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Num  
4 ~~17~~ 17

HIGHLIGHTS FROM NUMBERS  
"Complaints About Supplies"  
Numbers 20:1-3

CONTEXT

1. The wilderness is where God provides for His own. The red-heifer ashes (Num. 19) served as a reservoir of God's grace. There is cleansing from defilement (1 John 1:9).

2. Before recording the victories at Hormah, and over Sihon and Og, Moses rehearses some aspects of gloom and sin. How tragic.

3. Yet, the incidents of this chapter have valuable lessons for all believers to learn. Here they are:-

1. GOD KEEPS HIS WORD v. 1

The death of Miriam, Moses' sister, is critical. She was a leading protagonist at the time of the exodus (EX. 2:4-9; 15:20, 21; Num. 12). But the force of this woman is that she is a reminder that God said He would not allow one who came out of Egypt to enter Canaan--only Joshua and Caleb (Num. 14:29-35). Moses and Aaron would soon follow her in death. God does keep His promises! Remember, Kadesh is the same place Israel started. It was only 11 days from Canaan, but Israel took 40 years to get there (Deut. 1:2).

2. GOD KEEPS HIS PATIENCE vv. 2-6

The people assembled against Moses and Aaron (v. 2). Then, as a crowd, they contended with Moses (v. 3). The modern mass protest movements are really not new nor modern!

The crowd raised three concerns: 1) They wished they had died with Korah (cf. v. 3; Num. 16). 2) They questioned the wisdom of leaving Egypt (v. 4). They expected death personally and for their animals. 3) They disbelieved God's promise about Canaan (v. 5). Wow--how they complained and shouted negatives at God's servants. The derogatory attitude expressed by "this evil place" is evident.

Rather than immediate judgment, Moses and Aaron went from the people's presence for asylum to the tabernacle. God's glory appeared--what divine grace and patience!

3. GOD INSTRUCTS HIS SERVANTS vv. 7-11

The response to the rabble crowd was given by God. Moses and Aaron were not capable in themselves.

The "rod" was the one that budded (Num. 17). The Lord's word was "speak" <sup>to</sup> the rock (N.B. plural verb), and you (singular) will "bring forth water."

Moses did as commanded (v. 9). He was apparently distressed at the people for he called them "rebels" (v. 10). The word connotes "bitterness." Moreover, Moses hit the rock, rather than speaking to it (cf. v. 8, 11).

#### 4. GOD UPHOLDS HIS PERSON vv. 12-13

Moses' failure to follow instructions netted two results:

a. Prohibition to enter the Land because of unbelief (v. 12).

b. Vindication of God's holiness. Since Moses did not, by his actions, publicly acknowledge God's purity and unapproachability, God vindicated His own holiness (v. 13).

#### CONCLUSION

This is one of the most tragic sections of Numbers. Miriam died. Aaron died (v. 29). Moses would not enter Canaan (v. 12). Here is a fervent reminder of God's holiness, man's sinfulness, and the need for faithful obedience (cf. Heb. 3:7-4:13).

vs 24 (cf vs 13) Result of rebelliousness.

Isa 106:32

~~Deut~~ Deut 34: 25, 4, 5