

Yahweh, the Almighty God of Israel, is with us
"Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet,
and shew my people their transgression,
and the house of Jacob their sins." Isaiah 58:1

Prayer, Praise & Thanksgiving

Contentment

Reading:
Psalm Chapter 106 &
2 Corinthians Chapter 10

Introduction

Millions of people on this planet, including many '**true believers**,' are discontented with their lot in life. Very few things satisfy them. They can find fault with almost every place, everything and everyone; and they spend much of their time '**murmuring**.' They want more money, luxury, authority, power, position and possessions. They see others with these things: but they are discontented with their lot in life and are not slow to voice their discontent.

Discontentment is their Master and murmuring is their hobby.

These folk are spiritually sick. Are you one of them? Am I one of them? The Bible gives us some invaluable advice concerning **discontentment** and **murmuring**. It is found in Israel's experiences in their **wilderness**. I'll begin by reading a few verses of each experience and then endeavour to draw lessons from it.

1. In the Barren Wilderness of Sin

Exodus 15: 27: "And they came to **Elim**, where were **twelve wells of water**, and threescore and ten palm trees: and they encamped there by the waters."

Exodus 16: 1: "And they took their journey from **Elim**, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the **wilderness of Sin**, which is between **Elim** and **Sinai**, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt.
2: And the whole congregation of the children of Israel **murmured against Moses and Aaron**

in the wilderness:

3: And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the **flesh pots**, and when we did **eat bread to the full**; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with **hunger**.

4: Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, **I will rain bread from heaven for you**; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that **I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no**.

5: And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily.

6: And Moses and Aaron said unto all the children of Israel, At even, then ye shall know that the LORD hath brought you out from the land of Egypt:

7: And in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of the LORD; **for that he heareth your murmurings against the LORD**: and what are we, that ye murmur against us?"

What can we learn from this experience? Amongst other things, we can learn this:

- That we should never forget how God has delivered us from the *slavery of spiritual Egypt*. How that the **Lamb's blood** has saved us from sin and eternal death and brought us through the Red Sea of Trial.
- That though we live in an extremely evil world, a veritable '**wilderness of sin**,' the Creator is still able to keep us alive, though conditions appear to be deteriorating. Remember the manna never began to fall till a whole month had passed: so their food stocks were precariously low.
- That **Yahweh**, the Holy One of Israel listens to our every word, every murmur: '**for he heareth your murmuring**.' He can read every thought, weigh every motive and assess every action. Nothing escapes Him, absolutely nothing at all.
- That the LORD of the Sabbath is anxious to see **whether we will walk in His law, or not**: or whether at the first sign of a shortage we begin to complain.

2. In the Wilderness of Thirst

Exodus 17: 1: "And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, after their journeys, according to the commandment of the LORD, and pitched in **Rephidim**: and **there was no water for the people to drink**.

2: Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me? **wherefore do ye tempt the LORD?**

3: And the people thirsted there for water; and the people **murmured against Moses**, and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?

4: And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, **What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me**.

5: And the LORD said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go.

6: Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

7: And he called the name of the place **Massah**, and **Meribah**, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and **because they tempted the LORD, saying, Is the LORD among us, or not?**"

What can we learn from this experience? Amongst other things, we can learn this:

- God is well aware of the fact that we **need water**: and he will supply it when there are no wells from which to drink. But He usually waits to see our reaction when our supplies run dry.
- **Murmuring is tempting God!**

3. In the Wilderness of Burning

About a year later Israel entered the wilderness of Paran, the **wilderness of burning**. The nation's complaints moved into a higher gear; and so did the Almighty's frustration and anger.

Numbers 11: 1: **“And when the people complained, it displeased the LORD: and the LORD heard it; and his anger was kindled; and the fire of the LORD burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp.**
2: *And the people cried unto Moses; and when Moses prayed unto the LORD, the fire was quenched.*
3: *And he called the name of the place **Taberah**: because the fire of the LORD burnt among them.*
4: *And the mixt multitude that was among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, **Who shall give us flesh to eat?***
5: *We remember the **fish**, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the **cucumbers**, and the **melons**, and the **leeks**, and the **onions**, and the **garlick**:*
6: *But now our soul is dried away: **there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes...***
10: *Then Moses heard the people weep throughout their families, every man in the door of his tent: and **the anger of the LORD was kindled greatly**; Moses also was displeased.”*

What can we learn from this experience? Amongst other things, we can learn this:

- That after being warned, after witnessing the mighty power of God for a whole year, after eating food which fell from heaven, after drinking water which gushed out of a rock, the people of God persisted in their murmuring. **The LORD'S anger was greatly kindled, particularly against the 'mixt-multitude,'** that is, the faithless, half-converted believers in the camp who were only interested in the things of the flesh - food and drink.
- This passage is not teaching that we should all become vegetarians: or that cucumbers, melons, onions, leeks and garlic are **not** to be enjoyed. Oh no! This experience is teaching us that when we begin to be bored with the heavenly **Bread of Life** (the *Word of God*, the *Son of God*, the *worship of God*) then we are in grave danger of entering **Taberah: where the fire of the LORD burnt His people.**

4. In the Wilderness of Doubt

Even though **Jehovah**, the Holy One of Israel had crushed the mighty Egyptian army and set Israel free, His people still feared **human enemies** and **human fortifications**. Ten of the twelve spies had brought back a very discouraging report: one that was riddled with doubt about Israel's chances of taking over the Promised Land. As a result tens of thousands of adult Israelites, all except their little children, followed their lead and began to doubt. Those adults all lost their lives in the wilderness - all except Joshua and Caleb.

Numbers 14: 1: **“And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night.**
2: *And all the children of Israel **murmured** against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, **Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness!***
3: *And wherefore hath the LORD brought us unto this land, **to fall by the sword**, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt?*
4: *And they said one to another, **Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.***
5: *Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel.*
6: *And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of them that searched the land, rent their clothes:*
7: *And they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, **The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land.***
8: ***If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey.***
9: ***Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the LORD is with us: fear them not.***
10: *But all the congregation bade stone them with stones. And the glory of the LORD appeared in*

the tabernacle of the congregation before all the children of Israel.

*11: And the LORD said unto Moses, **How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me,** for all the signs which I have shewed among them?*

12: I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they.”

What can we learn from this experience? Amongst other things, we can learn this:

- Doubting the Almighty's power to save and keep His promise to protect us from our enemies, is fatal: not only for ourselves but for those who rely on our judgement and who may become infected with our doubts.
- Also, you may unthinkingly wish for something stupid, and then be granted your wish. They asked for death in the wilderness ('...**would God we had died in this wilderness!**) and then - horror of horrors! their wish was granted.
- Or you may well think of stoning the very people who try to instil faith in you. *'They took up stones to stone Joshua and Caleb.'*

5. In the Wilderness of Authority

Numbers 16: 1: *“Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men:*

*2: And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, **two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown:***

*3: And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, **Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD?”***

When summoned to discuss the matter with Moses, the Reubenite rebels Dathan and Abiram sent this insulting message to him:

Numbers 16: 14: *“Moreover thou hast not brought us into a land that floweth with milk and honey, or given us inheritance of fields and vineyards: wilt thou put out the eyes of these men? **we will not come up.**”*

Many of you know the story well. Moses was furious, the LORD was furious and He caused the earth to split open and swallow up the rebels, their families, their tents and all their goods.

Numbers 16: 31: *“And it came to pass, as he (Moses) had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them:*

32: And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods.

33: They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation.

34: And all Israel that were round about them fled at the cry of them: for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up also.

*35: And there came out **a fire from the LORD,** and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense...”*

The very next day:

Verse 41: *“But on the morrow all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, **Ye have killed the people of the LORD.**”*

The Almighty's anger overflowed, He began to slaughter Israel and it was only when Aaron, on Moses's orders, ran to their rescue that the plague was stayed.

Numbers 16: 48: “And he (Aaron) stood between the dead and the living; and the plague was stayed.
49: Now they that died in the plague were **fourteen thousand and seven hundred**, beside them that died about the matter of Korah.”

What can we learn from this experience? Amongst other things, we can learn this:

- Though Israel was a **nation of kings and priests** (Exodus 19: 6) not every Israelite was authorized to officiate as a **priest before God**. That office was reserved for the family of **Aaron**. To be sure the other Levites and the Reubenites had important duties, but not as priests of the Most High.
- Misjudgment of this fact on the part of the Levite **Korah** and the Reubenites, **Dathan, Abiram and On** resulted in the death of some 250 princes and about 15,000 souls!

6. Aaron's Rod

Surprisingly the remaining leaders in Israel still considered themselves in the right. To be sure they didn't join in the open rebellion of *Korah, Dathan, Abiram* and the 250 who died. But they still considered that Aaron and his sons were taking too much upon themselves. After all, were they not leaders of the other tribes of Israel. And so the LORD organised, what I call - the **Rod Test**. Like a *monarch's sceptre* or an army officer's *baton*, the **rod is the symbol of authority** that a ruler has over a company, tribe or nation.

Numbers 17: 3: “And thou shalt write Aaron's name upon the **rod of Levi**: for one rod shall be for the head of the house of their fathers.
4: And thou shalt lay them up in the tabernacle of the congregation before the testimony, where I will meet with you.
5: And it shall come to pass, that the man's rod, whom I shall choose, shall blossom: and I will make to cease from me the murmurings of the children of Israel, whereby they murmur against you.
6: And Moses spake unto the children of Israel, and every one of their princes gave him a rod apiece, for each prince one, according to their fathers' houses, even twelve rods: and the rod of Aaron was among their rods.
7: And Moses laid up the rods before the LORD in the tabernacle of witness.
8: And it came to pass, that on the morrow Moses went into the tabernacle of witness; and, behold, **the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds.**
9: And Moses brought out all the rods from before the LORD unto all the children of Israel: and they looked, and took every man his rod.
10: And the LORD said unto Moses, Bring Aaron's rod again before the testimony, to be kept for a token against the rebels; and thou shalt quite take away their murmurings from me, that they die not.
11: And Moses did so: as the LORD commanded him, so did he.
12: And the children of Israel spake unto Moses, saying, **Behold, we die, we perish, we all perish.**
13: Whosoever cometh any thing near unto the tabernacle of the LORD shall die: shall we be consumed with dying?”

What can we learn from this experience? Amongst other things, we can learn this:

- Rebellion against Moses, the channel of divine law, is a fatal mistake.
- Assuming or coveting spiritual authority which God hasn't given is a grave error. It can lead to the death of many souls.
- God has appointed various duties in the church which can only be done by His **authorised channels**. Divine authority in matters spiritual is always evident by its results: - **spiritual buds, blossoms and almonds**. The bowls of the seven branch candlestick (a symbol of the Holy Spirit) were all *'made like unto almonds, with their knops and their flowers.'* (Exodus 25:33-34, Exodus 37:19-20)

Acceptable Discontent?

There is, of course, such a thing as acceptable discontent: else no one would seek improvement. We would all sit still and content ourselves with any and everything - however bad it happened to be. But what is **acceptable discontent**? Misjudgement in this matter could be inviting disaster. Here are a few examples of acceptable discontent:

One's own righteousness

Comparing ourselves with others is a vain and futile pastime. Better by far to compare yourself to **Yeshua** (Jesus) the Saviour. You can be sure that if you take this course you will feel discontented with your own performance and this will lead to repentance, faith, humility and **contentment**.

2 Corinthians 10: 12: *"For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: **but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.**"*

2 Corinthians 7: 10: *"For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.
11: For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter."*

Psalm 17: 15: *"As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: **I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.**"*

National Godlessness

No believers should be satisfied with the moral decline we see all around. Speaking of Lot who lived in ancient Sodom the Bible says:

2 Peter 2: 8: *"(For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)"*

Pray for more labourers in the field

Luke 10: 2: *"Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest."*

Do something positive

Doubtless there are scores of other things that need improvement: in the home, in the church, in the school, in the workplace. Wherever you look you will see things that are crying out for attention. Things that make the true believer unhappy and **discontented**. That's not a bad thing. But don't just resort to criticism or murmuring under your breath. Get in there and help to put it right. Do something about it. Don't wait for others to lead out, do it yourself. Remember that the **only ground for criticism is - can you do better?** If you think you can, then go ahead and do it; because murmuring is counter productive and, what's worse, it angers God!

7. The Cure For Discontentment

There is a cure for discontentment. The Scripture says:

Hebrews 13: 5: *"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and **be content with such things as ye have:** for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."*

Proverbs 19: 23: *"**The fear of the LORD** tendeth to life: and he that hath it shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil."*

Philippians 4: 11: *"Not that I speak in respect of want: **for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am,***

therewith to be content.”

1 Timothy 6: 6: ***“But godliness with contentment is great gain.***

7: For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

*8: And having **food** and **raiment** let us be therewith **content**.”*

But there is a better route to **contentment**: which, if taken, will lead you to peace of mind, freedom from sin, distress and discontent? That route is to **Yeshua the Messiah**, the son of David, the **Son of God**. He is ever ready to accept you into his company. To be sure, none of his followers are perfect: but he is and you are welcome to join him. A story is told of king David of ancient Israel. On an infinitely higher plane the same is true of **Jesus of Nazareth**. Here is the story:

1 Samuel 22: 1: *“David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave Adullam: and when his brethren and all his father's house heard it, they went down thither to him.*

*2: **And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them...”***

Are you in distress? Are you spiritually bankrupt, with no hope whatsoever of clearing your debt? Have you some problem from which you want to run away? Are you discontented with your life, your partner, your family, your church, your job, your country? Then run to **Yeshua the Saviour**, to the son of David, the **Son of God!** You can be sure that he will not turn you away. In his company you will find rest for your soul and true satisfaction.

Matthew 11: 28: *“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

29: Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

30: For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

AMEN!

In the Son's Name - For the Father's glory.

Elder: Max W. Mader

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