

Numbers 11

The journey to Canaan

The cloud began to move, the trumpets were blown and Israel began to break camp to make the journey to the borders of the Promised Land.

This was a three-day journey that would end up taking Israel several months to complete. The reason for the delay is they will make three stops along the way. Each stop is filled with practical application for the believer today.

An important truth to keep in mind as we work our way through the remainder of Numbers

1 Corinthians 10:6

Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted.

1 Corinthians [10:11](#)

Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

While this verse can be applied to any narrative in Scripture it specifically speaks regarding the events that will begin to unfold in Numbers 11-12

As we walk with Israel on their journey we should be looking for applications for our own lives.

Tonight we will follow Israel from Sinai to the wilderness of Paran where they will enter Canaan for the very first time in over 400 years

The people complain

Numbers 11:1-3

¹ Now when the people complained, it displeased the LORD; 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. ³ So he called the name of the place Taberah, because the fire of the LORD had burned

among them.

Before we examine the contents of chapter 11, let's remember the setting.

Num 10:11-12

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.*

Num 10:33

*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.*

From the **Wilderness of Sinai** to the **Wilderness of Paran**, was a three-day journey. However, as we read chapters 11 - 12 we will discover that it took them nearly 3 months and that they made 3 stops along the way.

- For the children of Israel to go from Sinai to Paran, they had to travel through Taberah, Kibroth Hattaavah, and finally Hazereth.

It would be wonderful if following Jesus were as easy as hearing the horn, following the cloud, and arriving at our desired destination. But, because our destination is *to be conformed into the image of Jesus*, there is always much more involved. I have often been encouraged by the words of Alan Redpath who said,

. "Salvation is the miracle of a moment but the making of a man of God takes a lifetime"

- I believe the reason for this is that God had to remove some things from Israel.

This is a good illustration of what happens to us as we follow the Lord.

Like the children of Israel, we are on a journey. It's not to the land of Israel to conquer foes, set-up camp and build cities. But we're on a journey to become more like Jesus. Romans 8:28 explains that; "*all things work together for **good** for those who love God and are called according to His purpose.*" The following verse explains that the good is *?Being conformed to the image of Christ.*"

- The psalmist put it like this; he said, "*I will be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness.*"
- Paul writing to the Philippians put it like this; "*He who began a good work in you will complete it until the day of Christ.*"
- John said that, "*we don't know exactly what it's going to be like but we know that we will be like Him because we will see Him as He really is.*"

We are on a journey to be crafted into the image of Christ, along the way God has things that He wants to accomplish in our lives. He wants to sand off rough ages, to make us more like Jesus. The experiences of Israel in Numbers 11-12 are an illustration of that process.

First Stop Taberah:

Numbers 11:1-3

*Now when the people **complained**, it displeased the Lord; 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. **3** So he called the name of the place **Taberah**, because the fire of the Lord had burned among them.*

Often the names of people and places in Scripture give us added insight into their story. This is one of those cases.

Taberah means *burning* and was named after what happens in these three verses.

Two important lessons are highlighted

First, the people complained

I have often wondered what they were complaining about. It interests me that the text doesn't say. Perhaps if you asked them later, "*What were you complaining about?*" The response might have been, "*You know, I don't remember.*" They were upset or discontented about something, they began to complain, the fire of God burns and people die. Sadly this is how we often behave. We find ourselves complaining just to complain. Have you noticed that one morning you can wake up and be filled with praise for all that God has done, the next morning, without the world having come to an end, we arise murmuring about how terrible things are and that we don't know if we can continue through this miserable existence we call life. Nothing really changes we simply enjoy complaining. If it is sunny it is too hot, if it is cloudy too cold. If there is no one around we are lonely, if people show up it is too crowded. And on and on the list goes.

I was at the beach recently and struck up a conversation with a man. He began to complain about all the fishermen on the beach, then all the swimmers, then all the other surfers I kept trying to change the subject but no matter what we talked about he complained. I quickly looked for someone else to talk with.

God responds to their complaining by burning toward them.

We read *“the fire of the Lord burned among them.”* Notice it is not an earthly fire, or even a demonic fire, but *“the fire of the Lord.”*

Why is God so upset by their complaints?

Why does He treat complaining so harshly?

What would cause the same God who once carried them on eagle’s wings to now *“burn toward them?”* We simply read, ***“they complained”***.

Complaining, at its core is an evidence of a lack of faith in the plans and purposes of God.

We are essentially saying that God has done a poor job of leading our life.

The cause of this is often twofold

- **First** a failure to recognize that much of the hardship we face is a result of our own disobedience. We often complain to God about things we have brought upon ourselves. Keep in mind that God uses the consequences of our actions to bring us back to Himself. Imagine the folly of the prodigal son complaining that he was hungry or blaming God for his miserable job of feeding the pigs. It was his sin that brought about the disastrous consequences on his life, but God used those circumstances to grab his attention
- **Second**, complaining also stems from failing to see how God uses the struggles of life to accomplish His purposes. We complain that we were passed over for the promotion or didn't get picked for the team or injured our self failing to see that God wants to use those things to perfect the character of Christ in us.

Romans 8:28-29

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son,

that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Rather than complaining about your circumstances try looking to the Lord for how He desires to reveal Himself to you and what work He wants to compete in you

Second, the complaints came from those who dwelt in the outskirts

If we read the book of Numbers in one sitting this would definitely stand out to all of us. Earlier we read that God went to great lengths to explain where each tribe would camp. They were instructed to camp among their brethren, around the Tabernacle. Chapter 2 serves as a map showing each tribe where to camp. None of them were supposed to camp in the outskirts.

We are not sure what drove them there but we can make some applications from what we observe happening today.

Many people, who should be camped among the people of God, in regular church attendance and involved in body ministry find themselves camping in the outskirts. This is often caused by lack of full commitment to the Lord or by having had our feelings hurt by someone in the church.

It is important to keep in mind that those who live on the outskirts are more likely to be swept away by bad doctrine or practice and are an easy target for the attack of the enemy.

- It was those who lingered in the back that the Amalekites attacked.
- Reuben, Gad and half Manassah who camped East of the Jordan were the first to fall to Assyria.
- And if you or I "*forsake the gathering together of the brethren*" we will end up an easy target for the enemy and will find ourselves getting burned.

Let me encourage you. If you have been drawn away from fellowship for some reason, forgive those who have hurt you, return to the

gathering of the brethren and pitch your tent as close to the Tabernacle as you possible.

Psalm 92:13

*“Those who are planted **in the house of the Lord** shall flourish in the courts of our God”*

Second Stop Kibroth Hattaavah:

Numbers 11:4

*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?” ⁵ We remember the fish which we ate **freely** in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic;*

After getting burnt because of complaining they continue to travel north until they reach Kibroth Hattaavah or “The Graves of Lust”

Here we find that the people continued their complaining attitude. This time they are unhappy with the God's provision and begin to complain about the manna

Moses pauses the story to tell us a little bit about manna:

Numbers 11:7-9

Now the manna was like coriander seed, and its color like the color of bdellium. 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. And when the dew fell on the camp in the night, the manna fell on it.

The psalmist called it "Angel Food"

Psalm 78:25

Men ate angels' food; He sent them food to the full.

God provided a pastry that would meet all the dietary necessities of the people as they endured the difficult conditions of the desert.

They didn't need any dietary supplements; they had a pastry, a donut that met all of their nutritional needs. Can you imagine that? Your nutritional needs met by pastry.

Several years ago, my wife and I visited our children in school. She had baked cupcakes to bring for the twin's birthday. As we walked down the hallway all the heads were turning with longing in their eyes. I knew that we had extra so I asked, "Want one?" Every adult that I asked, responded the same way, 'No thank you, I am on a diet.' I have observed that there is a simple rule when it comes to food, "If it tastes good, it is bad for you." They knew better than to have a cupcake on a diet. Wouldn't it be cool if we had cupcakes without calories that met all your dietary needs? The Children of Israel had that. They had a heavenly pastry with nutritional value. Yet they are complaining. *"All we have is this crummy, lousy, supernatural provision that meets every need that we have in this scorching desert."*

I have found that I am often like Israel. God provides everything that I could ever need. Available to me are the riches of Christ. Paul told the Philippians, "My God shall supply all of your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Yet I often lose sight of what God has done and begin to murmur about what He isn't doing.

Instead of being satisfied with and rejoicing over God's provision they complained.

Two things stand out

Numbers 11:4

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?"

- They allowed themselves to be influenced by a mixed multitude.

They were the ones who followed Israel out of Egypt but never truly committed themselves to the Lord

- They had an unrealistic view of life before deliverance

Numbers 11:5

We remember the fish which we ate freely in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic;

This time they complain about what they have to eat. Notice the word, “freely.” Since they had been slaves in Egypt they did not actually eat anything freely. Scripture describes their condition in Egypt as a harsh bondage, living under the fear of death, where they daily cried to the Lord for deliverance. Yet they remember the fish that they ate **freely**.

Sometimes I think we as Christians have this same memory loss.

Things become difficult in our lives and we remember how much better things were before we were Christians.

Years ago one of my close friends began to go through his first really difficult trial. As things became more and more difficult he made a statement that I have not forgotten, he said, “*Things were so much easier before I was a Christian.*” Sadly, shortly after that he walked away from the Lord.

It is true that we face great difficulties when we follow Christ, but it is equally true that we ate nothing freely in Egypt. Don’t let the devil deceive you into thinking that things will improve when you decide no longer to follow Christ.

Paul reminds us not to forget life before Christ.

Ephesians [2:11](#)

Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—

We should not revel in the sins of the past but we should not forget the emptiness and misery of living after the flesh

*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? 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”*

As Moses walks through the camp he hears the people crying in their homes because they do not have meat to eat.

The problem that Moses is facing is the problem that every person in ministry faces, the people he has been called to shepherd are carnal. That is why they need a shepherd. Jesus was moved with compassion for the multitudes because they were like sheep without a shepherd. As a result he “taught them many things.”

Notice the solution:

*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. 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.*

- God promises to fill these men with the same Spirit that rested upon Moses

*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*

- Once filled with the Spirit they would be equipped to assist Moses in carrying the burdens of the people

If we desire to be used by God we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit continually.

Joel wrote that the Holy Spirit does not discriminate. He tells us "in those days I will pour out My Spirit on **all flesh**..." It is the Spirit of God that can take a selfish crying man and turn him into a leader in Spiritual things

There is no greater example of this than the life of Peter. Before the baptism with the Spirit Peter cowered in the presence of a young girl refusing to be associated with Christ. After the outpouring of the Spirit Peter stood before a massive crowd and

boldly declared the message of salvation through faith in Christ.

The Spirit of God transforms weak and feeble men into those who are empowered for the work of ministry.

The Spirit of God is given freely to the child of God who simply asks

Luke 11:13

If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"

This asking should be continual. IT is a good idea to begin each day seeking God for a fresh filling with His Spirit for the day ahead.

Luke 11:9-13

*"So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. **10** For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. **11** If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? **12** Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? **13** If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"*

*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?"'"*

- Next, God promises to provide meat for the people

Notice how Moses responds:

*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?"*

Moses immediately doubts the promise.

There are nearly 3 million people in the newly formed nation of Israel.

How will God provide meat for all of them for an entire month?

Moses thought about it and came up with a couple of viable solutions

- Sacrificing *all Israel's flocks*
- Drawing *all the fish from the Red Sea*

Notice what God says:

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."

Moses has given God 2 possible solutions to a single problem, but God has his own solution. It is not uncommon for us to do the same. We look at a problem, come up with solutions based upon our limited understanding and resources then put these same limitations on the Lord.

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.

²⁶ But two men had remained in the camp: the name of one was Eldad, and the name of the other Medad. 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!"

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.

God does what He promised.

He takes 70 men, pours His Spirit out upon them and gives them spiritual gifts. He enables them to come alongside and serve with Moses.

Two of them didn't come to the meeting at the Tabernacle. We are not given a reason for their absence, but the Spirit of the LORD came upon them and they began to prophecy. Joshua says, "*Moses, you have to make them stop.*" And Moses makes this incredible comment. He says,

"Oh, that all the LORD's people were prophets and that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them!"

Moses didn't live in a time when that was possible, but we do. God wants to pour out His Spirit upon each one of us. He wants to fill and empower each one of us.

If you look at an individual that the LORD is using in a particular way, and you see a character trait within them that is desirable. Perhaps it is love. So you think, *"Man, that person is so filled with love and I'm not, and I wish I were more like them."* Understand this, they're filled with love because love is a by-product of the Holy Spirit within them. So here's what you do. Pray, *"God do in me what You did in them."* If you see a person and they have such an incredible amount of patience and you think, *"LORD, I wish I were more like them."* That patience in them is a by-product of the Holy Spirit working in them and so you ask God to do what He did in them, in you.

We have been created with natural capacities, but the work of the Holy Spirit is to do a work that is above and beyond those capacities. I believe God can and will rewrite our genetic code, putting things in us that were not there before. All we have to do is simply ask. Remember when God told Solomon that He would grant him anything he asked. So Solomon asked to be given wisdom to lead the people and a heart to hear from God. God's response was to give Solomon what he asked for. From that time forward Solomon is gifted with wisdom and an ability to understand that is above any other man. There is no reason to think that Solomon was born with those capacities. Instead they were granted to him when he simply asked. That is what He did for

Solomon and His love for you is just as great. Jesus told us the Father would give the Holy Spirit to anyone who asks.

By providing the enabling of the Holy Spirit, God solved the first problem, now He's going to solve the second one. Remember God said, "*Moses, I'll take provide meat for the people.*" And in response Moses asked, "*Flocks or the fish?*" God's solution is recorder in verse 31:

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 naturally migrate from North Africa during the springtime; God simply multiplied the flocks. As they came passed through the camp of Israel, the people hit them with sticks, put them in buckets and carried them back to the camp.

*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);
..... 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. ³⁴ So he called the name of that place Kibroth Hattaavah, because there they buried the people who had yielded to craving.*

When the people saw the quail, they went nuts whacking quail, one after another, and brought the meat back to the camp and began to devour it until they are struck with a plague. We are not given details about this plague unless we go back, and read where God says, "*You're going to have so much quail that it comes out your nostrils.*"

Here's what may have happened. The people were so consumed with getting quail that they threw it on the grill and did not wait for it to cook all the way. They devour half-cooked fowl and end up getting sick, perhaps with salmonella. They are so sick that quail is coming out their nose. Have you ever had anything come out your nose? It comes out for two reasons; either laughter or vomiting so heavily that your throat and mouth are just not enough to get it all out.

The people continue in their sin and suffer its consequences

Numbers 11:33-35

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. So he called the name of that place Kibroth Hattaavah, because there they buried the people who had yielded to craving. From Kibroth Hattaavah the people moved to Hazeroth, and camped at Hazeroth.

On the of the key phrases is

"...the people who had yielded to craving."

The people gave in to the desires of the flesh to their own demise

We face constant cravings, but at times these become more intense and we must take drastic actions.

- Joseph is a good example of this

Genesis 39:7

And it came to pass after these things that his master's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, "Lie with me."

Genesis 39:10

So it was, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he did not heed her, to lie with her or to be with her.

Genesis 39:11-12

But it happened about this time, when Joseph went into the

house to do his work, and none of the men of the house was inside, that she caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me." But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and ran outside.

Her constant pressure kept him constantly on guard and when the pressure increase his reaction became more drastic

2 Timothy [2:22](#)

Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

As a result of this the place was named Kibroth Hattaavah, which literally means... *"The graves of lust."* I think that's something important to remember, guys in particular, men, these are the graves of lust. Lust will kill you.

Numbers 12

The children of Israel departed from Sinai en route to the wilderness of Paran where they would prepare to enter the Promised Land. This was normally a 3-day journey but they made 2 stops along the way. First at "you got burnt" then a second stop at "the graves of lust" Here in chapter 12 they will make a third stop at a place called "closed in."

This 3-day journey probably took them 3 months. They left on the 20th day of the 2nd month and arrived at the time of the time of harvest that would have been in late July. It took them 2 to 3 months to travel a 3-day journey. Sadly this is what happens to us when we begin to get our eyes off the LORD. It takes us a whole lot longer to get where the LORD wants to take us.

Let's follow them along the way,

¹ Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses **because** of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married; for he had married an Ethiopian woman.

² So they said, "Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us also?" And the LORD heard *it*.

Hazereth, a word meaning "closed in" is the last stop on the way to Paran.

Apparently Moses' first wife had died because there is no mention of her again in the narrative. So Moses married again, this time to an Ethiopian woman. Ethiopia is in North Africa so there is little doubt that this woman would have been dark in appearance. No doubt she was converted, but she wasn't a natural born Jew and Miriam and Aaron seem to have a problem with that. There is nothing in the Law that would forbid Moses from making this decision. The Bible never condemns interracial marriages. When the Bible warns of being unequally yoked it is not speaking of different races but of a believer marrying an unbeliever. That is a relationship that will never work because the two parties are traveling opposite directions; one in pursuit of the Lord, the other in rebellion against Him. Moses is not in sin he was simply exercising his freedom to marry whomever he chose. It seems that this decision really bothered his sister and brother. They responded by complaining to him about how the leadership was running. Remember the real cause of the complaint was his new wife.

It is not uncommon for believers today to get upset with leadership in the church and I think we need to be careful. There are people who leave churches because the pastor doesn't wear a tie or because, the children's ministry classes aren't big enough or they had a fight with a person over some silly matter.

There are good reason to leave a fellowship; if the pastor is a false teacher, if the practice of the leadership does not line up with the teaching of Scripture. The problem is we usually give up good

teaching, godly examples and spiritual worship because we have a personal issue with someone in the fellowship.

Miriam and Aaron were exceptionally good at making something very carnal seem as though it were spiritual. Be careful. Do not spiritualize your carnality. If you have a problem with someone, Jesus tells you to resolve it by forgiving them.

² So they said, "Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us also?" And the LORD heard *it*.

As a leader Moses made a personal decision that his support staff did not agree with and they use it as an opportunity to vie for more authority in the ministry. It is frightening how much we all love position and what we will do to ensure that we have a greater one. Both Miriam and Aaron had been given great opportunities in ministry.

- Aaron was the spokesman and right hand man of Moses.
- Miriam was a prophetess and worship leader.

In Ex 15:21 she led the praise team after crossing the Red Sea singing, "*Sing to the LORD, For He has triumphed gloriously! The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea!*"

Yet they are not satisfied with the area of service the LORD has given them, they have their eyes on another position, they want what Moses has been given. "*has the LORD spoken only through Moses?*" is another way of saying "*we can do what you do, and we can probably do it better.*"

Jesus warned us about the danger of wanting a position. He tells of how the Pharisees love the best seats and the greetings in the streets. They loved to be looked at as the men of God. In contrast Jesus told us that the position that we are to strive for in the kingdom is that of a servant taking the low place and doing what no one else wants to do. Let me encourage you, if you want to serve the LORD, don't look for a position, a title instead look for those things or people that are being neglected and reach out to them. The church is filled with people who want a position but greatly lacking those who want to simply serve the LORD.

At the end of verse two we are told that "*the LORD heard it.*" Nothing gets by Him. And in the following verses He will make clear who was chosen and who was in the wrong; Moses who married the Ethiopian or Miriam and Aaron who want a position.

3(Now the man Moses was very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth.) 4 Suddenly the LORD said to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, "Come out, you three, to the tabernacle of meeting!" So the three came out. 5 Then the LORD came down in the pillar of cloud and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam. And they both went forward. 6 Then He said, "Hear now My words:

*If there is a prophet among you,
I, the LORD, make Myself known to him in a vision;
I speak to him in a dream.
7 Not so with My servant Moses;
He is faithful in all My house.
8 I speak with him face to face,
Even plainly, and not in dark sayings;
And he sees the form of the LORD.
Why then were you not afraid
To speak against My servant Moses?"*

The LORD refers to Moses, he calls him a **prophet**, a **servant** one who **hears** from God, **receives** visions and dreams and even **sees** the form of God. It is very comforting to know that no matter; *“Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.”*

What a blessing, even if a prophet and a worship leader bring a charge against us, the LORD stands up for his servants. In the ministry I have been the object of accusations sadly some of them have been true. I have failed to represent the LORD properly toward someone who is hurting. I am thankful that “It is Christ who died and rose again” He justifies me before any man that would seek to bring condemnation.

Over the years I have observed that these accusations come from 3 places.

- **First**, from people who have a problem with me
- **Secondly**, it is from the devil. He loves is referred to in Revelation 12:10 as “the accuser of the brethren.” Sometimes he will make up charges but mostly he simply puts a spotlight on my sin.
- **Finally**, and at least for me, the most common accusers of myself is myself. I know that I am a sinner. I know that my very best attempts to represent the LORD or serve Him fall so short. I know that the things I want to do, I do not do and the things I hate, those I do. And I so often am riddled, even crippled with guilt. Thank the LORD that John tells us *“if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things.”*

There is a wonderful picture of this in the book of Zechariah. Allow me to set the scene. Joshua the high priest is standing

before the throne of God and Satan is their to oppose him. We are told that Joshua is dressed in filthy garments, (certainly not the attire the priest was required to wear in the presence of the LORD). But before Satan can even open his mouth and begin to point out all that is wrong with Joshua, the LORD addresses Satan, “The LORD rebuke you Satan, the LORD who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you.” Before the accuser of the brethren can even open his mouth he is told to shut it. The LORD will not listen to a single accusation, instead He takes the filthy garments off Joshua and clothes him in a rich robe even putting a clean turban on his head. Not only will the LORD not listen to the accusations, he washes his servant so there is no longer any charge to bring against him.

What a joy it is to know that the LORD will not listen to any charges that are brought against the child of God. It does not matter who brings the accusation, it has been washed in the blood of Jesus.

9 So the anger of the LORD was aroused against them, and He departed. 10 And when the cloud departed from above the tabernacle, suddenly Miriam became leprous, as white as snow. Then Aaron turned toward Miriam, and there she was, a leper.

“*The anger of the LORD was aroused against them*” and as a result Miriam a becomes a leper.

Leprosy was contagious so all lepers were isolated from the people and removed from the camp. Miriam was now destined to a life of loneliness and isolation. She wanted a higher position and she ends up removed from the entire camp.

11 So Aaron said to Moses, "Oh, my lord! Please do not lay this sin on us, in which we have done foolishly and in which we have sinned. 12 Please do not let her be as one dead, whose flesh is half consumed when he comes out of his mother's womb!" 13 So Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, "Please heal her, O God, I pray!" 14 Then the LORD said to Moses, "If her father had but spit in her face, would she not be shamed seven days? Let her be shut out of the camp seven days, and after that she may be received again." 15 So Miriam was shut out of the camp seven days, and the people did not journey on till Miriam was brought in again.

I think it would be natural for Moses to be bitter. Bitter, because Miriam was the one who had lashed out at Moses and was seeking to undermine his ministry. Or perhaps to feel self righteous because she was struck with leprosy and he was proven right. I think those would be the natural reactions. But for a man who hears the word of the LORD, sees His form and spends time around the tabernacle the response is quite different. His reaction is not natural but supernatural. Instead of rejoicing in her pain he pleads with the Lord to heal her. Miriam falsely accused him, but Moses intercedes for her to be healed.

What a picture of the true shepherd. One who lays down his life for the sheep

When we are wronged we should follow the example of Moses and intercede for those who have hurt us. You might think, "that is too hard, you don't know how badly they have hurt me." I don't think it is hard. I think it is impossible. Impossible, for the natural man, but not impossible for the one who will frequent the Tabernacle of meeting, listen to the voice of God and gaze at His form. It is in the presence to the LORD that we are transformed into the behavior of the LORD. The more time you spend in the Word of the Lord the more you will bear the image of the Lord.