

=THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL=

Lesson 7

The Greatest Sin of the Jews

AIM: to teach my pupils the awfulness of the sin of complaining.

POINT OF CONTACT: Ask the class members to tell you what they think is the greatest sin. Of course, this greatest sin of the Jews may not be the greatest sin ever committed, but at least it caused them the most trouble, and that was the sin of complaining.

INTRODUCTION: The word “complained” in Numbers 11:1 means that the people “complained of their lot.” This is complaining against the will of God, the plan of God, and the provisions of God. Let us notice the sin of complaining:

- I. COMPLAINING DISPLEASED THE LORD. See Numbers 11:1a. This means it was evil in the ears of the Lord. God did not like to hear complaining.
- II. THE LORD HEARD IT. Read Numbers 11:1b. We would not dare complain around good friends or even casual acquaintances, and yet God hears all our complaining.
- III. THE LORD’S ANGER WAS KINDLED. Notice Numbers 11:1c. The word “anger” here comes from two words meaning “hot” and “orgy.” In other words, God felt this way toward complaining. Have you been so mad that you became flushed in the face and were beside yourself? This is God’s attitude toward complaining.
- IV. GOD SENT A FIRE UPON THEM. Study Numbers 11:1d. Some think this was a supernatural fire. Some think it was lightning. Others think that God smote them with a hot, suffocating wind, which was very common in those countries. Whichever it was, God was certainly showing His displeasure with their complaining.
- V. THE PEOPLE CRIED UNTO MOSES. Read Numbers 11:2. In other words, they took their vent out on God’s man. Hence, complaining was administered to him.
- VI. THE COMPLAINING WAS CAUSED, A GREAT DEAL, BY THE MIXED MULTITUDE. Notice Numbers 11:4a. When the Israelites left Egypt, there went with them a mixed multitude or a mongrel, half-breed people who knew little of God and cared less but joined the Israelites in their trip, Exodus 12:38. Most bitter complaining in the church comes from people who are unconverted, especially that which causes division as was the case here. The mixed multitude started the trouble.
- VII. THEY “FELL A LUSTING,” Number 11:4b. This was not a lust for immorality, liquor, etc., but rather a lust to satisfy the flesh. When a person is more concerned about satisfying the flesh than being in the will of God and receiving God’s provisions, complaining is inevitable.
- VIII. MOSES HEARD THE PEOPLE WEEP. See Numbers 11:10a. The weeping followed. The people felt sorry for themselves. They had been affected by the mixed multitude, and now all the people were weeping. Notice that every man was in the door of his tent. He wanted his weeping to be seen. Perhaps he was not as heartbroken as he was just plain old complaining and wanting somebody to hear him.
- IX. THE ANGER OF THE LORD WAS KINDLED GREATLY. Read Numbers 11:10b. In other words, God got hotter and more angry because of this orgy. The word “kindle” is an interesting word. Anyone who has ever placed kindling wood on a fire will understand what this means. God put more heat on His fire against these people.
- X. IT AFFECTED THE MAN OF GOD. Study Numbers 11:14. When the mixed multitude complained, Moses was not affected, but when the good people of God complained and began to weep, it finally caused the man of God to yield and his burdens became heavy. In verse 15 he says he would rather die than live with a

complaining people. There is nothing worse than to live with a complainer. Husbands, wives, children, and others should take note of this so as not to make those with whom we live have to live with a complainer.

- XI. “YE HAVE WEPT IN THE EARS OF THE LORD,” Numbers 11:18b. Actually our tears get in God’s ears and He shows his aggravation because of our complaining and weeping.
- XII. THEY GOT THEIR DESIRE BUT LOST GOD’S PROTECTION. Read Numbers 11:20. God said, “All right, I will send you quail.” He sent quail within three feet of the ground so the people could catch all they wanted. They were given what they wanted, but they lost what they needed—the protection from God.
- XIII. GOD SMOTE THEM WITH SICKNESS. See Numbers 11:33. Much sickness comes because of our complaining. We complain because of our lot, and God, as it were, gives us something to complain about.
- XIV. MANY DIED BECAUSE OF THEIR COMPLAINING. Notice Numbers 11:34.

CONCLUSION: Stress to the class the fact that complaining is not only a sin against ourselves and against those with whom we live, but also against God. In the book of Proverbs the Bible says that it is better to live in the rooftop, or attic, than to live with a complainer. May God help us to learn, with Paul, the lesson to be content in whatsoever state we find ourselves.