

Numbers 11:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then Moses heard the people weep throughout their families, every man in the door of his tent: and the anger of the LORD was kindled greatly; Moses also was displeased.

Analysis

This verse describes Moses hearing 'the people weep throughout their families' (Hebrew *habocheh lemishpechotav*, הָבֹכֶה לְמִשְׁפְּחוֹתָו), indicating organized, communal complaint—not isolated individuals but entire family groups engaging in public lamentation. The phrase 'every man in the door of his tent' suggests deliberate display: they positioned themselves visibly to ensure their complaint would be heard and noticed. This wasn't private grief but public protest against God's provision.

The text states 'the anger of the LORD was kindled greatly,' emphasizing the severity of divine displeasure. God's wrath wasn't arbitrary but righteous response to brazen ingratitude. The people had food (manna), protection (pillar of cloud/fire), leadership (Moses), and God's presence (tabernacle)—yet they wept as though abandoned. Their complaint wasn't about genuine need but about preference—they wanted Egyptian food (verse 5), not the bread God provided.

'Moses also was displeased' reveals the burden leadership under rebellious people brings. The godly leader grieves both for God's dishonor and for the people's spiritual danger. Moses' displeasure wasn't merely personal offense but holy indignation at sin combined with pastoral grief. This anticipates Christ's grief over Jerusalem's hardness (Matthew 23:37) and the apostolic burden for wayward churches (2 Corinthians 11:28-29).

Historical Context

The public nature of the complaint ('every man in the door of his tent') indicates this was coordinated mass protest, not spontaneous individual dissatisfaction. Ancient Near Eastern cultures recognized the tent door as the place of public interaction and decision-making (compare Abraham at his tent door, Genesis 18:1). The family-by-family organization suggests the complaint spread through tribal and clan structures, making it a national movement rather than isolated murmuring. This public rebellion directly challenged Moses' leadership and God's provision, creating a crisis that required divine intervention (verses 16-17).

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does the organized, public nature of Israel's complaint illustrate how individual sin can become corporate rebellion when unchecked?
2. What does Moses' displeasure alongside God's anger teach about the proper pastoral response to congregation sin—neither excusing it nor abandoning the people?

Interlinear Text

וַיִּשְׁמַע ע	הַעֲמָד מִשְׁמַר אֶת	בְּכָה בְּכָה	לְמַשְׁפָּחָת וְ	אֲוֹשֶׁ
heard	Moses	H853	the people	weep

מְאָד יְהוָה אֶרְאָה וְלֹא תִּחְלֹת
greatly of the LORD and the anger of the LORD
was kindled and the anger of his tent in the door
H3966 H3068 H639 H2734 H168 H6607

רָע:	מֹשֶׁה	וּבְנֵי	י
H5869	Moses		
		H4872	

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 78:21 (References Lord): Therefore the LORD heard this, and was wroth: so a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel;

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