



WOW: Word Of the Week

Complaining

June 2, 2021

We do not study the Old Testament book of Numbers frequently. I share a brief overview and a few main ideas and themes. Along the way, we find a “WOW.”

Numbers gets its name from the fact that it talks about a census—twice! Numbers is about Israel leaving Sinai and heading for the Promised Land. With the Sinai covenant established, Numbers describes a faithful God and a complaining people. God is faithful to his people when they are not faithful to him. How often do we respond to blessings by grumbling?

Studies of Numbers often focus on geography and chronology, but the book may also be organized around seven “complaint narratives” (Num. 11-21). Life is too hard here, this food is terrible, we need a new leader, we can’t conquer the land, we need a new leader, we’re thirsty, we’re hungry and thirsty.

In an interesting section, God’s faithfulness is proclaimed by Balaam who, instead of seeing God’s judgments on Israel, describes Israel as blessed and beautiful (Num. 22-24).

Our WOW – complaining! Complaining is bad. Grumbling, murmuring, rebelling. Do we ever make God angry? Very angry? Do we ever suffer because we are complainers? We may not be able to know with certainty how God responds to our poor attitudes. We do know from Numbers—complaining doesn’t accomplish much with God!

In the midst of repeated failures, God blesses faith. Two faithful spies who lived to receive an inheritance in the Promised Land. Those who in faith looked at the bronze snake provided by God were healed of the poisonous snake bites.

Here is our choice – confidence and conviction when we cannot see, or complaints! If Numbers is about complainers, Hebrews 11 is about confidence and conviction. I chose confidence and conviction.

Lord, deliver us this week from our tendency to complain!