

A Journey Back To Egypt

As the children of Israel left Egypt in hopes of reaching the land God had promised them, they crossed the Red Sea, received the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai, and continued their journey toward the promised land. Not long after they left Mount Sinai, they started to complain. They complained to the point where they started to deceive themselves into thinking that their life in bondage back in Egypt was good.

In Numbers 11:4-6 we find how they described Egypt: *"Now the mixed multitude who were among them yielded to intense craving; so the children of Israel also wept again and said: 'Who will give us meat to eat? We remember the fish which we ate freely in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic; but now our whole being is dried up; there is nothing at all except this manna before our eyes!'"* If you just had these three verses to describe how their life was back in Egypt, you would wonder why they even left Egypt in the first place. They make it sound like a paradise in vs. 5, but we know from reading Exodus how bad it was in Egypt, being beaten and tortured, and having to work continuously for the Egyptians because they were enslaved to them (Exodus 1:8-14). This shows you how much the Israelites had deceived themselves because of their lack of faith in God. They did this, not just in Numbers 11, but in many other places as well. In Numbers 14:1-4, they even wanted to go back to Egypt, and planned to select leaders to lead them back.

Although they never actually went back to Egypt, their heart was there. In Stephen's defense in Acts 7:38-39, he said, *"This is he who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the Angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers, the one who received the living oracles to give to us, whom our fathers would not obey, but rejected. And in their hearts they turned back to Egypt."* After all that God had done for them, and all the promises that He had made to them, they did not want to press ahead, and instead wanted to go back to bondage. Does this make sense? Certainly not, but here is something else that makes no sense either: after all God has done for us and all the promises He has made, we to, like the children of Israel, still want to go back to bondage: the bondage of sin. But how does sin put us in bondage?

Sin separates us from God (Isaiah 59:2). Because we are separated from God, this keeps us from the spiritual blessings we have in Christ (Ephesians 1:3). And instead of having spiritual blessings in Christ, we are under sin and are spiritually condemned if we do not repent (Luke 13:3). Because of the pleasures of sin, those who are under sin obey its lusts (Romans 6:12),

so that they might fulfill its lusts (Romans 13:14). Those who are in this condition are what Jesus described as being slaves to sin: "*Jesus answered them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin'*" (John 8:34). Paul refers to this as being in the bondage of corruption in Romans 8:21. We must not desire this because we have so much to hope for if we keep on the straight and narrow path (Revelation 2:10). Like the children of Israel, we have a promised land waiting for us if we are willing to make the journey. Paul said in 1Timothy 6:12, "*Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good.*" Like the children of Israel, the way to our promised land is going to be difficult (Matthew 7:14), but we must not complain and give up. Instead, we must fight the good fight of faith, and never desire to go back to the bondage of sin!

Jonathan Glaesemann