

Complaining, Conspiracy and Consequences

Numbers 11 & 12

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Exodus 2:23–25 During those many days the king of Egypt died, and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God. ²⁴And **God heard** their groaning, and **God remembered** his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. ²⁵**God saw** the people of Israel—and **God knew**.

Numbers 11:1 And the people complained in the hearing of the LORD about their misfortunes, and when the LORD heard it, **his anger was kindled, and the fire of the LORD burned among them and consumed some outlying parts of the camp**.

we see the remedy for grumbling: the effective intercession of the mediator God has appointed.

Duguid, Iain M., and R. Kent Hughes. 2006. [*Numbers: God's Presence in the Wilderness*](#). Preaching the Word. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

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Rabble (asaphsaph): rabble, riff-raff, i.e., a collection of grumblers, with the focus being on their complaint (Nu 11:4+)

Numbers 11:4 Now the rabble that was among them had a strong craving. **And the people of Israel also wept again and said, "Oh that we had meat to eat!**

Numbers 11:5 We remember the fish we ate in Egypt that cost nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic.

Numbers 11:6 But now our strength is dried up, and there is nothing at all but this manna to look at.”

Numbers 11:7–9 Now the manna was like coriander seed, and its appearance like that of bdellium. ⁸The people went about and gathered it and ground it in handmills or beat it in mortars and boiled it in pots and made cakes of it. And the taste of it was like the taste of cakes baked with oil. ⁹When the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell with it.

Exodus 16:31 Now the house of Israel called its name manna. It was like coriander seed, white, and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey.

Numbers 11:10–12 Moses heard the people weeping throughout their clans, everyone at the door of his tent. And the anger of the LORD blazed hotly, and Moses was displeased. ¹¹Moses said to the LORD, “Why have you dealt ill with your servant? And why have I not found favor in your sight, that you lay the burden of all this people on me? ¹²Did I conceive all this people? Did I give them birth, that you should say to me, ‘Carry them in your bosom, as a nurse carries a nursing child,’ to the land that you swore to give their fathers?

Numbers 11:13–14 Where am I to get meat to give to all this people? For they weep before me and say, ‘Give us meat, that we may eat.’ ¹⁴I am not able to carry all this people alone; the burden is too heavy for me.

Numbers 11:15 If you will treat me like this, kill me at once, if I find favor in your sight, that I may not see my wretchedness.”

Numbers 11:16–17 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Gather for me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them, and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you. ¹⁷And I will come down and talk with you there. **And I will take some of the Spirit that is on you and put it on them, and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, so that you may not bear it yourself alone.**

Numbers 11:18–20 And say to the people, ‘Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, and you shall eat meat, for you have wept in the hearing of the LORD, saying, “Who will give us meat to eat? For it was better for us in Egypt.” Therefore the LORD will give you meat, and you shall eat. ¹⁹You shall not eat just one day, or two days, or five days, or ten days, or twenty days, ²⁰but a whole month, **until it comes out at your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you**, because you have rejected the LORD who is among you and have wept before him, saying, “Why did we come out of Egypt?” ’”

Numbers 11:21–23 But Moses said, “The people among whom I am number six hundred thousand on foot, and you have said, ‘I will give them meat, that they may eat a whole month!’ ²² Shall flocks and herds be slaughtered for them, and be enough for them? Or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, and be enough for them?” ²³ And the LORD said to Moses, **“Is the LORD’s hand shortened? Now you shall see whether my word will come true for you or not.”**

Numbers 11:24–30 So Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD. And he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people and placed them around the tent. ²⁵ Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the Spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders. And as soon as the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied. But they did not continue doing it. ²⁶ Now two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad, and the other named Medad, and the Spirit rested on them. They were among those registered, but they had not gone out to the tent, and so they prophesied in the camp. ²⁷ And a young man ran and told Moses, “Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.” ²⁸ And Joshua the son of Nun, the assistant of Moses from his youth, said, “My lord Moses, stop them.” ²⁹ But Moses said to him, “Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the LORD’s people were prophets, that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!” ³⁰ And Moses and the elders of Israel returned to the camp.

Numbers 11:31–35 Then a wind from the LORD sprang up, and it brought quail from the sea and let them fall beside the camp, about a day’s journey on this side and a day’s journey on the other side, around the camp, and about two cubits above the ground. ³² And the people rose all that day and all night and all the next day, and gathered the quail. Those who gathered least gathered ten homers. And they spread them out for themselves all around the camp. ³³ While the meat was yet between their teeth, before it was consumed, the anger of the LORD was kindled against the people, and the LORD struck down the people with a very great plague. ³⁴ Therefore the name of that place was called Kibroth-hattaavah, because there they buried the people who had the craving. ³⁵ From Kibroth-hattaavah the people journeyed to Hazereth, and they remained at Hazereth.

Kibroth-hattaavah: graves of craving

2 Peter 1:3–11 His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, ⁴ by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. ⁵ For this very

reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, ⁶and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, ⁷and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. ⁸For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. ¹⁰Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. ¹¹For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Numbers 12:1 Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married, for he had married a Cushite woman.

Numbers 9:14 And if a stranger sojourns among you and would keep the Passover to the LORD, according to the statute of the Passover and according to its rule, so shall he do. You shall have one statute, both for the sojourner and for the native.”

Numbers 12:2 And they said, “Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has he not spoken through us also?” And the LORD heard it.

Numbers 12:3-9 Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all people who were on the face of the earth. ⁴And suddenly the LORD said to Moses and to Aaron and Miriam, “Come out, you three, to the tent of meeting.” And the three of them came out. ⁵And the LORD came down in a pillar of cloud and stood at the entrance of the tent and called Aaron and Miriam, and they both came forward. ⁶And he said, “Hear my words: If there is a prophet among you, I the LORD make myself known to him in a vision; I speak with him in a dream. ⁷Not so with my servant Moses. He is faithful in all my house. ⁸With him I speak mouth to mouth, clearly, and not in riddles, and he beholds the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?” ⁹And the anger of the LORD was kindled against them, and he departed.

1 Timothy 5:19 Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses.

Hebrews 13:17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

Numbers 12:10-16 When the cloud removed from over the tent, behold, Miriam was leprous, like snow. And Aaron turned toward Miriam, and behold, she was leprous.

¹¹And Aaron said to Moses, “Oh, my lord, do not punish us because we have done foolishly and have sinned. ¹²Let her not be as one dead, whose flesh is half eaten away when he comes out of his mother’s womb.” ¹³And Moses cried to the LORD, “O God, please heal her—please.” ¹⁴But the LORD said to Moses, “If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be shamed seven days? Let her be shut outside the camp seven days, and after that she may be brought in again.” ¹⁵So Miriam was shut outside the camp seven days, and the people did not set out on the march till Miriam was brought in again. ¹⁶After that the people set out from Hazeroth, and camped in the wilderness of Paran.