

Notes and Quotes

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Numbers 11:1-3

On their way from Egypt out into the wilderness toward the promised land, the Israelites came to this place, Taberah.

“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.”

The people complained. Delivered from all those years of hard labor in Egypt, knowing that God had made them His special nation, and moving toward a homeland, yet they complained. We are quick in our criticism of them, yet we may find occasion to imitate them. We are so blessed by God, given tremendous opportunity from His grace and promised a home in heaven. Yet we express dissatisfaction so quickly. Stop and ask yourself, **what is the spiritual value of complaining?**

God was displeased. His anger burned against the people and there was a literal event: *burning fire from the Lord*. This historical event ought to “burn” in our memory how dangerous this kind of complaining is. And it should awaken within us such reverence for God, we carefully avoid any thought, words or conduct that would displease Him. Here’s an example:

¹⁸From heaven God shows how angry he is with all the wicked and evil things that sinful people do to crush the truth. ¹⁹They know everything that can be known about God, because God has shown it all to them. ²⁰God's eternal power and character cannot be seen. But from the beginning of creation, God has shown what these are like by all he has made. That's why those people don't have any excuse. ²¹They know about God, but they don't honor him or even thank him. Their thoughts are useless, and their stupid minds are in the dark. ²²They claim to be wise, but they are fools. ²³They don't worship the glorious and eternal God. Instead, they worship idols that are made to look like humans who cannot live forever, and like birds, animals, and reptiles.” Rom. 1:18-23, ESV.

Moses interceded for the people. This good work of intercession was based on his love and care for the people. “Now Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth,” (Num. 12:3). Authentic humility will express itself through intercession, speaking to God on behalf of others. Moses had such a heart. We ought to have such a heart, anxious to speak to God in the interests of others.

In summary, this episode shows that God and Moses cared more about these people than they cared for themselves. All the history after this demonstrates the same.