

Numbers 10-12

October 16, 2011

10:1-10 In chapter 10 verses 1 to 10 we are told about Israel using trumpets to get the people's attention. They were used to gather people together and to prepare them for war. Look at verses 9 and 10; what principles in these two verses apply to us today?

- They were to use the trumpets to sound the alarm when they went to war. In times of trial and trouble, we need to realize that we are in a spiritual battle (Ephesians 6:10-12) the enemy seeks to devour us (1 Peter 5:8). We need to draw near to God for wisdom and strength. They also used the trumpets in times of rejoicing (*days of gladness*). When life is good we need to draw near to God and acknowledge Him as the source of our blessings. See Deuteronomy 8:18 and James 1:17. Ecclesiastes 7:14 says, "In the day of prosperity be happy, But in the day of adversity consider." [14 Enjoy prosperity while you can, but when hard times strike, realize that both come from God. Remember that nothing is certain in this life.] NLT

10:11-28 In verses 11 to 28 we learn about how they moved as a nation. Notice that the Tabernacle went ahead of the holy things so that it would be set up when the holy things arrived at the new camp.

10:29 God has not promised us a pain-free life. How, though, has He promised us good?

- He has promised that we "win" in the end because we go to heaven where pain and loss no longer exist (Revelation 21:3-4). He has promised to be with us, no matter what we go through in this life (Hebrews 13:5). He has promised to give us grace to handle whatever we face (2 Corinthians 12:9). He has promised to turn the bad that happens in our lives in this cursed world to good (Deuteronomy 23:5 & Romans 8:28-29). He has promised us His joy (John 15:11). If we are Christians, we *will* "win" in the end and He *will* always be with us (whether we "feel" Him or not). Experiencing Him turning bad to good and experiencing His grace and joy, though, are conditional upon us walking with Him and trusting Him.

10:32 What do we learn by what Moses says at the end of verse 32?

- We are to "bless" those who have been a blessing to us. If this man helped Moses and Israel, Moses promised to share with him God's blessings. We are not only to "do unto others as we would have them do unto us" (Matthew 7:12), we are to do unto others who have helped us *as* they have done unto us. See Galatians 6:7. Now look at Galatians 6:6. The context of "reaping what you sow" is blessing those who have blessed you.

11:1-9 What takes place in chapter 11 verses 1 to 9?

- Some of the people began to complain about their circumstances; they are wishing that they were back in Egypt. God judged them by sending "fire" onto the camp. They cried out to Moses who cried out to God; God stopped the fires. The manna is described in verses 7 to 9.

What is your response to what they said in verse 5?

- These people had a poor memory. They were slaves in Egypt. Their sons were being killed as they were born (Exodus 1:16). Unhealthy people have exaggerated opinions about what they wish to have ("more money would make me happy"... "if I was married, I'd never feel lonely") and about what they formerly had (the good old days). The "good old days" used to be known as "these trying times".

11:10-30 What takes place in verses 10 to 30?

- The people are unhappy and weeping and the Lord is angry with their dissatisfaction. Moses tells God that he needs help, the burden of these people is overwhelming. Moses *appoints* and God *anoints* (prophesying) **70 men** to help share the load. The Lord tells them that He will give them so much meat that they will be sick of it.

What do we learn from **verses 14 and 17**?

- We are not to do life alone. God wants us doing life with others so that burdens are halved and blessings are doubled. **See Ecclesiastes 4:9-12.**

What was the people's "greed" in this passage?

- Their greed was to not appreciate what they had and to demand more in order to be content.

What is contentment and what does the lack of it in our lives "say" to God?

- Contentment is believing that God has provided everything I need for my current happiness. The lack of contentment tells God what He is providing for us is inadequate and stingy.

11:23 Is the Lord's power "limited" in any way?

- It is "unlimited" in the fact that He is omnipotent...capable of doing anything He pleases (**Psalm 115:3**). His power is "limited", though, by His nature and character. He cannot act contrary to who He is. **See 2 Timothy 2:13.** God can do whatever He chooses to do, but He never chooses to do anything that is inconsistent with who He is. Therefore, for example, God cannot sin (**James 1:13**) or lie (**Numbers 23:19**).

11:25 Does **verse 25** have any connection to what took place with the disciples at Pentecost (**Acts 2:4-6**)?

- On the day of Pentecost, all of these people *witnessed* to others in languages they had never learned. We don't know of this taking place on any other occasion. People glorified God in other languages (**8:14-17; 10:44-46; & 19:6**) as God brought together in Christ Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles, but they did not witness in unlearned languages.

11:31-35 What takes place in **verses 31 to 35**?

- God "buries" them **three feet deep in quail**. They spend at least **36 hours** picking them all up. God then sends a severe plague among them.

What lesson might we learn from this?

- If we insist on getting or having something, God sometimes lets us have what we want and then we pay a price for having it that He wanted to protect us from. **See Psalm 106:15.** We can pay a "high price" for having our own way. Rachel wanted "children", not a child. She got her children and died giving birth to the second son (**Genesis 35:16-19**). David wanted Bathsheba, lied and murdered to have her, and the rest of his family history is a mess. Solomon wanted many women and they turned his heart away from the Lord (**1 Kings 11:3-4**). Lot wanted the fertile values and got Sodom and Gomorrah. This is how God often judges us: He gives us what we want. In **Romans 1:24,26,28**, God gives people over to their sin.

What are some areas of life where God gives people what they want?

- He allows us to marry who we "want" rather than listen to Him. He allows us to change jobs, buy houses or other things that we want but that He did not want for us.

If we want something, is God's "no" or is His "yes" the best answer?

- God’s answer, whatever it is, is the best answer. God is good and will say “no” to protect those He loves.

How does this principle apply to hell?

- Hell is where God gives people what they want...for Him to leave them alone.

12:1-16 What takes place in chapter 12?

- Miriam and Aaron (sister and brother to Moses) decide that they are equal with Moses. God rebukes them and strikes Miriam (it must have been her idea) with leprosy. Aaron asks Moses for mercy. Moses prays for Miriam and she is made clean after 7 days of isolation outside of the camp.

Are all people “equal” before God in every way?

- **No.** All people are equal in the matter of God’s love for them, but they are not equal in roles and responsibilities. God chooses what roles people will fill. See [1 Corinthians 12:5 & 18](#). In the family God has designated the husband to be head over the wife ([Ephesians 5:22-24](#)) and the parents over the children. In the church God has designated leaders over His people. See [Hebrews 13:17](#) and [1 Thessalonians 5:12-13](#).

12:3 Is humility a personality type, body language, being soft-spoken, an attitude, or actions?

- Humility is about attitude and actions, not these other things. Moses was surely a powerful personality, but he was submitted to God and was willing to do whatever God asked of Him. Humility is probably best measured by a person’s willingness to serve in small things and not require recognition. The King James uses the word “meek”. Meekness is controlled strength. God controlled Moses’ strength.

Look at the end of [verse 8](#). As we will see in the chapters to come, God takes seriously the criticism of and rebellion against His designated leaders.