

Holiness Directs Your Attention To God

Numbers 14: 11-24

¹¹ And the LORD said to Moses, “How long will this people despise me? And how long will they refuse to believe in me, in spite of all the signs that I have done among them?”

¹² I will strike them with pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they.”

¹³ But Moses said to the LORD, “Then the Egyptians will hear of it, for in your might you brought up this people from among them,

¹⁴ and they will tell the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that you, O LORD, are in the midst of this people; for you, O LORD, are seen face to face, and your cloud stands over them and you go in front of them, in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night.

¹⁵ Now if you kill this people all at one time, then the nations who have heard about you will say,

¹⁶ ‘It is because the LORD was not able to bring this people into the land he swore to give them that he has slaughtered them in the wilderness.’

¹⁷ And now, therefore, let the power of the LORD be great in the way that you promised when you spoke, saying,

¹⁸ ‘The LORD is slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, forgiving iniquity and transgression, but by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the parents upon the children to the third and the fourth generation.’

¹⁹ Forgive the iniquity of this people according to the greatness of your steadfast love, just as you have pardoned this people, from Egypt even until now.”

²⁰ Then the LORD said, “I do forgive, just as you have asked;

²¹ nevertheless—as I live, and as all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD —

²² none of the people who have seen my glory and the signs that I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and yet have tested me these ten times and have not obeyed my voice,

²³ shall see the land that I swore to give to their ancestors; none of those who despised me shall see it.

²⁴ But my servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit and has followed me wholeheartedly, I will bring into the land into which he went, and his descendants shall possess it.

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- I. Background of Numbers
 - A. Summation of Numbers
 1. Numbering Israel
 2. Wandering Israel
 - a. Numbers 1:1 – “The Lord spoke to Moses *in the wilderness*”
 - b. Cannot receive the promise land without going through the wilderness of testing
 3. God directs Israel
 - a. Genesis – election of a nation
 - b. Exodus – the nation’s redemption
 - c. Leviticus – the nation’s sanctification
 - d. Numbers – the nation’s direction by God
 - B. The Purpose of Numbers
 1. Israel’s historical disobedience and illustration of the distinction between a faithless and faithful generation
 2. God leads His people
 3. God’s perseverance for His people despite their lack of faith in Him
 4. Christological purposes
 - a. Christ is our rock (Numbers 20:8 and 1 Cor. 10:4)
 - b. Crucifixion of Christ represented through the bronze serpent on a pole (Numbers 21:8 and John 3:14)
 - c. Christ as the Bread of Life (Numbers 11:9 and John 6:24)
 - d. Christ as Our Director (Numbers 9:15)
 - C. The Themes of Numbers
 - 1. Israel’s walk with God**
 2. Israel’s pilgrimage with God
 3. Israel’s history with God
 4. Israel’s call to faithfulness to God
 - 5. Israel’s shift from sanctification before God to being directed by God**
- II. Numbers 14:11-25 – Walking and being directed by God through the lens of Moses
 - A. Verses 11-12 – The Lord’s accusation and response
 1. Teachings
 - a. Accusation 1: The people despised (hate, loathe, feel contempt towards) God
 - b. Accusation 2: The people refused to believe (in length and in the signs)
 - c. Result: disease, disinheritance, and dislodgement (a new nation through Moses)
 - B. Verses 13-19 – Moses’s Five Rebuttals
 1. Rebuttal 1: Egyptians will conclude of God’s inability to deliver His people – v. 13, 16

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2. Rebuttal 2: Egyptians will pass this information to the Canaanites (in hopes that they will finish Israel's annihilation since Egypt did not – v. 14)
3. Rebuttal 3: Canaanites already heard reports on Israel's progress and their fear of the nation – v. 14
4. Rebuttal 4: All of God's progression to establish Israel will be in vain – v. 15
5. Rebuttal 5: Remind God of who He is – v. 17-18
 - a. Patient (slow to anger)
 - b. Loves His people dearly (abounding in steadfast love)
 - c. God of forgiveness (forgiving iniquity)
 - d. God of justice (but by no means clearing the guilty)

C. Verses 20-24 – God's response and judgment on the issue

1. Vv. 20-21 – God is a God of truth and forgiveness (Numbers 23:19 – God is not a man that He should lie or a mortal, that he should change His mind)
2. Vv. 22-24 – God is a God of justice to the faithless and faithful (Psalm 81:12 – So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts, to follow their own counsels)
 - a. Faithless
 - 1) Category 1: Those who seen God's glory in Egypt & the wilderness
 - 2) Category 2: Those who seen God's signs in Egypt & the wilderness
 - 3) Category 3: Those who have tested God's faithfulness, character, and heart (John 10: 37-38 – If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe Me. But if I do them, even though you do not believe Me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me and I am in the Father)
 - 4) Category 4: Those who have despised God
 - b. Faithful
 - 1) Category 1: Caleb
 - a) Stands out (different spirit)
 - b) Faithful follower (followed wholeheartedly)
 - c) Result
 - (1) Caleb walks into the promise
 - (2) His descendants inherit the promise

III. Gleanings from Numbers 14: 11-25

- A. God will reveal His feelings on any given matter
- B. God will listen to your petitions (in sheer honesty)
- C. God will put you in situations to test your character (negotiate)
- D. God will reveal the true nature of the people you are surrounded with
- E. God will give you a heart for the people to be their intercessor
- F. God will showcase a heart of mercy and grace for people who do not deserve it
- G. God will strengthen your heart to engage in difficult and meaningful conversations with Him
- H. God will strengthen your ability to console for others (1 Cor. 1: 3-4)