

## Into the Promised Land - Joshua's Story

### Lesson #11 – “On the Road”

#### **•HANDOUT•**

► This lesson picks up after Moses has completed all that the Lord commanded. Everything is in readiness for the future. Israel can now pack everything up and begin their journey to the Promised Land.

Their two years at Mt. Sinai hopefully has taught them valuable lessons and they, like Moses, have learned to be obedient and trusting toward the Lord. Right?

It is from Moses' eye-witness account in Numbers that we look at some of the details as Israel moved forward for the first time since arriving at Mt. Sinai and take the first steps into their future.

Number 10:11-14 • On the twentieth day of the second month of the second year, the Cloud lifted from above the tabernacle of the Testimony. Then the Israelites set out from the Desert of Sinai and traveled from place to place until the cloud came to rest in the Desert of Paran. They set out, this first time, at the Lord's command through Moses. The divisions of the camp of Judah went first, under their standard. Nahshon, son of Amminadab, was in command.

► For the next nineteen verses Numbers lists each tribe and its leaders as they take their individual place in the lineup, which occurred according to their size and military strength. The one exception was the Levites, who were kept in the middle. In this way the Levites will be able to protect the sacred objects from the Holy Place. Moses also requested that his brother-in-law, Hobab, son of Reuel [aka Jethro] the Midianite, go with them. Though Hobab initially declined, Moses said to him, "Please do not leave us. You know where we should camp in the desert, and you can be our eyes. If you come with us, we will share with you whatever good things the Lord gives us."

*[From Judges 1:16, we learn that Hobab does agree to go with Moses, to be the “eyes” for the people in the desert.]*

#### **Israel's journey begins • It will be a three-day march.**

Numbers 10:33-36 • So they set out from the mountain of the Lord and traveled for three days. The Ark of the Covenant of the Lord went before them during those three days to find them a place to rest. The cloud of the Lord was over them by day when they set out from the camp. Whenever the ark set out, Moses said, "Rise up, O Lord! May your enemies be scattered; may your foes flee before you." Whenever it came to rest, he said, "Return, O LORD, to the countless thousands of Israel."

Q: It is going to take a lot longer than three days to get to the Promised Land. Why was only a three-day march scheduled?

Q: Why would Moses say, “Rise up, O LORD...” whenever the Cloud caused the Ark to set out and then say “Return O LORD...” whenever the Cloud caused the Ark to come to a rest?

**In spite of all the miracles, in spite of Israel becoming God's Covenant people, in spite of witnessing the Shekinah Glory as it filled the Most Holy Place, within the time frame of their first 3-day-march it all begins to fall apart ...**

Number 11:1-3 • 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. When the people cried out to Moses, he prayed to the Lord and the fire died down.

So that place was called Taberah, because fire from the Lord had burned among them.

Q: What does God reveal about Himself in this scripture passage?

Q: What is the “fire from the Lord?”

**Sadly, the lessons seemingly learned at Taberah were quickly forgotten ...**

Number 11:4-9 • The rabble with them began to crave other food, and again the Israelites started wailing and said, "If only we had meat to eat! We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost--also the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic. But now we have lost our appetite; we never see anything but this manna!" The manna was like coriander seed and looked like resin. The people went around gathering it, and then ground it in a hand mill or crushed it in a mortar. They cooked it in a pot or made it into cakes. And it tasted like something made with olive oil. When the dew settled on the camp at night, the manna also came down.

Q: Who were the “rabble?”

Q: What was the “rabble's” complaint and how serious should their complaint be viewed?

**The problem intensified and didn't just stay with the “rabble.”  
Like yeast, the complaint spread throughout the entire Israeli camp.**

Number 11:10-15 • Moses heard the people of every family wailing, each at the entrance to his tent. The Lord became exceedingly angry, and Moses was troubled. 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?"

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 forefathers?

Where can I get meat for all these people? They keep wailing to me, 'Give us meat to eat!' I cannot carry all these people by myself; the burden is too heavy for me. If this is how you are going to treat me, put me to death right now – if I have found favor in your eyes – and do not let me face my own ruin."

Q: Why has Moses suddenly buckled under the pressure of trying to lead Israel? It isn't like it hasn't been difficult before.

Q: Moses accepted his role as Israel's designated leader and serves as the Mediator between the people and God. God has given Moses incredible insight into His plans and has even used him to perform miracles. So, are Moses' complaints valid?

### **In tender mercies, the Lord responds to Moses' Lament with a solution ...**

Number 11:16-17 • 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. I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take of the Spirit that is on you and put the Spirit on them. They will help you carry the burden of the people so that you will not have to carry it alone.

Q: What does this solution tell us about the Lord?

### **The people wanted meat ... They are going to get meat. [But ...]**

Number 11:18-20 • "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. You will not eat it for just one day, or two days, or five, ten or twenty days, 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?"'"

Q: We see God granting the people's desire to have meat. Does this represent God's mercy or His anger?

Q: What behavior from the people is God specifically reacting to?

Number 11:21-23 • 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!' 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?"

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

Q: Why does Moses react to God's promise with such skepticism? Shouldn't Moses, by this time, expect miracles from God?

Q: Once again, in light of Moses' skepticism, we see God's patient response. Not only does the Lord answer Moses' concern but he uses the situation as a teaching opportunity for Moses. What is it that God wants Moses to learn from this?

### The Rejection and The Graves of Gluttony

Number 11:31-35 • Now the Lord sent a wind that brought quail from the sea and let them fall all around the camp. For miles in every direction there were quail flying about three feet above the ground. So the people went out and caught quail all that day and throughout the night and all the next day, too. No one gathered less than fifty bushels! They spread the quail all around the camp to dry.

But while they were gorging themselves on the meat -- while it was still in their mouths -- the anger of the Lord blazed against the people, and he struck them with a severe plague.

So that place was called Kibroth-hattaavah (which means "graves of gluttony") because there they buried the people who had craved meat from Egypt.

From Kibroth-hattaavah the Israelites traveled to Hazeroth, where they stayed for some time.

Q: What caused the Lord's anger to blaze so hot against the people?

Q: What should be our "truth take-away" for this most disturbing account?

**Israel leaves the "Graves of Gluttony" behind and moves on to Hazeroth.**

**Hopefully, the worst is behind them.**

**Surely great lessons were learned about God's love and care for His people.**

**Surely they now understand the need to be grateful for God's Manna.**

**They arrive at Hazeroth where they plan to stay for a while,**

**only to have a new controversy break out.**

**This is where we will pick up the story next time.**



Next Time • Lesson #12

"The Trouble at Hazeroth"

