

Israel's Murmurings and Ours

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When noticing how Israel complained and repeatedly showed a lack of faith during the days of Moses, it is interesting to also note how God reacted. God was gentle and patient with them at first, treating them like they were an impatient son (cf. Ex. 4:22-23; Psa. 103:13), but later God began losing His patience.

ISRAEL'S MURMURINGS IN EXODUS

5:21 - They spoke against Moses and Aaron because of the hardships Pharaoh added to them.

Result - God told Moses to assure the people that He would deliver them and bring them to the promised land, but they would not listen (6:1-9).

14:11-12 - They accused Moses of bringing them out of Egypt to die.

Result - God parted the Red Sea for them and destroyed Pharaoh's army.

15:24 - They complained that the water was bitter.

Result - God sweetened the water of Marah miraculously.

16:2-3 - They accused Moses and Aaron of wanting to kill them with hunger.

Result - God said, "I will rain bread from heaven for you" (16:4), when He could have rained fire and brimstone!

17:1-7 - They accused Moses of bringing them out of Egypt to kill them with thirst.

Result - God brought water from a rock for them.

ISRAEL'S MURMURINGS IN NUMBERS

11:1 - They complained about their hardships.

Result - Thousands were destroyed by a plague of fire from God.

11:4-6 - They complained about the lack of various foods and the manna.

Result - God sent them quail piled up 3 feet high all over the ground; but as the people ate, God struck them with a plague that killed many of them (11:31-33).

14:1-4 - They complained about being stuck in the wilderness and facing the giants of the promised land, and they desired to return to Egypt.

Result - Everyone who complained and refused to obey was forbidden to enter the promised land, and died in the wilderness.

16:3 - They complained about the authority and leadership of Moses and Aaron.

Result - The families, friends, and possessions of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram were swallowed by the earth; then fire consumed another 250 men who rebelled.

16:41 - They complained that Moses and Aaron had caused the death of Korah and his followers.

Result - God began to destroy Israel with a plague, but Moses and Aaron interceded for the people. 14,700 people still died.

20:2-3 - They complained about the lack of water

Result - Moses also sinned, and was not allowed to enter the promised land.

21:5 - They complained that God and Moses brought them into the wilderness and complained about the food God gave them, and the lack of bread and water.

Result - God sent deadly serpents that killed many people and seriously injured others.

WHAT ABOUT US?

Are we impatient complainers like those Israelites? Do we understand that they were being tested to see if they would be faithful and grateful to God? (Deut. 8:2-6). Are we passing our tests? (Job 23:10; Psa. 66:10; Prov. 17:3; James 1:12; 1 Pet. 4:12; 2 Pet. 1:7). The New Testament teaches us to *“Do all things without murmurings and disputings”* (Php. 2:14). Paul wrote those words while imprisoned! In the same epistle he wrote, *“Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice...for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content...I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me”* (Php. 4:4, 11, 13; cf. 1 Tim. 6:6-12). God does not want us to be anxious, but to cast our cares upon Him and trust in Him (Php. 4:6-7; 1 Pet. 5:7; cf. Prov. 3:5-6; Matt. 6:25-34; 7:7-11).

As God was patient with Israel, God is longsuffering with people today (2 Pet. 3:9), but one day His patience will run out (3:10; Rom. 11:22). As Joshua and Caleb were in the faithful minority who entered the promised land, let us make sure we are not angering God with a lack of faith, so we can enter the Promised Land of Heaven! (Psa. 95:7-11; Matt. 7:13-14, 21-23; 1 Cor. 10:1-13; Heb. 3-4).