notice that work of the HS wasn’t limited to a particular area. These 2 men who were not with the rest of the seventy elders were filled with the same Holy Spirit.

Joshua was appalled that Eldad and Medad were filled with the Holy Spirit while still in the camp - among the common people. Yet Joshua is really acting like a good assistant to Moses. His

first concern was for Moses' ministry and feared that this might in some way undermine it.

29 Then Moses said to him, "Are you zealous for my sake? Oh, that all the LORD's people were prophets and that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them!" 30 And Moses returned to the camp, he and the elders of Israel. I love Moses' response, "Are you zealous for my sake?" In other words, "Do you think I want to monopolize God's gifts?" quite the opposite, Moses says, "Oh, that all the LORD'S people were prophets and that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them!"

Rather than view the power of the Holy Spirit as the exclusive property of an elite few – Moses longed for the day when all God's people would be empowered by the Holy Spirit and exercising supernatural gifts.

Moses was way ahead of his time. In the Old Testament select people at select times were empowered by the Spirit. Today all of us can be filled with the Spirit.

Verse 31 here comes the meat...

31 Now a wind went out from the LORD, and it brought quail from the sea and left them fluttering near the camp, about a day's journey on this side and about a day's journey on the other side, all around the camp, and about two cubits above the surface of the ground. Quail was actually an Egyptian delicacy - the Hebrews will be eating better in the desert than most of the Egyptians. And so you can picture them celebrating...

32 And the people stayed up all that day, all night, and all the next day, and gathered the quail (he who gathered least gathered ten homers); and they spread them out for themselves all around the camp. The idea of spreading out the quail all around the camp

indicates they were drying out the meat in the sunshine. They were apparently making quail jerky

33 But while the meat was still between their teeth, before it was chewed, the wrath of the LORD was aroused against the people, and the LORD struck the people with a very great plague. The people, with great excitement gathered the quail and prepared it for eating. But when they ate - while the meat was still between their teeth, the LORD sent a plague among them and many died.

Psalm 78:27-31 He also rained meat on them like the dust, feathered fowl like the sand of the seas; and He let them fall in the midst of their camp, all around their dwellings. So they ate and were well filled, for He gave them their own desire. They were not deprived of their craving; but while their food was still in their mouths, the wrath of God came against them, and slew the stoutest of them, and struck down the choice men of Israel.

AND

Psalm 106:13-15 They soon forgot His works;

They did not wait for His counsel,

14 But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness,

And tested God in the desert.

15 And He gave them their request,

But sent leanness into their soul.

When we allow ungodly cravings to rule our lives, God may send what we crave - and leanness into our soul as well.

Now this was a difficult judgment, but it was a help to Israel because it taught them to not be ruled by their craving. We're to be lead by the spirit, and not of our flesh.

34 So he called the name of that place Kibroth Hattaavah,[fn] because there they buried the people who had yielded to craving.

35 From Kibroth Hattaavah the people moved to Hazeroth, and camped at Hazeroth. Kibroth Hattaavah means "graves of craving." And sadly, this is not the last time someone dies because they fail to say "No" to a craving.

Communion...