

Beloved Brothers and Sisters

In the previous chapter we saw the deaths of both Miriam and Aaron but in spite of this having a sobering effect upon the people we see they continue to complain. The lack of water in such arid conditions was perhaps to be expected but we have to learn by their experiences and attitude, so we must not be as they were ,forever complaining and showing lack of faith and trust in God- we must always wait upon the Lord and pray especially when the way seems hard. We have this promise

1Co 10:13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

And this applies to everyone who is called right from Adam

This is what Moses did as a leader. We see they were forever looking back to their slavery in Egypt with rose tinted glasses. They must have known of Lot's wife but did not take it to heart.

V1 it seems should be rendered "the king of Arad". (It is refreshing to see Israel fulfilling their vow and the place was called "Hormah" which means "devote to utter destruction," (this was fulfilled later by Joshua 12/14)

V4(Numbers 20vs20-21where Edom refuses to allow them passage) meant that they had to travel through very daunting territory. We must remember that they were families, members of all ages, including children and their cattle. So it was very difficult and their minds kept going back to Egypt but with rose tinted glasses. But this description is given in the Book of Numbers by one traveler shows it was a quite formidable passage, "gradually

the wadi grew smaller as the hills encroached upon us until we were surrounded by queer eroded mountains, rumpled and fissured> I have never seen such extraordinary landscape before”.

Nevertheless we know that God does not try us beyond what we can bare. It was for each one to look beyond- to the end of the journey and the Promised Land but the lessons here remind us that patience is needed in our calling to serve The Almighty(Ps 40:1,Luke 21:19, Rom 2;7, 5,2-5, Jas1,3-4, 1Pet2:20, 3,10-12)

Num 21:5 And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread.

This would have been very disappointing to Yahweh and a burden to Moses that the people He had chosen of all the nations of the earth to enter The Promised Land so easily lost their faith and focus.

we are reminded Heb 10:35 Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward.

Heb 10:36 For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

Heb 10:37 For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.

That the attitude of the people was not justified is shown by Yahweh's response in sending poisonous snakes that bit the people. This takes us back to Genesis 3 and the fall of Adam and Eve when the serpent was upright and had the power of speech. It was by subtlety of argument they were deceived. (I mentioned this to a Jehovah's Witness who visited me some time ago and He wondered at me because I said it was to be taken literally- a literal

snake So I don't know what they believe but clearly a perversion of the Truth

The people of Israel –His chosen nation - expressed loathing for the manna (See John 6vs 25 on for what has replaced the Manna).

V6The Lord sent fiery serpents and many of the people were bitten with their lethal bite. (It is thought to be a species that is said to still exist in W Africa and its venom is very potent and the animal easily provoked). The people of Israel suddenly realised how vulnerable they were. In the provision of the remedy; faith was required-there was no magic, no medicine but to look up and upon the elevated (dead) snake and believe: the remedy was in their hearts and minds-faith. It seems the original infers a deliberate seeking (not a casual glance).Thus we see what is involved in our calling to serve God.

We may often wonder why it seems so few are called but God knows the hearts and is not willing that any perish.

2Pe 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

2Pe 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

So the things of the Truth are very precious to us seeing them with our eyes open and as a matter of reality-a matter of life and death

Moses made a serpent of brass-this would have gone through the fire so that the metals of brass and copper merge-amalgamate and become one. The fire also had a purifying where all contamination would have been burnt off.

Job 23 is very helpful in this connection

So we see that this speaks of Jesus and the way to salvation

Joh 3:13 And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.

Joh 3:14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

Joh 3:15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

Joh 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Joh 3:17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

Joh 3:18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

There is only this way to salvation and we must count our blessings in that we have been called and know and understand the Truth concerning the most vital thing in the life of man

Heb 12:2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

It is for us to have the same mind that was in Christ and to have this joy ever in our minds

2Co 10:3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh:

2Co 10:4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

2Co 10:5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

We must respond in love recognizing the wonderful love of God in giving His own Son. This was no easy thing for though He came down from Heaven He was born of woman and thus had the same propensities as we. We see then that He was constantly in prayer to His Father

Heb 5:7 Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared;

Heb 5:8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;

Heb 5:9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;

This together with strong determination, aware at all times of the great burden He carried. The experiences and determination of Job would have helped Him Job 23:10 But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.

Job 23:11 My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined.

Job 23:12 Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.

Job 23:13 But he is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth.

Job 23:14 For he performeth the thing that is appointed for me: and many such things are with him.

This is the acceptable attitude, one of faith and trust and one for us to strive to emulate

Love to all Brothers and Sisters and to all seeking to serve God acceptably

Kenneth J Gallon