

Numbers 14: Rebellion & Defeat.

I. (1-4): The rebellion.

The Israelites complained, cried, questioned God's intentions in leading them home, accused God of evil and they wanted a leader to return them to Egypt.

"It was mourning filled with a resentful attitude towards God, blaming Him for their "problem" - denying that He is a loving Father who cares for His children."

"This was pure rebellion. They said that they did not want God's plan, they did not want God's leaders, and they did not want God's land."

1 Samuel 15:23 - *For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you from being king."*

Philippians 2:14-15 - *Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,*

i. (5-10) The Leaders respond.

They did their best to pray for, encourage and envision the people so as to overcome their fears and grow their faith, all in vain. The people instead threatened to kill them.

Deuteronomy 1:38 - *'Joshua the son of Nun, who stands before you, he shall go in there. Encourage him, for he shall cause Israel to inherit it.*

Luke 22:32 - *"But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren."*

ii. (11-35) God and Moses convene;

(11-12) God – how long? I will punish and disinherit them.

They had God's power & presence; nonetheless, they were in fear and rejection.

"...When a strong-willed child resists, the pressure to give in for the sake of peace and harmony can become overpowering. I am reminded of the mother who wanted to have the last word but couldn't handle the hassle that resulted whenever she said no to her young son. After an especially trying day, she finally flung up her hands and shouted, "All right, Billy, do whatever you want! Now let me see you disobey THAT!"

(13-19) Moses - intercedes.

If you get rid of them, the nations around us will think you weren't able to take them all the way home. Show your greatness, patience, mercy and forgive them please.

In **Genesis 18:16ff**, Abraham bargains with God concerning Sodom & Gomorrah...

(20-35) God - promises pardon and punishment.

God forgave, but there are consequences of their sin; they were to wander around and die in the wilderness and won't enter the Land, except for the believing spies (Joshua & Caleb) and their descendants.

Proverbs 15:10 - Harsh ***discipline*** is for him who forsakes the way, And he who hates correction will die.

(36-38) – The ten unbelieving spies die, the faithful two are preserved.

II. (39-45) The Defeat.

“They made a futile attempt in the flesh to accomplish what they had rejected by faith, and it ended in defeat. It was now back to the wilderness.” “When God was with them, they did not think it was enough; now that God was *not* with them, they thought they could do it.”

Psalms 95:7-11 – *For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand. Today, if you will hear His voice: Do not harden your hearts, as in the rebellion, as in the day of trial in the wilderness, when your fathers tested Me; they tried Me, though they saw My work. For forty years I was grieved with that generation, and said, 'It is a people who go astray in their hearts, and they do not know My ways.' So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.'*

Hebrews 3:16-19 - *For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.*

Hebrews 11:6 - *But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*

Instant obedience is the only kind of obedience there is; delayed obedience is disobedience. Whoever strives to withdraw from obedience, withdraws from Grace.
Thomas a Kempis.

When Christian Herter was governor of Massachusetts, he was running hard for a second term in office. One day, after a busy morning chasing votes (and no lunch) he arrived at a church barbecue. It was late afternoon and Herter was famished. As Herter moved down the serving line, he held out his plate to the woman serving chicken. She put a piece on his plate and turned to the next person in line.

"Excuse me," Governor Herter said, "do you mind if I have another piece of chicken?"

"Sorry," the woman told him. "I'm supposed to give one piece of chicken to each person."

"But I'm starved," the governor said.

"Sorry," the woman said again. "Only one to a customer."

Governor Herter was a modest and unassuming man, but he decided that this time he would throw a little weight around. "Do you know who I am?" he said. "I am the governor of this state."

"Do you know who I am?" the woman said. "I'm the lady in charge of the chicken. Move along, mister."

Bits & Pieces, May 28, 1992, pp. 5-6.

Dr. B.J. Miller once said, "It is a great deal easier to do that which God gives us to do, no matter how hard it is, than to face the responsibilities of not doing it."

Today In The Word, November, 1989, p.11.

The blessing of obedience is nothing compared with the cost of disobedience.