

3/12/89

HIGHLIGHTS FROM NUMBERS  
"Intervention by Intercession"  
Numbers 14:10-20

PREPARATION

1. Because the majority report (13:27-29) was dominant, the people were discouraged and desirous of retreat to Egypt (14:1-4).
2. Caleb and Joshua appealed to the people to believe God, set aside fear, and accept the fact of impotency from the land's inhabitants (14:5-9).
3. Sadly, the people took offence and took up stones (an accusation of a major crime) to kill Joshua/Caleb (14:10). Incredible.
4. Now at this critical juncture, God acts. Moses does also. Here are the actions taken.

1. GOD--HIS ACTION OF DISAPPOINTMENT vv. 10-12

a. By His Presence v. 10

This is the significance of the "glory of the Lord" (Jehovah) in the tabernacle. Note that "all" the Israelites were aware of this dynamic intervention of God at unbelief. This presence of God as glory is often recorded in the O.T. (cf. Ex. 16:10; 24:16-18; the Shekinah in Ex. 40:35 etc.). This is an awesome demonstration of God Almighty!

b. By His Questions v. 11

1) How long? #1 The verb "provoke" means to deride, despise, reject. He was being treated with contempt by the nation. How long could this go on?

2) How long? #2 The plagues, Red Sea and feeding in the wilderness were all "signs" of God to provoke belief. Yet, Israel did not believe. How long could this go on? After all, it was done by God right in their midst (Hebrew: inner being, as stomach or womb).

c. By His Intentions v. 12

Three verbs indicate God's intent: Smite, dispossess, and make. His "I wills" are obviously expressions of His sovereign power. "Pestilence" is a strong noun sometimes rendered "death." His thoughts concerning Moses had been previously expressed (Ex. 32:10).

2. MOSES--HIS ACTION OF PRAYER vv. 13-20

a. His Reasons vv. 13-18

1) The Lord's Reputation vv. 13, 14. The Egyptians are the bottom line (v. 13). This is because

Jan 12:36, 37

Jan 17:3  
Prayer  
for his  
cause.

Israel was taken from there. However, they would tell others (v. 14) who have heard of God's reputation--i.e. His presence, His visibility (eye to eye), His guidance (cloud by day; fire by night). All of this is God's might (v. 13).

2) The Lord's Ability vv. 15, 16. Other nations would not see the failure of Israel as a judgment for unbelief, but God's impotence. He promised the land, but was incapable of fulfilling His promise. Some would probably view it as a superiority of their own gods.

b. His Appeal vv. 17-20

1) Demonstration of Power vv. 17, 18

The might of God, being great, is called upon to be seen--just as God's says He is. He is a God slow of anger (long-suffering) of great mercy, forgiving (carry away cf. Deut. 32:11) iniquity (i.e. consequence of sin or punishment) and transgression (personal rebellion). *show (mercy)*

N.B. Interspersed with these more "kind" acts of God is the fact of God's justice for a penalty, but limited to the 3rd, 4th generations. *God never condones sin*

2) Demonstration of Pardon v. 19, 20

The pardon (same modern Hebrew word for "excuse me") requested is "according to" God's great mercy (grace). This is the only ground for a pardon (cf. Eph. 2:4). But this is the way God has borne up His people right from Egypt! What a mighty God--He responds (v. 20). Hallelujah!

#### CONSIDERATION

Viewing all of this as a type (1 Cor. 10:11), what kind of people ought we to be? One word: obedient. Shake off rebellion. Put on obedience. Amen.