

11/21/93

**The Problem With Complaining**  
**Num. 11:1-15,18-23, 31-35**

Entering a department store, a little old lady was startled when a band began to play and a dignified executive pinned an orchard on her dress and handed her a crisp hundred dollar bill. She was the store's millionth customer. Television cameras were focused on her and reporters began interviewing. "Tell me, one asked, "just what did you come here for today?" The lady hesitated for a minute, then answered. "I'm on my way to the Complaint Department." (#744)

Have you ever been around a person who is constantly complaining, it drives you to the end of your patience and it causes you to realize that the real problem is the persons heart attitude and their self centerness.

This morning we want to examine the complaining of Israel as they have gone out only three days into the wilderness and learn four things about complaining. 11:1-9, 18-20,31-35

- I. Complaining is displeasing to God. 11:1-3
- II. Complaining makes us vulnerable to crave the things of the world. 11:4-9
- III. Complaining causes others to complaint. 11:10-15
- IV. Complaining results in yielding to our cravings. 11:18-23, 31-35

**I. Complaining is displeasing to God. 11:1-3**

- A. The people complained about God and their circumstances. vs. 1

\* The word complained "Hithpael" means murmur, 2X's O.T. Ps. 77:3

1. They had a history of being complainers. Ex. 16:2-3, 17:3, 32:1-4
2. They had seen God do great things in Egypt and in the exodus but still did not trust Him for their lives.
3. They had also seen God's judgment at Egypt and Sinai yet it did not stop them.
4. They were heard by the Lord and they were consumed by the fire of the Lord.

**B. The people cried out to Moses complaining about God's judgment and for him to intercede for them. vs. 2-3**

1. Their repentance was due to the consequences not genuine repentance. vs. 2a
2. Their being spared was the mercy of God. vs. 2b
3. Their judgment was memorialized, calling the place Taberah which means "burning". vs. 3

***Complaining is displeasing to God!***

**II. Complaining makes us vulnerable to crave the things of the world. vs. 4-9**

- A. The peoples complaining caused them to identify more with the mixed multitude. vs.4
  1. The mixed multitude had come out with the people of God in the Exodus, some married to Hebrews and wealthy. Ex. 12:38
  2. The mixed multitude caused division in the home and the children did not follow the Lord. Lev. 24:10-11

3. The mixed multitude is always present in the church yielding to intense cravings of their flesh.
  4. The mixed multitude are single non-believers and those married to believers who like the fellowship and benefits of the church body but are not of Christ.
- B.** The people were desiring the things of the earth over the things of heaven. vs.5-6
1. Their memory recalled the time in Egypt under nostalgia and colored glasses, thinking only of their appetites, "the good old days".
  2. Their memory refused to remember the whip of the task masters and the 400 years of bondage.
  3. Their appreciation for the things of God became distasteful and dissatisfying, complaining about the Manna. vs. 6
  4. The Manna is described, the various ways it was prepared and how they obtained it. vs. 7-9, Ex. 16:14-21  
\* The Psalmist tells us that it was bread from heaven and it was angels food. Ps. 78:24-25

*Complaining makes us vulnerable to crave the things of the world!*

### **III. Complaining causes others to complain. vs. 10-15**

- A.** Moses was displeased with the peoples weeping at their tent doors and God's anger was greatly aroused. vs. 10
1. God was upset with their complaining. vs. 10c
  2. Moses was in agreement with God. vs. 10a-b, d

- B.** Moses is taken in by the ongoing complaining and complained to God about the burden of the people. vs. 11
1. He complained that God had afflicted him without reason. vs. 11a-b
  2. He complained of having no favor before God. vs. 11c
  3. He complained that God had laid all the responsibility of the people on him. vs. 11d
- C.** Moses complains to God in a sarcastic way. vs. 12
1. He declared that he did not conceive nor beget them. vs. 12a-b
  2. He declare he was no nursing mother. vs. 12c-f
- D.** Moses complained about giving them to eat yet God never asked him to feed them. vs. 13
1. He vents his frustration. vs. 13a
  2. He declares the ongoing pressure. vs. 13b-d
- E.** Moses complains to God about his inability to bear all the people. vs. 14
1. He was looking to himself. vs. 14a
  2. He had no resources. vs. 14b
- F.** Moses complains to God about the injustice He has done to him and suggests the solution. vs. 15
1. He charges God with being unfair and that He might as well kill him. vs. 15a-b  
\* Elijah and Jonah. IKing 19, Jonah 4
  2. He cries out for help. vs. 15c-d

*Complaining causes others to complain!*

### **IV. Complaining results in yielding to our cravings. vs. 18-23, 31-35**

- A. The Lord would give them over to their flesh. vs. 18
1. They wept and said, "Who will give us meat?" vs. 18a-e
  2. They said it was well with them in Egypt. vs. 18f
  3. The Lord would give them to their desire. vs. 18g  
\* He gave them their request, But sent leanness to their souls. Ps. 106:15
- B. The Lord would allow their cravings to correct them. vs. 19-20
1. Till we abhor them. vs. 19-20a-b
  2. The reason being we have despised Him by wishing we had never come out of Egypt. vs. 20c-e
- C. The Lord rebukes Mose for his unbelief. vs. 21-23
1. The difficulty is proclaimed. vs. 21
  2. The difficulty is illustrated. vs. 22
  3. The difficulty is destroyed. vs. 23
- D. The Lord provided the quail miraculously. vs. 31
1. He used the wind to bring the quail. vs. 31a-d
  2. He caused them to fly about three feet above the ground being tired from the journey. vs. 31e, Ps. 78:26-31
- E. The people were completely overcome by their flesh. vs. 32
1. Their lust drove them night and day. vs. 32a-c
  2. Their greed drove them to gather all they could. vs. 32d-e

- F. The judgment of God fell on them as they were wrapped up in their lust. vs. 33
1. They were unaware of God while in their sin. vs. 33a-c
  2. They were struck by God in their sin. vs. 33d  
unawares in their sin. vs. 33d  
\* Their craving was not deprived by God but while their food was still in their mouths, the wrath of God came gainst them and slew the stoutest of them and the choice men of Israel. Ps. 78:30-31
- G. The craving for the flesh was memorialized by God. vs. 34-34
1. He named the place "Kibroth Hattaavah" meaning graves of lusting or cravings, to warn the people of the end result of the flesh. vs. 34
  2. He moved them on to from the place of failure. vs. 35  
\* Yes, again and again they tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel. Ps. 78:41

### ***Complaining results in yielding to our cravings!***

***\* Don't mistaken legitimate concerns and difficulties that God is never tired of hearing with critical and constant complaining which we have studied!***

A recent medical survey stated that chronic complainers live longer than people who are always sweet and serene. It claims that their cantankerous spirit gives them a purpose for living. Each morning they get up with a fresh challenge to see how many things they can find to grumble about, and they derive great satisfaction from making others miserable. I question whether those who complain actually do outlive those who don't. *Maybe it just seems that way to everybody around them.* (#745)

**Conclusion**

The complaining of Israel teaches us four things about complaining.

- I.** Complaining is displeasing to God.
- II.** Complaining makes us vulnerable to crave the things of the world.
- III.** Complaining causes others to complain.
- IV.** Complaining results in yielding to our cravings. \_