

Lesson 2 for July 10, 2021

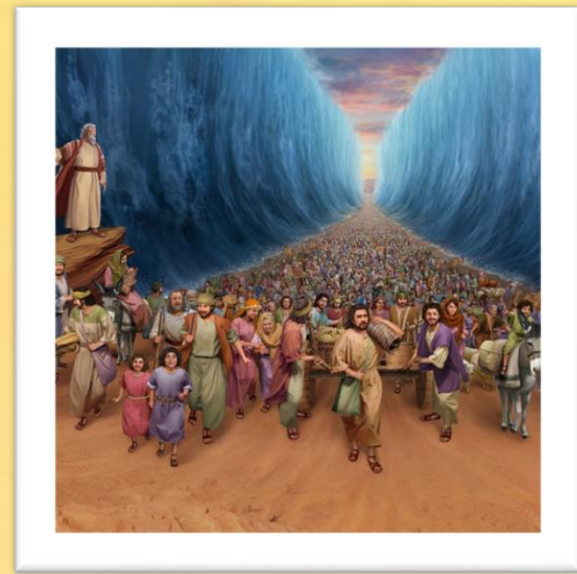


RESTLESS AND REBELLIOUS

The story of a rebellious people is told in Numbers 11-14. God's people quickly forgot the great things God had made for them.

They longed for the promised rest, and they got impatient at not having it yet. However, just before getting it, they lost heart and they rebelled again.

What can we—"who are living in the closing days of history" (1 Corinthians 10:11 GW)—learn from their mistakes?



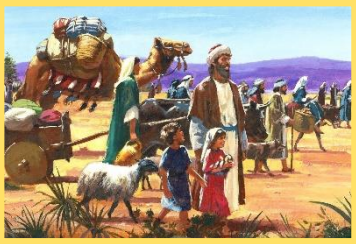
- ▶ Selective memory. Numbers 11
- ▶ Yearning for leadership. Numbers 12
- ▶ Dissatisfaction and rebellion. Numbers 13; 14:1-10
- ▶ Interceding for the rebels. Numbers 14:11-19
- ▶ Lessons learned. Numbers 14:39-45



SELECTIVE MEMORY



"We remember the fish which we ate freely in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic." (Numbers 11:5)

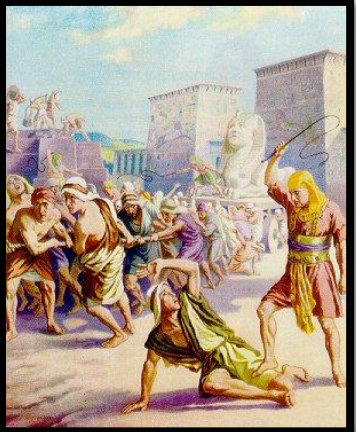


About a year after getting out of Egypt, the people of Israel left Mount Sinai and resumed their journey to the Promised Land.

The foreigners who had joined Israel encouraged them to ask for meat. They had had enough of manna! (Nm. 11:4, 6).

However, they had a quite selective memory. They remembered they ate those things "freely" in Egypt, but they had forgotten about their tough slavery.

God gave them meat "until it comes out of your nostrils" (Nm. 11:20). He also appointed leaders who could calm the people and mitigate their rebellion with the power of the Holy Spirit.



YEARNING FOR LEADERSHIP

**"Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married; for he had married an Ethiopian woman."
(Numbers 12:1)**

The people had been led by Moses, Aaron, and Mary until the rebellion of the quail (Micah 6:4).

Then, 70 elders helped Moses to lead the people. Mary and Aaron were jealous and afraid of losing their leadership.

Therefore, they use Moses' marriage with a foreigner as an excuse to claim a position that did not correspond to them:

"Has the Lord indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us also?" (Nm. 12:2).



Criticizing the leadership God has appointed is dangerous. Fortunately, they came to their senses. Aaron repented and interceded for his leprous sister. Without a doubt, intercession is much more powerful than criticism.

“Let no one aim at a soldier whom God recognizes, whom God has sent forth to bear a special message to the world and to do a special work. The soldiers of Christ may not always reveal perfection in their step, but their mistakes should call out from their fellow comrades not words that will weaken, but words that will strengthen, and will help them recover their lost ground.”

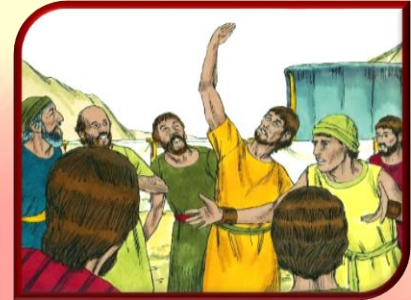
E. G. W. (Selected Messages, book 3, cp. 50, p. 344)



DISSATISFACTION AND REBELLION

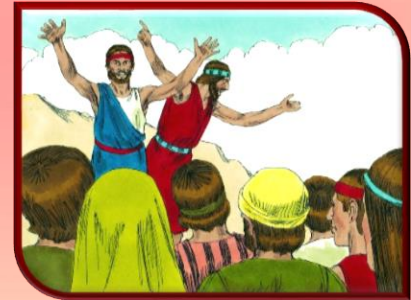


“But the men who had gone up with him [Caleb] said, ‘We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we.’” (Numbers 13:31)

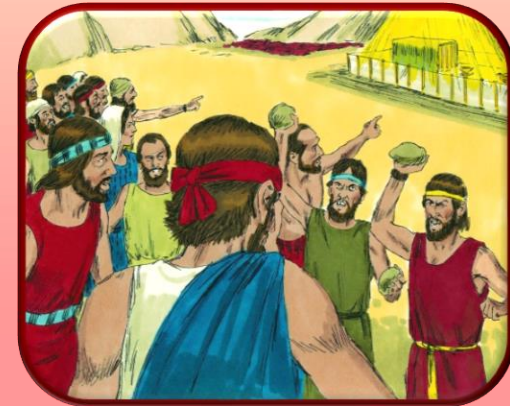


This is another example of selective memory. They had forgotten the crossing of the Red Sea, the water from the rock, the bitter waters being sweetened...

They were at the gates of a land that “flows with milk and honey” (v. 27). God had promised it to them. They didn’t have to trust their own strength. However, they didn’t want to remember nor to listen to Caleb and trust God’s power.



They were discouraged by the problems they saw ahead, so they rebelled against God and their leaders. Their rebellion went so far that they were willing to stone Joshua and Caleb.



When we forget what God has done for us, we distort the present and don’t see the future clearly. This results in discouragement.

INTERCEDING FOR THE REBELS

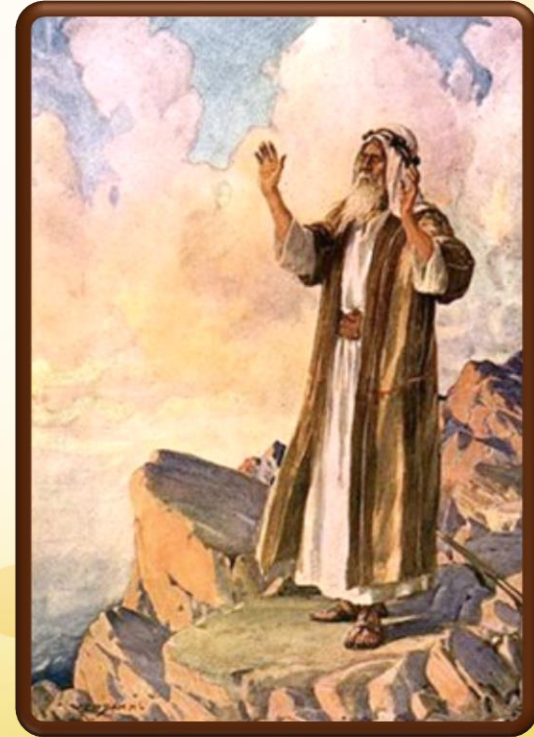
“Pardon the iniquity of this people, I pray, according to the greatness of Your mercy, just as You have forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now.” (Numbers 14:19)

God made Moses an offer: Since they don’t want to enter Canaan, I will destroy them so we can begin from scratch (v. 12).

Moses interceded for the people before God, as a type of Jesus. He admitted they were rebel and deserved destruction. However, he asked God to forgive them because of His love (v. 19).

God showed His grace and forgave them. But He didn’t exempt them from the consequences of their rebellion. Only their children would enjoy what they had disregarded (v. 30-31).

That was part of God’s grace too. They could not have conquered Canaan because of their lack of faith. However, their children learned the lessons they needed to do so during their pilgrimage through the desert.



LESSONS LEARNED

"Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come." (1ª de Corintios 10:11)



They added presumptuousness to their rebellion. They acknowledged they were wrong, but still trusted their own strength instead of God's (Nm. 14:39-45).

Paul used their story as an example, so that we don't make the same mistakes (1 Corinthians 10:1-12).

Building our faith up is essential to keep presumptuousness away. Faith helps us to cling to God's promises and to claim them. Not to excuse our transgressions, but to trust God's love and obey His commandments.



Do not covet (v. 6)

Do not be idolaters (v. 7)

Do not fornicate (v. 8)

Do not tempt God (v. 9)

Do not gossip (v. 10)

“It is time for every one of us to decide whose side we are on. The agencies of Satan will work with every mind that will allow itself to be worked by him. But there are also heavenly agencies waiting to communicate the bright rays of the glory of God to all who are willing to receive Him.

It is ours to choose whether we will be numbered with the servants of Christ or the servants of Satan. Every day we show by our conduct whose service we have chosen.”

E. G. W. (Our High Calling, January 9)