



A Worship Study Guide for Individuals, Groups and Families: For the week of February 4, 2018

Note to Discussion Leaders: Have members read the Bible passage in the group meeting. This is a “worship discussion” guide, and our reflections and applications are grounded in Scripture. Read through this guide before meeting with the group. You do not need to work through the whole guide. Decide which points would be most helpful for the time of meeting together, and use them as a starting point for your time together.

Numbers 14:1-45 “Grounds”

- When do you find that your heart is growing cold? What do you do when you realize it?

¹ Then all the congregation raised a loud cry, and the people wept that night. ² And all the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron. The whole congregation said to them, “Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness! ³ Why is the LORD bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become a prey. Would it not be better for us to go back to Egypt?” ⁴ And they said to one another, “Let us choose a leader and go back to Egypt.”

- **God’s people are in complete rebellion against Him.** What are some of the features of this rebellion?

⁵ Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the people of Israel. ⁶ And Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes ⁷ and said to all the congregation of the people of Israel, “The land, which we passed through to spy it out, is an exceedingly good land. ⁸ If the LORD delights in us, he will bring us into this land and give it to us, a land that flows with milk and honey. ⁹ Only do not rebel against the LORD. And do not fear the people of the land, for they are bread for us. Their protection is removed from them, and the LORD is with us; do not fear them.” ¹⁰ Then all the congregation said to stone them with stones.

- **How do Israel’s leaders respond** to the rebellion?
- **What is the significance of the congregation’s plan in v.10?**

But the glory of the LORD appeared at the tent of meeting to all the people of Israel.

¹¹ And the LORD said to Moses, “How long will this people despise me? And how long will they not believe in me, in spite of all the signs that I have done among them? ¹² I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they.”

- How does the LORD respond?

¹³ But Moses said to the LORD, “Then the Egyptians will hear of it, for you brought up this people in your might from among them, ¹⁴ and they will tell the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that you, O LORD, are in the midst of this people. For you, O LORD, are seen face to face, and your cloud stands over them and you go before them, in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night. ¹⁵ Now if you kill this people as one man, then the nations who have heard your fame will say, ¹⁶ ‘It is because the LORD was not able to bring this people into the land that he swore to give to them that he has killed them in the wilderness.’ ¹⁷ And now, please let the power of the Lord be great as you have promised, saying, ¹⁸ ‘The LORD is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, forgiving iniquity and transgression, but he will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, to the third and the fourth generation.’ ¹⁹ Please pardon the iniquity of this people, according to the greatness of your steadfast love, just as you have forgiven this people, from Egypt until now.”

- Moses intercedes for the people. On what basis does he plead with the LORD.

²⁰ Then the LORD said, "I have pardoned, according to your word. ²¹ But truly, as I live, and as all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD, ²² none of the men who have seen my glory and my signs that I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and yet have put me to the test these ten times and have not obeyed my voice, ²³ shall see the land that I swore to give to their fathers. And none of those who despised me shall see it. ²⁴ But my servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit and has followed me fully, I will bring into the land into which he went, and his descendants shall possess it. ²⁵ Now, since the Amalekites and the Canaanites dwell in the valleys, turn tomorrow and set out for the wilderness by the way to the Red Sea."

²⁶ And the LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, ²⁷ "How long shall this wicked congregation grumble against me? I have heard the grumbings of the people of Israel, which they grumble against me. ²⁸ Say to them, 'As I live, declares the LORD, what you have said in my hearing I will do to you: ²⁹ your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness, and of all your number, listed in the census from twenty years old and upward, who have grumbled against me, ³⁰ not one shall come into the land where I swore that I would make you dwell, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun. ³¹ But your little ones, who you said would become a prey, I will bring in, and they shall know the land that you have rejected. ³² But as for you, your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness. ³³ And your children shall be shepherds in the wilderness forty years and shall suffer for your faithlessness, until the last of your dead bodies lies in the wilderness. ³⁴ According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, a year for each day, you shall bear your iniquity forty years, and you shall know my displeasure.' ³⁵ I, the LORD, have spoken. Surely this will I do to all this wicked congregation who are gathered together against me: in this wilderness they shall come to a full end, and there they shall die."

³⁶ And the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land, who returned and made all the congregation grumble against him by bringing up a bad report about the land— ³⁷ the men who brought up a bad report of the land—died by plague before the LORD. ³⁸ Of those men who went to spy out the land, only Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh remained alive.

- How does the LORD **respond to Moses' plea**? Why does He respond this way?

³⁹ When Moses told these words to all the people of Israel, the people mourned greatly. ⁴⁰ And they rose early in the morning and went up to the heights of the hill country, saying, "Here we are. We will go up to the place that the LORD has promised, for we have sinned." ⁴¹ But Moses said, "Why now are you transgressing the command of the LORD, when that will not succeed? ⁴² Do not go up, for the LORD is not among you, lest you be struck down before your enemies. ⁴³ For there the Amalekites and the Canaanites are facing you, and you shall fall by the sword. Because you have turned back from following the LORD, the LORD will not be with you." ⁴⁴ But they presumed to go up to the heights of the hill country, although neither the ark of the covenant of the LORD nor Moses departed out of the camp. ⁴⁵ Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who lived in that hill country came down and defeated them and pursued them, even to Hormah.

- How does the rebellion continue?
- The Israelites rebelled when they ascribed bad motives to the God who delighted in them. When have you been tempted to believe that God is not for you? Why?
- **This week's New Testament Reading from [Hebrews 3:7-14](#)** serves as a commentary on Numbers 14, and **tells us what we are to learn from Israel's rebellion.** Read that passage aloud. How are you personally challenged or encouraged?
- Jesus is a better Mediator than Moses. When He stands before our Heavenly Father on our behalf, our sins are not simply passed over or treated mercifully. We have full atonement for our sins. Take time to thank God for the Cross of Christ, confessing your sins, and giving the LORD glory for His grace toward us in Jesus Christ.

Sermon Notes

This week, Kevin Greene preached on [Numbers 14:1-45](#).

- “Defensiveness...at the most basic level, it expresses a lack of faith... And often enough, when we think we are protecting ourselves, we are struggling against the rescuer.” (*Marilynne Robinson, Gilead*)
- “Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end.” (*Hebrews 3:12-15*)

Full-on Rebellion (1-4)

- Longing for Death, “Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness!” (2)
- Attributing Evil Motives the LORD, “Why is the LORD bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become a prey.” (3)
- New Leader; Old Slavery, “Let us choose a leader and go back to Egypt” (4)

The Leaders Respond (5-10)

- Moses & Aaron; Joshua & Caleb
- The LORD delights (8)... The LORD is with us (9)
- “Do not fear the people of the land, for they are bread for us” (9)
- The people are so deeply rebellious they reject all of this & declare it a crime to trust God. They organize a stoning (10)
- “Woe to those who call evil good and good evil.” (*Isaiah 5:20*)

The Lord’s Just Response (10-12)

- “How long?” (11)
- “I will strike them” and “disinherit them” (12)
- Both just and, ironically, just what they wanted

Moses’ Plea (13-19)

- “The appeal is not based on anything in the people. God is not asked to forgive because of their repentance or their faith. True, these are the conditions on which His pardon is received by us, but they are not the reasons why it is given by Him.” (*Alexander Maclaren*)
- On the basis of God’s Glory; “the nations who have heard your fame” (15)
- God’s Word; “as you have promised” (17)
- God’s Name; “The LORD...” (17-18)

Mercy & Consequences (20-38)

- “I have pardoned, according to your word” (20)
- Did God forget? Was He worn down?
- Though a generation is handed over to the terrible consequences of unbelief, God mercifully grants the Promised Land to the next generation.

And Again! (39-45)

- Further rebellion; They go to war against the Amelkites and Canaanites. Against the warnings of Moses. Without the Ark of the Covenant, without a leader. They were defeated and driven back.

Take Care, Brothers & Sisters

- “Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, ‘Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness, where your fathers put me to the test and saw my works for forty years. Therefore I was provoked with that generation, and said, ‘They always go astray in their heart; they have not known my ways.’ As I swore in my wrath, ‘They shall not enter my rest.’” Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end.” (*Hebrews 3:7-14*)
- Take care when you are tempted to assign bad motives to God and long for Egypt & death
- Take care when you want to stone the messenger who is encouraging you to trust Jesus.
- Take care when you want to go up anyway in your own strength
- Take care to see that Jesus is better Mediator