

## The People Complain (*part 2*)

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Purpose: to encourage church leaders not to become discouraged and to warn God's people not to take for granted the word (manna) that God gives to us.

Last week we saw that as the people finally began to head toward the promised land, the people began to complain:

**Num 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?"

**Num 11:5** - We remember the fish which we ate freely in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic;

**Num 11:6** - but now our whole being *is* dried up; *there is* nothing at all except this manna *before* our eyes!"

This one problem meant that God dealt with two things at the same time:

- He had to deal with the discouragement of Moses
- He had to deal with His people

With the Moses, it was a matter of responsibility

With His people, it was a matter of submission

In verses 16 and 17 God tells Moses that He will anoint more leaders to help him:

**Num 11:16** - 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.

**Num 11:17** - 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 is able to raise up others – there are always others
- Moses was to gather them – leaders chose leaders, based on God's criteria
- Tit 1:5** - For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you (see also Acts 14:23; 2 Timothy 2:2)
- God will give His Spirit to others – we must believe that He can empower others, which means that we will not try to do everything by ourselves
- Leaders were never meant to bear the burden alone – they need help!

In verses 18 to 20, God tells Moses that He will deal with the people

**Num 11:18** - 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.

**Num 11:19** - You shall eat, not one day, nor two days, nor five days, nor ten days, nor twenty days,

**Num 11:20** - 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 heard what they said and saw what they did – He knows when we complain!

The thing that they craved would become loathsome to them!

God decided to give them what they asked for – it was to their detriment!

**Jas 1:13** - 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.

**Jas 1:14** - But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.

**Jas 1:15** - Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

**Rom 1:21** - because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

**Rom 1:22** - Professing to be wise, they became fools,

**Rom 1:23** - and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

**Rom 1:24** - Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves,

**1Co 10:6** - Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted.

This was a test for Moses –

**Num 11:21** - 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.'

**Num 11:22** - 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?"

**Num 11:23** - 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."

God was patient with Moses, and he was obedient -

**Num 11:24** - 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.

God does exactly what He promised to the leaders:

**Num 11:25** - 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.

**Num 11:26** - 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.

**Num 11:27** - And a young man ran and told Moses, and said, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp."

**Num 11:28** - So Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, *one* of his choice men, answered and said, "Moses my lord, forbid them!"

**Num 11:29** - 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!"

**Num 11:30** - And Moses returned to the camp, he and the elders of Israel.

The leaders prophesy – a sign of their anointing

We also see the heart of Moses with the two that remained in the camp

God found where they were, gave them abilities for the task and filled their mouths with a prophetic voice

Moses was not jealous or envious

God deals with the people:

**Num 11:31** - 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.

**Num 11:32** - 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.

**Num 11:33** - 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.

**Num 11:34** - So he called the name of that place Kibroth Hattaavah, because there they buried the people who had yielded to craving.

**Num 11:35** - From Kibroth Hattaavah the people moved to Hazeroth, and camped at Hazeroth.

He gives them quails

They were plagued – because they despised what God had given them and lusted after something else!

Summary – two things for us to learn in the wilderness:

1. God will raise up leaders in the wilderness
  - a. When the need arises, God will raise up leaders who would be responsible.
  - b. He can anoint others with His spirit and give them His word.
  - c. Don't get discouraged when people complain.
  
2. God will deal with those who lust and complain in the wilderness
  - a. If we crave something other than what God wants for us, He might just give it to us!
  - b. Doing things our way, will ultimately hurt us.

- c. The children of Israel were given manna (which represents the word of God from heaven). Don't take for granted what God is giving you!