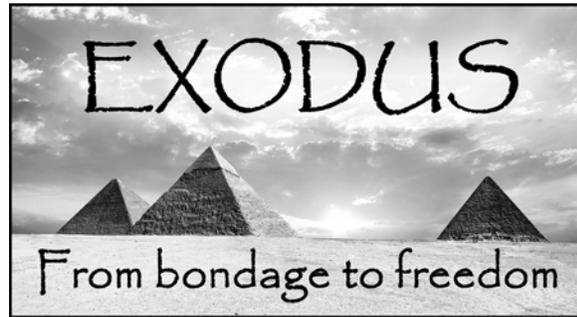


STUDY GUIDE

Week 5: Numbers 10 & 11

Wilderness

October 16, 2016



Before you begin this study, ask the Holy Spirit to show you what God is saying in these scriptures.

In the wilderness, God can seem distant, aloof, or even vindictive. The wilderness often engenders hope and darkness.

Day 1: Numbers 10: 10 - 32

1. Read Numbers 10: 11-13. How long had Israel been at Sinai? (see Exodus 19:1) In the first ten chapters of Numbers, the Tabernacle was set up, the tribes were arranged around it, worship and Passover had been celebrated, and the Lord's presence was visible in a cloud over the Tabernacle.
2. Numbers 10:11 says "the cloud lifted." What was the significance of the cloud lifting and settling? (see Numbers 9: 15-23) What other passages of scripture speak about clouds, and what does the cloud signify in these passages? (see Exodus 13: 21; Isaiah 19:1; Daniel 7: 13; Matthew 24: 30; Mark 13: 26; Revelation 1: 7)
3. In Numbers 10-12, from where do the Israelites leave? To where are they heading? (see if you can find this on your map)
4. Read Numbers 10: 14-28. What do you note about this leaving from Mt. Sinai?

Day 2: Numbers 10: 33 - 36

1. Numbers 10: 33-36 says that the Israelites traveled 3 days from Mt. Sinai. What went before them? What was over them?
2. Note the words Moses used each time the Ark of the Covenant (also called the Ark of Testimony) set out and each time the ark settled. What effect do you think these words should have had on Israel, and what effect do you think these words actually had?
3. In our worship services the Pastor says words that begin the time of worship, and at the end of the service the Pastor says a blessing. What effect does this have on you?

Digging deeper: A study of the Ark of the Covenant (Testimony) – what is it, what is it made of, what is in it, what is the significance or message of the ark to the Israelites (see Exodus 25: 10-22; Deuteronomy 31: 26; Numbers 17: 2-11; Psalm 132: 7, Revelation 11: 19)

Day 3: Numbers 11: 1-3

1. In Numbers 11: 1, the people complained. They had only traveled for 3 days (Numbers 10:33). What were they complaining about? In what other situations had the Israelites complained? (see Exodus 14: 10-12; Exodus 15: 22-24; Exodus 16: 1-3; Exodus 17: 1-2)
2. Why do you think the Israelites complained rather than trying to cope with their situation?
3. In verse 1, who heard the Israelites complaining? What was aroused in God? What did He do? Where else does God use fire to consume? (see Genesis 19: 12-14; Leviticus 10: 1-2; Psalm 106: 16-18)
4. How easy it is to complain when God doesn't do what we expect, want, or ask, or when it doesn't seem like God is meeting our perceived needs. What do you complain and grumble about? How significant are these objects of your complaint? Does our complaining block our ability to obey God? Does it block our ability to worship God? What does it take to break us out of complaining or grumbling?

Digging deeper: study how fire is described in the Bible and used to purge or punish (see Numbers 11:1-3; Leviticus 10:1-3; Numbers 16 and retold in Psalm 106:16-18; Isaiah 33:11-14), to refine (see Deuteronomy 4:24; Zechariah 13:9; Isaiah 4:4; Malachi 3:1-4; 1 Corinthians 3:14), and to accept (see Exodus 19:18-19; Leviticus 9:24; Judges 6:20-22; 1 Kings 18:36-39 and 2 Chronicles 21:26)

Day 4: Numbers 11: 1-3

1. In Numbers 11: 2, to whom do the people cry out? What does he do? What happened? How did God respond to Moses? Why do you think God was angry with the Israelites but responded positively to Moses' prayer?
2. In verse 3, what was the place called when the fire died down? What is the meaning or significance of that name? (see Deuteronomy 9: 22)
3. Imagine what it was like for the Israelites to be in a remote and barren place, with no clear idea of where they were going. Imagine not only their physical surroundings but their attitudes and emotions. Then recall your own wilderness experience(s). At what times did it seem that God was distant or vindictive? When were you in a place where you did not really know where you were going? What hope, if any, did you have during the darkness? How did you finally emerge from this wilderness, and what difference did that make?

Day 5

1. Read Mark 1: 12 and Matthew 27: 46. Compare Jesus' wilderness experiences. Identify the presence of darkness and the presence of hope. How does it make you feel to realize that Jesus, God's Son, had these wilderness experiences?
2. Read Psalm 88: 13-18. Note the Psalmist's description of his wilderness experience. Have you ever been in a time when you had these same feelings? How does it make you feel to read this passage where the experience is not resolved in this Psalm?

Day 6

(If you have the book Leaving Egypt, read chapter 9. If you do not have the book, consider how you might respond to these questions based on your own experiences and understanding.)

1. In Chapter 9, DeGroat says that the wilderness is experienced in two different ways – one that expresses hope and another that knows only chaos and darkness, where the bottom falls out and everything you knew to be true is called into question. In what ways have you encountered both hope and darkness, or both of them together? How do you cope when the answers seem to provide you no comfort, no security, and no justice?
2. On page 125, DeGroat writes “No one can take the wilderness journey for you, but there are people who can walk alongside, helping you navigate the rough terrain along the way.” Who are the people in your life who have helped you journey through the wilderness? Who seems right now to need you to help them on this journey? How can you reach out to them and help them?
3. On pages 130-131, DeGroat writes, “It's a typically North American phenomenon to glamorize suffering” or “to find a bright side to the pain.” What is your typical response to pain or suffering? What makes you uncomfortable or unsure of how to respond?