

The Book of Numbers



Between
Mount
Sinai
And
The
Promised
Land



As You Enter Into a New Year:

1. What is your attitude toward the leaders God has placed in positions of authority over you?
2. How are you handling your finances? Are there difficulties and struggles? Arguments?
3. What difference would it make in 2011 to have a different perspective on these critical issues?
4. How does God speak to these issues from His Word in the book of Numbers?

Response to “Bad News”

1. How do you respond to “bad news”? Faith or Fear?
2. When the Israelites realized that in order to receive the great blessings of the Promised Land, they would have to “go through the giants of the land,” discouragement set in.
3. A God-sized task like this, was far beyond what the people could do on their own. God would have to intervene in a mighty way. (**Faith required!**)

A Different Spirit

1. Joshua and Caleb were up to the task, they did not have a problem believing God could do it. (Why were they different? What were they thinking on the way back to the people at the end of the 40 days of exploring?)
2. The people wailed, grumbled, despaired. To go back to Egypt; maybe even stoning Moses and Aaron seemed a better plan.

The Consequences

1. “In this desert your bodies will fall—every one of you twenty years old or more who was counted in the census and who has grumbled against me. **Not one of you will enter the land** I swore with uplifted hand to make your home, except Caleb . . .and Joshua.” The LORD said. 14:29-30
2. “these men responsible for spreading the bad report about the land were struck down and **died** of a plague before the LORD.” 14:37

The Response

1. The Israelites mourned bitterly.
2. “We have sinned.”
3. “We will go up to the place the LORD promised.”
4. Moses responds, “Because you have turned away from the LORD, he will not be with you and you will fall by the sword.” vs. 43
5. In their presumption, they went up against their enemies anyway and suffered bitter defeat.
6. Have you ever acted in presumption before the Lord and suffered for it?

Chapter 15

1. The LORD interjects this chapter to remind the people of:
 - A. The need to offer sacrifices to the Him.
 - B. The importance of offering the FIRST of their wealth.
 - C. How to atone for unintentional sins.
 - D. The command to “cut off” from the community anyone who sins defiantly. (Example: man collecting firewood on Sabbath=execution)
 - E. Putting tassels on their garments to remind them to obey all God’s commands.

Reflections

1. When we fail the LORD, all is not lost.
2. We may suffer consequences, but God wants to **move forward** with us.
3. Chapter 15 serves as a reminder that God wants to move on in fellowship with his people, not stand in condemnation over them.
4. What do you do when you fail the LORD? Do you quickly repent and move forward with Him, or wallow in condemnation and self-pity?

Chapter 16-17: Leaders Become Targets!

1. Angry about the current circumstances in the desert, Korah (Levite), Dathan and Abiram, and 250 **well-known leaders** band together to oppose Moses and Aaron.
2. They don't like the fact that Moses and Aaron are following God's plan to keep the community in the desert for 40 years.
3. They accuse Moses and Aaron of :
 - A. "Lording it over them"
 - B. Bringing them **out of** a land flowing with milk and honey (Egypt) to kill the community in the desert.

How About You?

1. Have you ever targeted God's leaders when you are unhappy with the way they are doing things?
2. How do you react when they have said something that has offended or hurt you?

God's Defends His Leaders

1. God wants to destroy the whole community, but Moses and Aaron fall facedown and intercede.
2. God causes the **earth to open up and swallow** Korah, Abiram and Dathan, with their families and possessions.
3. **Fire** came out from the LORD and consumed the other 250 well-known leaders in rebellion.
4. The people grumbled against Moses and Aaron about these deaths blaming them for their deaths, and God broke out against the assembly with a **plague**.

True Leadership

1. 14,700 people died before Aaron could make atonement for the community. “He stood between the living and the dead, and the plague stopped.” 16:49
2. How does God call us to stand in the gap on behalf of sinners?

God's Plan to Stop the Grumbling Against His Leaders

1. God ordered that 12 staffs be brought to the Tent of Meeting with the names of 12 leaders, one from each tribe. (Aaron was written on the one for the tribe of Levi.)
2. Aaron's staff budded, blossomed, and produced almonds over night!!
3. This freaked the people out and they cried out, "We will die! We are lost! Anyone who even comes near the tabernacle will die! Are we all going to die?" 17:12-13

God Cares How We Treat His Leaders!

1. The Fear of God, includes a serious respect for His leaders (not because they are perfect, and not when they are walking away from God; but because God has chosen them to shepherd His people).
2. What is your attitude toward the spiritual leaders God has put in your life? Do you grumble against them?
3. They, in themselves are not worthy of respect and following; but Christ IS. We do it for HIM!

What Does Submission to Leadership Look Like?

1. We are all called to submit to leadership: in the home (children to parents; wife to husband); in the church; and in society (children to teachers, workers to boss, citizens to government, etc.)
2. This is NOT mindless obedience, but IS a CONSISTENT spirit of COOPERATION flowing from HUMILITY that recognizes the hand of God behind ALL leadership.
3. The OPPOSITE is a spirit of criticism, of challenge, of resistance, of competition, of “knowing better” flowing from PRIDE.