

WHO IS IN CHARGE?

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August 5, 2018

Numbers 13:25-33

1. The life of every Christian and every church will be defined by how this question is honestly answered.
2. God should be in charge, but must most of the time He is not.
3. Recently I read a classified ad in the Biblical Recorder that was placed there by a church looking for a pastor.
4. The church defined itself as a congregation led church; a statement that should cause any potential pastoral candidate to be concerned.
5. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament are clear related to the fact that Jesus Christ is God and the Head of His Body, the Church universal and local, along with all of its individual members.
 - a. Isaiah 45:20-25

"Gather yourselves and come; draw near together, you fugitives of the nations; they have no knowledge, who carry about their wooden idol and pray to a god who cannot save. 21 "Declare and set forth your case; indeed, let them consult together. Who has announced this from of old? Who has long since declared it? is it not I, the Lord? And there is no other God besides Me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none except Me. 22 "Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other. 23 "**I have sworn by Myself, the word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness and will not turn back, that to Me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear allegiance. 24 "They will say of Me, 'Only in the Lord are righteousness and strength. Men will come to Him, and all who were angry at Him will be put to shame. 25 "In the Lord all the offspring of Israel will be justified and will glory."**
 - b. Phil 2:5-11

Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. 8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 **For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**
6. No church or individual Christian has the right to usurp the authority of God and His Christ.
7. With these thoughts in mind let's look at what happens when men rule instead of God.

I. God's intention.

A. God's intention related to Israel was clearly stated by God on several occasions.

1. God told Moses what He was going to do. Ex 3:7-8

The Lord said, "I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have given heed to their cry because of their taskmasters, for I am aware of their sufferings. 8 "So I have come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite."

2. Moses was to tell the people what God intended to do. Ex 3:16-17

"Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, 'The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, "I am indeed concerned about you and what has been done to you in Egypt. 17 "So I said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite, to a land flowing with milk and honey.'"

3. God spoke and told the people Who He was and what He had done. Ex 20:1-3

Then God spoke all these words, saying, "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. 3 "You shall have no other gods before Me."

4. What is God's intention for you and me?

a. Rom 8:28-30

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. 29 **For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;** 30 and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

b. Phil 1:3-7

I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, 4 always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all, 5 in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now. 6 **For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.**

II. Man's contention.

A. While camped at the base of Mt. Sinai God prepared His people for the second part of His plan for them-to bring them into the Promised Land.

B. The Law was given, the Tabernacle was built, furnished, and erected, the Priesthood was instituted, the camp was arranged, directions were given as to how it would move, and a system of communication was instituted.

C. Finally the time came to move to the border of the Promised Land. Num 10:11-14
Now in the second year, in the second month, on the twentieth of the month, the cloud was lifted from over the tabernacle of the testimony; 12 and the sons of Israel set out on their journeys from the wilderness of Sinai. Then the cloud settled down in the wilderness of Paran. 13 So they moved out for the first time according to the commandment of the Lord through Moses.

D. In chapter 13 we read that God instructed Moses to send 12 spies to spy out the land that God intended to give to the sons of Israel.

NOTE: What is not mentioned here is that that this command was given because the people were reluctant to possess their possession. Deut 1:19-28

"Then we set out from Horeb, and went through all that great and terrible wilderness which you saw on the way to the hill country of the Amorites, just as the Lord our God had commanded us; and we came to Kadesh-barnea. 20 "I said to you, '**You have come to the hill country of the Amorites which the Lord our God is about to give us. 21 'See, the Lord your God has placed the land before you; go up, take possession, as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has spoken to you. Do not fear or be dismayed.'**

22 "Then all of you approached me and said, 'Let us send men before us, that they may search out the land for us, and bring back to us word of the way by which we should go up and the cities which we shall enter.' 23 "The thing pleased me and I took twelve of your men, one man for each tribe. 24 "They turned and went up into the hill country, and came to the valley of Eshcol and spied it out. 25 "Then they took some of the fruit of the land in their hands and brought it down to us; and they brought us back a report and said, 'It is a good land which the Lord our God is about to give us.'

26 "Yet you were not willing to go up, but rebelled against the command of the Lord your God; 27 and you grumbled in your tents and said, 'Because the Lord hates us, He has brought us out of the land of Egypt to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites to destroy us.'

E. The people rebelled against the command of the Lord because 10 of the 12 spies discouraged the people by bringing an evil report.

NOTE: Those who lead the church should be God-appointed and God-anointed men. Agreement should be sought from the entire congregation, but no church will be blessed that does not follow the lead of its God-appointed leaders.

III. God's intervention.

A. God declared that none of the men twenty years and older, who had seen God's glory and God's signs in Egypt and in the Wilderness, would get to enter the Promised Land.

B. All of the people were sentenced to wander in the Wilderness for forty years.

C. The ten spies who brought an evil report died by a plague before the Lord, while Joshua and Caleb were promised an inheritance one day.

NOTE: No church and no individual Christian will be blessed when it or they refuse to believe and obey God.

APPLICATION

1. There is a very sad passage of Scripture found in Deuteronomy 1:2-3.

It is eleven days' journey from Horeb by the way of Mount Seir to Kadesh-barnea. 3

In the fortieth year, on the first day of the eleventh month, Moses spoke to the children of Israel, according to all that the Lord had commanded him to give to them, after he had defeated Sihon the king of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon, and Og the king of Bashan, who lived in Ashtaroth and Edrei.

2. Because of unbelief an eleven day journey took forty years.

3. Sadly many professed believers in the Lord Jesus Christ never experience the life of progress and victory that is promised to them by God.

4. The problem is that they have never fully submitted to the lordship of Jesus Christ, and until they do their lives will resemble the wilderness wanderings of the Jewish people. 2 Corinthians 4:5

“For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus’ sake.”