

Numbers Chapter 14 Commentary

1 And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night.

The first thing we see is; the people believe the evil report of the 10 and disregard the facts that God has been, and is, their protector, and is well able to deliver them from any enemy. Now, we shall see them add to their sin of unbelief and not trusting in God. A reminder to us; when we trust first in our own will, and then in our own strength, we shall always fail. Why? Because, we are not doing the will of God.

2 And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness!

Their first complaint is against Moses and Aaron. This is a picture of us today; when things don't exactly like we want them to, we immediately look around for someone to blame. Most often, in the church, this is where the ministers and deacons get blamed. We murmur and complain because we do not trust God fully, and thereby, we are complaining against God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. Scripture testifies in many places; rejections of God's chosen is a rejection of him, one of which is: ***1Sa 8:7 "And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them."***

Remember the scripture in: ***Lu 9:62 "And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.***" We shall see the judicial wrath of God in this matter; when all those that are murmuring and complaining shall be denied entrance into the Promised Land. This gives the reference text in Luke a whole new meaning for us now in this perspective.

3 And wherefore hath the LORD brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt?

These make their complaint; as if they are thinking about their children; but it is their own lives and wants they are complaining about. We shall see that God, in his judicial wrath, will bring the children into the land, but the complainers will not set foot in it.

This gives us the example; before we complain, we should evaluate our complaint against God's word of truth. If we do this, we will know, if we have a legitimate reason to complain, and if we are standing on solid ground, or if we are without excuse for our fears and to complain.

What is an excuse? An old preacher defined it well once: an excuse is: a reason wrapped up in the skin of a lie. Do you see this is what Israel is doing here? "***Wish we were back in Egypt***". Dear friends; remember the reference text ***Lu 9:62*** given above.

4 And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.

Already, they have forgotten the lesson in the previous chapter; when Aaron and Miriam tried to usurp the authority of the leadership God gave Moses. We see they want to choose a man and that reminds me of some other scriptures:

- ***Ps 118:8-9; 8 "It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man. 9 It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes."***
- ***Jer 17:5-8; 5 "Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD. 6 For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited. 7 Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is. 8 For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit."***

In both these references, we are reminded where to always put out trust and confidence, in God alone.

5 Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel. 6 And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of them that searched the land, rent their clothes:

In these 2 verses; we see the faithful few standing on the promises of God. In this we see the picture of; the gospel preachers pleading with the congregations, when they turn from sound doctrine and want to return to their past. The faithful minister sees the death and destruction that is coming, because of the unbelief of the people, and wants to spare them the great loss and the judicial wrath of God.

7 And they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. 8 If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. 9 Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the LORD is with us: fear them not.

Joshua and Caleb, in faith, understand the delivering power of God. They believe the promise of God, having seen the land. They believe God has already accomplished what he promised. How do we know this? What did they say? "***their defence is departed from them***" This expression is in the past tense, and they know that God is able to do what he promised. Oh, may God grant that we be so faithful in our walk in Christ Jesus.

10 But all the congregation bade stone them with stones. And the glory of the LORD appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation before all the children of Israel.

We see here, an example of a quote by Thomas Paine: "*To argue with a person who has cast aside all reason is like administering medication to a dead person.*" The arguments, and the facts, presented to Israel have no impact, just like medication to a dead body does no good.

It is also a present day picture for us; to help us understand that the dead cannot see, hear, or understand. Israel is blinded by their lusts and desires, and has fallen into the clutches of satanic rebellion against God. May God help us to be content with His will and purpose in our lives.

We see that the exercise of faith, exhibited by Joshua and Caleb, is rewarded by the immediate appearance of the glory of God. This is a reminder to us that God is faithful in all he says and does.

11 And the LORD said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have shewed among them? 12 I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they. 13 And Moses said unto the LORD, Then the Egyptians shall hear it, (for thou broughtest up this people in thy might from among them;) 14 And they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land: for they have heard that thou LORD art among this people, that thou LORD art seen face to face, and that thy cloud standeth over them, and that thou goest before them, by day time in a pillar of a cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night. 15 Now if thou shalt kill all this people as one man, then the nations which have heard the fame of thee will speak, saying, 16 Because the LORD was not able to bring this people into the land which he sware unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness. 17 And now, I beseech thee, let the power of my Lord be great, according as thou hast spoken, saying, 18 The LORD is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation. 19 Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now.

In these verses we have the pleading of the kind intercessor, Moses, which is a picture of Christ Jesus pleading for us unto God the Father. We need to see; Moses didn't see this as an opportunity to make his own name great, rather, he understood that if God carried through with the destruction of all Israel, the previous displayed glory and power of God would come to have no effect on the world, and would render God as one who could not deliver on his promises, in the earthly mind of man.

As we consider this, we must evaluate our own will and works in life. Are we standing steadfast upon the rock of the Church of Salvation by Grace, established by Jesus Christ? Are we doing all we can to insure that the finished work of Christ stands? Are we striving to insure that Christ and God the Father get all the praise? Are we praying to God on the behalf of those who have not yet manifested that they have been saved by God's marvelous grace? In living out our lives, in time, we must insure that both, our walks and our talks, are giving to God and Christ all the glory, taking none to ourselves. God help us to magnify your holy name.

20 And the LORD said, I have pardoned according to thy word:

We see that God heard Moses, the intercessor, and did not destroy as he had said he would. Thus it is with us, God the Father has heard God the Son and his prayer on our behalf. This is why the church is existent today, and we are spared eternal death, because of the intercessory prayer of Jesus Christ, and the sacrifice of himself. It is a picture of why the Church of Salvation by Grace exist today, and why we have a Promised Land to enter into and rest, not only here in time, but also in the eternal heaven.

21 But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD. 22 Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice; 23 Surely they shall not see the land which I sware unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it: 24

But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it.

We see in these verses the eternal judgment to come, how? We see those who believed not will not to enter the Promised Land, and so it is in the end of time. Those who have not believed God, and trusted the finished work of Christ Jesus, will not enter into the eternal heaven, the New Jerusalem, but shall be confined to eternal death and punishment in the lake of fire.

25 (Now the Amalekites and the Canaanites dwelt in the valley.) Tomorrow turn you, and get you into the wilderness by the way of the Red sea.

We see here; a prophetic picture of the church of grace to be brought forth in time. How? Israel was commanded to go into the wilderness, and there the unbelieving would die over the 40 year period. At the end of that time, the children would enter into the Promised Land, which is a picture of the Church of Salvation by Grace coming into fruition at the end of the sacrificial/ceremonial law period.

The Israelites, who trusted in their own works, are a picture today, of those who will die in the wilderness of sin, and never enter into the promised rest. Why can't they gain entrance into the Promised Land? Because; they believe in their own strength, desire their own will over the will of God, and because of their unbelief in the finished work of Jesus Christ. They are their own god, and reject obedience to the one true and living God.

Their children entering into the Promised Land, is a picture then of the church, our promised land, being established by Jesus Christ, who ushered in the age of Salvation by Grace. The Promised Land is entered by those who God has brought out of the wilderness and given them faith to enter in. It is a clear picture of the church of grace in time, and those who are saved by God's grace entering into this land of promise.

26 And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, 27 How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur against me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me. 28 Say unto them, As truly as I live, saith the LORD, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you: 29 Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me, 30 Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I sware to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun. 31 But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised. 32 But as for you, your carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness. 33 And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness. 34 After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise. 35 I the LORD have said, I will surely do it unto all this evil congregation, that are gathered together against me: in this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die. 36 And the men, which Moses sent to search the land, who returned, and made all the congregation to murmur against him, by bringing up a slander upon the land,

We see that God gave them a year of punishment for each day they delayed in entering into the Land of Promise. What a great warning to us today. If we are born again, we should immediately join ourselves unto the organized church of the Lord Jesus Christ, entering into this provided rest, and trusting fully in the finished work of Christ our Saviour. If we don't, we may end up like the children of Israel that did not believe, just wandering around in the wilderness of sin until we die and never entering into the promised rest. We see this plainly stated in New Testament scripture: **Heb 3:6-12; 6**
"But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. 7 Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, Today if ye will hear his voice, 8 Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: 9 When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. 10 Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. 11 So I sware in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.) 12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God."

37 Even those men that did bring up the evil report upon the land, died by the plague before the LORD.

We see; the source of the unbelief, the 10 unfaithful spies, are immediately dealt with, and they die for their transgression of forgetting, and belittling, God and his great power of deliverance.

38 But Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of the men that went to search the land, lived still. 39 And Moses told these sayings unto all the children of Israel: and the people mourned greatly. 40 And they rose up early in the morning, and gat them up into the top of the mountain, saying, Lo, we be here, and will go up unto the place which the LORD hath promised: for we have sinned.

Do you see and understand? When they understood the greatness of their sin, that the time of repentance was already passed? Thus it will be at death, and/or the end of time, for those who have rejected Christ, and the salvation provided by him. They will see the greatness of their sin, and then it will be too late to repent. God has already passed judicial judgment upon those who do not believe, and trust, in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, God's Almighty Power of Salvation.

41 And Moses said, Wherefore now do ye transgress the commandment of the LORD? but it shall not prosper. 42 Go not up, for the LORD is not among you; that ye be not smitten before your enemies. 43 For the Amalekites and the Canaanites are there before you, and ye shall fall by the sword: because ye are turned away from the LORD, therefore the LORD will not be with you. 44 But they presumed to go up unto the hill top: nevertheless the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and Moses, departed not out of the camp. 45 Then the Amalekites came down, and the Canaanites which dwelt in that hill, and smote them, and discomfited them, even unto Hormah.

Remember; this is a people who have been blinded by their own deceitful lust. They understand naturally that they are to be punished. Now, they are adding to their sin, by attempting to enter into the Promised Land by their own power, without the presence of God with them. This picture is presented in the text as: "**nevertheless the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and Moses, departed not out of the camp.**" This is a picture for us; remember, and never go to battle without "**thus saith the Lord.**"

Making application of this principle in our own lives; see that; when you have an opportunity, to do that which God would have you to do, and you let it pass by; there is no recovery of that lost opportunity. Understand; when we disobey God, and God passes judicial judgment on us, it will come to pass.

This is a testimony to us that there is always a consequence for our sins, even after we are born again. It helps us see and understand the scripture in: ***Ro 6:1 "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"*** May God give us eyes that see, ears that hear, and hearts that understand, what he would have us to do in this life; that we may be fruitful in bringing glory, and honor, and praise, to the name of the Lord.