

ST. ANDREW'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

FLAWED MASTERPIECE



wisdom from
ancient voices

WEEK 4



FLAWED MASTERPIECE WEEK FOUR

This week we are doing something a little different with our study guide. Over the next few weeks, we will be teaching some hermeneutical practices (that's just a fancy phrase for "bible study tools") to dive deeper into the biblical text. This week we are going to take a look at how to use commentaries. Watch the video and then continue.

WATCH THIS VIDEO FIRST:



DO THIS PART SECOND:

Take a look at Numbers 11:1-34 and read the text while asking these questions:

- Who are the main characters in the story?
- Where is God at work?
- What is confusing, surprising, or unique?

As we look at this passage, we want to point out something "unique" in verse 17. God says he will take some of the "power" that is on Moses and place it upon the called elders so they may be empowered to carry the burdens of the nation of Israel.

Opening Questions

- What does verse 17 tell you about spiritual authority?
- What happens to leaders when the work of carrying each other's burdens isn't shared?
- What can you do to be part of the solution in your church context?

**SEE BELOW FOR ONE
COMMENTARY ON
THIS TOPIC.**

Moses is directed to nominate the persons, Num. 11:16. The people were too hot and heady and tumultuous to be entrusted with the election; Moses must please himself in the choice, that he may not afterwards complain. The number he is to choose is seventy men, according to the number of the souls that went down into Egypt. He must choose such as he knew to be elders, that is, wise and experienced men. Those that had acquitted themselves best, as rulers of thousands and hundreds (Exod. 18:25), purchase to themselves now this good degree. "Choose such as thou knowest to be elders indeed, and not in name only, officers that execute their office." We read of the same number of elders (Exod. 24:1) that went up with Moses to Mount Sinai, but they were distinguished only for that occasion, these for a perpetuity; and, according to this constitution, the Sanhedrim, or great council of the Jews, which in after ages sat at Jerusalem, and was the highest court of judgment among them, consisted of seventy men. Our Saviour seems to have had an eye to it in the choice of seventy disciples, who were to be assistants to the apostles, Luke 10:1-24

-Matthew Henry Commentary,
biblegateway.com/resources/matthew-henry/Num.11.16-Num.11.23



DISCUSS WITH YOUR GROUP

Often in passages, there is a “glitch” where things don’t seem to add up. This is an intentional writing practice of ancient Jewish authors. They would write the story so that something would not seemingly make sense, causing the reader to ask deeper questions about the story. For us—thousands of years later—it’s sometimes hard to know how to understand the cultural or theological nuances, and that’s where a good commentary can be helpful.

- What would you say is the “glitch” (something confusing, surprising, or unique) in this passage?
- Why do you think the author wrote the story in such a way?
- Why did the author interrupt the story of the quail and complaints to talk about the calling of the 70 elders?



AFTER you have taken the time to talk through this with the group, consult the commentary. Be sure to take your time as sometimes we can be quick to jump straight to “answers,” missing the beauty of discovering God in the process of asking deeper questions.

"The Anger of the LORD
burned against the people,
and he struck them with a
severe plague."

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COMMENTARY 2

In vv 31-34 the [author] brings the wheel full circle and tells of the "action" concerning the quail. The gift turned out to be a terrible means of judgment, involving a plague and death for the rabble whose inordinate desire is apparently judged all the more severely through their deaths. It is the blindness and unbelief of these false roads to security that most concern the author. Mere sensual desire, or the more sophisticated hankering after Egypt, are both evidence of lack of faith.

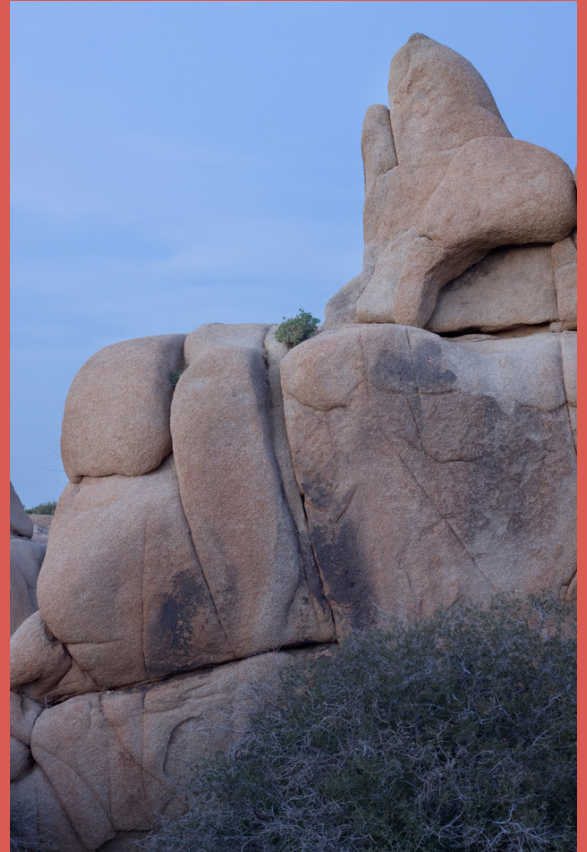
Philip J. Budd, Numbers, vol. 5 of Word Biblical
Commentary. Accordance electronic ed. (Nashville:
Thomas Nelson, 1984), 129-130



FINAL THOUGHTS

Take a final few minutes to apply this passage to your lives:

- What would God call you to do related to supporting each other in your ministry efforts?
- How should we go to God in prayer when we ask him of things?
- Should our process of going before God be different than what the Israelites did, given we now have access to the Holy Spirit all the time through Jesus?



**Here are some online commentaries
you can consider:**

Free:

biblegateway.com/resources/commentaries/
blueletterbible.org/study.cfm

Paid:

accordancebible.com
logos.com