

Numbers 20:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the people chode with Moses, and spake, saying, Would God that we had died when our brethren died before the LORD!

Analysis

The people's accusation—'would God that we had died when our brethren died before the LORD'—expresses desire to have perished in Korah's judgment. This reveals envy of the dead, preferring judgment to trusting God through difficulty. Their complaint conflates God's judgment with random misfortune, showing distorted perspective on divine providence and human mortality.

Historical Context

They reference either Korah's rebellion (ch.16), the plague (16:41-50), or both. This death-wish echoes their parents' generation (14:2), showing how unbelief's vocabulary repeats across generations without learning from the past.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does ungrateful complaining distort your memory of God's past faithfulness?

2. What causes people to prefer death over trusting God through temporary hardship?

Interlinear Text

וְיִרְאֶב	וְעַם	מֹשֶׁה	לְאָמֵר	לְאָמֵר	וְיִלְאָמֵד
chode	And the people	H5973	with Moses	and spake	and spake
H7378	H5971		H4872	H559	H3863

בְּגַעַת	אֲחִינוּ	לְפָנֵי	יְהִיָּה:	בְּגַעַת
died	died	when our brethren	before	the LORD

H1478	H1478	H251	H6440	H3068
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Additional Cross-References

Exodus 17:2 (References Lord): Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me? wherefore do ye tempt the LORD?

Numbers 16:49 (Parallel theme): Now they that died in the plague were fourteen thousand and seven hundred, beside them that died about the matter of Korah.

Numbers 11:1 (References Lord): And when the people complained, it displeased the LORD: and the LORD heard it; and his anger was kindled; and the fire of the LORD burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp.