

## **THE CHURCH IN NEW YORK CITY CHILDREN'S MEETING LESSON**

**DATE:** January 18, 2015

**SUBJECT: THE TRAVELS OF THE CHOSEN CHILDREN OF ISRAEL: Murmuring About their Situation and Lusting After Egyptian Food**

**SCRIPTURE:** Numbers 11:1-11, 16-23, 31-35

**AIM:** To show the children that murmuring about their situation and lusting after things that are not pleasing to God, are serious offenses. We should be grateful and content with what the Lord has provided and arranged for us.

**MEMORY VERSES TO CHOOSE FROM:** Philippians 2:14 (“Do all things without murmurings and reasonings”); Ephesians 5:20a (“Giving thanks at all times for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ ...”)

**SUGGESTED SONGS:** 5 (Grumblers), 56 (God Sees Us), 193 (Is it Fair – a song about saying thank you); 1013 (Always Rejoice); 8308 Bible Story Songs Moses Vol. 2 (Do All Things Without Murmuring); 9533 BSS Vessels Unto Honor (Giving Thanks); 9534 BSS Vessels Unto Honor (Just One of the Lepers Came to Thank the Lord)

**APPROACH:** Ask the children: (1) Have you ever kept complaining about something? Perhaps your parents have made a decision about where to go or what to do, or what to eat for dinner. Do you complain? (2) Have you ever really wanted something that you didn't need, and you insisted on having that thing? That feeling is called lust. In this lesson, we will see how serious it is to complain and lust.

**BACKGROUND:** In an earlier lesson, we talked about how the tabernacle was built by the children of Israel and the tribe of Levi had been given charge over it. On the day that the tabernacle was finished, a cloud covered it and the glory of the Lord filled it. Whenever the cloud was taken up, the children of Israel moved or journeyed with it. When the cloud rested, then and there they would set up camp again. The Lord took care of His people's needs as they journeyed through the wilderness by providing manna for them every morning. (By this time, the children of Israel had been eating manna for more than a year.) In this lesson, we will see that as the children of Israel journeyed on, they began to complain and lust after things of their old life in Egypt.

**CONTENT:** Even though God provided so much for His people and did amazing things to rescue them from slavery in Egypt, the people of Israel had many failures. One failure was that they murmured and complained. Murmuring means a half-suppressed or muttered complaint, to grumble (serving ones or one of the children can demonstrate what this is like). Jehovah heard the people's murmuring, and He became angry. To complain against God is a very serious offense. It was so serious that the fire of Jehovah burned among the people and consumed some of them at the outskirts of the camp. The people cried to Moses; and Moses prayed to Jehovah, and the fire stopped. The place where this happened was then called Taberah, which means burning.

There was a group of people, called the mixed multitude, that was among the children of Israel. They began to lust exceedingly. Lust is a strong word, meaning that you really want something for your own pleasure that you don't need, and you have no self-control over that feeling. The lusting of the mixed multitude stirred up the lust of the children of Israel and they began to weep and say things that offended God: “Who shall give us meat to eat? We remember the fish which we used to eat in Egypt for nothing, the cucumbers and the melons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic; But now our appetite has gone; there is nothing at all but this manna to look at.”

Manna was the special food God sent down from heaven to feed the children of Israel. Instead of being thankful, the people of Israel lusted after other foods that they had in Egypt and complained more. They were so upset they were even weeping. Moses heard the people weeping family by families, each at the entrance of his tent. This made Jehovah quite angry and Moses was displeased.

It seemed like this complaining was getting to be too much for Moses. He said to Jehovah, “Why have You treated (me) Your servant badly, and why have I not found favor in Your sight, that You have put the burden of all this people upon me? Did I conceive all this people? Or did I bring them forth, so that You should say to me, ‘Carry them in your bosom, as a nurse carries the nursing child, to the land which You swore to give to their fathers?’ From where should I get meat to give to all this people? For they weep before me, saying, ‘Give us meat, so that we may eat!’ I am not able to bear all this people alone...”

So Jehovah told Moses to gather seventy elders of Israel to the Tent of Meeting (tabernacle), and have them stand there with him. Then the Lord would come down and talk with Moses there. The Lord said He would take of the Spirit who was upon Moses and would put Him upon the seventy elders; they would bear the burden of the people with Moses, so that he would not bear it alone. The Lord also told him to say to the people, “Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow, and you shall eat meat; for you have wept in the ears of Jehovah, saying, Who will give us meat to eat? For it was well with us in Egypt. Therefore Jehovah will give you meat, and you shall eat. You shall eat not one day, nor two days, nor five days, nor ten days, nor twenty days, But a whole month, until it comes out from your nostrils, and becomes loathsome to you, because you have rejected Jehovah who is among you and have wept before Him, saying, Why did we ever come out of Egypt?” But Moses said, “The people, among whom I am, are six hundred thousand on foot; and You have said, ‘I will give them meat so that they may eat a whole month.’ Will flocks and herds be slain for them, to satisfy them? Or will all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, to satisfy them?” And Jehovah said to Moses, “Has Jehovah's hand become short? Now you will see whether My word will come to pass for you or not.”

So Moses went out and told the people the words of Jehovah, and he gathered seventy elders, and set them around the tent. And Jehovah came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and He took of the Spirit who was upon him, and put Him upon the seventy elders...And Moses and the elders of Israel returned to the camp.

Then Jehovah sent a wind and brought quails from the sea, and let them fall beside the camp, about a day's journey on this side and a day's journey on the other side, all around the camp, and about two cubits above the surface of the earth. That is an enormous amount of meat! And the people rose up all that day and all the night and all the next day, and they gathered the quail. He who gathered least gathered ten homers (a Hebrew unit of measurement). And they spread them out for themselves all around the camp. While the meat was still between their teeth, before it was chewed, the anger of Jehovah was kindled against the people, and Jehovah struck the people with a very severe plague. And the name of that place was called Kibroth-hattaavah, meaning *graves of lust*, because there they buried the people who lusted.

#### **SUGGESTED APPLICATIONS:**

- **We need to be careful not to murmur and complain.** We may think we are just complaining to our parents or serving ones or teachers. Perhaps we are not happy about what our parents are serving for dinner, chores at home that we need to do, or the homework that the teacher is giving us. But we need to realize that when we complain, the Lord hears it too. The children of Israel murmured about their misfortune and later about the manna God had provided, and this angered the Lord. Instead of complaining, we need to be thankful for what the Lord has given to us. When we want to complain, instead, we can ask the Lord to help us be thankful for what we have.
- **We need to be careful not to lust after things. (2 Timothy 2:22a).** The children of Israel had no self-control over what they wanted to eat. They remembered certain foods in Egypt that they ate and could not control their feelings. The lusting of the children of Israel greatly kindled the anger of the Lord and displeased Moses, the Lord's representative. This shows us that we should be careful not to greedily desire (lust for) things that are beyond our need. For example, in school we may desire what our classmates have such as food, drink, pencils, bags, clothes, toys, computer games, etc., because we are not satisfied with what our parents have provided. We need to be grateful and thankful for whatever the Lord has provided for us. We can pray that the Lord would help us not to lust after things.

Adapted from the Church in New York City Children's meeting lessons: 11/20/88; 1/21/96; 1/18/04; 1/24/2010