

Hello everyone,

PERCENT OF BIBLE COMPLETED: 14.1%

Weekly Readings will cover: Numbers 8 through Numbers 14

Sunday: Numbers 8

Monday: Numbers 9

Tuesday: Numbers 10

Wednesday: Numbers 11

Thursday: Numbers 12

Friday: Numbers 13

Saturday: Numbers 14

Current # of email addresses in the group: 582

We seem to continue to grow weekly still as a group. Welcome to all who are joining us for the book of Numbers. I hope your first week in the book of Numbers went very well. There are a lot of exciting and interesting stories coming up this week in our second week in Numbers. I hope you have a great study week!

Website archive location for audio files & PDFs:

<https://www.ucg.org/congregations/san-francisco-bay-area-ca/posts/audio-links-re-three-year-chronological-deep-dive-reading-program-circa-2022-2025-903711>

### **3-YEAR CHRONOLOGICAL STUDY: Week 26**

Read the following passages & the Daily Deep Dive on the daily reading.

Day 155 - SUNDAY: May 14<sup>th</sup>

Numbers 8

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading plan states the following for this chapter: “The system of sacrifices and offerings in the Old Testament often seems too complicated for us to grasp. Yet in this chapter another dimension is added—we see the Levites themselves being offered to God by Aaron as a wave offering—as if he lifts them up to present them to God for His acceptance. Indeed, waving overhead was the typical way of presenting something to God, who dwells above in heaven (compare Exodus 29:24-27; Leviticus 7:30, Leviticus 7:34; Leviticus 8:27, Leviticus 8:29).

We see that God does accept the Levites, stating that they are now His (Numbers 8:14).

Interestingly, the High Priest today, Jesus Christ, also "lifts" His servants—His priesthood the Church (see 1 Peter 2:5, 1 Peter 2:9)—to present them before God the Father as if a wave offering. We find this in Ephesians 2:4-7: "God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and *raised us up together* [out of spiritual death and into God's presence], and made us sit together in the *heavenly places* in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus" (emphasis added).

Of course, "the ages to come" is what we are really waiting for, when we will be perfected and sinless and given God's Kingdom. But we are "raised up" and "waved" before God for Him to accept us right now. And He does—thanks to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ that covers our sins. We find this portrayed in the ceremony that took place in ancient Israel on the Feast of Pentecost, when two leavened loaves of the firstfruits of the wheat harvest were waved before God. These "wave loaves" represented God's converted followers of Old and New Testament times, the "firstfruits" in God's plan of salvation (compare Romans 8:23; James 1:18; Revelation 14:1-4; Hebrews 12:23). The leaven shows that these firstfruits are not yet perfect and still beset with sin (see Leviticus 2:11-12; 1 Corinthians 5:6-8; and highlights covering the grain offering in Leviticus 2). Yet the loaves were accepted because a sin offering was waved *with* them (see Leviticus 23:16-20). The same is true today. When Christ presents His followers before the Father, His perfect sacrifice is presented with them—and they are accepted.

Returning to the Levites, there was a training period of five years, a sort of apprenticeship, for them before they assumed their full duties at age 30 (verse 24; 4:3). After age 50, it seems they went into a kind of semi-retirement with limited duties (Numbers 8:25-26; Numbers 4:3).

The purpose of the laying on of hands, mentioned here, is to set someone apart for a specific purpose such as in ordinations and healings. The first mention of laying on of hands in the Scriptures is when Israel (Jacob) placed his blessing and name on Ephraim and Manasseh (Genesis 48:13). In this case of the Levites, we see representatives of all Israel laying on their hands to set the Levites apart for the special service of the tabernacle (verse 10). The laying on of hands, according to the book of Hebrews, is one of the basic doctrines of the Bible (Hebrews 6:1-2).” [END]

Verse 7 – Commentaries speculate as to why the Levites were required to shave their bodies, but what is clear, is that God required the Levites to be sprinkled with water, shave their bodies and wash their clothes, all as part of the process for them to be clean before Him.

Verse 10 – The Adam Clarke’s commentary states: “it appears that what was done on this occasion meant no more than that the people gave up this whole tribe to God in place of their firstborn; and that by this act they bound themselves to provide for them who, because of their sacred service, could follow no secular work. And surely it was right, that they who served the altar should live by the altar. The ministers of God perform offices for the people which the people cannot perform for themselves; and nothing can be more reasonable than that the people should give them the necessaries and comforts of life while they are thus employed in their behalf.” [END]

Verse 12 – One offering for Atonement to God for their sinful natures (Sin Offering) and one for Atonement to God showing that they were giving themselves fully to God (Burnt Offering).

Verse 15 – After they were cleansed, the Levites went in the court of the Tabernacle to serve the priests. John Gill's commentary states: "cleanse them by sprinkling the water of purifying on them, and offer them by waving them as before; and indeed this is no new thing which is here observed, but what was already done, and therefore should be rendered, "when thou shalt have cleansed them", or "after thou hast cleansed them", &c. and so the particle "vau" is sometimes used" [END]

Verse 19 – The Levites belonged to God, so God gave them as a gift to Aaron & his sons to help with the work.

Day 156 - MONDAY: May 15<sup>th</sup>

Numbers 9

Daily Deep Dive:

In Exodus 12 we received the original instructions for the Passover. Now, however, because some men had become defiled by coming into contact with dead bodies, thus becoming ceremonially unclean, they would have to miss the Passover. They appealed to Moses because they really didn't want to miss out entirely on this divinely commanded feast (Leviticus 23:5).

God reveals Himself in encounters like this one. He isn't the harsh, heavy-handed, unreasonable God some would make Him out to be. This event gives us a glimpse at how compassionate and understanding He actually is in making it possible for us to follow Him. He is giving and serving, not willing that any should perish, but that all mankind should ultimately be in His Kingdom. Thus, He establishes the second Passover for those who, for reasons beyond their control, miss the first Passover.

It isn't usually published on sacred calendars, so how can you tell when to keep the second Passover? There is an easy rule of thumb to use so as not to get confused. Just add four weeks and two days to the first Passover. For example, if the first Passover was on a Tuesday night the second Passover will be on a Thursday night.

Of course, we must never purposely skip the first Passover. God the Father literally gave up His Son Jesus Christ so that Christ could come to earth and die to take away our sin. Passover pictures this aspect of God's incredible plan of salvation. By God's good graces some have been called to be a part of that plan at this time. Moses explained that those who disregarded the Passover would be cut off and bear their sin. It is the same for us today. To skip, or treat the Passover lightly, is to say to our Savior, "Thanks, but no thanks." We would remain in our sin (verse 13). Let us never drift down such a dangerous spiritual path."  
[END]

Verse 6 – We learn of two men who had become defiled due to touching/handling dead bodies and couldn't keep Passover due to being unclean. Here in Numbers, we aren't given any insight into why or how this happened. Commentaries make a connection to Leviticus 10 where Nadab and Abihu are killed by God for offering "profane fire" before God. In Leviticus 10:4, Moses calls two individuals, Mishael and Elzaphan (Aaron's cousins), to come and carry their bodies away. They follow Moses' instructions and would have become unclean in the process for 7 days (compare Numbers 19:11).

JFB commentary says that "Jewish writers assert that these men were the persons who had carried out the dead bodies of Nadab and Abihu" Barnes commentary also states that these Certain Men were "Probably Mishael and Elzaphan, who buried their cousins, Nadab and Abihu, within a week of this Passover".

Try to place yourself in their shoes. You follow the instructions of Moses and now you can't keep the first memorial Passover (1 year after coming out of Egypt)? They are wise enough to bring their issue to Moses, who then goes to God about this unprecedented situation.

Verse 10 – God is very merciful and makes a way for these individuals to keep a second Passover a month later (30 days later). This is the only festival that God allows a makeup date. What can we learn from this important example.?

First, God didn't lower His standard and allow unclean people to participate in this important Passover observance.

Second, it shows us that God is reasonable and works with us where we are to find solutions to our problems.

Third, it shows us how incredibly important Passover is that God would create a makeup day for His people.

Verse 13 – Notice, everyone who possibly can is expected to take the first Passover. The second Passover is for only those rare times when someone was physically unable to keep the first Passover. God judges strongly the individual that could have taken the first Passover but chose not to.

Day 157 - TUESDAY: May 16<sup>th</sup>

Numbers 10

Daily Deep Dive:

“The two silver trumpets (Hebrew *chatsotserah*) are not to be confused with the more traditional trumpet (Hebrew *shofar*), an animal's horn that was also blown on the Feast of Trumpets. The two silver trumpets were used to signal the entire encampment. We can imagine their use as similar to modern army buglers sounding an assembly or charge. The sound must have carried over the heads of the Israelites for miles. The new month and feast days were marked, various assemblies could be

called, alarms sounded to move forward, or even to go to war, depending on the signal given, not unlike the system still used on naval vessels today. One trumpet blown (Hebrew *teru'ah*) a *prolonged blowing*, called the leaders of Israel to Moses (verse 4).

Eleazar and Ithamar, sons of Aaron, were to blow the two silver trumpets as an ordinance forever (verse 8). Of course, there is no functioning Levitical priesthood today to carry out this ordinance. These trumpets were a type or a picture of the heavenly trumpets that will sound at the return of Christ (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17). During the time of Solomon (whose peaceful kingdom pictured the coming Kingdom of God), the Levites created a beautiful choir and orchestra with an astonishing 120 priests playing trumpets! (2 Chronicles 5:12).

The second part of chapter 10 sees Israel departing from Mount Sinai in great drama and pageantry—just a month and a half after first setting up the tabernacle. Preparing to leave, Moses appeals to his brother-in-law Hobab to go with them. Hobab declines because he wants to return to his native land and people. But Moses persists, and it appears that Hobab continued with the Israelites (see Judges 1:16).” [END]

Verse 10 – The JFB commentary states: “Festive and thanksgiving occasions were to be ushered in with the trumpets, as all feasts afterwards were (Psa 81:3; 2Ch 29:27) to intimate the joyous and delighted feelings with which they engaged in the service of God.” [END]

Verse 31 – Adam Clarke’s commentary states: “But what need had they of Hobab, when they had the pillar and fire continually to point out their way? Answer: The cloud directed their general journeys, but not their particular excursions. Parties took several journeys while the grand army lay still. (See Numbers 13, 20, 31, 32, etc). They therefore needed such a person as Hobab, who was well acquainted with the

desert, to direct these particular excursions; to point them out watering places, and places where they might meet with fuel, etc., etc. What man cannot, under the direction of God's providence, do for himself, God will do in the way of especial mercy. He could have directed them to the fountains and to the places of fuel, but Hobab can do this, therefore let Hobab be employed; and let Hobab know for his encouragement that, while he is serving others in the way of God's providence, he is securing his own best interests. On these grounds Hobab should be invited, and for this reason Hobab should go." [END]

Day 158 - WEDNESDAY: May 17<sup>th</sup>

Numbers 11

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG Reading plan states: "The people were setting out for the Promised Land with high hopes and expectations. It is interesting to compare this episode with the departure of the Israelites from their great deliverance from Egypt at the Red Sea. Only three days' journey into the wilderness from that point, the people turned to murmuring against God for lack of water (Exodus 15:22-24). And here, too, it is only three days from leaving Mount Sinai (Numbers 10:33) that the people again turn to complaining (Numbers 11:1-3).

Again we see just how wrong it is to be ungrateful. After all God had done for them, they griped and complained. To teach them how sorely displeased He was, God struck the outskirts of the camp with fire, possibly lightning, as a lesson to those who would be unappreciative. That lesson was meant for us today as well, for God hasn't changed the way He views things like ingratitude and rebellion. But despite the warning, ingratitude increased—to the point of the people weeping for what they didn't have (thus showing little regard for the extent to which God had incredibly blessed them). Amazingly, they even said they wanted to be back in Egypt, where they had been whipped and beaten as slave laborers!



The insanely needless moaning and crying takes its toll on Moses. Not only is he helpless to deal with the situation himself, but the people hold him personally responsible for the predicament they are in. It all gets to be more than Moses can deal with, so he pleads to God. He didn't father all these people; he doesn't have food for them; why does he have all the responsibility? Just to get a feel for the burden Moses thought he was carrying, consider the size of this encampment of people. For Moses to give every Israelite a quarter-pounder, just one hamburger each, it would have required 375 *tons* of fresh ground meat! Moses asked to be put out of his misery.

Indeed, Moses was so upset that he was actually blaming God of evil-doing. The King James and New King James Versions, however, give only a hint of this—in verse 11, where Moses asks God, "Why have you afflicted your servant?," and in the first words of verse 15, "If you treat me like this...." This shows that Moses considered God responsible for His plight but not that Moses actually thought God morally wrong because of it. Yet of great interest in this regard are the last words of Moses in verse 15—"my wretchedness." This should literally be translated "my evil" (J.P. Green, *The Interlinear Bible*). Yet Moses is certainly not confessing His own faults in this passage. Rather, what he must be saying is, "the evil of my situation" or "the evil that has come *upon* me," which, in either case, by direct implication, means "the evil that You [God] are doing to me." To see this more clearly, notice how *The New English Bible* translates verse 15: "But if I have won thy favour, let me suffer this trouble at thy hands no longer." And even more poignantly, notice the same verse in the *Good News Bible*: "If you are going to treat me like this, have pity on me and kill me, so that I won't have to endure your cruelty any longer." So Moses was actually accusing God of evil—of deliberate cruelty.

Yet God, who knows the heart, was merciful to Moses. Remember always that God has promised that He will put no burden on us we

can't bear (compare 1 Corinthians 10:13). In His lovingkindness, God responded to Moses' plea by calling for the appointment of 70 elders to help carry the burden of the people—men who would be helped by God's Holy Spirit.

Nevertheless, God was sorely displeased with the ungrateful attitude of the people who were saying it was better back in Egypt. Did they consider it a small thing that God was giving them manna enough for all their needs? Evidently. And rather than be content with that—or at least pray to God to supply the desires of their hearts—the people just moaned and bellyached for the meat they didn't have. Moses had doubted whether it was possible to find enough meat for the whole congregation. To carry the previous analogy a little further, two Big Macs a day, for a month, would come to more than 30,000 tons of meat altogether! We can't imagine that much meat—and neither could Moses. Are there that many fish in the sea? Yet God was able to provide—and did. But angered by the voracious lust of such rebellious ingrates, God smote the people with a great plague, killing many. The place where this happened, now named Kibroth Hataavah or "Graves of Lust," was a vast graveyard of needlessly ravenous, ungrateful people.”  
[END]

Verse 3 – “Taberah” means “burning”.

Verse 4 – It appears in this particular case that the mixed multitude that had come out of Egypt with the nation of Israel began to complain and lust after food and soon that complaining had spread to the nation of Israel.

Verse 16 – John Gill’s commentary states: “out from among them, such as were not only men in years, but men of gravity, prudence, and wisdom; elders there were among the people in Egypt, [Exo 3:16](#); and it was from among such as those the seventy men were to be taken; we

read of seventy elders before this time, that went up to the mount with Moses, Exo 24:1; but they are supposed only to be selected for that purpose at that time, and did not continue as a separate body, or in any office: according to this number seventy, the great sanhedrim, or court of judicature the sat at Jerusalem in later times, consisted of seventy persons, with a prince or president at the head of them, as Moses was at the head of those: and so our Lord, besides his twelve apostles, sent out seventy disciples to be assisting in his work and service, Luk 10:1," [END]

Verse 17 – JFB commentary states: ““The spirit” means the gifts and influences of the Spirit (Num 27:18; Joe 2:28; Joh 7:39; 1Co 14:12), and by “taking the spirit of Moses, and putting it upon them,” is not to be understood that the qualities of the great leader were to be in any degree impaired but that the elders would be endowed with a portion of the same gifts, especially of prophecy (Num 11:25) - that is, an extraordinary penetration in discovering hidden and settling difficult things.”

Verse 20 – God would give them so much meat to eat that they would become sick of eating it. It would become disgusting to them. While God wants us to come to Him and share our feelings, He does not want us to be complaining and unthankful. Their approach was wrong.

Verse 22 – It’s a little shocking that after all the miracles God has performed that Moses is doubting how God will accomplish this great feat of meat for this large group of people for an entire month. Even people of great faith can have moments or situations of doubt.

Verse 25 – God will occasionally pour out His spirit in dramatic fashion to initially prove without a doubt that He is doing something spectacular (compare Acts 2:3 (Holy Spirit poured out on the Church) and Acts 10:44 (Holy Spirit poured out on Gentiles). Notice here in this

verse, that after they prophesied at this time, they never did it again. It was for a specific purpose and that purpose was accomplished.

Verse 28 – There is a reason that all leaders first need a period of mentoring and preparation. Joshua’s view here is shortsighted and off base. He is still growing as a leader.

Verse 29 – The NKJV states: “Are you zealous for my sake?” The Hebrew translated “zealous” means “to envy, be jealous, be envious, be zealous”. By Moses’ response, it appears that Joshua was afraid that Moses authority would be diminished by others prophesying but Moses wasn’t jealous or concerned but was happy that God was pouring out His Spirit on others. How would we have responded?

Verse 34 – Hebrew for “Kibrothhattavah” means “Grave of lust”.

Day 159 - THURSDAY: May 18<sup>th</sup>

Numbers 12

Daily Deep Dive:

“Resisting God-ordained authority has been as common a temptation as presuming to *speak* for God when not appointed to do so. Often in the case of sedition and rebellion, we see both. And in chapter 12, we find *Miriam and Aaron* doing both. Moses was the most humble man on the face of the earth (verse 3)—a note probably inserted by Joshua or a later biblical editor to put the challenge against Moses in perspective. And this humble man patiently waited on the Lord to intervene and uphold him. He did nothing to refute his sister and brother.

People who are jealous of someone will often run them down, which is what Miriam and Aaron proceed to do. They start by attacking him over "the Ethiopian [or Cushite] woman whom he had married" (verse 1).

Many have built theories on this accusation. We have no other record in Scripture of the woman mentioned here, for the only wife we do know of, Zipporah, was a Midianite. Thus, we cannot know for sure when Moses married this woman. It is possible that he married her decades earlier while a prince in Egypt, after winning a victory against Ethiopia, as this is what Josephus records. This first-century Jewish historian refers to her as Tharbis, daughter of the king of Ethiopia (*Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 2, chap. 10). Moses may have retrieved her when he returned to Egypt to free the Israelites—we simply do not know. In any case, there is no record of God issuing any criticism of Moses in this circumstance. Indeed, God exonerates Moses as being faithful in all His house (verse 7).

But do not Miriam and Aaron also speak for God? Is not their disapproval sanctioned by Him? The question is even raised as to whether Moses was unique in his role as the one through whom God communicated. At the very least, Miriam and Aaron wanted to have an equal say with Moses. Perhaps it was jealousy, perhaps it was pride, perhaps a family argument. They convinced themselves that they had a valid claim—after all, Miriam was a prophetess (Exodus 15:20) and God spoke to Aaron, too (Leviticus 10:8; Leviticus 11:1; Leviticus 13:1; Exodus 6:13; Exodus 12:1; etc.). God does, then, speak to all three of them. Yet, while exonerating Moses, He comes down hard on Miriam and Aaron. Miriam, it appears, may have been the instigator of the criticisms of Moses, as her name is mentioned first (verse 1) and the principal punishment befalls her (verses 10, 14). Remarkably, Moses' wonderful character shines through as he intercedes for his brother and sister despite the personal betrayal he must have felt." [END]

Verse 1 – As mentioned above, there are a number of theories on this verse. Here are a couple that connect that this Ethiopian would be the same as Zipporah the Midianite.

JFB commentary states it's theory as: "*Hebrew*, "a Cushite woman" - Arabia was usually called in Scripture the land of Cush, its inhabitants being descendants of that son of Ham (see on [Exo 2:15](#)) and being accounted generally a vile and contemptible race (see on [Amo 9:7](#)). The occasion of this seditious outbreak on the part of Miriam and Aaron against Moses was the great change made in the government by the adoption of the seventy rulers [[Num 11:16](#)]. Their irritating disparagement of his wife (who, in all probability, was Zipporah [[Exo 2:21](#)], and not a second wife he had recently married) arose from jealousy of the relatives, through whose influence the innovation had been first made ([Exo 18:13-26](#)), while they were overlooked or neglected. Miriam is mentioned before Aaron as being the chief instigator and leader of the sedition." [END]

Adam Clarke's commentary states a similar view: "It appears that jealousy of the power and influence of Moses was the real cause of their complaint though his having married an Ethiopian woman- האשה הכשית [haishshah haccushith](#) - That Woman, the Cushite, probably meaning Zipporah, who was an Arab born in the land of Midian - was the ostensible cause." [END]

John Gill's commentary has a lot to offer in first presenting the theories it disagrees with before stating what he believes: "not a queen of Ethiopia, as the Targum of Jonathan; nor Tharbis, a daughter of a king of Ethiopia, whom Josephus says he married, when he was sent upon an expedition against the Ethiopians, while he was in Pharaoh's court; nor the widow of an Ethiopian king whom he married after his death, when he fled from Pharaoh into Ethiopia, and was made a king there, as say some Jewish writers: for there is no reason to believe he was married before he went to Midian; nor was this some Ethiopian woman he had married since, and but lately, Zipporah being dead or divorced, as some have fancied; but it was Zipporah herself, as Aben Ezra, Ben Melech, and so the Jerusalem Targum, which represents her not as truly an Ethiopian, but so called, because she was like to one; indeed she was really one; not a native of Ethiopia, the country of the

Abyssines, but she was a Cushite, a native of Arabia Chusea, in which country Midian was, from whence she came; hence the tents, of Cushan, and the curtains of Midian, are spoken of together, Habakkuk 3:7. Now it was not on account of Moses's marriage with her that they spoke against him, for that was an affair transacted in Midian some years ago, which at first sight may seem to be the case; nor because he now had divorced her, as Jarchi, which perhaps would have given them no uneasiness; and for the same reason, not because he abstained from conversation with her, that he might give up himself to the service of God in his house, and perform it in a more holy and faithful manner, which is the common sentiment of the Jewish writers: but rather, as it is thought by others, because of a suspicion they had entertained, that she had interested herself in the affair of the choice of the seventy elders, and had prevailed upon Moses to put in such and such persons into the list she had a mind to serve; at least this seems to be the case, for the displeasure was against Moses himself; they were angry with him, because he transacted that affair without them, and chose whom he pleased, without consulting them; and therefore, though they cared not to ascribe it entirely to him, and his neglect of them, they imputed it to his wife, as if she had over persuaded him, or her brother through her means, to take such a step as he did." [END]

Verse 3 – Moses was more humble than anyone else living at that time. What an amazing statement about him!

Verse 7 – Moses was firm in his obedience to God (faithful).

Verse 8 – Contrasting how God normally spoke to prophets through visions and dreams (verse 6), He tells Aaron & Miriam that He speaks face to face, speaking plainly and clearly (as opposed to parables or riddles). Because of this close relationship, God asks them “why they were not afraid to speak against Moses?”. This should cause all of us to stop and consider our own words against any of God’s chosen leaders.

In Romans 13:1 – 2 (breaking into the verse), it states: “there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.” It is not uncommon in our world today to see people criticize and bring accusations against leaders often. Many times these criticisms and accusations are based on information that is often unreliable. Additionally, we see many who claim to be Christians criticizing and attacking leaders even of God’s Church. We must all be very careful in our words and criticisms. Aaron & Miriam would have been wise to keep their mouths closed and trust God to deal with their perceived injustice.

Verse 11 – Aaron quickly realizes how foolish and sinful he and his sister had been and is repentant.

Verse 12 – We covered back in Leviticus 13 & 14 the difficult life one had if one were a leper. Aaron equates leprosy with being “as one dead”. This makes sense as their life as they knew it would be over and they would be forced to live in isolation. John Gill’s commentary states: “As she was in a ceremonial sense, being to be shut up and excluded from the society of people, and as defiling by touching as a dead carcase; and, in a natural sense, her flesh, by the disease upon her, was become as dead flesh, putrid and rotten, and unless miraculously cured it would issue in her death:” [END]

Regarding the second half of that verse, it’s a disturbing image. Here is what John Gill’s commentary states: “like an abortive, or one stillborn, that has been dead some time in its mother's womb; and therefore when brought forth its flesh is almost wasted away, or at least half consumed: and in such a plight and condition was Miriam already, or quickly would be, through the force of her disease.” [END]



Verse 14 – While God could have quickly healed her, He instead thought it would be better for her (and perhaps others as an example) for her to at least have to deal with this punishment for seven days. I imagine she took that time to consider her sinful words and actions and probably learned and grew a lot.

### Day 160 - FRIDAY: May 19<sup>th</sup>

#### Numbers 13

#### Daily Deep Dive:

No doubt God inspired the decision to send these two who He already knew to be faithful—ensuring that there would be at least two faithful witnesses among this generally faithless group to fulfill His requirement that we are to accept something on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Interestingly, in the end time, after the organized work of God is publicly silenced, there will still be two witnesses (Revelation 11:3) who will give a faithful report on the nature of the future promised land, the Kingdom of God. Yet, as before, the vast majority of those reporting on God's Kingdom will be false witnesses—as is the case even now. While we see God here telling Moses to send men to spy out the land (13:1-2), Deuteronomy 1:21-23 shows that this idea was initially brought to Moses by the people. The idea pleased Moses, who evidently took it to God for approval—which God gave with more details here in Numbers 13. (It is, of course, likely that God intended this plan all along—perhaps inspiring the people to come up with it.) Twelve men, one from each tribe, were chosen to spy out the land. They were to check out the soil, trees, people, cities, everything, and then report back. These 12 men are different leaders of Israel than those we saw in chapters 1 and 7. Only two of these men brought a favorable report, Caleb and Joshua. Caleb said, evidently because of his faith in God, "Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it" (verse 30).

Another important factor to consider is that even if everything the evil witnesses said were actually true, the omnipotent God was easily able to defeat obstacles like giants and massive fortresses—a fact that should already have been evident from the plagues upon Egypt and the parting of the Red Sea. God had, after all, brought low the most powerful kingdom on earth—the Egyptian empire—right before their eyes, and the city-states of Canaan were much weaker in comparison.

Besides not expanding fears about the dangers of the land beyond all proportion, Joshua and Caleb knew—had the faith—that God would deliver on His promise. They were the ones the Israelites should have listened to. Sadly, however, this was not to be.” [END]

Verse 22 – This verse tells us that the descendants of “Anak” were there. This is the first time this word appears in the Bible. It’s used a total of 9 times, although 3 of those are here in this chapter.

Deuteronomy 9:2 tells us that these people were “great and tall”. John Gill’s commentary on that verse states: “who described them as very large bodied men, and of a gigantic stature, the descendants of one Anak, a giant;”

Verse 23 – John Gill’s commentary states: “it was so big; and which was not done only for the ease of carrying it, but that it might not have any of its grapes squeezed, bruised, and broken off, but that they might carry it entire and whole for the Israelites to behold:”

Verse 32 – As part of their unfaithful reporting of the land, the men said the men there were of “great stature”. This word in Hebrew means “measurement, size” (BDB).

Verse 33 – They state they saw “giants, the sons of Anak”. We already discussed this family of Anak above. This word from “giants” is

“nephil/nephiyl” and we saw this used in Genesis 6:4 and this is the only other time it is used.

### Day 161 - SATURDAY: May 20<sup>th</sup>

Numbers 14

Daily Deep Dive:

“The Israelites, it appears, had come to the point where they could have immediately possessed the Promised Land. But a lack of faith would keep them out of this land that flowed with milk and honey for several more decades—making their time in the wilderness a total of 40 years.

Discouragement set in as a result of the evil report of the 10 faithless spies, and once again the children of Israel speak against Moses and Aaron. They begin by wishing they had already died in Egypt or the wilderness rather than face the "dangers" of the land of Canaan (verse 2). But the complaining doesn't stop there. They accuse God of intentionally putting them and their families in harm's way to kill them (verse 3). And then an even more incredible thing happens. They decide that it would be much better to return to Egypt, so they actually call for the selection of a new leader to lead them back to the land of their enslavement.

At this point Moses and Aaron "hit the deck," as it were (verse 5), probably to intercede for the people and perhaps to "dodge the bullets" of God's wrath that would surely follow such outrage. Indeed, how out of touch with reality can people be? Of course, we probably consider ourselves impervious to such a frame of mind. Yet discouragement can also cause *us* to want to give up and go back into the world. Egypt, a type of sin, for us represents those things we

believe and do before the Father calls us and grants us repentance and faith. We must, then, never look back.

But again, the people were not merely *looking* back—they had already determined to actually *go* back. They were picking a leader for this rebellion when Joshua and Caleb step forward in utter grief. They encourage the people to go forward toward the Promised Land. In Numbers 13:16, we see that Moses has changed the name of Hoshea (Hebrew "Salvation" or "May the Eternal Save") to Joshua (Hebrew "The Eternal Saves")—thus providing an "answer" to the "request" in the former name. The Latinized Greek form of Joshua is Jesus. Indeed, Joshua was a type of Jesus Christ in many respects. Joshua's encouragement gives us a picture of Jesus, our Savior, our Deliverer, our Captain, cheering us on and helping us into His Kingdom (verse 8). With Caleb, he exhorts the people, "Don't rebel, don't fear our enemies, we'll eat them alive, they will fall apart" (compare verse 9). Like Joshua, Caleb was appropriately named, as his name carries the sense of being "Bold" or "Wholehearted" in Hebrew.

Clearly, to not follow God's lead, to refuse His promises, is rebellion. But the Israelites' rebellion is further magnified when their response to the faithful witnesses is a call to stone them to death. Then the thing that Israel should have truly feared happens—God's presence is manifested before them in the shekinah glory (verse 10), and He is furious. God again considers wiping Israel out altogether, and starting over with Moses. Notice, however, that Moses doesn't seek preeminence for himself. Rather, he is primarily concerned with God's reputation. He reminds the Lord that the nations are watching (verses 13-16). Furthermore, despite the rebellion of the people and their threats against him personally, Moses loves them and seeks their welfare. In coming to their aid, he appeals to God's patience and mercy (verses 17-19). Moses is very obviously, then, a type of Christ in obtaining pardon for the people.

But for the Israelites it is only a *temporary* pardon—because they will not repent. And ultimately, the very thing that they wished for, that they had fallen dead in the wilderness (verse 2), *will* come upon them (verses 28-29, 32, 35). Of the older generation, only Joshua and Caleb will enter the Promised Land (verses 24, 30). And rather than God placing the Israelites' children in jeopardy as the people had accused, the children would be the only ones spared: "Your little ones, whom you said would be victims, I will bring in, and they shall know the land which you have despised" (verse 31). Yet for 40 years, the nation will be rejected from entering the Promised Land. Incredibly, as severe as this might sound, it actually displays the tremendous mercy of God that He would still make it possible for a purged Israel to enter the land.

But now we come to an amazing tendency of human nature. When God says, "Do," the carnal mind wants to *not do*. And when God says, "Don't," the carnal mind wants to *do* (compare Romans 8:7; Romans 7:8). Now that God says they can't enter the Promised Land, the people suddenly want to—and attempt to do just that. They do acknowledge their prior sin, but they do not see that by seeking what God has now forbidden by His judgment, they are guilty of the sin of rebellion just the same. Though Moses warns them, they mount a futile invasion attempt of the land. But it is, of course, doomed to failure from the start because God is not with them (verses 42-45).

Consider then: As a result of the fear and lack of faith of 10 cowardly men, and the people's response to it, the Israelites would have to die in the wilderness. They hardened their hearts, and God made up His mind that they would not enter His rest (Psalm 95:8-11)—that is, the Promised Land. They refused to follow God, though He was visibly with them in the cloud and the fire. We must take warning from all this. God's Word states that the Israelites falling in the wilderness should serve as a powerful example to us (1 Corinthians 10:1-12). They took their eyes off the goal, a mistake we are repeatedly warned not to

make. Let us therefore fear, we who have the promise of entering into God's future rest, His millennial Kingdom, lest any of us should come short of it. We can miss out just as assuredly as they did, and for the same reason—a lack of faith. And yet, like the children of Israel, we are so close to entering in (Hebrews 3:8-4:11).” [END]

Verse 9 – Joshua & Caleb gave such wise advice “only do not rebel against the Lord”. Sadly their wise words were not considered and they were hated for them as the crowd turned against them.

Verse 22 – Regarding the ten times the people of Israel have tested God, John Gill’s commentary states: “which the Jews understand precisely and exactly of such a number, and which they reckon thus; twice at the sea, Exo 14:11; twice concerning water, Exo 15:23; twice about manna, Exo 16:2; twice about quails, Exo 16:12; once by the calf, Exo 32:1; and once in the wilderness of Paran, Num 14:1, which last and tenth was the present temptation: these are reckoned a little otherwise elsewhere; but perhaps it may be better, with Aben Ezra, to interpret it of many times, a certain number being put for an uncertain, they having frequently tempted the Lord:” [END]

Verse 24 – Even though Joshua and Caleb were faithful, they still also paid a price. Sometimes even when we ourselves do right, we sometimes suffer right along with those who do not. Joshua and Caleb and their families would have to wander the wilderness right along with the rest of Israel for the completion of the 40 years.

As we end this week, it’s easy to shake our head at Israel. Let’s strive to learn from their bad example and be sure to avoid rebellion. Let’s commit to trusting God, even in the face of an authority we think might be off base. Let’s respond with faithfulness to God, even when the giants of life seem to be against us and life appears hopeless. Let’s obey and follow God’s instructions with great care.