

## NUMBERS

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Numbers chapter 11 as we continue our study through the Word of God. In our last study we saw the children of Israel on the move from Mount Sinai, a three days journey and there must have been great excitement in the camp as they are moving towards Canaan, the Promise Land. And the Shekinah glory, God is leading them on this journey. With that said, let's begin reading in Numbers chapter 11, starting in verse 1 and see how excited the children of Israel really are.

### NUMBERS 11

#### VERSES 1-3

1. After only three days on their journey to the Promise Land they are complaining and truly this is the pattern of someone who is not walking with the Lord. They receive the blessings of God and then a circumstance arises and they are complaining. What they are saying is that they are not satisfied with what God is doing and thus, they are complaining. Can you imagine some 3 million people complaining and God hears their complaints and He is not pleased. And we are not even told what they are complaining about because the issue is not their complaints, but their hearts. And God is so displeased with them that He sends the fire of His judgment upon them and those on "**the outskirts of the camp**" were consumed! And the people cry out to Moses because they are afraid of God, they didn't know Him or they didn't believe that He is for them. This judgment was to draw them back from their unsatisfied heart!

2. Folks, as Christians we can't live on the fringe or the boarder of our faith because if you are not close to the Lord, you will complain and like the children of Israel you are saying that God is not in control over the situation you are facing, or you are not satisfied in what He is doing, He is wrong, and that is not true! Just as the children of Israel were so blessed by God and yet were complaining, we too can follow in their footsteps! It is amazing what we complain about, isn't it! Be thankful to God, rest in Him and walk by faith. That is the lesson God is trying to teach the children of Israel and us because there are giants in the land!

#### VERSES 4-9

1. How soon they forgot the lesson and began to complain all over again. This time the mixed multitude or those non-Jews who fled Egypt with them began to complain about not having meat to eat and the children of Israel joined in and started to complain also. Instead of being thankful for the bread from Heaven they were receiving, the manna, they **“craved”** meat and longed for the spicy food they had in Egypt, in the world!

Isn't that amazing how their memory was not what really transpired. In Egypt they were slaves, in heavy bondage, the food was not great and yet, they remembered it being a great time! Keep in mind they called out to God down in Egypt to deliver them! Now they were tired of the manna pancakes, the manna bread, the fried manna, the manicotti! And did they exaggerate the condition they were in? Absolutely, their whole being was not dried up, God was providing for them just what they needed and it was good for them!

2. Folks, where are you at? Are you longing for a time when you were in the world, thinking of how great it was? I hope not for God has given to you all that is good, don't complain, but be thankful! We can allow situations we face to cause us to long for the past, but once again God is in control, He is aware of what we are going through and thus, receive His nourishment, spiritual food for your life to sustain you not only in the good times but in those difficult times you will face and don't be misguided about how great the past was!

#### VERSES 10-15

1. Yes, the Lord was angry with them and so was Moses, but Moses allowed this to cause him to be frustrated with the people. So much so that he was angry with God. You see, he saw himself as the one carrying all these people and the burden was too much. God never asked him to carry these people, He would carry them, Moses was to lead them. It is so bad for Moses that he would rather be dead and asks the Lord to kill him! And he tells the Lord, "**do not let me see my wretchedness!**" God did not answer that prayer of Moses, why? Because Moses needed to see his wretchedness, he needed to be aware that he couldn't fix this problem and He too would have to trust in the Lord!

It is as Paul tells us in II Corinthians 12:9-10, **“And He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”** You see, it is out of our weakness that God is seen strong. It is not about us or our strength, but His and as we understand this and walk by faith, others too will see this, that it is only by the power of God that these things can be accomplished!

2. How does this relate to us? Maybe you are involved in ministry and you are frustrated because no one is helping out in the work. God is still on the throne and you need to trust in Him, don't get to the point where you say, “God, just kill me!” It is only by the grace of God we can truly do anything. We might find ourselves in situations that are tough and we might think, “God, how can you bring this upon me?” Do you ever think He is allowing these things because He loves you and wants your faith to grow! And as He is working in you, He is also working on others, maybe opening up their eyes to the needs that are out there. In fact, Paul reminds us in I Thessalonians 3:3, **“that no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this.”** It is in the heat of the fire that we grow strong in the Lord and thus, these things were appointed for us to help us to grow in Him!

VERSES 16-17

1. God wants Moses to pick seventy men to help assist in the work and not just any men. In fact, God had made these men and all Moses did was recognize what God was doing in their lives. Today, people are picked for ministry because of their talents, their influence, their money and-so-on. But that is not what we are to do. These were godly men who were not to take over for Moses, but assist him in the work. God is looking to pour His Spirit upon individuals to assist them in the work of ministry and we see here, He poured out His Spirit upon these seventy men to empower them for the work. When I look for people for ministry, for leadership, I look for men that God is raising up and I just acknowledge what God is doing in their lives! That is the way it needs to be!

VERSES 18-20

1. When God answers the desires of our heart, that is not always a good thing as we see here with the children of Israel. They want the cravings of their bellies to be satisfied, and God is going to answer them in such a way that they will be sickened over it.

Listen to what Paul says on this battle in Philippians 3:17-21, **“Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame — who set their mind on earthly things. For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.”** Who are you going to serve? Who are you going to follow?

#### VERSES 21-23

1. We act so often as Moses acted. He saw the power of God over and over again. Now God tells him that He will provide enough meat for them to eat, more than enough, all 2 to 3 million people, and they will have enough to eat for a whole month, not just a day or two! And Moses asks, “How in the world are you going to do that? That is impossible!” God was not asking Moses to figure out how He was going to do it, but to trust that He can do it and will do it – He is God! The same is true for us. We find ourselves in difficult situations and we wonder what God is going to do, how He is going to do it and all He is asking us is to trust in Him and walk by faith! It is as Paul said in Philippians chapter 4, **“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. . . . And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”**

Philippians 4:13, 19.

VERSES 24-30

1. It is one thing to have the tools, and it is another thing to have the power to run those tools. These seventy elders were now empowered to do the work that God had called them to do and I believe in verse 25, where it says, **“although they never did so again”** is a wrong translation. I believe it should read, **“and they did not cease.”** If you don’t have the power of God’s Spirit upon your life, you are not equipped to serve and in the end you will resort to worldly ways to accomplish the work! If you think about it, what good would this be for the children of Israel or for us if it happened just once, that power? It would be of no benefit!

2. Now, only sixty-eight of the seventy men are around the tabernacle, and yet, these other two are manifesting the spirit-empowered life. Well, we can’t let that happen and Moses is informed of what is going on and Joshua is ready to deal with it! But Moses steps in and responds by saying, **“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!”** Numbers 11:29. In other words, they are working for the same cause and the same Spirit is upon them as is upon us. Just because they were not with the rest of this group doesn’t mean the work they were doing was wrong.

Folks, may we be careful so that we don't develop this kind of attitude that we are alone in the work of God and if you are not with us, doing things the way we do them here at Calvary Chapel then you are wrong, you are not working for God. Now we might not be that blunt, but God's work is being done by a variety of God's people, in a variety of different ways even right here in Manitowoc! My prayer is that God would pour out His Spirit and empower more of His people for the work that is out there for the harvest is ready but the laborers are few!

#### VERSES 31-35

1. Many of you may be surprised by this, but it was not Alexander Cartwright or Abner Doubleday who invented the game of baseball in 1845. It was first invented right here in the Bible. Let me explain this to all you doubters out there. When these quail flew in they were about belt high, a good fastball down the middle of the plate and these guys were good because the least athletic person hit ten homers! Sorry, I've been waiting 13 years to use that one!
2. I find this interesting, not the baseball thing, but that God poured out His Spirit upon the seventy elders as they were close to Him. Now, to obtain the quails you had to go farther away from the camp, outside the camp. How true that is for our fleshly cravings, they are not found as we are close to the Lord but as we move farther away from Him. And think about it. This wild feeding frenzy that is going on here as they gathered these quails not just one day, not just through the night, but all the next day they gathered them. And the one who gathered the least gathered about 80 bushels or 10 homers!



3. Now, as soon as they began to eat, the Lord struck them with a plague and many died from this plague! In Psalm 106:13-15 we are told of what went on here, **“They soon forgot His works; They did not wait for His counsel, But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, And tested God in the desert. And He gave them their request, But sent leanness into their soul.”**

Folks, anytime we go after things that are not of God, feed our flesh, go after the cravings of our flesh, God may give to us what we long for but spiritually speaking, we will dry up! Why did God do this to them? To teach them a lesson, that they were not to be ruled by their fleshly cravings. You see, Promise Land people or Spirit-filled people are not to be like that and God was preparing them for this life. For us the lesson is the same. Don't be ruled by your physical or emotional appetites, but by God! Interestingly enough they called this place Kibroth Hattaavah, which means “graves of cravings.” Don't succumb to your fleshly appetites and live in Kibroth Hattaavah, but live that Spirit-filled life that is seen as we draw close to God and are obedient to Him!

**NUMBERS 12****VERSE 1**

1. Here we see Miriam and Aaron come against their brother Moses and it would seem as you read through this story that Miriam is the ringleader of this attack. What was the issue? This verse tells us it was because of the wife Moses had, an Ethiopian! Now, I thought Zipporah was from Midian? She was and thus, the implication is that Zipporah has died and Moses has remarried, I don't believe he had two wives; there is no indication of that. Then why was Miriam so upset? Possibly because she saw this woman as a threat to her position in the camp, as a leader and thus, she is attacking not only her, but also Moses! But, as we will see, this is not the real issue.

**VERSE 2**

1. They are challenging the authority of Moses, that is the real issue here and thus, the envy, the jealousy that was hidden has now come to the surface and it is not pretty. They felt they were just as good as Moses and what gives him the right to think that God only speaks through Him! Tragically, we see that same attitude even in churches where people try to usurp the position that God has placed upon another and God not only heard the rebellion of Miriam and Aaron but He also hears the rebellion that is in our own lives, He hears what we say, He knows what we are doing!

VERSE 3

1. Moses began his ministry over 40 years earlier as a very proud man and that did not work! God broke Moses and then, 40 years later when God wanted to use Moses, we see his humility. He realized he couldn't do it and even tried to get out of it. But that is just where God wanted him, not trusting in himself but the Lord. Folks, if you think you have the talent, the gift, the intellect, the power, the resources to do the work of God, look out because your pride will bring you down. The Bible says that we need to, "**Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.**" James 4:10. You see, that was the problem of Miriam and Aaron, their pride got in the way of what God was doing in their lives and they were not satisfied and God will humble them to get them back on track.

VERSES 4-5

1. Maybe Miriam and Aaron thought that God would vindicate them in this situation, He would right the wrong that Moses had done. But there is not going to be this vindication for Miriam and Aaron but really for Moses. God is going to chasten them for challenging the leadership of Moses and for not rejoicing in the work that He was doing in their own lives!

VERSES 6-9

1. God had placed Moses in this position of leadership and now they were challenging it! And God called them on it. Moses had a unique ministry from the Lord for the Lord spoke to Moses face-to-face. Now he did not see God because no man has seen God the Father but He did have as close a relationship with the Father as anyone could! And it was not that Moses was so special, yes he was humble, but he had his problems. The reason God used Moses is because he chose to use Moses and the same is true of us. I am not the pastor here because I am so special; it is just that God has placed me in this position. Can others do the work better? Probably, but the issue is what God has done as Miriam and Aaron found out! And it says that God was angry with Miriam and Aaron and departed from them, can you imagine how they now felt, waiting for the chastening of the Lord!

VERSE 10

1. This is why I believe Miriam led this rebellion; the Lord put upon her an advanced stage of leprosy. And as Aaron looked at his sister, he saw, in a sense, dead woman walking! Why did God do this? Because, what was in her heart, her sin, was now reflected in her body for all to see. God does the same with us, not giving us leprosy, but as we are in various situations, what comes flowing from our lips is a reflection of what is in our heart. Why does God do that or allow that? To make us aware and to give it to Him so we can be more like Him! He is purging that garbage from our lives and until the heat is turned up, that garbage will not rise to the surface!

VERSES 11-12

1. Isn't it interesting how quickly Aaron is swayed. When the children of Israel wanted a golden calf to worship, an idol, he made them one. When confronted by Moses regarding what he did, he blamed the people. When Miriam started this rebellion against Moses, he followed along. And now, as the situation changed, he submits to the authority of Moses. That is a very dangerous place to be, being blown this way and that way instead of submitting to the Lord and being directed by Him! Yes, sometimes he was right, but sometimes he was very wrong in his actions!

VERSE 13

1. That is the heart of God as Moses prays for Miriam's restoration and not destruction. I don't know about you, but for me, there are times I am like the brothers James and John, the sons of thunder who wanted to bring destruction upon all those that refused to follow them. Obviously that is the wrong attitude to have and Jesus even rebuked these two, His men, by telling them, "... **'You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them.'** . . ." Luke 9:55-56. God is in the business of restoration and yes, there will come a point where He will pour out His judgment upon this world, but let Him be in charge of that because His timing is perfect. Our responsibility is to reach out to restore those that have been condemned by their sin and that is only done as they receive Jesus!

VERSES 14-16

1. Miriam was an object lesson for the nation as she was kept outside the camp for seven days – a lesson of not coming against those that God has placed in authority. Now, I am not saying you can't question a leader or if a leader is in sin you just ignore it. That is not what is being spoken of here. Miriam and Aaron were trying to usurp a position that was not theirs and God dealt with that!

2. Also, did you notice that Moses did not fight for this position, he let God take care of it and He did! One more point, when people come against the work you are doing for the Lord, don't let them distract you; don't let them stop you from doing what God has called you to do. If God placed you in that position, if God called you to a work, He will see you through!

**NUMBERS 13****VERSES 1-3**

1. Folks, I do not believe God wanted them to spy out the land, God knew what it was like. And the reason I say that is because what we are told in Deuteronomy 1:21-23, **“Look, the Lord your God has set the land before you; go up and possess it, as the Lord God of your fathers has spoken to you; do not fear or be discouraged.’ And every one of you came near to me and said, ‘Let us send men before us, and let them search out the land for us, and bring back word to us of the way by which we should go up, and of the cities into which we shall come.’ The plan pleased me well; so I took twelve of your men, one man from each tribe.”**

In other words, the people wanted to know, Moses bought into the plan, maybe swayed by the people, and the Lord allowed them to go into the land to spy it out to test their faith, to show them what was really in their heart! You see, they were to go into the land and take it, not spy it out. But one person from each of the 12 tribes, not including the tribe of Levi, would go into the land to check it out.

2. I am so thankful that God does not tell us everything we will face but tells us just to “Go!” When I moved up here from Chicago I had no idea all that would come my way because if I did, I might have had second thoughts. And yet, God had a plan, He would see me through it all, but I could let “giants” get in the way of what God wanted to do. That is what happened to the children of Israel, as we will see!

VERSES 4-16

1. These 12 men represented the nation and there are two names that I would like to focus on that are important. First of all, from the tribe of Judah was Caleb and he was a tough dude! In Joshua 14:6-15 we are told of what happens when they are in the land, **“Then the children of Judah came to Joshua in Gilgal. And Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him: ‘You know the word which the Lord said to Moses the man of God concerning you and me in Kadesh Barnea. I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh Barnea to spy out the land, and I brought back word to him as it was in my heart. Nevertheless my brethren who went up with me made the heart of the people melt, but I wholly followed the Lord my God. So Moses swore on that day, saying, “Surely the land where your foot has trodden shall be your inheritance and your children's forever, because you have wholly followed the Lord my God.” And now, behold, the Lord has kept me alive, as He said, these forty-five years, ever since the Lord spoke this word to Moses while Israel wandered in the wilderness; and now, here I am this day, eighty-five years old. As yet I am as strong this day as on the day that Moses sent me; just as my strength was then, so now is my strength for war, both for going out and for coming in. Now therefore, give me this mountain of which the Lord spoke in that day; for you heard in that day how the Anakim were there, and that the cities were great and fortified. It may be that the Lord will be with me, and I shall be able to drive them out as the Lord said.’**



**And Joshua blessed him, and gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh as an inheritance. Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite to this day, because he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel. And the name of Hebron formerly was Kirjath Arba (Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim). Then the land had rest from war.”**

I love this guy Caleb, 85 years old and still ready to fight. You would think by now it was time for him to retire and relax. Maybe take a portion of the land that had the weakest of enemies. But he asks for just the opposite. He asks for the area where the giants lived, the Anakim. Caleb was still acting upon the promises of God, even though the work was tough, he knew the land belonged to Israel and this was his portion. Thus, Hebron is the area Caleb got as an inheritance, the same area that terrified the 10 spies over 40 years earlier. God wants our faith to be stretched, to grow and He places giants before us and asks us to take that step of faith. To trust in Him for the victory.

Then there is Hoshea from the tribe of Ephraim. Think of it like this. This young man comes to Moses and he asks him who he is, and he tells him, “Hoshea, “ which means “salvation.” And Moses tells him, “No, Ya-Hoshea” or “Yahweh is salvation.” And that was now his name! Joshua is the one who will lead the children of Israel into the Promise Land and he is a picture of our Joshua, Jesus in the Greek, the one who will bring to us salvation for our salvation is only found in Yahweh!

VERSES 17-20

1. Did they need to know these things? Absolutely not, all God wanted them to do was go in by faith and see the salvation He would bring to them. God already told them the land was good, it was fruitful, that they would occupy it, that He would drive out the enemies. Then why did they do this? I believe it was a lack of faith, unbelief on their part, they had to figure things out before they could enter in!

VERSES 21-25

1. After forty days of spying out the land they return to the camp and the land looks great, it is fruitful. So far so good.

VERSES 26-29

1. They came to the children of Israel with a good news bad news report. Yes the land was great, very fruitful, **BUT** they have fortified cities, **BUT** the people are strong, **BUT** the land is full of people! Was that true? Yes it was true, but that was not the issue. God promised them the land and all they needed to do was walk by faith and not by sight!

VERSE 30

1. Here we see a man of faith by the name of Caleb who did not go along with the ten other spies, and Joshua is also with Caleb on this. And he tells the people, “Forget about it, the land is ours. God has given to us, let’s go!” True faith walks; false faith or unbelief goes nowhere! Caleb went against what the other ten spies were saying, what the nation believed because he trusted in the Lord and not in men. Paul, in Romans 3:3-4 tells us, **“For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect? Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar. . . .”**

Who are you going to trust, the words of men or the words of God? Joshua and Caleb trusted in the Lord and they are men of faith and it will be only these two men, of this generation, that will enter the Promise Land!

VERSES 31-33

1. Like I said, from a human perspective, what they said was true, for the most part. But from a godly perspective, the land was theirs and they needed to walk in and take it! Was there some exaggeration in what they were saying? You bet and that is usually the case. When we walk by sight and not by faith we tend to paint an even darker picture than what is really there. But folks, does it matter how bad it looks when the Lord tells you to walk? Absolutely not! Thus, walk by faith and not by sight!

2. Now, how could two of the spies look at the same exact situation as the other ten and see something completely different? Because they looked at this through the eyes of faith, trusting in the Lord. Thus, they could come away from the situation filled with joy and excited about what God is going to do while the other ten spies had a distorted picture of this as they looked at the situation through the eyes of man, and it was hopeless. How about you? You see, our faith or our unbelief does not come from the outward situations as you may think, but from our hearts. What we do outwardly is just a reflection of what is going on inside of us, what we truly believe. Keep your eyes focused on the Lord and walk by faith and not by sight!

3. Next time we will look at how just a few people filled with unbelief can affect an entire nation!