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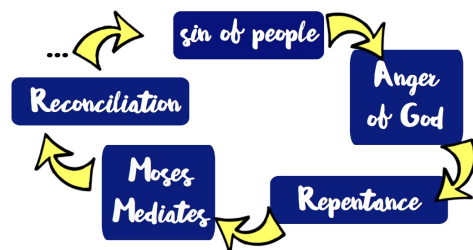
This week at Magdalen Road we continued our Numbers series from chapters 11-12 as the people begin their initial journey towards the Promised Land. It's a snapshot of camp life and it's not a pretty one.

We explored the chapters under 3 broad headings of the 3 sin-cycles a the people complain, God, 2 questions and objections that we might have and then finally 4 applications (2 challenges and 2 encouragements).

3 Sin-Cycles:

See the diagram attached - slightly oversimplified - but helpful nevertheless to see what's going on at a broader level.

11v1-3: General Complaints
11v4-35: Complaining about Food
(with a complication in the middle)
12v1-16: Complaining about Leadership



2 Questions

We questioned the fact that this seems like a strange picture of God who is both angry with his people and also reliant upon Moses to mediate for him. We noted that God is real and really angry with sin (as is graphically seen in these verses), but that he's also kind and gracious in providing Moses as the mediator (and later Jesus and the cross).

4 Applications. (2 Challenges and 2 Encouragements...)

1. Lest we think we're not like them, we complain and sin - like them. Our propensity to complain is extraordinary...just like theirs. We probably need to repent.

2. Sometimes in scripture God judges people by giving them what they want as per the Quail (11v19-20 - see also a king in the Old Testament). We noted also the cycles in Romans 1 that show God giving humanity over to our foolish desires and so being judged

by him.

3. In Jesus we have - the Prophet promised like Moses (Deut 18, Acts 3v22) - an eternal mediator (eg 1 Tim 2v5-6). It's clear as we read the chapters that one way to disrupt the cycle is to have a mediator who is constantly at work - we have Jesus who died for our sin to bring forgiveness and reconciliation.

4. We all have the Holy Spirit - another way that the rebellion cycle gets disrupted is by God answering Moses' 'wish' in 11v29 for all God's people to receive the Holy Spirit. At Pentecost God answered that prayer, pouring out his Spirit upon his people, so that now we don't have to sin - in the same way that they did.

Here are some thoughts for questions for your group - as always feel free to adapt as appropriate

What do you remember so far from Numbers? Recap last week...

Try and map the sin-complaint cycle onto verses from the 3 sections as best you can - where doesn't it work? Why do you think the people (often) name a place after the events that happened there? Would we?!

What would you say to a friend who said "isn't God just angry in these verses - i like the God of the NT better?"

Have a think about each of the 4 applications mapped out:
Where are we tempted to complain like them...?
How does God sometimes judge by giving what people want...? Does he do this for Christians now do you think?
Why is it so important for us to have an eternal mediator...?
How does God answering 11v29 potentially change the cycle...?