

# BETWEEN THE LINES

## *A Deeper Look...*

### #975- DIVINE NEGOTIATIONS: **Bargaining With God**

**The Children Complain:** As we have discussed in our radio broadcast there is an incredible contrast between the apparent treatment of the people of Israel and the response of the Lord to His chosen leader, Moses. We know that Moses was punished after only one failure while the Lord seemed to exhibit extreme patience with multiplied failures with the people. Let's take a look at some of those events...

- Exodus 15: It's understandable how being hot, tired, and thirsty will make you irritable but these people are questioning the God who just recently turned the Nile to blood and parted the Red Sea before them. The Lord was hoping for one leap of faith where they might say, "We don't see it now but this God has power over water and we will wait!"
- Exodus 16: Again, a nagging hunger will take an otherwise civilized person and cause him to do irrational things but this was another opportunity for the people to express faith based on the previous evidence of their God.
- Exodus 17: Here we go with the water again. (These people don't seem to learn any faster than I do!)
- Numbers 14: "The land is filled with giants!" So what? Doesn't this sound like a very immature, childish response? Don't you think that within a few minutes the giants went from being "X" feet tall to being "XXXX" feet tall? Don't you know that human nature takes it from being a portion of the population to being 97% of everyone on the other side of the border? We really do tend to "horrible-ize" things that we don't understand or things that we fear.
- Numbers 16: The rebellion begins in the hearts of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. Korah is dissatisfied because he feels he's "every bit as much a Levite as Aaron!" and the other two are predisposed to frustration with the status quo as they are from the tribe of Reuben. Reuben was the oldest son and should have had all the privilege of the birthright but lost it in Genesis 49.
- Numbers 16: A ground swell of complaint begins to erupt as the people express dissatisfaction with the treatment of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.
- Numbers 17: Even after all the evidence of the Lord's desire there are some who still question the order of things and they complain about Aaron's position.
- Numbers 20: Here we go with the water again...

**In Conclusion:** All of this, and Moses receives the pronouncement of judgment for one single failure. Apparently the Lord really does hold leadership to a different standard.

**The Experience of Theophany:** Here's a partial listing of those who were allowed to have "a view of God" in a unique way in the Scriptures...

- Genesis 5- Enoch
- Genesis 22- Abraham
- Genesis 32- Jacob
- Exodus 34- Moses
- I Kings 19- Elijah
- Isaiah 6- Isaiah
- Mark 1- John the Baptist
- Luke 2- Simeon
- John 21- Peter (in contrast to events of the crucifixion night)

- Acts 8 - Saul/Paul
- Revelation 1 - John

**In Conclusion:** This is just a sampling of the life-changing moments of exchange where a person views God in a light they'd not seen before. It's a fun study... why not dig into it more deeply for yourself?

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**A King Who Negotiated:** A reading of the parallel passages of II Kings 18-20 and II Chronicles 29-32 tell the biography of Hezekiah, one of the truly noble kings of God's people. It's fun to read those passages and see how richly God blessed this man during his reign.

Here's an overview of the life of one of Judah's very best...

- He chooses to serve the Lord.
- The king inspires the priests to arise to the high calling of their work again.
- He purges the city of Jerusalem from its pagan influences.
- The temple service is re instituted for the honor of the Lord.
- All the people (even northern tribes) are invited to the Passover celebration.
- The Passover is so magnificent that they decide to extend it another week.
- Hezekiah continues to cleanse the city of the old desecrations.
- The king overthrows the incursions of the Philistines and drives them back home.
- He stops the tribute that has been paid to Assyria... Assyria doesn't take it lightly.
- There are two confrontations with Sennecharib and he is, eventually, annihilated.
- The word is delivered to Hezekiah that it is "time to die".
- Hezekiah pleads for life extension and God defers to the king's will.
- Babylon sends emissaries to discover the secret of a king who succeeds so quickly.
- Hezekiah forgets his priorities and seeks to impress Babylon with his own values.
- Babylonians return home with visions of Hezekiah's gold... not his God.
- Hezekiah dies.
- Babylon returns for the gold.

**In Conclusion:** It's sad that the only failure recorded against him comes after the time when he felt he had to negotiate with God over the will of the Lord. How differently would the story have read if he would have accepted the apparent will of the Lord at that time?

Better yet, what if he had said to Babylon, "*You need to learn about our God. Let me teach you...*"