

Satisfied in God

Numbers 11:4-9, 18-20, 31-34

January 25, 2009

Intro

We now come to Numbers chapter 11 and an important event in history of Israel while they were in the desert. The events of this chapter took place in perhaps their second year of wandering in the wilderness. The chapter begins in verse one by giving us an insight into the problem, the people became like those who complain of adversity in the hearing of the Lord.

The cause of their complaint had to do with what they were provided to eat. Apparently, they were tired of manna and so they began weeping again saying, “Who will give us meat to eat?”

There is a lot of personal application in this story for us. Israel being set free from their slavery in Egypt is a picture of our being set free from the world. It is also a picture of those who find themselves discontent and so it’s important that we understand what was going on in the hearts of the people of Israel and learn from their mistakes.

I. Discontent is Dangerous

- 1 The theme that we seen running through this entire chapter is discontent. There are several places that describe the complaining of the people of Israel, but the root of complaining is discontent and discontent is dangerous.

A. It begins with the rabble

- 1 Verse four begins, “And the rabble among them had greedy desires.” But I think the New King James says it better, “Now the *mixed multitude* among them yielded to intense craving.”
- 2 We read earlier in the book of Exodus that there was a mixed multitude that came out of Egypt.

Exodus 12:38, A mixed multitude also went up with them, along with flocks and herds, a very large number of livestock.

- 3 There were people who were not Jews who also came out of Egypt with them. Perhaps they were slaves from other countries or perhaps they longed for something new.
- 4 There are some people who have a desire to start new things; they like to move from city to city, they are never content.
- 5 The problem was that they didn’t have the same relationship to God and here they

are being led by greedy desires. *There was a mixed multitude within Israel, there is a mixed multitude in the church in general, and there is a mixture of flesh and spirit within all of us.*

- 1 The problem is that the flesh is very powerful and we must understand the danger within of us.

James 1:14-15, But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.

- 2 Numbers 11 is for our instruction, then, that we should learn from their example.

1 Corinthians 10:6, Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved.

B. Beware of creative remembering

- 6 There is a difference between selective memory and creative memory. When Israel started complaining about not having meat, they started to get very creative about how they remembered their time in Egypt.
- 7 Verse 6 -- “We remember the fish which we used to eat free in Egypt, the cucumbers and the melons and the onions and the garlic...”
- 8 That makes it sound like there was our regular “Home Buffet” in Egypt and that life was all roses and light.
- 9 That wasn’t the way it was at all. Did they forget the tears and the bitterness of slavery? In fact, the Passover meal was designed to help them always remember. They had bitter herbs to eat, dipped in salty water to represent their bitter years and the tears of anguish with which they cried out to God.

Illus – Some people have creative remembering when it comes to the ‘good ol’ days’ when they were in the world. Did they forget the lostness, the loneliness, the emptiness and the stupidity of those days?

- 10 We need to understand that creative remembering is very dangerous.

2 Corinthians 10:5, We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,

C. Don’t go to Kibroth- hataavah

11 Verse 6 – “there is nothing at all to look at but this manna!”

12 Manna was actually quite good; it tasted like wafers with honey. But more than that, it was a miraculous provision! It was what God Himself had provided for Israel to be sustained in the desert for forty years!

13 The problem was that they weren’t satisfied with manna and since it was God’s provision, it meant that they weren’t satisfied with God.

14 So God gave them what they craved. It’s a very bad day when God gives us what the flesh craves for.

Romans 1:24-25, Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie...

15 God gave them quail to eat, enough for thirty days. But they weren’t satisfied with the quail either. They went after it with greed and ate so much it came out their nose.

Illus – I’ve seen kids do that with soda pop, but what does it take to do that with quail? Eat so much they threw up. And with some they ate so greedily that the Lord struck many.

Illus – there was a farmer whose dog ate chickens, so he tied one around his neck. He never touched chickens again.

Illus – At first, people think they can control the lust, then they become partners, then they are the ones being controlled.

16 God gave them their request, but it came at a great price.

Psalm 106:13-15, 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.

17 So they called that place, Kibroth-hataavah, which means literally, “the graves of greed.”

18 Proverbs describes the price that is paid at the graves of greed.

Proverbs 7:22-27 The way of the ox led to slaughter

II. May Your Soul be Fully Satisfied

- 1 We see in this chapter the dangers of discontent, but we also see the power of the presence of the Holy Spirit.
- 2 God had given Moses seventy men from the elders of Israel to help shoulder the burden, and at one point God took of the Holy Spirit and placed Him upon them and they even prophesied.

A. Never forget who you are in Christ

- 1 Not only did Israel have a problem of creative remembering, they also forgot all that God had done for them!
- 2 They forgot that God had saved them from slavery and oppression, had parted the Red Sea that they might be rescued from the Egyptian army, that He turned the bitter water sweet, that He brought water out of a rock, that he gave them manna to eat every day!
- 3 The problem was that manna wasn't exciting their senses.

Illus – There are churches that try to appeal to the mixed multitude and come up with all kinds of spiritual fads to stay exciting and filled with spiritual spiciness.

We have decided that what we need is God's Word, the manna of the soul. Some think this isn't spicy enough and want the latest fad. But what we need is manna in the morning, manna in the evening, manna at every service!

John 6:31-35 Jesus is the Bread of Heaven

- 1 Since God has sent His Son as the manna, the Bread of Life, then we must never become discontent and long for the garlic and leeks of the world. But rather, we must remember what God has done for us in Christ!

2 Peter 1:1-9 what we have in Christ

B. The joy of the Lord is your strength

- 4 The answer to keeping from discontent is to be wholly satisfied in God. In other words, that we should be filled with the Holy Spirit.
- 5 This is what Paul meant when he wrote to the church at Galatia...

Galatians 5:16, But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.

- 1 The flesh will not be satisfied with a spiritual diet, and the spirit will most

certainly not be satisfied with a fleshly diet.

2 Paul gave insight in this when he gave us the secret of being content...

Philippians 4:12-13, I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

1 The key is found in the verse, “The joy of the Lord is my strength.”

Illus – If I am filled, satisfied, at the banquet table of God, then there is no emptiness in me that will make me long for the leeks and onions, or the hot dogs of the old days in the world.