

The First Tragic Failure Seen in the People: Distrusting God; Complaining and Grumbling, Craving and Lusting Numbers 11:01–35

1. *Complaining and grumbling about hardships: Not trusting God and losing sight of His guidance*

- a. The LORD heard the grumbling and was angered:
His judgment fell upon them;
some fire burned the outskirts of the camp
- b. The people and the servant of God cried out and prayed
 - 1) The LORD heard the prayer
 - 2) The fire was extinguished
- c. The place was named Taberah, which means “burning,” a place of awful judgment

2. *Complaining and murmuring about food: Not trusting God, craving and lusting after the food and appetites of the world*

- a The ringleaders: The rabble
- b. The complaint:
Had only manna to eat
 - 1) Longed for the food of Egypt but exaggerated it
 - 2) Had lost their appetite:
Were tired of “this manna”
 - It was like coriander seed
 - It looked like resin
 - It was gathered and ground in a hand-mill or crushed in a mortar

- 1 Now the people complained about their hardships in the hearing of the LORD, and when he heard them his anger was aroused. Then fire from the LORD burned among them and consumed some of the outskirts of the camp.
- 2 When the people cried out to Moses, he prayed to the LORD and the fire died down.
- 3 So that place was called Taberah, because fire from the LORD had burned among them.
- 4 The rabble with them began to crave other food, and again the Israelites started wailing and said, “If only we had meat to eat!
- 5 We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost — also the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic.
- 6 But now we have lost our appetite; we never see anything but this manna!”
- 7 The manna was like coriander seed and looked like resin.
- 8 The people went around gathering it, and then ground it in a hand mill or crushed it in a mortar.

- It was cooked in a pot or made into cakes
 - It tasted like something made with olive oil
 - It was miraculously given by God: Fell from the sky
- c. The terrible influence of the grumbling:
Every person began to complain and murmur
- d. The response of the LORD and Moses:
The LORD became angry
- 1) Moses questioned, poured out his heart to the LORD
- Why had God allowed so much trouble?
 - Why was God so displeased?
 - Why had God put the burden of the people on him?
 - Had he, Moses, conceived and given birth to the people?
 - Why had God chosen him to carry the people – like babies – to the promised land?
 - Where could he conceivably get enough meat for the people?
- 2) Moses cried for God to raise up others to help him:
The burden was too heavy
- Cried for God to take him unless He gave him help
 - Cried for God to keep him from ruin

They cooked it in a pot or made it into loaves.
And it tasted like something made with olive oil.

9 When the dew settled on the camp at night, the manna also came down.

10 Moses heard the people of every family wailing at the entrance to their tents. The LORD became exceedingly angry, and Moses was troubled.

11 He asked the LORD,
“Why have you brought this trouble on your servant?
What have I done to displease you that you put the burden of all these people on me?”

12 Did I conceive all these people?
Did I give them birth?
Why do you tell me to carry them in my arms, as a nurse carries an infant, to the land you promised on oath to their ancestors?

13 Where can I get meat for all these people?
They keep wailing to me,
‘Give us meat to eat!’

14 I cannot carry all these people by myself; the burden is too heavy for me.

15 If this is how you are going to treat me, please go ahead and kill me — if I have found favour in your eyes — and do not let me face my own ruin.”

- 3) The LORD met the need of Moses
- Instructed Moses to bring 70 elders to the Tabernacle
 - Promised to anoint the elders with God's Spirit: They would help carry the burden of the people, help deal with the problems
- e. The message of God's judgment to be given to the people
- 1) To consecrate themselves: Prepare to have their complaint and grumbling answered – the complaint that they were better off in Egypt (a symbol of the world)
 - 2) To know that the LORD would give them meat: Not just for days, but for a whole month – so much meat they would loathe it
 - 3) The reason:
 - Because they rejected the LORD
 - Because they desired to be back in Egypt (a symbol of the world)
 - 4) The stress and questioning of Moses
 - How could God provide meat for several million?
 - Would there be enough even if they slaughtered all their flocks and herds? Or if they had all the fish in the sea?

- 16 The LORD said to Moses:
 “Bring me seventy of Israel’s elders who are known to you as leaders and officials among the people. Have them come to the tent of meeting, that they may stand there with you.
- 17 I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take some of the power of the Spirit that is on you and put it on them. They will share the burden of the people with you so that you will not have to carry it alone.
- 18 Tell the people: ‘Consecrate yourselves in preparation for tomorrow, when you will eat meat. The LORD heard you when you wailed, “If only we had meat to eat! We were better off in Egypt!” Now the LORD will give you meat, and you will eat it.
- 19 You will not eat it for just one day, or two days, or five, ten or twenty days,
- 20 but for a whole month – until it comes out of your nostrils and you loathe it – because you have rejected the LORD, who is among you, and have wailed before him, saying, “Why did we ever leave Egypt?” ’ ”
- 21 But Moses said,
 “Here I am among six hundred thousand men on foot, and you say, ‘I will give them meat to eat for a whole month!’
- 22 Would they have enough if flocks and herds were slaughtered for them? Would they have enough if all the fish in the sea were caught for them?”

5) The LORD's rebuke to Moses:
The LORD's arm (power)
is not too short;
He will do exactly what He says

f. The obedience of Moses

1) He declared the LORD's message
to the people

2) He summoned the 70 elders
to the Tabernacle

3) The faithfulness of the LORD

- He put His Spirit
on the 70 elders
- They prophesied this one time,
but never again

g. The true spirit of Moses:
The spirit of a humble minister,
a true servant of God

1) The Spirit also came upon two
elders who remained in camp
and they prophesied

- A young man ran
and told Moses
- Joshua, Moses' aide,
insisted that Moses stop them

2) Moses' true servant spirit:
His desire was for the LORD's
Spirit to be upon all believers
and for all to be prophets

3) Moses and the elders
returned to the camp.

23 The LORD answered Moses,
"Is the LORD's arm too short?
Now you will see whether or not
what I say will come true for you."

24 So Moses went out and told the people
what the LORD had said.
He brought together seventy of their elders
and had them stand around the tent.

25 Then the LORD came down in the cloud
and spoke with him,
and he took some of the power
of the Spirit that was on him
and put it on the seventy elders.
When the Spirit rested on them,
they prophesied — but did not do so again.

26 However, two men,
whose names were Eldad and Medad,
had remained in the camp.
They were listed among the elders,
but did not go out to the tent.
Yet the Spirit also rested on them,
and they prophesied in the camp.

27 A young man ran and told Moses,
"Eldad and Medad are prophesying
in the camp."

28 Joshua son of Nun,
who had been Moses' aide since youth,
spoke up and said,
"Moses, my lord, stop them!"

29 But Moses replied,
"Are you jealous for my sake?
I wish that all the LORD's people
were prophets and that the LORD
would put his Spirit on them!"

30 Then Moses and the elders of Israel
returned to the camp.

h. The judgment of God:
The complaint of the people
was granted

1) A wind drove quail
in from the sea

2) The people gathered quail
for two days and one night:
Every person gathered no less
than 10 homers (50 bushels)

3) The people acted like gluttons:
Gorged themselves

i. The anger of the LORD:
Was aroused,
burned against the people

1) He struck them
with a severe plague

2) The place was named
Kibroth Hattaavah,
which means
“graves of craving”

j. The march of the people:
Camped at Hazeroth

31 Now a wind went out from the LORD
and drove quail in from the sea.
It scattered them up to two cubits deep
all around the camp,
as far as a day’s walk in any direction.

32 All that day and night and all the next day
the people went out and gathered quail.
No one gathered less than ten homers.
Then they spread them out
all around the camp.

33 But while the meat was
still between their teeth
and before it could be consumed,
the anger of the LORD
burned against the people,
and he struck them with a severe plague.

34 Therefore the place was named
Kibroth Hattaavah,
because there they buried the people
who had craved other food.

35 From Kibroth Hattaavah
the people travelled to Hazeroth
and stayed there.