

CONSUMERISM IN THE WILDERNESS

The Old Testament Today
Banska Bystrica, 25th September 2022

Numbers 11:1-35 **Numbers 11:1** And the people complained in the hearing of the LORD about their misfortunes, and when the LORD heard it, his anger was kindled, and the fire of the LORD burned among them and consumed some outlying parts of the camp. ² Then the people cried out to Moses, and Moses prayed to the LORD, and the fire died down. ³ So the name of that place was called Taberah, because the fire of the LORD burned among them. ⁴ Now the rabble that was among them had a strong craving. And the people of Israel also wept again and said, "Oh that we had meat to eat!" ⁵ We remember the fish we ate in Egypt that cost nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic. ⁶ But now our strength is dried up, and there is nothing at all but this manna to look at." ⁷ Now the manna was like coriander seed, and its appearance like that of bdellium. ⁸ The people went about and gathered it and ground it in hand-mills or beat it in mortars and boiled it in pots and made cakes of it. And the taste of it was like the taste of cakes baked with oil. ⁹ When the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell with it. ¹⁰ Moses heard the people weeping throughout their clans, everyone at the door of his tent. And the anger of the LORD blazed hotly, and Moses was displeased. ¹¹ Moses said to the LORD, "Why have you dealt ill with your servant? And why have I not found favor in your sight, that you lay the burden of all this people on me?" ¹² Did I conceive all this people? Did I give them birth, that you should say to me, 'Carry them in your bosom, as a nurse carries a nursing child,' to the land that you swore to give their fathers?" ¹³ Where am I to get meat to give to all this people? For they weep before me and say, 'Give us meat, that we may eat.' ¹⁴ I am not able to carry all this people alone; the burden is too heavy for me. ¹⁵ If you will treat me like this, kill me at once, if I find favor in your sight, that I may not see my wretchedness." ¹⁶ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Gather for me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them, and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you. ¹⁷ And I will come down and talk with you there. And I will take some of the Spirit that is on you and put it on them, and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, so that you may not bear it yourself alone. ¹⁸ And say to the people, 'Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, and you shall eat meat, for you have wept in the hearing of the LORD, saying, "Who will give us meat to eat?" For it was better for us in Egypt." Therefore the LORD will give you meat, and you shall eat. ¹⁹ You shall not eat just one day, or two days, or five days, or ten days, or twenty days, ²⁰ but a whole month, until it comes out at your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you, because you have rejected the LORD who is among you and have wept before him, saying, "Why did we come out of Egypt?"'" ²¹ But Moses said, "The people among whom I am number six hundred thousand on foot, and you have said, 'I will give them meat, that they may eat a whole month!' ²² Shall flocks and herds be slaughtered for them, and be enough for them? Or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, and be enough for them?" ²³ And the LORD said to Moses, "Is the LORD's hand shortened? Now you shall see whether my word will come true for you or not." ²⁴ So Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD. And he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people and placed them around the tent. ²⁵ Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the Spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders. And as soon as the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied. But they did not continue doing it. ²⁶ Now two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad, and the other named Medad, and the Spirit rested on them. They were among those registered, but they had not gone out to the tent, and so they prophesied in the camp. ²⁷ And a young man ran and told Moses, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." ²⁸ And Joshua the son of Nun, the assistant of Moses from his youth, said, "My lord Moses, stop them." ²⁹ But Moses said to him, "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the LORD's people were prophets, that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!" ³⁰ And Moses and the elders of Israel returned to the camp. ³¹ Then a wind from the LORD sprang up, and it brought quail from the sea and let them fall beside the camp, about a day's journey on this side and a day's journey on the other side, around the camp, and about two cubits above the ground. ³² And the people rose all that day and all night and all the next day, and gathered the quail. Those who gathered least gathered ten homers. And they spread them out for themselves all around the camp. ³³ While the meat was yet between their teeth, before it was consumed, the anger of the LORD was kindled against the people, and the LORD struck down the people with a very great plague. ³⁴ Therefore the name of that place was called Kibroth-hattaavah, because there they buried the people who had the craving. ³⁵ From Kibroth-hattaavah the people journeyed to Hazeroth, a

Ταῦτα δὲ τύποι ἡμῶν ἐγενήθησαν, εἰς τὸ μὴ εἶναι ἡμᾶς ἐπιθυμητὰς κακῶν, καθὼς κάκεῖνοι ἐπεθύμησαν.

1Co 10:6 Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did.

Συμμιμηταί μου γίνεσθε, ἀδελφοί, καὶ σκοπεῖτε τοὺς οὕτω περιπατοῦντας καθῶς ἔχετε τύπον ἡμᾶς.¹⁸ πολλοὶ γὰρ περιπατοῦσιν οὐς πολλάκις ἔλεγον ὑμῖν, νῦν δὲ καὶ κλαίων λέγω, τοὺς ἐχθροὺς τοῦ σταυροῦ τοῦ Χριστοῦ,

Phil 3:17-18 Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us.¹⁸ For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ.

OUTLINE

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0. INTRODUCTION

0.1. THE PROBLEMS AFTER

- Can the Christian life be without problems?
- → **Nu 14:21-22** But truly, as I live, and as all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD,²² none of the men who have seen my glory and my signs that I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and yet have put me to the test these ten times and have not obeyed my voice
 - “1. Ex 14:10-12 At the Red Sea where it seemed that Pharaoh’s army would destroy them
 - 2. Ex 15:22-24 At Marah where they found bitter water
 - 3. Ex 16:1-3 In the Desert of Sin as they hungered
 - 4. Ex 16:19-20 In the Desert of Sin as they paid no attention to Moses concerning the storing of the manna until the morning
 - 5. Ex 16:27-30 In the Desert of Sin as they disregarded Moses concerning the gathering of the manna on the seventh day
 - 6. Ex 17:1-4 At Rephidim as they complained for water
 - 7. Ex 32:1-35 At Mount Sinai as Aaron led the people in making the golden calf
 - 8. Nu 11:1-3 At Taberah where the people raged against the Lord
 - 9. Nu 11:4-34 At Kibroth Hattaavah in the grumbling provoked by the rabble for quail
 - 10. Nu 14:1-3 At Kadesh in the Desert of Paran when the people refused to receive the good report of Joshua and Caleb but rather wished themselves dead.”¹

¹ <https://www.biola.edu/blogs/good-book-blog/2014/what-is-meant-by-these-ten-times-in-numbers-14-20-23>

0.2. COMPLAINTS

- “misfortunes” → **Matthew 6:25** “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?”
- Jude → **Jude 1:16** These are grumblers, malcontents, following their own sinful desires; they are loud-mouthed boasters, showing favoritism to gain advantage
- “into the hearing of the LORD” → too much(?); mentioning the NAME(?) → [you] have wept before him, saying, “Why did we come out of Egypt?”
- “if I do not walk in the life of faith, I am a slander to God” (CHAMBERS, *Not Knowing Where*)

0.3. THE FOOD PROBLEM

- „Láska ide cez žalúdok?“ → „social justice“
- Rome: *panem et circenses*...
- 1Cor 11 → **1Cor 11:20-22** When you come together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat. ²¹For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry, another gets drunk. ²²What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not.
- **idolatry** → **Acts 12:20-22** Now Herod was angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon, and they came to him with one accord, and having persuaded Blastus, the king's chamberlain, they asked for peace, because their country depended on the king's country for food. ²¹ On an appointed day Herod put on his royal robes, took his seat upon the throne, and delivered an oration to them. ²² And the people were shouting, "The voice of a god, and not of a man!"

[LEWIS *Screwtape* 17] The contemptuous way in which you spoke of gluttony as a means of catching souls, in your last letter, only shows your ignorance. One of the great achievements of the last hundred years has been to deaden the human conscience on that subject, so that by now you will hardly find a sermon preached or a conscience troubled about it in the whole length and breadth of Europe. This has largely been effected by concentrating all our efforts on gluttony of Delicacy, not gluttony of Excess.

- leadership improvement → Nu 11; Acts 6

1. TEMPTATION – LIMITATIONS

- consumerism → [Webster] “the theory that an increasing consumption of goods is economically desirable”
- manna → **Dt 8:3** And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD

1.1. THE FLESH

- dual nature of the Christian man
- food problem: embarrassing desires (garlic, cucumbers...)
 - Esau → birthright; Eli's sons → desecrating the offerings; John 6 (Jesus → king!)
 - Acts 6 → the first church inner problem **Acts 6:1** Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution.

1.2. MEMORIES

- idealized → remembering better things; forgetting God's deliverancies

1.3. SERIOUSNESS OF THE PROBLEM

- **Gula (gluttony)** Fornicatio (fornication, lust) Avaritia (avarice/greed) Superbia (hubris, pride) Tristitia (sorrow/despair/despondency) Ira (wrath) Vanagloria (vainglory) Acedia (sloth)
- (1) Pýcha, (2) Hněv, (3) Závist, (4) Nečistota, (5) **Obžerství**, (6) Lenost, (7) Lakomství
- → leadership (Moses, Church in Acts 6) → judgmental attitudes (Rom 14)
- [Billy Graham] Obžerstvi (gluttony) **Je to jeden z nejrozšířenějších hříchů mezi křestany.**

2. CHECK YOUR VALUES!

- behind "social justice" → self
- desires → **Ps 37:4** Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart.;
- **Ps 10:17** O LORD, you hear **the desire of the afflicted**; you will strengthen their heart; you will incline your ear

2.1. THIS WORLD

- secularism (secularised eschatology)
- worldliness, → consumerism; fulfillment *here and now...*

2.2. THE COMING WORLD

- spirituality shows in scarcity and austerity
- **Heb 6:5** have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the **powers of the age to come**

3. VICTORY

- Live **beyond the present moment.**

3.1. REMEMBER THE PAST

- **2Pt 1:9** For whoever lacks these qualities (virtues) is so nearsighted that he is blind, having **forgotten** that he was cleansed from his former sins.
- **Rev 2:4-5** But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. ⁵ **Remember** therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.

3.2. THINK OF THE FUTURE

- hope → **Heb 6:18-19** we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us. ¹⁹ We have this as a sure and **steadfast anchor** of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain,

3.3. SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE

- **Phil 2:14** Do all things without grumbling or questioning
 - fear of asceticism (history: often meritorious) → indulging desires of the flesh (protestantism)
 - → accepting difficulties (when necessary) without grumbling...
 - → simple lifestyle
 - suffering
- **Mt 9:15** The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will **fast**.
- **Acts 13:2** While they were **worshiping the Lord and fasting**, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.

4. TO REMEMBER

- Do not underestimate lower “animal” temptations of physical needs. Do not join those who complain.
- Your new life in Christ will be tested. How much do you value eternal hope?
- Train yourself in spiritual discipline to be prepared for difficult times without grumbling.