

I would like to say, "Welcome," to everyone on this Sabbath day, God's Sabbath day.

Brethren, in the last sermon on "Rebellion" we looked at the rebellion of Korah and the murmurings, the complaining, the grumblings that the Israelites had spread throughout the camp. And we saw how they had said before Moses that all the camp was holy. And even though when those that had rebelled had been removed, this idea persisted among the people, and they blamed Moses and Aaron for the death of those that had rebelled. So now God would have to make it clear to them that only Aaron and his descendents were to serve as the priests of this physical nation, God's physical nation that He was delivering, and that any violation of this would merit death. And they had witnessed the judgment of God for those that had rebelled.

Today we will continue to look at those that rebel, and we will continue on in this theme so the title today will be *Rebellion, Part 2*.

Let's turn over to Numbers 17 and let's pick up the story. Numbers 17:2. And this is the account of where Aaron's rod budded, and let's see what took place. God told Moses for each tribe to get a rod, a stick, and carve the name of the tribe's leader on that stick, and Aaron's name was to be upon the rod of the family of the Levites. And Moses was to take these twelve rods (these sticks with the names of each tribe that was carved upon them), he was to take these before God in the tabernacle and God would settle the matter by causing the rod of the one that He had chosen to blossom.

Verse 5—And I know that Moses and Aaron hoped that this would put a stop to any claims that the priesthood belonged to others, so Moses did as God had instructed him to do. And the next day, Aaron's rod had buds; it had blossoms and almonds that had already ripened. So every tribe got their stick back, while Aaron's rod that blossomed was laid up in the Most Holy Place to serve as a sign.

So let's turn over to the book of Hebrews, but let's hold your place here as we will come back. But let's go over to Hebrews 9:1 and let's see where this is recorded. **Hebrews 9:1—Then, indeed, even the first covenant had ordinances of divine service in the earthly sanctuary, and that's what we're looking at today, when this was upon this earth, for a tabernacle was prepared, the first part in which was the lampstand, the table, and the showbread, which is called the Sanctuary.**

Verse 3—We see it being explained, and God had it recorded in His book. ...And behind the second veil, the part of the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of All, which had the golden censer and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which were the golden pot that had the manna—and let's notice what else was there—Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant; and above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. So we can see that the 10 Commandments were there and a pot of manna, and also Aaron's rod that budded.

So, now let's go back to Numbers 17 and pick up the story. Numbers 17:12-13, we see that it ends with the Israelites afraid that they would die if they made some mistake, overlooked something at the tabernacle. And we will see that God answers their fears in chapter 18, Numbers 18. The congregation seems to have calmed down after they saw what God did. They seemed to have more respect for the holy things of God. We will see the duties of the priests and the Levites. And the people are afraid that they would die if they made some mistake when they were required to approach the tabernacle. We know that they would bring their offerings there, and they were afraid to do so. So God is letting it be known that the responsibility for the proper care and service of the tabernacles, that that belonged to the priests and other Levites and that they would be held accountable if anything goes wrong.

And we will see this account in **Numbers 18:1**. It says—**You and your sons and your father's house with you**, so this is talking about the Levites, **shall bear the iniquity *related to the sanctuary*, and you and your sons**, and this is talking about just the priest when it says, "You and your sons," **shall bear the iniquity *associated with your priesthood***. God is telling them if something is correct or not the way that it's supposed to be that that individual would be held responsible, that that individual would be held guilty for his actions. And so it is in the Church of God today, just as in ancient Israel, the ministry carries great responsibility and accountability, brethren. And it should bring every elder that serves in the Church of God, it should bring you to your knees to understand the accountability and responsibility that you have. Every consideration should be given to lead in a righteous way, and to use mature wisdom in following all the laws and principles of God that is laid out in sermons and in this book, God's book.

And we are told in God's Church that we're not to take too much upon ourselves, and we saw where some did that in the last sermon in the example of Korah and those that rebelled against God. And just as the Levitical priesthood was not for all Israelites, so being ordained as a minister is not for all. Let's go over to James 3 (but let's hold our place here in Numbers), and let's look at chapter 3:1.

James 3:1—the apostle James wrote, **Let not many of you become teachers**, which was the responsibility of the priests and Levites in the day of Moses. And it says, **knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment**. So today, just as in the day of Moses, elders today will bear the iniquity if they misuse their office. And we know that the temple is being measured, especially upon the ministry. God says that elders will bear their iniquity if they misuse their office.

James 3 tells us in verse 1 (we'll go back through it), **My brethren, Let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment. For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, also able to bridle the whole body**. Now, we know that there was only one perfect one upon this earth, and that was Jesus Christ, but we also know that God uses imperfect individuals to move His plan forward. God is showing us, through these examples that we are going through today in the examples of rebellion, and it shows us *a lot* about man's mind, with God's spirit and without God's spirit. And it shows how we can rebel, even the ones that God is using. And today we will look at some of these examples.

But here James is telling us about something that is very dangerous, especially to the Church of God, and especially to the ministry, because we have this little thing inside our mouth that wags. James is telling us how dangerous this little member is. And James tells us that **we put bits in horses' mouths (verse 3) that they may obey us**, then we can control that animal is what he's saying. And when we look at the ships and how big they are and they are controlled by a very small rudder, and it goes wherever the pilot steering the ship desires. And he tells us, **Even so, the tongue is a little member and it boasts great things.**

And he says, **See how great a forest a little fire kindles! And the tongue—let's notice what he says—and the tongue *is* a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire, and the word here is "gehenna."** James is telling us that this tongue has a lot of power, especially when it comes to iniquity. We can sin so quick with this little member, and we don't realize it sometimes.

James tells us in **verse 7—For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed (or controlled) by mankind.** And let's notice—**no man can tame the tongue.** So you and me and those of us in the Church of God have to really understand about this tongue. And God had it written in His book that, ***It is an unruly evil, and it's full of deadly poison,*** because of what it can cause. And, **with it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God.** So even in the Church of God we can do much harm with this little tongue. God says, **Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing.** And he says, **my brethren, these things ought not to be so.** And I agree! But that's not the way it is in Satan's world at this time.

And there's a question being asked: **Does a spring send forth fresh *water* and bitter from the same opening? Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs?** Questions that are being asked. **Thus, no spring yields both salt water and fresh.**

There is a demonic influence upon mankind at this time. It's still here. And God had it written that, **Who *is* wise and understanding among us? Let him show—let's notice—by good conduct *that* his works *are done* in the meekness of wisdom.** So when this little member in our mouth is moving up and down, those in the Church of God should make sure that it is done with much wisdom, God's wisdom, because that's where all wisdom comes from. And God tells us in His book, a way for you and me to live and a way for you and me to deal with one another.

Verse 14—But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts ("in your minds," better said), **do not boast and lie against the truth.** It's a warning. Because, **this kind of wisdom does not descend from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, demonic,** when we use this tongue and our minds in a wrongful manner. **For where envy and self-seeking *exist*, confusion and every evil thing *are* there.** And it is! God tells us that the wisdom that is from (Him), from above, is first pure, and then it's peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.

And in **verse 18**—Now, the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. And it is when this little member is used in the right way. And as we saw in the example of Korah how that little member was used to complain, to murmur. We saw that they had bitter envy (as God calls it) and self-seeking in their minds, and they were always complaining against Moses and Aaron and how God was moving them forward. And they always blamed Moses and Aaron.

Let's go back to **Numbers 18:20**— Let's see what God had recorded. And God says, to Aaron and his sons and to their families, belonged all the tabernacle offerings for their sustenance. So this required Aaron and his sons to live by faith. They had to rely on God because they had no job, no income, so they had to depend upon the Great God of this universe during their stay upon this earth. Aaron's family had no inheritance in the land and looked to God for their inheritance, for their livelihood upon this earth. God said in **verse 20**... *I am your portion and your inheritance among the children of Israel.* And the Levites were to only have small portions of land, and that was mainly for the purpose of keeping some animals that provided their daily needs.

Let's look at **verse 21**. We can see that to the Levites went the tithes that were received of all Israel as their inheritance. And this is how they lived, how they had their sustenance (as God calls it) supplied upon this earth.

And **verse 25**—Then the Eternal spoke to Moses saying, **Speak thus to the Levites, and say to them: When you take from the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them as your inheritance, then you shall offer up a heave offering up to the Eternal, the tenth of the tithe. And your heave offering shall be reckoned to you as though *it were* the grain of the threshing floor and as the fullness of the winepress. Thus you shall offer a heave offering to the Eternal from all your tithes which you receive from the children of Israel, and you shall give the Eternal's heave offering from it to Aaron the priest.** And as the book of Hebrews explains, God has directed that tithes and offerings go to those who represent the Melchizedek priesthood.

Let's go to Hebrews 7. Let's go through time, for the sake of this sermon. We know these things, but let's look at where God had it recorded and how this priesthood was changed and when it was changed. We can see a need for that change. **Hebrews 7:11**—**Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need *was there* that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron?** So this is a question.

Verse 12—**For the priesthood—let's notice—being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law.** This is where the protestant world and the Catholic Church really do a twist with this. They say this is changing the commandments of God and that they were done away with. This is mainly where they get this from. But this is not talking about the 10 Commandments, brethren, this is talking about the Levitical system; and that is what is being changed, the Levitical system of law that was there in the time of Moses. **For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar.**

And verse 14 we will see...For *it is* evident that our Lord, talking about Jesus Christ, came from the tribe of Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest (Jesus Christ) who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power—let's notice—of an endless life. For He testifies: You *are* a priest, talking about Jesus Christ, forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

For on the one hand—let's notice—there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness, for the law, talking about the sacrificial law not the 10 Commandments, made nothing perfect; on the other hand, *there is the* bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.

And in verse 20—And inasmuch as *He was not made priest* without an oath (for they have become priests without an oath, but He with an oath by Him who said to Him: The Eternal has sworn and will not relent, You (Jesus Christ) *are* a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek) by so much more Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant. Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing. And they did. They died. The priests would come and they would go because they were physical human beings upon this earth.

And let's notice what took place in verse 24—But He (Jesus Christ), because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. And He does. He has eternal life and He is sitting at the right hand of God today, brethren, waiting to return to this earth to set up the Kingdom of God upon this earth. Therefore, He (Jesus Christ) is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him—let's notice—since He always lives—He has eternal life, brethren, and He has eternal life to make intercession for us. For such a High Priest was fitting for us, holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, because He, He was perfect, brethren, and He has become higher than the heavens. What this is saying, He is sitting at the right hand of God and He was without sin. That's the reason He's separate from sinners, and that's why He is holy. ...who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices—let's notice what's being said and why this was changed—Who does not need daily, as those priests (high priests) to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's—let's notice—for this He (Jesus Christ) did once for all when He offered up Himself. For the law appoints as high priest men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, *appoints* the Son (Jesus Christ) who has been perfected forever. And He did. He came and died for our sins, and He'd been without sin. He sits at God's throne today waiting for the redemption of the firstfruits (the 144,000) when He returns to this earth as King of kings.

Brethren, there is only one, and that is Jesus Christ, who has not rebelled against the Great God. Only one! Only one down through time.

Go back to chapter 8:1. Now, this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a high priest who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle, which the Eternal erected and not man.

Now, let's go back to Numbers 20 and we will see rebellion by some others. And this is the story of man, rebellion upon rebellion. Numbers 20. When the people arrive in Kadesh decades have passed since the last chapter. And Kadesh was the location where Israel rebelled against entering the promised land. So you can understand where we're at. And back when the spies brought their report (God called it "an evil report") God had told the Israelites that they would be in the wilderness forty years, and these years have been long and bitter for the Israelites, with rebellion upon rebellion. And that's what we're focusing on today, rebellion.

And the timeframe here, and it's the fortieth and final year of their wandering, and nearly all the people who were 20 years and older at the time of the Exodus have died out, and Miriam, at around the age of 130, dies as this final year begins.

Numbers 20:1—Then the children of Israel, the whole congregation, came into the Wilderness of Zin in the first month, and the people stayed in Kadesh; and Miriam died there and was buried there. Before we continue in Numbers to see what Moses did, let's go to Ezekiel and see what had taken place through the years.

Let's go to Ezekiel 20:1. Let's see what Ezekiel had recorded. **Came to pass in the (Ezekiel 20:1), came to pass in the seventh year, in the fifth month, on the tenth day of the month *that* certain of the elders of Israel came to inquire of the Eternal, and sat before me. Then the word of the Eternal came to me, saying, Son of man, speak to the elders of Israel, and say to them, Thus says the Eternal God, and this is the question that God asked them: Have you come to inquire of Me? That's the question. As I live, says the Eternal God, I will not be inquired of by you. So, fearful words that God answered them back there with: Will you judge them, son of man, will you judge *them*?** It's the question that God asked them.

Then make known to them the abominations of their fathers. And say to them, Thus says the Eternal God: On the day when I chose Israel and raised My hand in an oath to the descendants of the house of Jacob, and made Myself known to them in the land of Egypt, I raised My hand in an oath to them, saying, I *am* the Eternal your God. On that day I raised My hand in an oath to them, to bring them out of the land of Egypt into a land that I had searched out for them, flowing with milk and honey, the glory of all lands. Then I said to them, Each of you, throw away the abominations which are before his eyes, and do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt. I *am* the Eternal your God.

Verse 8—let's notice—But they rebelled against Me and would not obey Me. And they did not cast away the abominations which were before their eyes, nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt. Then I said, I will pour out My fury upon them and fulfill My anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt.

Verse 9—But I acted for My name's sake—let's notice—that it should not be profaned before the Gentiles among whom they *were*, in whose sight I had made Myself known to them, to bring them out of the land of Egypt. Therefore, I made them go out of the land of Egypt and brought them into the wilderness. And I gave them My statutes and showed them My judgments, which is, *if* a man does, he shall live by them. Moreover, I gave them My Sabbaths—let's notice—to be a sign between

them and Me, that they might know that I *am* the Eternal who sanctifies (or "set them aside"). Yet the house of Israel rebelled against Me in the wilderness; they did not walk in My statutes; they despised My judgments, 'which, *if* a man does, he shall live by them.' And let's notice, it doesn't say just "defiled." God says, they greatly defiled My Sabbaths. Then I said I would pour out My fury upon them in the wilderness, to consume them. But I acted for My name's sake, that it should not be profaned before the gentiles, in whose sight I had brought them out. So I also raised My hand in an oath to them in the wilderness—let's notice—that I would not bring them into the land which I had given *them*, God says He had given it to them, and it was 'flowing with milk and honey,' the glory of all lands, because they despised My judgments and did not walk in My statutes, but profaned My Sabbaths; for their heart ("their minds") went after their idols. This is what they did. And we do the same, brethren. It's a witness against them, but it's a witness against you and me and those that have had God's spirit, what we can do even with God's spirit. Nevertheless, My eye spared them from destruction. I did not make an end of them in the wilderness.

But I said to their children in the wilderness, Do not walk in the statutes of your fathers, nor observe their judgments, nor defile yourselves with their idols. I *am* the Eternal your God: Walk in My statutes, keep My judgments, and do them; hallow My Sabbaths, and they will be a sign between Me and you, that you may know that I *am* the Eternal your God. Notwithstanding, the children rebelled against Me. So we see it again, brethren. And we know why. God has it recorded in His book. We know that they didn't have God's spirit. But we also know that if we had been there during their time, during their stay upon this earth, walking side-by-side with them, we would be right there with them, brethren, rebelling right alongside them. They did not walk in My statutes, and were not careful to observe My judgments, 'which, *if* a man does, he shall live by them'; but they profaned My Sabbaths. Then I said I would pour out My fury upon them and fulfill My anger against them in the wilderness. Nevertheless, I withdrew My hand and acted for My name's sake, and we saw in the rebellion of Korah in the last sermon why God would think this way. He knew what they would do. He granted Moses' prayer not to destroy them, but God knew what they would do and what was in their mind.

Nevertheless, I withdrew My hand and acted for My name's sake, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the gentiles, in whose sight I had brought them out. And I raised My hand in an oath to those in the wilderness, that I would scatter them among the gentiles and disperse them throughout the countries, because they had not executed My judgments, but had despised My statutes, profaned My Sabbaths, and their eyes were fixed on their fathers' idols. And we can bring it down to this time, the time that you and I live, and we can see that the twelve tribes of Israel were scattered. Ten of them were scattered and dispersed.

But God raised up a man named Herbert Armstrong to bring it to His end-time Church, who we are at the end of an age, and to understand who the Israelite tribes are to this day and how they were dispersed throughout the countries. And God says it was "because they had not executed His judgments, and despised His statutes, and profaned God's Sabbaths, and their eyes were always on their fathers' idols," not on God. Therefore, I also gave them up to statutes *that were not good*, and we can see

the world that we live in, Satan's world, and we can see this world coming to a crescendo that our minds cannot comprehend, because of this very thing. But we know that God has a plan to rescue man. And we just celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles that pictured this plan and how it will be brought about. But God "gave them up to statutes that were not good," and we can see this in Satan's world, that it is not good. And God says, **I pronounced them unclean because of their ritual gifts, in that they caused all their firstborn to pass through *the fire*, that I might make them desolate and that they might know that I am the Eternal.**

Therefore, son of man, speak to the house of Israel, and say to them, Thus says the Eternal God: In this too your fathers have blasphemed Me—let's notice—by being unfaithful to Me. And it's the same old story over and over about man. But God has made a way for man through the sacrifice of His Son, to cover the sins of those that want to live this way of life.

Verse 28—When I brought them into the land *concerning* which I had raised My hand in an oath to give them, and they saw all the high hills and the thick trees—let's notice what they did—they offered their sacrifices and provoked Me with their offerings. Because of what they did, brethren, they took it to themselves to worship God in a way that was not pleasing to God. **There they also,** let's see what they did...**they sent up their sweet aroma and poured out their drink offerings.** And I said to them, **What *is* this high place to which you go?** It's a question that God is asking. So its name is called Bamah to this day. **Therefore, say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Eternal God: Are you defiling yourselves in the manner of your fathers, and committing harlotry according to their abominations?** And we can bring this forward in time and ask ourselves these same questions: Are we committing spiritual adultery with the Great God of this universe and His Son? We can do that even with God's spirit. And this time will be a witness for an eternity, brethren, what some have done with God's spirit.

Verse 31—For when you offer your gifts and make your sons pass through the fire, you defile yourselves with all your idols, in other words, even to this day. So shall I be inquired of you, O house of Israel? And we can see that they were defiling themselves with the way that they worshipped God. Moses and Aaron were among them, telling them of the correct way to worship their God. We have some among us, an apostle, a prophet, and prophets that tell us of a correct way to live. Do we defile our self by going away from where we learned the truths, the truths of God? God says, "Shall I be inquired of by you, O House of Israel?" **As I live, says the Eternal God, I will not be inquired of by you.** And He won't be by me, and you either, brethren. We can bring it down to our time. **What you have in your mind shall never be,** especially those that were among us and God's spirit has been taken away, **when you say, We will be like the gentiles, like the families in other countries, serving wood and stone;** in other words, serving God in the way that they think it should be done, not the way that God says it is to be done in His Church.

Brethren, there is one Church, one faith, one God, one Jesus Christ. Here we see the younger generation was just as rebellious as their parents. They did the same thing. And when they complained to Moses...and I think this is the example about the water. You know, God had not ceased to take care of them, brethren. You know, they had the fire by night and the cloud by day, so it was a controlled

environment that they were in, even though they were in the desert. And God was supplying their every need, but here they are complaining again.

So let's go back to Numbers 20 and let's look at verse 2. **Numbers 20:2—Now, there was no water for the congregation; so they gathered together against Moses and Aaron. And the people contended with Moses and spoke, saying: If only we had died when our brethren died before the Eternal! Why have you brought up the assembly of the Eternal into this wilderness, that we and our animals should die here? And why have you made us—let's notice—why have you made us come up out of Egypt, to bring us to this evil place? That's what they're calling it! It *is not* a place of grain or figs or vines or pomegranates; nor *is* there any water to drink.** And there wasn't in the desert, but God always supplied their every need. **So Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and they fell upon their faces. And the glory of the Eternal appeared to them.** And God gave them some instructions, and it was very specific instructions, when we understand.

Verse 8—Take the rod; gather the assembly, and speak to the rock..."speak to the rock" where the people can see. We can see very specific instructions: "speak to the rock." But Moses, after all this time had become fed up with these Israelites and their complaining.

Verse 10... We know this because of what is recorded in God's book. **Moses said, You rebels!** In other words, "You always rebel!" And that's what Moses called them. And we can understand why they called them this, rebels, those that always rebel. And we can see that his anger was getting the best of him because we can pick up the anger that Moses had here because of the way it's written. Moses didn't say, "God will give you water." Moses said...let's notice what was said, **Must we bring water for you out of this rock? And he struck the rock** instead of speaking to it, just as he had done nearly forty years before.

So let's hold our place here and let's look at this account and what Moses did and what God told Moses, and how Moses was instructed to act at that time.

So let's go to Exodus 17:1 and let's look at this account and what took place and the instructions that were given at that time. **Exodus 17:1—Then all the congregation of the children of Israel set out on their journey from the Wilderness of Sin, according to the commandment of the Eternal, and camped in Rephidim; but *there was* no water for the people to drink. Therefore, the people contended with Moses, and said, Give us water, that we may drink. So Moses said to them—let's notice what Moses asked them—Why do you contend with me? Why do you tempt the Eternal? And the people thirsted there for water, and the people complained against Moses, and said, and here they are blaming Moses again, Why *is* it you have brought us up out of Egypt—and let's notice what they told Moses—to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst? So Moses cried to the Eternal, saying, What shall I do with this people? ("...with these people?")** And let's see what Moses told God. This is how they were stirred up, brethren. How would you have liked to have been in Moses' shoes? And there were a lot of people there confronting Moses, and Moses said, **They are almost ready to stone me!** So this is how far and how stirred up they were.

And let's notice what was taking place. The people were pretty upset and they were blaming Moses and Aaron for all of it. **And the Eternal said to Moses, Go on before the people, and take with you some of the elders of Israel.** So let's notice what's taking place, "Take some of the elders of Israel," and also **take in your hand your rod which you struck the river, and go. I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb,** and here we see the instructions from God and what Moses was to do, and **you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it that the people may drink.** So, **Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.** And so he called the name of this place **Massah and Meribah, because of the contention of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Eternal, saying—**let's notice what they were saying—**Is the Eternal among us or not?** After all they had seen, brethren. And we hear it today in the Church of God by those that have rebelled and left God's Church, and they say terrible things about us, brethren, and here they are doing the same to Moses and Aaron.

And they are blaming Moses and Aaron, and they have been doing it through their time of wandering for forty years, as we will see. And they have blamed Moses and Aaron, and here we see Moses has had enough of their complaining. So let's go back to **Numbers 20:12.** This time God had not told Moses to strike the rock. **Verse 12—The Eternal spoke to Moses and Aaron, Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel,** and this is better said, because, I guess this is better said, **Because you did not obey Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore, you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them.**

Verse 13. Brethren, it was not that Moses and Aaron didn't believe water would come out of that rock by speaking to the rock, but they let down about the seriousness of following and obeying God's instructions exactly, therefore, it was an act of rebellion. And their closeness to God did not give them any leeway, brethren. Moses knew that and he knew that just the opposite is true. But we can see that anger got in Moses' way after so much frustration from the people and their constant rebellion and complaining and murmuring that had taken place for so many years. And it got to Moses and Aaron. Brethren, those in leadership positions are held to stricter accountability, to set the right example for everyone else. Moses and Aaron called the people rebels, yet that was true, and they rebelled against God's word themselves.

And let's see what God had to say about what Moses had done. **Verse 22—Now the children of Israel, the whole congregation, journeyed from Kadesh and came to Mount Hor. And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in Mount Hor by the border of the land of Edom, saying: Aaron shall be gathered to his people, for he shall not enter the land which I have given to the children of Israel,** and let's notice why and how serious God thought this act of rebellion was, **because you rebelled against My word at the water of Meribah.** Brethren, rebellion is a very serious thing before the Great God of this universe, and we can see it. We can see the judgment given to Aaron here because of that rebellion.

And God said, **Take Aaron and Eleazar his son, and bring them up to Mount Hor; and strip Aaron of his garments and put them on Eleazar his son; for Aaron shall be gathered to his people and die there. So Moses did just as the Eternal commanded, and they went up to Mount Hor in the sight of all the congregation. And Moses stripped Aaron of his garments and put them on Eleazar his son,** and if we remember, Moses was Aaron's brother. God says, **Aaron died there on the top of the**

mountain. Then Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain. And when all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead, all the house of Israel mourned for Aaron thirty days.

Hold our place here and let's go to Romans 2:21. **Romans 2:21—You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself?** It's questions that are being asked. And we know that answer. **You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal? You who say, Do not commit adultery, do you commit adultery?** Physical adultery, spiritual adultery? **You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?** In other words, are we really worshipping God the way that God says worship Him? **You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law?** Brethren, neither Moses, Aaron, or Miriam would enter the promised land. It is not owed to anyone, brethren. It's not owed to me. It's not owed to you. We only know through some scriptures that are written in this book of some that will be there, but for you and me that are alive now, it's not owed to anyone. God has a plan and He will execute that plan just as He said it would be.

Be turning to Numbers 33. Aaron died on Mount Hor at the age of 123. **Numbers 33:37—They moved from Kadesh and camped at Mount Hor, on the boundary of the land of Edom. Then Aaron the priest went up to Mount Hor at the command of the Eternal, and died there,** and let's notice when he died. This is another account of what took place— **in the fortieth year after the children of Israel had come out of the land of Egypt, on the first day of the fifth month. Aaron was one hundred and twenty-three years old when he died on Mount Hor.** And there is a vital lesson here for you and me. None of us are ever so perfect that we don't have lessons to learn. And no matter who we are or what position that we may have, or the position that we may hold, we are not excused from obeying God. There is no excuse for rebellion.

Let's go to **Numbers 20:14** and let's go back in time and pick up the story. Here we see Moses trying to negotiate a peaceful passage through the territory of Edom, and here we see Moses offering to pay Edom for anything that they may consume by going through their land, but we can see Edom refusing Moses' offer. Verse 14...**Numbers 20:14—Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom. And thus says your brother Israel: You know all the hardship that has befallen us, how our fathers went down to Egypt, and we dwelt in Egypt a long time, and the Egyptians afflicted us and our fathers. And when we cried out to the Eternal, He heard our voice and sent the angel and brought us up out of Egypt; now here we are in Kadesh, a city on the edge of your border. Please let us pass through your country, which would have been much easier, brethren. Moses said, We will not pass through fields or vineyards, nor will we drink water from your wells; we will go along the King's Highway and we will not turn aside to the right hand or to the left until we have passed through your territory. And Edom said to him, You shall not pass through my *land*, lest I come out against you with the sword. In other words, he would attack them if they tried to do it. So the children of Israel said to him, We will go by the Highway, and if I or my livestock drink any of your water, then I will pay for it; let me only pass through on foot, nothing *more*. Then he said, You shall not pass through. So Edom came out against them with many men and with a strong hand, and Edom refused to give Israel passage through his territory; so Israel turned away from him. This is just one of the acts of hostility that Edom showed toward the descendents of Jacob.**

Let's go to Numbers 14. The rest of the trip toward the promised land would be hard and difficult, as we know. Just travelling through that desert was hard on the people, even with God's protection and the cloud by day and the fire by night. But the travelling was difficult. And the king of the Canaanite city of Arat picks a fight and carries away some Israelites captured. God empowers the Israelites to destroy the Arodites in a place that became known as Hormah, which means "utter destruction." And this first military victory against the Canaanites takes place in the same spot that decades before the Israelites had been defeated when they tried to enter Canaan after God told them that they would have to wait forty years, when God passed judgment upon them for their rebellion.

Let's look at **Numbers 14:42** and let's see what they tried to do. And here they are being told: **Do not go up, lest you be defeated by your enemies, for the Eternal is not among you. For the Amalekites and the Canaanites are there before you, and you will fall by the sword; because you have turned away from the Eternal, the Eternal will not be with you. But they presumed to go up to the mountaintop. And nevertheless, neither the ark of the covenant of the Eternal nor Moses departed from the camp. But we see what they were doing. Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who dwelt in the mountain came down and attacked them, and drove them back as far as Hormah.**

In verse 26 we see the death sentence God had placed on those that had rebelled, "the rebels," that Moses called them. Back up in verse 26—**And the Eternal spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, How long will I bear with this evil congregation who complain against Me? I have heard the complaints which the children of Israel make against Me. Say to them, As I live, says the Eternal, just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you,** so God was listening to their complaints.

In verse 29 we see God placing judgment upon them for rebellion, brethren: **The carcasses of the bodies of you who have complained against Me will fall in this wilderness, all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above. Except for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun, you will by no means enter the land which I swore I would make you dwell in. But your little ones, whom you said would be victims, I will bring in, and they will know the land which you have despised. But as for you, your carcasses ("your bodies") will fall in this wilderness. And your sons shall be shepherds in the wilderness forty years, and bear the fruit of your infidelity, until your carcasses are consumed in the wilderness. According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for each day you shall bear your guilt one year, namely forty years, and you shall know My rejection. Because of their rebellion, brethren, that's what brought it on. And here we see God's judgment because of that rebellion. I, the Eternal, have spoken this. I will surely do so to all this evil congregation who are gathered together against Me. In this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.**

Now the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land, who returned and made all the congregation complain against him by bringing a bad report of the land, those very men who brought the evil report about the land died by the plague before the Eternal. But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh remained alive, of the men who went to spy out the land.

And now, in verse 39, we will see an attempt by them even after judgment was passed upon them by God. And let's see what they did. We can see this human nature come out, brethren. **Moses told these**

words to all the children of Israel, and the people mourned greatly, because of the judgment that was passed.

And we can see their reaction to their punishment in verse 40—they rose early in the morning and went up to the top of the mountain, saying—let's notice—Here we are, and here we see what they planned to do, we will go up to the place which the Eternal has promised, for we have sinned! Moses said, Why do you transgress... In other words, Why do you not believe the punishment that was given, the judgment that was given from the Great God of this universe, the command of the Eternal? For this will not succeed. It's what Moses said to them. Moses said, Do not go up, lest you be defeated by your enemies, for the Eternal is not among you. We bring it down to our time, those that have rebelled, those that have been in the Church of God at the end of an age. They think they are still worshipping their God. They don't think that they have left God, brethren. They think they are still worshipping the Great God of this universe and His Son. God says there is one Church, one Body, one spirit, one God, so how can this be? You cannot worship the Great God of the universe and His Son outside the Body, brethren, yet they are greatly deceived by their rebellion that has actually taken place. That's what it is.

Moses is telling them, "Do not go up lest you be defeated by your enemies, for the Eternal is not among you." For the Amalekites and the Canaanites *are* there before you, and you will fall by the sword; because you have turned away from the Eternal the Eternal will not be with you. And it's the same today for those that have turned away from the Great God of this universe. God will not be with them and they no longer have God's spirit. They rely on their own intellect from this time forward.

Verse 44—But they presumed to go up to the mountaintop. Nevertheless, neither the ark of the covenant of the Eternal nor Moses departed from the camp. Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who dwelt in that mountain came down and attacked them, and drove them back as far as Hormah.

Let's go to Numbers 21. We've heard in other sermons about the fiery serpents among the people, and here is the account that took place. Numbers 21:4, and we see that they were journeying from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom, bringing us back into the flow of the story. Because we saw how Moses was refused passage, and the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way. And it was a difficult journey. We've seen some of this land that they have walked through. It's not a place that you would want to be, brethren. We know that God had made a way to protect them and they never appreciated it. They always complained about the way that God was doing things.

And it's no different today. There are complainers out there complaining about the way God is leading His people today. There are people that speak against you and me in the Church of God—PKG, and especially Ron and Laura, the leaders of God's Church at the end of this age. We see here the people, verse 5, the people spoke against God and against Moses, and that's what they do today. They're actually speaking against God, but they don't know this. And they said, Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For *there is no food, no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread*, talking about the manna, brethren, and they called it "worthless bread." And I'm sure

that manna had everything that was needed to sustain a human life upon this earth, and here they are calling this "worthless bread." They likened it to bread. And when you talk about bread, there are many things you can do with bread, many ways to prepare bread. From what little bit we know about manna, this was so about the manna.

And **verse 6**, let's see what God did. **So the Eternal sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died. Therefore, the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Eternal and against you, so they knew what they had done, and here they are going back to Moses. And let's notice what they want Moses to do. They want Moses to pray to the Eternal that He take away the serpents from among them. And so Moses prayed for the people. And the Eternal said to Moses, Make a fiery *serpent*, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, they shall live. So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.**

So, brethren, going around the way that they had to go was very difficult (going around Edom) when it would have been very easy just to go through. We see that they are complaining again and what God has done. And their ingratitude leads them to declare that they detest the manna that was the very thing that was sustaining them, brethren, the bread of life for them at that time. We know what it is today for us, the "bread of life." And they called it worthless, and God sends them deadly, fiery serpents. If we call "the Bread of Life" worthless today we really have some serpents in the form of demons that are really fiery, when you don't have God's protection, brethren. We can see that the people were terrified because they were dying, because they were being bitten by these snakes, these serpents as it's called. We can see Moses' prayer on their behalf and God tells Moses to make that bronze image of a serpent and set it on a pole and then instruct the people to look upon it to be healed. We know what happened to this bronze serpent down through time – the people began to worship it. It had to be destroyed, and it was destroyed by King Hezekiah. And if you want to note where you can find that you can find that in 2 Kings 18. We see it today, brethren, we see that serpent on a pole. We see it on the medical emblems, the ambulances, the emergency vehicles. And there it is, a symbol of healing even in our day. Hezekiah couldn't even do away with it. It was passed on even to our time! And that serpent on a pole has travelled through time to our day, brethren, but it is a sign to you and me of who we are as a people. We know that we are descendents from those very people that were travelling through that wilderness. God let us know through His Church, through Herbert W. Armstrong, about the tribes of Israel and how they filtered down through the countries, through the nations down through time. And we know who we are today. We know where these countries are, the Israelite nations to this day. But let's continue on in the story. We know that King Sihon is defeated and King Og is defeated.

Let's turn over to Jude, verse 5. We come to what Jude told us about. So let's go to the book of Jude and read about what was said. And we read through this in the past sermon. (Hold your place here, as we will come back.) But let's turn over to **Jude 1:5**, and Jude tells us (this is many, many years in their future), and Jude tells us: **I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Eternal,**

having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. And this is the account that we are going through today in this story of rebellion. **And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode;** in other words, they rebelled. And let's notice what God says about their rebellion, **He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day,** because of their rebellion, brethren. Judgment is just delayed. Punishment is just delayed for them. But God tells us here how serious rebellion is.

Verse 7—As Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. And we just went through some of this in a past sermon, about Sodom and Gomorrah. **Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries.** And they do, even in our time, brethren. We're reading about it in Moses' time and we can bring it forward to our time. And this has not changed, even with those that had God's spirit; they become the enemy of Jesus Christ. **Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring about him a reviling accusation, but said, The Eternal rebuke you! But these speak evil of whatever they do not know; and whatever they know naturally, like brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves,** by their actions, by their rebellions, brethren, and they don't know what they're doing. They do not understand how serious rebellion really is. And God says, **Woe to them, those that rebel! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished as in the rebellion of Korah** (that we saw in the earlier sermon on rebellion).

But today we will begin (and I don't think we'll get through this), but we will begin to see what God is talking about in His book about "Balaam for profit," because when you read, start to read through about Balaam we will see what God has written about who Balaam really was and we will begin to see what Balaam did that God reminds you and me about. And that God tells you and me not to forget these examples for a reason.

"Balaam's profits" is talked about in the book of Numbers, and Numbers 22, if you want to be turning there. But Balak and Balaam looked down on the children of Israel from a high vantage point, a high place (and this was used for the worship of Baal, is where they were at), the location that they thought had some kind of spiritual power, undoubtedly. And we find that in verses 38 through 41. And Balak was the king and he had saw Israel, the children of Israel, and he knew the stories and he was afraid, and that's why he was calling on Balaam (and we'll see the story). And at Balaam's request they built seven altars in this high place just for Balaam to sacrifice upon, and Balaam sacrifices seven bulls and seven rams. And false religion often counterfeits elements of true worship, but it's in a superstitious kind of way. And the one that practiced such a thing believe that God is primarily interested in ritual, and the Catholic church is full of it, brethren, even to this day. But we know that God is preparing a people who would one day be His people ruling in the Kingdom of God upon this earth. And they are preparing to be in the Kingdom of God, therefore, our name, and we know how to worship our God. But rituals, such as animal sacrifices, are not what God is really after, because we know what God had written in this book, and God always said that that's not what He was looking for.

But God was looking for the purpose behind them, and that's what's important. Animal sacrifices taught obedience during Moses' time, and it had a purpose because the sacrifices of the lamb pictured a time of Jesus Christ upon this earth. And it paints you and me a picture of Passover. And many places in God's book we see it written that "sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin, You did not desire, nor You had any pleasure in them." And that's Hebrews. I think you can find it in Hebrews 10. But we know that there is no power in rituals or in the locations where they're done. These ancient Baal worshippers didn't understand such a thing, but they were imitating (to a point) what God had instituted in Israel.

And Balaam, the greatest prophet of his time, as we will see, will be unable to curse the nation of Israel. And Balaam cannot curse the children of Israel because the true God will not allow it, as we will see as we go through this story, which we won't have time today but we will continue on in this story in another sermon. And we will see whenever Balaam prophesies, God has him pronounce blessing upon blessing upon Israel, blessing upon blessing on Israel. And Balaam ends up uttering a prayer, and he says, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my end be like his." And I'm going to read from an article that Mr. Armstrong wrote many, many years ago about Balaam, and we'll go through part of it today.

And he says, "Remember the Old Testament character, Balaam?" And if you want to you can turn over to Revelation 2:14 and you can look at what's written there as I go through some of this. But we read in **Revelation 2:14** in the words of Christ that Balaam caused ancient Israel to sin. We will go through that in another sermon. God said, **I have a few things against you, because you hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.** So Mr. Armstrong says, "Let me give you some interesting facts about this Balaam. Balaam, it now appears, was in his time successor in office to Nimrod, and we know that Nimrod was the founder of the world's pagan civilization. Balaam was the greatest prophet of his time in the pagan religion. Knowing this, does it seem strange that he prayed to God and appeared to be a servant of God through these scriptures? And when King Balak of Moab sent emissaries to hire Balaam to put a curse on the people of Israel, Balaam asked the emissaries to remain overnight, so that he could go aside, and pray and ask God that he might go with them. If he was the chief PAGAN prophet, actually sitting in SATAN'S SEAT, as head of Satan's religion upon earth, WHY would he pray to God about it?"

Mr. Armstrong says that, "I feel quite sure that most people that have read this account have supposed Balaam to be a prophet of God—not of Satan. Did he not do RIGHT in consulting God?" It's a question. "Surely Satan would not do that! But let's take a quick look at the incident. The children of Israel, under Moses, had pitched camp in the plains of Moab, on the east side of the Jordan River, near Jericho. The King of Moab, Balak, saw what these Israelites — and there were at least two or three million of them — had done to the Amorites. And he was struck with fear. The Moabites were far outnumbered. So King Balak sent messengers to Balaam, who lived at Pethor in Mesopotamia — far distant, near the Euphrates River." So it was a long way. "They took with them the fees for divination, to hire Balaam to curse the

Israelites. 'They are too mighty for me,' was Balak's message to Balaam, 'for I know that he who you bless is blessed, and he who you curse is cursed.'" So this is what was said.

So let's look at Numbers 22:1-6—And the children of Israel set forward, (Numbers 22:1-6) and pitched in the plains of Moab on this side of Jordan by Jericho. And Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. And Moab was sore afraid of the people because they *were* many, and Moab was distressed because of the children of Israel. And Moab said unto the elders of Midian, Now shall this company lick up everything around us, as an ox licks up the grass of the field. And Balak the son of Zippor *was* king of the Moabites at that time. So we can see he was king. And he sent messengers, therefore, unto Balaam the son of Beor at Pethor, which by the River of the land of the children of his people, to call him, saying: Behold, there is a people come out from Egypt. Behold, they cover the face of the earth, and they abide over against me! Come now, therefore, I pray, curse me this people, for they *are* too mighty for me. Peradventure I shall prevail that we may smite them, and that I may drive them out of the land, for I know that he whom you bless *is* blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed.

So when the elders of Moab and Midian, in verse 8, they dispatched messengers who delivered this message to Balaam. Notice what he said, Lodge here this night, and I will bring you word again, as the Eternal will speak unto me: and the princes of Moab abode with Balaam. ...God said to Balaam, You shall not go with them; you shall not curse the people: for they are blessed. And Balaam rose in the morning, and said to the princes of Balak, Get you into your land: for the Eternal refuses to give me leave to go with you.

Verse 19— "Again King Balak sent messengers to Balaam — this time more noble princes of higher rank, and more money. Again Balaam asked them to remain overnight, 'that I may know what the Eternal will say unto me more.' This time God allowed him to go with them, but forbade him to curse Israel. Yet the angel of God stopped Balaam's donkey on the way." Why would he do this?

"Now doesn't all this sound as if Balaam were GOD'S prophet, not Satan's? Yet, see what we read in the New Testament! Peter speaks of false prophets 'following the way of Balaam ...who loved the wages of unrighteousness.'" 2 Peter 2:15, let's quickly look at it. And Peter tells us that there are those that have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages, unrighteousness.

And "Jude writes" to them, as we read, "'Woe unto them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward.'"

Revelation 2:14, which we should have turned to earlier says (and I'll just read it), "And Jesus Christ says to the Church of the Pergamos era: And He says, 'But I have a few things against you, because you have them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel...'" So we can see that "Jesus Christ, Peter, and Jude all tell us Balaam was a FALSE prophet. And when we research into his actual identity, we find that Pethor, where he resided, was the headquarters of the highest priest of the pagan religion. In reading through Numbers 22, 23, and 24, one might suppose Balaam was just an ordinary individual of no consequence. Yet here was the king of a nation, and he passed up his own highest priests, magicians, and astrologers of the pagan

religion. And he sent his highest princes, with rich rewards and high fees. And he sent them a great distance, to Pethor, near the Euphrates, in Mesopotamia. And he would not have sent them to any but the most powerful practitioner of divination."

"Other scriptures show that these higher magicians of divination were often demon-possessed. And this Balaam could have been demon-possessed, so that it was actually Satan himself in possession of a human, Balaam, working in and through him. WOULD SATAN CONSULT GOD ABOUT DOING THIS?" A question that is asked.

"And the answer comes sharp and clear! Satan himself WOULD consult God, precisely as Balaam did, under such circumstances! Biblical 'scholars' and commentators have assumed Balaam had been a true prophet of God originally. And this is not true, brethren. And the answer is found in the first two chapters of the Book of Job." About this question. "Satan himself is here pictured in conversation with God concerning the righteousness of Job. And God ALLOWED Satan to afflict Job – but God placed a limit on HOW FAR Satan could go! God is SUPREME RULER of this universe," brethren. "At first, God allowed Satan to take all Job possessed, but not to harm Job's person. Job failed to crack under the test. Satan argued that a man would give all that he possessed to save his own life – but if only he could afflict Job's PERSON, Job would turn against God. So God now gave Satan permission to go this much further – but to spare his life."

And we know that it was actually turned around and used for Job's benefit, and we know the story, that Job really came to "see" God and Job came to understand what he really was.

"But in like manner," continuing with what Mr. Armstrong had written, "In like manner the Satan-influenced (or Satan-possessed, as the case may be) Balaam well KNEW God had set limits to his powers. Satan is the god and invisible ruler of this world – yet God is SUPREME RULER over all. Every ruler has authority and power ONLY within his own boundary lines or jurisdiction. There is NO boundary lines on God's rulership – but there are on Satan's. And Satan well knows it! There could be no sin – no evil – unless God ALLOWED IT! And if God did not allow it there would be no free moral agency – no free choice – and that would nullify God's PURPOSE!"

"We know that even Satan's ministers talk about God, and masquerade as His ministers."

Let's turn over and finish up in **2 Corinthians 11:13—For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel, that's what God had written. This is not a marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore—let's notice—it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness—let's notice, we know what the end is—whose end shall be according to their works. Because of their rebellion, brethren, and there is a day of judgment for them.**

And we will conclude the sermon there today and pick up the rest of the story in the next sermon.□