

## **MARCH 9**

### **Numbers 11:24-13:33**

When it rains, it pours. All of these events happened very near to each other. Even with the obvious presence of God in their midst, even with the signs of His power and blessing, fallen people still acted like fallen people. God's message to the people that the sin of a few affects everyone will become unforgettable for the entire generation of people who will enter the land.

Numbers 11:24-35

Vs. 24-30 This doesn't mean that Moses had less of the Spirit, but that the same kind of spirit was passed on to the 70 elders. These men were probably empowered like spiritual shepherds, to encourage the people in the Spirit.

V. 25 Whatever happened, it was visible. We have examples of this happening to people, especially in 1 Samuel 19:20-24. They didn't just prophesy; they went into a kind of trance or condition. The German word, "Verzückung," gives the idea of an involuntary kind of spasm. If you read the passage in 1 Samuel, you'll see that God did this to protect David. The people who had this happen to them were so incapacitated that they couldn't hunt for David. In this case, it probably looked like what happened on the day of Pentecost. These men were overcome and began speaking the Words of God and praising Him.

The implication of the Hebrew is that this was a one-time event.

V. 26 Apparently not all 70 elders made it to the tent. When the spirit came upon them, they prophesied, spoke the Word of God with strength and conviction to the people to direct them to follow God.

V. 28 We've met Joshua before, but now his father is named. It is no accident that we suddenly hear of Joshua in this situation. Today and tomorrow we'll hear more about Joshua.

What I find interesting is that Moses doesn't feel threatened, because this rose out of a genuine need that Moses begged for. His God-given desperation saved him from being closed and defensive in bringing on more leaders.

Vs. 31-36 The birds probably were not piled 2-3 feet high, but were so dense that they only flew that high and were very easy to catch. It would have been like a wacky video game, standing out in the middle of a field and having a low-flying flock head in your direction.

Vs. 33-35 In the plague, the idea here is that God took care of the people with the craving, who began the avalanche of carnality that "ate up" the camp. The timing factor is very interesting. They had it in their mouths, but didn't get to enjoy the food they craved. I'm sure some people were punished who got caught up in the sins of these other people. In v. 34 you have a note that tells you what they named that place. I'm willing to bet that as these people gathered, prepared and ate, there was no sense of repentance for their complaining and no thanks to God for His provision.

V. 35 God moved the people from that terrible place.

Numbers 12

Vs. 1-2 So, we have heard nothing of Miriam since the Red Sea. Apparently in all of this, she was the instigator and jealousy was the motive. She used Moses' intermarriage as a tool to breed discontent with Aaron. Either Zipporah, Moses' wife, had died and Moses had remarried a Cushite (Egyptian), or they were finally taking Moses to task that his wife wasn't an Israelite. Aaron and Miriam would have both had true-blue Israelite spouses. The fact that Miriam is punished here shows that she was the real force behind the problem and discontent. Also, since

God had recently put His Spirit on the 70 elders, she was jealous. Aaron probably was the "weak" accomplice just as he was with the golden calf.

V. 3 That Moses was "meek" didn't make him "weak." Meek would mean, "non-aggressively" strong. He didn't have to fight to feel secure, and in the following cases, it isn't weakness that makes him fall on his face. He realizes that the decisions people are making will bring God's wrath.

Vs. 5-8 It is interesting that God says He is the one who makes the choice of whom He talks to. It wasn't Moses' fault that God chose Moses. I'm sure, in a way, if Moses could have retired to a little chalet in the Alps, leaving someone else in charge, he would have done that, but God didn't give him that choice.

In a way, it is true with us as disciples; "success" is not our fault. It isn't even based on our talent or skills. God makes the choice. On the one hand, there is no room for pride, and on the other hand, there is no room for envy. When the disciples of John the Baptist complain to John about Jesus' growing popularity, *John answered, "A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven."* (John 3:27)

Notice that God tells them they should have been afraid to have spoken against Moses. They didn't respect him, and more disrespect was to follow.

Vs. 10-12 Apparently Miriam's appearance wasn't just white, but the reactions of Aaron and Moses indicate that she looked like she was *half eaten away*.

Vs. 13-16 Both Moses' reaction and God's response are very interesting. The entire nation had to wait seven days for Miriam. I'm sure word spread through the nation about what had happened. You would have hoped the people would have taken it to heart.

Numbers 13

So far things haven't been pretty, and now it goes from bad to worse.

Vs. 1-3 The Lord says to send out spies. In Deuteronomy 1:21-22, Moses says it was the people's idea. I believe God simply said OK to the desire of the people. So, I think the idea originated from the fear and uncertainty of the people, but God allowed them to send the spies to confirm for the people that the land was good.

Vs. 4-16 I don't know if they teach this children's song in Sunday school anymore, *Twelve men went to spy on Canaan, ten were bad and two were good*. We don't need to focus on the bad guys, just the good guys, and tomorrow we'll hear more.

Notice that Joshua is mentioned today in 11:28, 13:8 and 13:16. Based on 13:16 and Joshua's past history with Moses, I believe Joshua was the leader on their adventure. Moses changed his name from "salvation" to "Yahweh is salvation." The first century version of Joshua's name was "Jesus."

Vs. 17-29 Now just to put some of this in perspective, these men traveled together and talked together for 40 days. That should have brought some closeness. I've seen something like this happen in a group, oddly enough, of 12 men. Based on what I saw there, I'll suggest this. Not all of the spies were bad men, but they were not men of faith. They were swayed by the majority in the group. There were men who could see the merit of both sides of the argument when they sat at night and talked. Some of these men certainly were friendly to the point of view of Caleb and Joshua. But when it came down to the decision, it was rooted in fear and practicality, not in the reality of an awesome God. I'll bet, when the ten men spoke to the multitude of people, Joshua and Caleb were surprised, hurt, shocked, to hear what came out of some of their mouths.

V. 22 Notice the mention of Hebron. This will become the property of Caleb and the possession of Judah. In the future David will reign in Hebron for seven years as the king of Judah, before he

eventually becomes the king of the entire nation. Hebron was also the home of the Anakites, who were giants and would make big targets for Caleb.

V. 30 We are introduced to Caleb first in 13:6, and now he steps to center stage. Caleb *quieted the people*. He was a man of great faith, strength and confidence in God, but he was only one man.

Vs. 31-33 So what was the real problem? Giants. You would think that with all they saw in Egypt, this would be nothing. With God, giants were just big targets and easier to hit. God will remind them of these words about giants.

I have seen something like this happen in church groups. If you want to see a good possibility or direction be defeated, allow the deciding group to grow full of people with little faith and then allow criticism to grow, saying, "Well, that is a valid point." The voices of faith and confidence in God get drowned out in the laughter.

This is another reason why Jesus kept the core of His disciples small. The core of disciples making disciples has to be of men and women who deeply love Christ and will follow Him in the harvest. His Word and His commission have to be their burning passion. While it is attractive to move fast and invite everyone to be involved, the reality is that faith matures slowly.

Here, God isn't laughing. If you want a good man to use as a model of a disciple, look at Caleb. Tomorrow we'll read more. Just as trivia, notice the tribes that Caleb and Joshua come from. Remember the last words of Jacob. Tomorrow will be a very, very sad day for Israel.

### **Mark 14:22-52**

Vs. 22-25 This is the Lord's Supper and the sign of the new covenant. The *blood of the covenant* wouldn't flow until Jesus was on the cross. The time when Jesus will enjoy this celebration will be future and probably when He establishes His Millennial Kingdom on earth after the Tribulation.

Vs. 26-42 This talk began in the upper room and must have continued until they reached the *Mount of Olives*. Jesus told them they would *fall away* in order to help them cope and hold on to their faith after they did fall away. Also, the three disciples eventually recovered from their failure to wait with Jesus. They kept falling asleep, but the joy of the resurrection must have erased their guilt. Peter's "fall" was deeper, and he needed Jesus to pull him up. Notice that Jesus spoke to Peter. It is probably no coincidence that Peter fell asleep three times, denied Him three times and was asked by Jesus to confess his love three times.

Vs. 43-50 I still think it's funny that it will take reading Luke's account, before we realize that Jesus healed/ reattached the cut-off right ear. In artistic language you could say that Peter "Van Goghged" the man, although for Vincent it was the left earlobe, and for the slave of the high priest, it was the entire right ear.

Vs. 51-52 The young man who ran away naked is supposed to be Mark. John Grassmick gives an interesting idea of what might have happened here on p. 181 of the [Bible Knowledge Commentary-NT](#). According to him, the mob might have stopped at the upper room first and found that Jesus and the disciples were gone. Mark might have been sleeping and woke when the mob showed up and left. Apparently, the little rich kid just grabbed the sheet he was sleeping in and followed. The rest is history.

It is interesting that all the disciples got away. It is only here that we realize that the mob was looking to grab others, too. Maybe the sword play played a role.

### **Psalm 52**

It is sort of hard to think of these as songs sung in worship. To understand what had happened you need to read 1 Samuel 22:9-23. Doeg was a real dog. The soldiers at least had the faith and

sense not to kill the priests of the Lord, but not Doeg the Edomite. He launched right in and killed the priests and their families. God's judgment on Doeg is seen to be "typical" of how He will judge all evildoers.

V. 1 Notice the contrast between the two lines of this verse.

Vs. 2-5 For many years David would have to endure the lying of those who ruled under King Saul. This is addressed to Doeg, but there were many others.

Vs. 6-7 Again, notice the contrast between these verses.

Vs. 8-9 David knew that in spite of the lies, hatred and violence aimed at him, *the steadfast love of God* would not fail. Today, David was content to wait. David was just now beginning to run from Saul, and his lying had gotten others in trouble. David would be on the run and live in hiding for many years. Slowly David would learn to wait and overcome his fear by being secure in the love of God.

As disciples following the Lord in the harvest, the hardest thing we will ever do is to wait on the Lord as He brings us through a season of pruning and leads us on to the next season of fruitfulness.

### **Proverbs 11:1-3**

Imagine that v. 1 is a symbolic principle and the next two verses expand on that symbolism.

*False balance* = pride and crookedness.

*Just weight* = humility and integrity.

Humility and integrity come from having a just "weight" to understand and weigh life. That "just measure" is the love of God and the Word of God.