



Portion:

Title:

## SCRIPTURES

- Number 19:1-22:1
- Matthew 20:1-16
- I Kings 19:9-10
- II Peter 1:5-9

## DO YOU DARE GRUMBLE?

- Be Patient Regardless!
- God is NOT Impressed
- Nothing is Worthless
- Carry On!

*As a society in the western hemisphere, we have become spoiled, by having everything in a “have-it-your-own-way, right-away!” fashion. We have become accustomed to pressing a button on a microwave and in minutes extracting an entire meal—completely cooked and scorching hot. We pick up our cell phones, better described as hand-held supercomputers, for instant information about anything we can fathom: recipes, phone contacts, directions, opinion pieces, news, weather, or the population of Bismarck, North Dakota—you name it and you can find it in milliseconds. You can also run to a grocery store and buy anything your heart desires, with practically zero limitations.*

*Our level of patience is tested whenever those little trivial things in life do not function as they ought. You know, that little*

*buffering circle on your device takes longer than, well, instantly, and you wonder if you should change providers. The waiter takes too long to come take your order and you are popping up your neck like a giraffe to get his attention. If this is your level of patience, how would you handle a truly challenging circumstance? Let's say one that might cause a permanent shift in your life. Would you throw a temper tantrum?*

*In the likeness of the Children of Israel, would you dare grumble at or against God? Or, like Elijah, would you want to give up and throw in the towel after coming to realize that the people you've put your life in danger for are not really worth it? They have no interest in following the Lord and you are left as the only one keeping Yahweh's covenant.*

*As believers in Christ, we are called to a totally different standard! We are charged with patience and perseverance; we are certainly not permitted to grumble. Question: Do you dare grumble?*

## **THEME: MAIN SCRIPTURE(S) THAT HAS INSPIRED MESSAGE**

From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom. And the people ***became impatient on the way***. And the people ***spoke against God and against Moses***, "Why

have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness?

Numbers 21:4-5 ESV

“For the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house **who went out early in the morning** to hire laborers for his vineyard. **After agreeing** with the laborers for a denarius a day, **he sent them** into his vineyard. And going out about the third hour he saw others **standing idle** in the marketplace, and to them he said, ‘You go into the vineyard too, **and whatever is right I will give you.**’ So they went. Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing. And he said to them, ‘Why do you stand here idle all day?’ They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You go into the vineyard too.’ And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last, up to the first.’ *And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius. Now when those hired first came, they thought they would receive more, but each of them also received a denarius. And on receiving it they grumbled at the master of the house, saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’ But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius?*

*Take what belongs to you and go. I choose to give to this last worker as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?’ So the last will be first, and the first last.” Matthew 20:1-16 ESV*

## **OUTCOME: MAIN TAKEAWAY(S) I AM HOPING FOR PEOPLE**

Not that I am speaking of ***being in need***, for I have learned in whatever situation I am ***to be content***. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. ***In any and every circumstance***, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. Philippians 4:11-12 ESV

My Brethren, count it all joy when falling into ***various trials***. Knowing that the ***testing of your faith produces patience***. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. James 1:2-6 NKJV

But now you must put them all away: ***anger, wrath***, malice, slander, and ***obscene talk*** from your mouth. *Colossians 3:8 ESV*

But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, knowledge self-control, ***to self-control perseverance***, to ***perseverance*** , ***godliness*** to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, *you* will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For ***he who***

*lacks these things is shortsighted*, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. 2 Peter 1: 5-9  
NKJV

Let's Set the Scene: Portion in a blurb

1. This portion presents the mysterious laws of the red-heifer ceremony for purification after contact with human death. This reading also contains the tragic account of Moses striking the rock twice to bring forth water, 40 years after the first time he did such, although this time it was considered a disobedient and act that disregarded Yahweh's holiness. It records the deaths of Aaron and Miriam and the wars with the Amorites. It also includes the prophetic message of the deadly fiery serpents and dramatic intercession. The portion concludes with the Israel encamped on the edge of the Promised Land.

## **Numbers 19**

2. **Laws of Purification:** the purification procedures for the sacrifice and offering of the red heifer. All the procedures for the High Priest as well as the one who burns it, and for those who clean up the ashes are described.
3. The ashes of the heifer are stored outside the camp in a clean place and kept for the congregation for the water of purification; it is for purifying from sin.

4. The rules for purifying one who comes into contact with a dead body are presented. The ashes of the heifer and running water shall be put on the person, all their vessels, and sprinkled on their tent.
5. The Prophetic significance of the Red Heifer sacrifice as it relates to Christ is found in the Book of Hebrews chapter 9:11-14 and there is a great deal of pattern Typology that can be extracted from this procedural ritual.

### **Numbers 20**

6. Chapter 20 leads us to the central point of today's study. This chapter begins and ends in a morbid fashion. First, Miriam's death is reported in the first verse of the chapter. The chapter ends with the death of Aaron.
7. Between those two deaths, we see the narrative of events which carry a great deal of spiritual impact for us, Moses and the famous, or should I say infamous, incident when he strikes the rock twice instead of speaking to the rock.
8. This requires our understanding in order for us to *WATCH OUR ANGER!*
9. Again, just like almost 40 years earlier as told in Exodus 17:1-7, the people are desperate for water, and they are complaining and making accusations. However, this time Yahweh tells **Moses to go WITH Aaron and to "speak to the rock"** before the eyes

of all of Israel (as a testimony) and it will yield water (Numbers 20:7-8). **Aaron was with Moses when he got the instructions and is therefore complicit in Moses' disobedience, which is why he also does not get to enter the Promised Land.**

(a) THE FIRST TIME 40 YEARS EARLIER: *"And the LORD said to Moses, "Go on before the people, and take with you some of the elders of Israel. Also take in your hand **your rod** with which you struck the river, and go. Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; **and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it**, that the people may drink." And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel."*

(Exodus 17:5-6)

(b) THIS TIME 40 YEARS LATER: *"Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "**Take the rod**; you and your brother Aaron gather the congregation together. **Speak to the rock** before their eyes, **and it will yield its water**; thus you shall bring water for them out of the rock, and give drink to the congregation and their animals.""* (Numbers 20:7-8)

10. Moses gathers the people before the rock and declares, *"Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?"* (Numbers 20:10)

11. But instead of speaking to the rock as commanded, and for all the congregation to witness (his disobedience), Moses "struck

the rock twice.” Water did come out but something terrible has just occurred. (Numbers 20:11)

12. Moses is guilty of unbelief because he struck the rock, as he did effectively 40 years earlier, instead of speaking to the rock as commanded. He actually had to strike the rock twice this time, which seems to indicate the first strike was “ineffective” and produced no water.
13. Can you imagine? He is told to speak to the Rock; he strikes it once and nothing happens. Then, instead of acknowledging that nothing came out because he was not obeying Yahweh, he strikes it again. Water does come forth upon the second strike, not for Moses’ sake, but rather to meet the people’s need. Yet, something terrible has just occurred.
14. For this blatant lack of faith (disobedience) before the people, Moses and Aaron, who is by his side when he was commanded to “speak to the rock”, will not enter the promised land. They will both die in the wilderness. (Numbers 20:12)
15. **Passage Through Edom Refused:** the King of Edom refuses to let Israel pass through his land and even comes out in battle to deter them from passing. Israel avoids the conflict by turning away.



- (a) It is no small thing to note here that there are times we will be directed to walk away from conflict and at other times to enter conflict to be victorious!
- (b) **Side Note:** This is a teaching for another time, but it is worth mentioning here as precedent. When Yahweh has NOT INSTRUCTED you to take on the battle, it is futile to enter it. Worse yet, you will be defeated in dramatic fashion, even if your enemy is an enemy of God!
- (1) **Warfare:** Read 1 Samuel 3-4 and witness the horrific “double-defeat” of Israel at the hands of the Philistines, and the abominable use of the Ark of the Covenant by Israel and capture of the Ark by the Philistines. The tragedy includes the death of Eli and his two rebel sons, Hophni and Phinehas, who were responsible for moving the Ark.
- (2) **Spiritual Warfare:** Look at another dramatic account, this time one that warns about getting yourself into a spiritual battle where you have not been given authority. In Acts 19:11-20 men, wishing to tap into Holy Spirit power to engage in spiritual warfare, get smacked around and beaten to a pulp by demons for challenging an enemy they have no authority over. **The outcome:** *“And the evil spirit answered and said, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?” Then the man in whom the evil spirit was*

*leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house **naked and wounded.***" (Acts 19:15-16)

(3) **Bottom line:** don't take on battles when you are not instructed to do so.

16. **The Death of Aaron:** Aaron is stripped of his priestly garments; they are placed on his son Eleazar, and Aaron dies in the wilderness.

## **Numbers 21**

17. Numbers 21 catalogues the Canaanites defeat at Hormah, the movement of Israel from Mount Hor to Moab, and the defeat of the kings of Sihon and Og. You see! These times Israel is directed to engage in the conflict and Yahweh makes them victorious!

18. Soon after the second "water from a rock" miracle of provision, we have the famous fiery serpent incident. Even after just witnessing water coming from a rock AGAIN, and hearing of the horrible penalty imposed on Moses for dishonoring Yahweh by his disobedience, and Aaron for his complicity (Aaron just died!), the people were still discouraged and uninhibited in their complaining. Their faithlessness, rudeness and lack of appreciation are unimaginable; *"And the people spoke against God and against Moses: "Why have you brought us up out of*

*Egypt to die in the wilderness? For **there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread.***” (Numbers 21:5) So Yahweh sent fiery serpents among the people who were still complaining after all they just witnessed with Moses and Aaron. Many of those ungrateful complainers died that day from venomous snake bites.

19. While thousands were dropping dead, the people rush to repent for speaking against Yahweh and Moses and they beg Yahweh to take away the serpents.
20. The LORD tells Moses to, *“Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live.”* (Numbers 21:8) *“So Moses did as instructed and if a serpent bit anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.”* (Numbers 21:9)
21. **PROPHETIC MOMENT!** John 3:16 might be the most memorized and quoted verse of all 31,102 verses in the Bible. But, can you quickly account for the verses that immediately precede it? Surprise! They are Y’shua’s reference to the “fiery serpent” incident in Numbers 21. John 3:14-15 reveals how that entire incident was actually a prophetic picture pointing toward Y’shua’s death on the cross and YOUR life that would come from it.

- (a) “And as Moses **lifted up the serpent in the wilderness**, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish **but have eternal life.**” (John 3:14-15)
- (b) **Referring to:** “Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, **when he looks at it, shall live.**” “So Moses did as instructed and if a serpent bit anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, **he lived.**” (Numbers 21:8-9)
- (c) THEN WHAT FOLLOWS, IN CONTEXT, IS THE MOST FAMOUS VERSE IN THE BIBLE: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16)
- (d) Think about who Y’shua was teaching in John 3. “There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, **a ruler of the Jews.**” (John 3:1) He is teaching Jewish scholar who would easily connect what He was saying to this incident with Moses and the serpents!
- (e) Y’shua is teaching him how to be born again (verse 3) and knows Nicodemus will also instantly connect the serpent incident to the WATER COMING FROM A ROCK and Moses’ terrible misstep in the same narrative!: To Nicodemus’ question: “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?”

(John 3:4) *“Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is **born of water and the Spirit**, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.”* (John 3:5)

(f) Making the connection would be natural for anyone who was familiar with the Scriptures; as Y’shua was always connecting His life with the words Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms.

(1) **Look at his words to the men on the road to Emmaus (and remember that the only Scriptures at that time is what we know today as the Old Testament):** *“And beginning at **Moses and all the Prophets**, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.”* (Luke 24:27)  
*“Then He said to them, “These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were **written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.**””* (Luke 24:44)

(2) **And see how He rebuked religious Jews for missing the very fact that ALL the Scriptures pointed to Him:** *“You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they **which testify of Me.**”* (John 5:39) *“Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you—Moses, in whom you trust. For **if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he***

*wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?'"* (John 5:45-47)

- (3) **And Y'shua's parable comparing the rich man and the poor beggar Lazarus. Read Luke 16:19-31 makes yet another reference to the importance of understanding Moses and the Prophets.** *"Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.' Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.'* And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' But he said to him, **'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.'** ""

Luke 16:27-31 NKJV

- (g) This is why you must be trained to have prophetic eyes if you wish to capture the depth of Yahweh's Holy Word. Look now at Y'shua's words in John 6:35 with prophetic eyes and you will recognize exactly to what He is referring! *"I am the **bread of life**. He who comes to Me shall **never hunger**, and he who believes in Me shall **never thirst**."* He is speaking to a rebellious, complaining, and accusatory people who speak out against Yahweh and His prophet! *For **there is no food and***

***no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread.***

“ (Numbers 21:5)

- (h) **WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU?** “*Then He said to them, “Therefore **every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom** of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things **new and old.**”” (Matthew 13:52) You must be trained to have a treasure trove of knowledge to connect the new with the old!*

22. The portion ends with the children of Israel camped on the West side of the Jordan across from Jericho.

23. You can see last year’s teaching on this portion here: [Juicy Rocks and Fiery Serpents](#) and [Watch Your Anger!](#)

BE PATIENT REGARDLESS!

**1. False Expectations:** “*You were under the impression this would be easy!*”

**A. Your Response when Facing Delays, Trials & Opposition**

(1) Why is God taking so long?

- (a) From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom. And the people ***became impatient on the way.*** Numbers 21:4 ESV

1. Being that the King of Edom did not permit the children of Israel to pass through the land of Edom. The children of Israel were ***forced to go around it.***
- (b) Taking the longer journey where they were pressed for “desirable” provisions caused them to ***become irritated.*** They ***became impatient.***
  1. It is not uncommon for us, as believers, to **wrongfully assume** that the way in which God ordains our lives ***will be easy, unchallenged or uncontested.***
  2. Nothing could be further from the truth. As a matter of fact, if truth be told, believers should, and in my experience **will, face more oppositions** than their unbelieving counterparts.
  3. But, why should this be? Aren’t believers supposed to always have wind in their sails? Isn’t it supposed to be that because the believer is moving within God’s will that automatically all of his endeavors are going to be smooth sailing? Think again my fellow brother and sisters!
- (c) If you are not familiar with the word suffering (tribulation), below are a few verses to ponder:



1. Not only that, but we rejoice in our **sufferings**, knowing that **suffering produces endurance** Romans 5:3 ESV
2. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall **tribulation**, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? Romans 8:35 ESV
3. Rejoice in hope, be patient in **tribulation**, be constant in prayer. Romans 12:12 ESV
4. For when we were with you, we kept telling you beforehand that **we were to suffer affliction**, just as it has come to pass, and just as you know. 1 Thessalonians 3:4 ESV

## GOD IS **NOT** IMPRESSED BY YOUR DISDAIN

**2. Unmet Expectations:** *“You had no idea this would take so long.”*

### **A. Speaking Against God**

(1) Why is God not serving us the way He should?

(a) And the people **spoke against God and against Moses**, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? Numbers 21:5 ESV

1. We should be asking some questions inspired from this verse:

(b) What made the Children of Israel speak against Yahweh?

1. Could it be unmet expectations? Can you relate to that attitude?
2. Is it possible that the Children of Israel felt Yahweh became more of a servant to them, (than the God of them?), since He worked on their behalf to release them from their bondage in Egypt?
3. Has there ever been a time in your life when you let a similar statement or comment out of your mouth? (“Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness?”)
4. Did you immediately repent of the audacity to do so, or did you wait until you were reprimanded by Yahweh Himself?

(2) Obedience, Patience & Perseverance

(a) Did God really bring the Children of Israel out of their bondage in Egypt, so that they would die in the wilderness?

1. Did God really go through the 10 plague exercise just so those whom he freed would be decimated in the wilderness? Hardly the case!
2. The Children of Israel were released from their bondage to be a representation of the one true Deity,

the one who stands apart from the plethora of false gods in Egyptian and other cultures.

(b) However, being a representation of Yahweh required obedience. It required obedience then; and it requires obedience today! It also requires ***patience & perseverance!***

1. Let's assume for just a moment that Yahweh's intention was that His Children would die in the wilderness. Even then it would be better that they die where he pleases than dying in any other place? Would it also not surpass living under the tyranny of an enslaving regime, one in which the ruling party would force pagan worship practices upon Yahweh's Children, amongst many other tyrannical practices? Is that not what is happening to our brothers and sisters in Christ in other parts of the world today?

(c) Where do we get the notion that God is supposed to be fair? Certainly, not from His Word.

1. "For the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house ***who went out early in the morning*** to hire laborers for his vineyard. ***After agreeing*** with the laborers for a denarius a day, ***he sent them*** into his vineyard. And going out about the third hour he saw

others ***standing idle*** in the marketplace, and to them he said, 'You go into the vineyard too, ***and whatever is right I will give you.***' So they went. Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing. And he said to them, 'Why do you stand here idle all day?' They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You go into the vineyard too.' And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last, up to the first.' *And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius. Now when those hired first came, they thought they would receive more, but each of them also received a denarius. And on receiving it they grumbled at the master of the house, saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.'* ***But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what belongs to you and go. I choose to give to***

*this last worker as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?’ So the last will be first, and the first last.” Matthew 20:1-16 ESV*

- a) Just like the Children of Israel did in the wilderness, the hired servants **grumbled against** the Landowner. Their **grumbling was based on what they thought was unfair** in relation to what the Landowner decided to pay the hired servants.
- b) This is common human behavior. The average person is accustomed to getting paid more than another if they work more hours; if they do a better job than someone else; if they carry a bigger load—you get the picture. The problem herein lies in the fact that this parable shows that the laborers who “argued, bargained, or bid for what they believed their services were worth”, got exactly what they negotiated.
- c) Conversely, if they would have left it to the “goodness” of the Landowner, they might have received a greater recompense. But since they asked for an amount, **they got exactly what they believed they were worth.**

- d) The other problem we see here is that they **grumbled**. Grumbling in the life of the believer is a **sign of immaturity, and a sign of discontentment** in what God is doing, in contrast to what they think God should be doing.

NOTHING GOD PROVIDES OR PERMITS IS WORTHLESS!

**3. Wrong Expectations:** *“You got what you were supposed to get, you just didn’t get what you thought you deserved!”*

**A. Obvious Contradictions**

(1) Why is God not satisfying us?

(a) For there is no food and no water, and we **loathe this worthless food.**” Numbers 21:5b ESV

1. In the cursory reading of the verse, anyone can pick up on the contradiction raised by the statement the Children of Israel made. If the first part of the verse were the entirety of their statement, the point could be well taken, “For there is no food and no water”. However, the following words, “We loathe this worthless food” raises a question. Did you not just say in the preceding words “there is no food”?

(b) So, either, “There is no food!” OR “We loathe this worthless food!” Which one is it?

1. If there is no food, then there is no food! That includes ***“worthless food.”*** The Children of Israel were simply doing what people normally do when they don’t like what they have. They dismiss it as “worthless.” What that really means is, ***“I don’t care for what I have!, I deserve more; I deserve better.”***
2. This proves the shortsightedness of most people. If you have children, you are accustomed to hearing this. Have your children ever told you, ***“We have nothing to eat?”*** Meanwhile, you have cupboards filled with things they could prepare to eat. The truth is that they are simply being lazy; they don’t want to spend time to prepare the food, nor to clean up after themselves.
3. Ultimately, the Children of **Israel’s assessment of their situation is wrong.** If they would have been grateful for what they had, Yahweh would have gladly given them more. The inverse also applies here, Yahweh is not in the business of frivolously giving things to people who will not be appreciative of what they’ve been given.

EVEN IF YOU ARE THE ONLY ONE LEFT, YOU CARRY ON!

**4. Failed Expectations:** *“Things didn’t turn out the way you thought they would, so you are discouraged and disappointed.”*

**A. Disappointing Results**

(1) Why is God not applauding us?

(a) There he came to a cave and lodged in it. And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” He said, ***“I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away.”*** 1 Kings 19:9-10 ESV

(b) There are times in the life of the believer when melancholy can set in.

1. Doing work on behalf of God is challenging. It has been said in the past that the work of the minister is the most thankless job there is. Often, one never knows what has been accomplished, for much of the fruit of that work is delayed in ripening.
2. Being a believer can isolate you from others who do not identify with the life you live. This is possible within Christian circles all the same. There will be



those who are not okay with you observing the Feasts of the Lord, not eating at a pig-roast, not having drinks with them, or your desire to observe THE Sabbath, etc.

3. At the end of the day, Elijah found himself in a “physical” cave after doing so much work for God. He was depressed by the circumstances he faced. His people had “**forsaken God’s covenant**”, had “**thrown down his altars**”. However, simultaneously, Elijah had been putting **his life in danger** for the people all along.

(c) Don’t lose heart! Regardless of how much resistance we face, we can push back.

1. James and Peter in their respective letters remind us of this important fact:
2. My Brethren, count it all joy when falling into **various trials**. Knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.  
James 1:2-6 NKJV
3. So we see that the opposition we face has a purpose. It is not wasted effort; it is not a futile exercise.

(d) What about Peter? What did the Holy Spirit inspire him to pen in relation to the subject of perseverance?

1. But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, knowledge self-control, **to self-control perseverance**, to **perseverance** , **godliness** to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, *you* will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For **he who lacks these things is shortsighted**, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. 2 Peter 1:5-9 NKJV

## CLOSING

### 5. Temper and Character

#### A. We are all in ministry!

- (1) Temper and character are two personal attributes which Yahweh desires to work on in the life of each one of His Children. It is unbecoming of the Child of God to blow his witness, by being impatient or by not persevering. There are times when holding our tongues is almost impossible.

However, it is paramount that believers self-correct, immediately! Yahweh expects you to do so.

- (2) Everyone of us is in the ministry. Whether you stand behind a pulpit and preach, or you tell people, “Have a blessed day,” you are in the ministry of reconciliation. You are thereby, even if in the smallest way, at the root reconciling the lost to Christ. Your work for Yahweh might not be clearly defined in your mind, but trust me, it is very well defined in the mind of Yahweh.
- (3) And being a Christian does not exonerate any of us from having to deal with trying circumstances. The Children of Israel felt compelled to grumble against Yahweh simply because they improperly assumed that Yahweh was their personal genie. Having saved them from the bondage in Egypt; and by providing for them in amazing ways; and by leading them and establishing a direct connection through Moses, they twisted in their mind who they truly are and who Yahweh truly is.
- (4) Don’t let the same happen to you; Yahweh is Yahweh and you are not! In any circumstance you face, remain ***patient and persevere*** till Yahweh tells you otherwise. And whatever you do, ***don’t you dare grumble!***

## QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION

### **1. How do you respond when facing delays, trials and opposition?**

- A. What happened in Numbers 21 that caused delays and how did the people react?
- B. How did their false expectations affect their attitude?
- C. How do false expectations affect your attitude?

### **2. It is not uncommon for Christians to assume that what God ordains in their lives should come easy, without challenges and opposition:**

- A. Why is this a wrong assumption? (See: Romans 5:3, 12:12; I Thessalonians 3:4)

### **3. In Numbers 21:5, the people actually spoke out against God:**

- A. Have you ever been angry at God because He has not met your expectations?
- B. Have you ever viewed God as your servant as opposed to you as His servant? Explain!

### **4. Representing God requires obedience, patience and perseverance:**

- A. Would you consider it unfair that God allowed His people to face various trials in the wilderness?

B. Would it have been unfair for God to rescue the people from Egypt only to let them die in the wilderness? Yes or No?

Explain your reasoning?

C. Use Matthew 20:1-16 to compare the dissatisfied workers to the children of Israel in the wilderness. Was the landowner being fair?

**5. What is the obvious contradiction in Numbers 21:5?**

A. What are the people really saying?

B. Do you ever feel like you deserve more or deserve better?  
Please explain.

C. Why are wrong expectations problematic?

**6. It's common to become disappointed when things don't turn out the way we hoped. (Read I Kings 19)**

A. How did failed expectations make Elijah feel in I Kings 19:9-10?

**7. Every Christian is called to some type of ministry, whether officially or in their everyday lives:**

A. Why might it be said that the life of a minister is the most thankless job there is? (Hint: Think about how Elijah did not see the fruit of his work!)

B. Food for Thought: It takes time for fruit to grow and it takes even more time for fruit to ripen.

**8. We might even say that it takes “perseverance” for fruit to ripen.**

- A. How are we encouraged to stay the course no matter how long it takes to see God’s fruit? (See: James 1:2-6; II Peter 1:5-9)

**9. Mediate and journal about how the following beliefs play out in your life:**

- A. False Expectations: *“You were under the impression this would be easy! Why is God taking so long?”*
- B. Unmet Expectations: *“You had no idea this would take so long. Why is God not serving me the way He should?”*
- C. Wrong Expectations: *“You got what you were supposed to get, you just didn’t get what you thought you deserved! Why is God not satisfying me?”*
- D. Failed Expectations: *“Things didn’t turn out the way you thought they would, so you are discouraged and disappointed. Why is God not applauding me?”*