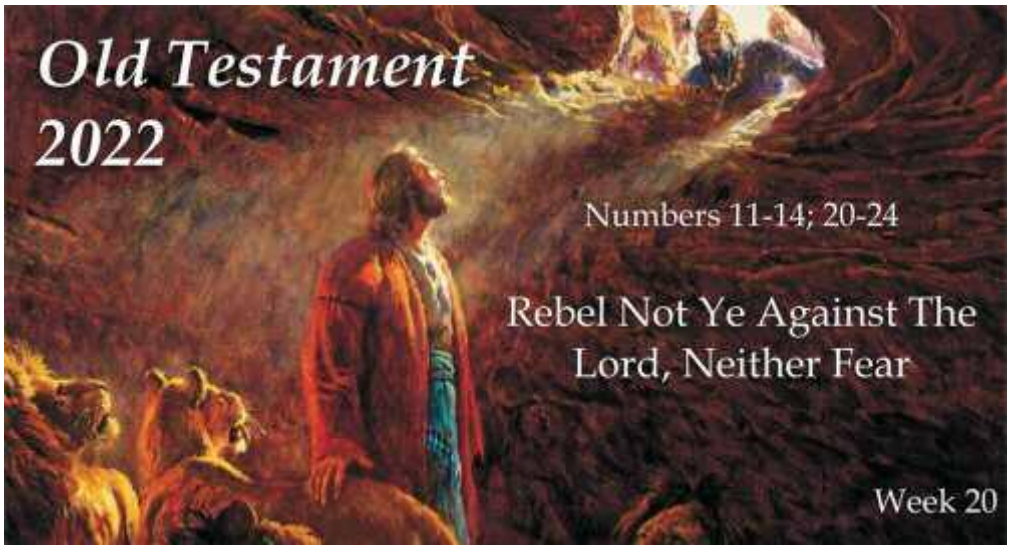

Week 20 is scheduled for study May 9-15, 2022. This week's lessons demonstrate that when we rebel against God we have reason to fear. When we don't rebel there is no reason to fear.

Day 1

This outline highlights some of the many valuable principles in the book of Numbers. Be open also to others the Spirit may help you see.

Numbers 11:11-17, 24-29; 12 - Revelation is available to all, but God guides His Church through His prophet.

There are a number of things about the latter-day Saints that set us apart from the rest of the world, but I would contend that chief among those differences should be that we have ready access to the Holy Spirit. Or at least we should have ready access to Him. That is, after all, the first privilege given to us when we make our first covenant with God.

In Moses' day only he had the Melchizedek priesthood among the children of Israel, but when he pleaded with the Lord for help with his calling to care for the people, the Lord took a portion of the spirit that was with Moses and shared that with 70 other men who were called to assist Moses in governing Israel. Think about that. When you do enough work that when you leave your position they have to replace you with 2 or 3 people, you feel justified in the exhaustion you felt at work. But Moses required 70 men to help him

with the millions of Israelites who were constantly getting themselves into trouble with the Lord. No wonder he asked the Lord to just kill him and get it over with.

What was special about the calling of these 70? It was that they were able to receive the Spirit. This made them special among all the camp of Israel. While these 68 men were receiving the portion of the spirit that rested with Moses, there were two who weren't at the Tabernacle at the time they were appointed, but were still out in the camp among the people. When the Spirit came upon them, the 68 started to prophesy, so too did the two who were out in the camp. This panicked some of the people, because only Moses was known to have that gift. In their fear they ran and told Moses to stop them from prophesying. Moses's response was "Enviest thou for my sake? would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them!"

The people didn't understand that this was the very thing the Lord wanted for all of His people, not just Moses. Moses was still His prophet, but what a blessing to have more than one person through whom inspiration could come! The original goal of the tables of stone Moses brought down from the mountain was to give the higher priesthood (with the gift of the Holy Ghost) to all of the men so all of their families could be blessed by the priesthood power in their homes. But since they were busy at the time worshiping a golden calf, the Lord gave them, instead, a law of physical performances to prepare them for the day (more than a thousand years later) that they would be ready to live by a higher standard. And even then, most of the Jews in Jerusalem rejected the gospel Christ brought to them, and the gospel had to be take to the gentiles to find a foothold in the world.

Day 2

This outline highlights some of the many valuable principles in the book of Numbers. Be open also to others the Spirit may help you see.

Numbers 13-14 - With faith in the Lord, I can have hope for the future.

The two spirits described in these chapters could be rendered as the spirit of doubt and the spirit of faith. Of the twelve men sent in to learn what they could of the land they were promised by the Lord, ten of them saw only the obstacles Israel would have to face. They did not include the Lord in their thinking. When they gave their report to the

their tribes, their reports were colored by their personal fear that those they had to face were too much for Israel to overcome. Only Caleb and Joshua came back and reported that with the Lord's help they would be triumphant over their foes.

The first ten saw giants, walled cities, and powerful armies. They had no faith in the Lord who brought them out of Egypt, the mightiest country in the world at that time. Despite all that the Lord did to deliver them from Egypt, without any help from Israel, they didn't give Him the benefit of the doubt that He could help them, even with their help, in defeating the armies of the giants and the people in the walled cities. These ten were engulfed in fear and doubt. They had no faith in the God that had been leading them on with one miracle after another for the last year or two. Only Caleb and Joshua looked at the miracles and said, 'Yes! We can do this!' They actually believed the Lord when He promised to fight their battles for them.

Joshua and Caleb didn't see the walls and the giants of the land as obstacles, but as opportunities for the Lord to prove to the people that He had their backs and would fulfill His promises to them. The spirit of faith is a spirit of hope and optimism. Unfortunately, two voices advocating faith among ten promoting failure weren't loud enough to inspire Israel to believe in their Lord. Hence the Lord's pronouncement that for every day the twelve were outside the camp exploring the land God had promised them, they would spend one year out in the wilderness, until every adult 20 and older was dead. They had complained that it would have been better had they died with their brethren in the wilderness before seeing the despair of this day, so He granted their wish.

It was only when they received what they asked for that they decided to exercise their faith and go to battle against the people of the land. It was too little too late, and the Lord was not with them, as Moses warned them, and they got trounced by the opposing army. The Lord made their original assessment of the armies of the land come true before sending them back out in the wilderness to serve out their time until a new generation was prepared to return and enter the promised land.

As a modern people, we sometimes pride ourselves as being practical and realistic about life. We see obstacles to our obedience to the Lord's directives and can fall into the trap Israel fell into, that of cutting the Lord out of the equation of life. They forgot that the Lord never gives a commandment we cannot live or fulfill, if we put our faith in

Him. We are Israel, just as much as those who physically walked out of Egypt thousands of years ago. The promises God makes to us are just as binding as those He made to them. All of God's promises are based on our willingness to exercise faith in Him and His ability and willingness to keep His promises to us. As long as we keep our focus on Christ, and do as God directs us, the miracles will flow in our individual lives, and for us as a people.

The Lord has a Promised Land for all of us. For ancient Israel it was a physical land flowing with milk and honey, symbols of prosperity, with images of comfort, safety, and happiness. For us, our Promised Land is eternal life, with our loved ones around us, and promises of eternal development and advancement. For both of us the active and deciding ingredient in our lives is our faith in Christ.

Day 3

This outline highlights some of the many valuable principles in the book of Numbers. Be open also to others the Spirit may help you see.

Numbers 21:4-9 - If I look to Jesus Christ in faith, He can heal me spiritually.

So many of these stories in the Bible are missing the key teaching lessons from their experience. In this story we are told that those who looked on the serpent of brass lived. What we aren't told, except through modern revelation, is that many in Israel refused to look at the serpent, because of the easiness of the way, and they died in their unbelief.

The lesson here is that looking to Christ, which is what the serpent represents, is easy. That is the whole point. It isn't rocket science. You don't need a degree in physics to believe in Christ. Anyone can do it. But precisely because it is easy, there are those who turn their heads away and refuse to believe. Mankind hasn't changed one iota in all these centuries. The basic tendencies of mankind are as they always have been.

I mentioned in earlier lessons that most of what happened during the life of Moses with the Israelites was a physical representation of the spiritual lessons that would happen later through Christ. The serpent on the pole is like Christ on the cross. The serpent,

though representative of the poisonous serpents that were killing the people, was given to them to heal them from the very bites that the physical serpents inflicted upon them. Christ, was raised up on the cross to save his people. He looked just like them, but came with "healing in his wings." All we have to do is look to him and be saved from the poisons in our lives.

We need to remember that God had to make the way to be saved from sin easy enough that absolutely all of His children could take advantage of the way to escape spiritual death. This is what Christ offers us, the way to escape spiritual death, eternal separation from God. By focusing our lives on Christ's example of how to live and behave, we can be forgiven of our sins and become worthy, through the changes repentance brings, to return to live with our Father once again.

Day 4

This outline highlights some of the many valuable principles in the book of Numbers. Be open also to others the Spirit may help you see.

Numbers 22-24 - I can follow God's will, even if others try to persuade me not to.

If you only read the story of Balaam here, he comes off as quite the faithful prophet, though the manual is careful not to call him one, that is what I would call him. He speaks with the Lord on a regular basis, and is worthy of revelation on demand. He demonstrated this ability over and over again. The real story that is not presented in these chapters, is given to us elsewhere in the scriptures.

Evidently, since Balaam could not curse Israel, lest he, himself be cursed, in order to get the promised treasures and payment that was really most important to him, he betrayed Israel by telling the king how he could cause Israel to curse itself. He actually thought that he could betray the Lord by using a technicality and get away with it.

I suggest you read this article I wrote for the Sunday School Old Testament study a few years back *Avoiding Balaam's Sin*.

FHE/Personal Study

Numbers 12:3 - Meekness

Rather than repeat myself unnecessarily, I will just refer you to this article written a few years back entitled, *Meek or Weak?*

Click the link below to

print a PDF copy of the article.

OT20-2022 - Rebel Not Ye Against the Lord, Neither Fear

Week 20