



READ NUMBERS 11:1-35

- Notice the opening sentence of Numbers 11; “the people became like those who complain of adversity...”
- Notice verse 4, also; “the rabble among them had greedy desires, and also the sons of Israel wept again...”
- Observe the conflict Moses had with the people and with God, and observe God’s response to Moses’ difficulty. The purpose of the coming of the Spirit of God was to relieve the burden of leadership on the shoulders of Moses (vs. 17).

NUMBERS 11:24-29

“24 So Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD. Also, he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people, and stationed them around the tent. 25 Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him; and He took of the Spirit who was upon him and placed Him upon the seventy elders. And when the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied. But they did not do it again. 26 But two men had remained in the camp; the name of one was Eldad and the name of the other Medad. And the Spirit rested upon them (now they were among those who had been registered, but had not gone out to the tent), and they prophesied in the camp. 27 So a young man ran and told Moses and said, “Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.” 28 Then Joshua the son of Nun, the attendant of Moses from his youth, said, “Moses, my lord, restrain them.” 29 But Moses said to him, “Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the LORD’S people were prophets, that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them!”

The purpose of God for the coming of the Spirit here, coupled with the response of Moses to Joshua concerning Eldad and Medad, suggests the prophetic response of the seventy elders at the coming of the Spirit was a means of validating the leadership of those men. Their one-time prophetic anointing sent a clear message to the people they led, while Moses’ status as leader was once again affirmed. In this way, the elders would maintain order among the people and lighten the leadership load on Moses. While Joshua’s desire for Moses to restrain Eldad and Medad from prophesying in the camp indicates his own fear of a potential leadership coup, Moses was not concerned. In fact, he expressed his own desire that all God’s people would be prophets, and that God would put His Spirit on all of them. In this way, the coming of the Spirit of God represented His seal of approval, authorization, and validation.

While this narrative makes it clear that the elders did not prophesy again, this account clearly foreshadows the events of history as they unfold on the pages of Scripture. One biblical commentator observes in Moses' response a "wistful longing" and "stamps" it as a definite part of Yahweh's program for the future. **From a spiritual perspective, this event looks forward to the day of Pentecost and the coming of the Holy Spirit in the upper room.** From a historical, experiential perspective, this event stands as a paradigm for similar experiences yet to come in the history of Israel.



Moses was incapable of fulfilling God's purpose for His life. Every situation he faced only confirmed his inability to successfully do all that he had been called to do. There was a great desperation in Moses to see some kind of headway; he asked that God either lift the burden, in effect, or kill him outright.

God responded by placing the leadership load on 70 elders who would assist Moses. The mantle of leadership was conferred upon them by the reception of the Holy Spirit and was confirmed by their prophetic response. That mantle represented God's approval, His authorization, and His validation of those men and of Moses. **His Spirit would be the empowering agent behind all that God wanted to accomplish among them and through them.**

There are parallels with this event in our lives today. We often sense our own inability to accomplish what God has called us to do. We get frustrated by the adversity we face, and we want to give up.

There is a certain level of desperation--a coming to terms with the mission of God and the call of God--that preceded the coming of the Spirit then and now.

When we become so focused on the mission and call of God and so hungry for His empowering presence to accomplish that mission and call in our lives, and when we become separated unto Him, we too position ourselves much like the Seventy Elders did for the power of God to grant strength to us in our weakness--to anoint us with His approval, authorization, and validation.

Maybe we've become distracted and somehow reached the mistaken conclusion that we can accomplish all that God has for us in our own ability. Perhaps we have lost sight of that original calling, that mission that filled our vision beyond the frames of our mind and made us turn towards Him. **We will not see the power of God moving in us as long as we are convinced we have the ability to do it ourselves.** God did not set His Spirit upon those men until Moses had reached the point that HE KNEW he could not do it on his own.

What has God called us to accomplish?

What's the mission and purpose burning in your heart to see fulfilled? Is there a burden that cannot be borne apart from His empowering presence?



PASSAGE COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

- What conflict made Moses and God so aggravated and angry in verse 10? What were the people demanding that Moses wasn't able to give (HINT: check out verse 13)?
- Considering his conversation with God, do you think Moses was a little overwhelmed? What makes you think so?
- What was God's solution to Moses' problem? What did He instruct Moses to do?
- What happened when Moses obeyed God's instructions? How did the people in the camp know that something BIG had just happened?

MIDDLE SCHOOL APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever been given a job or task to do that seemed bigger than you? What was the job? Were you able to finish? Did you get frustrated by that job?
2. Where do you usually turn when you need help? Why do you turn to that person/place/thing?
3. How might problems help us in our relationship with God? Does God still help us today with difficult tasks? How?
4. Do you believe that God has a purpose and plan for your life? If you could do it by yourself, do you think you would ever need His help?
5. Have you given any thought to fasting? What distraction(s) could you set aside in order to hear God's voice more clearly?

HIGH SCHOOL APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Do you think God ever calls us to do impossible tasks? Why or why not?
2. How did Moses' "impossible" task open a door for God to work in his life? How does an "impossible" task for us create opportunities for God to work in our lives?
3. What kind of obstacles do you face in your everyday life? What distractions keep you from fulfilling God's purposes and plans for your life?
4. What conflict made Moses so desperate that He had to ask God for help? How does conflict in our lives help our relationship with God?
5. How might fasting help us discover God's power in our lives to overcome difficulty?