

YOUR GOD IS TOO SMALL

Hebrews 10:26-31

INTRODUCTION

- A. In 1961, J.B. Phillips wrote a small book, “Your God is too Small”.
 - 1. The idea – many notions of God which are inadequate to describe our God.
 - 2. Our ideas are flawed, so behavior toward Him is flawed.
 - 3. God, a benevolent “grandfather”, we take His mercy for granted, and overlook His judgment.
 - 4. See God as a stern and harsh disciplinarian, emphasis on punishment and overlook His grace.
- B. God – a bigger version of man.
 - 1. Creating God in our own image.
 - 2. He thinks, reacts, and feels like us.
 - 3. We have become the yardstick.
 - 4. Our worship becomes worship of ourselves.
- C. God is not that small.
 - 1. God’s “holiness” stresses His separateness from anything else.
 - 2. We can’t put God in a box that works for us.
- D. The Israelites tried to put God in a box they understood.
 - 1. Major purpose of Numbers – God must be treated with respect and reverence.
 - 2. Not a God of convenience, but of power and authority.

I. UNDERESTIMATING GOD’S POWER, ch. 13 & 14.

- A. Coming into Canaan.
 - 1. God’s promises concerning Canaan:
 - a. It would be a bountiful land, Ex. 3:8, 17; 13:5.
 - b. He would give this land to Abraham and descendants, Gen. 12:7; 17:8.
 - 2. Choosing and commissioning the 12 spies.
 - a. Num. 13:2, 17-20.
 - b. God never intended the spies pass judgment on whether the land could be taken.
 - c. They were merely to see how good the land was and to determine the best way to take it.
 - 3. The report of the spies to the people – fake news!
 - a. The land was bountiful, Nu. 13:27.
 - b. But it could not be taken, vs. 31-33.
- B. The Reaction of the People.
 - 1. These people had seen the power of God.
 - a. The 10 plagues.
 - b. The parting of the Red Sea.
 - c. The miraculous provision of food and water.
 - d. The presence of God at Mt. Sinai.
 - 2. Yet, they forgot God’s power when confronted with the reports about the people of Canaan.
 - a. Num. 14:1-4, negative response.
 - b. Their God was too small.**
- C. The Response of God.
 - 1. Num. 14:10b-12.
 - a. “How long will these people treat me with contempt?” [NIV]
 - b. Moses has to intercede in their behalf, vss. 13-19.

2. Num. 14:20-23.
 - a. 40 years of wandering in the wilderness – one year for each day of the spies journey.
 - b. The unfaithful spies are struck down and killed by a plague (vs. 37) – all but Joshua and Caleb.

II. USURPING GOD’S LEADERSHIP, ch. 16.

A. The Rebellion of Korah.

1. Num. 16:1-3.
 - a. Korah was first cousin to Moses and Aaron, Ex. 2:1; 6:18.
 - b. As descendants of Kohath, Korah and his immediate relatives had the highest and most sacred duties besides those carried out by Moses and Aaron, Num. 4.
2. The reason for the rebellion: Korah felt he should have a leadership role equal to that of Moses and Aaron, vs. 3.
 - a. He forgot that God chose these men – they were God’s men.
3. 250 men rose up with Korah against Moses and Aaron, v. 2.
4. **Their God was too small.** “*You have gone too far*”, 16:3 [NIV].

B. The Reaction of Moses.

1. Num. 16:5-7.
 - a. Notice the emphasis on God choosing His own leaders.
 - i. “...*the Lord will show...*”, vs. 5.
 - ii. “*The man He chooses...*”
 - iii. “*The man the Lord chooses...*”, vs. 7.
 - b. It is God who chooses leaders for His people. They are not self-chosen. To rebel against them is to rebel against God.
 - c. “*You Levites have gone too far*”, 16:7b [NIV].
2. A literal “trial by fire”, vss. 15-19.
 - a. Korah and his followers are to put fire in their censers and draw near to God.
 - b. Aaron will do the same.
 - c. God will show who is to serve Him as high priest.

C. The Response of God.

1. The next morning:
 - a. Korah and his followers gather at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting, vs. 19.
 - b. Moses warns the Israelites to move away:
 - i. The ground opens under Korah and his family and swallows them alive, vss. 31-34.
 - ii. Fire comes out from the Lord and consumes the 250 men who rebelled with Korah, vs. 35.
2. **“These men have treated the Lord with contempt”**, vs. 30b [NIV].

III. TAKING GOD’S CREDIT, ch. 20.

A. The People Complain Once More.

1. They are at the end of their 40 years of wandering.
 - a. All that time, God has supplied them with quail and manna – they’ve fed miraculously.
 - b. Num. 20:2-5 – in spite of everything, they do not trust God to provide water.
2. **Their God was too small.**

B. Moses’ Reaction.

1. Num. 20:6-12.
2. Moses is fed up with complaining Israelites.
 - a. How many times has he heard this same song? (N. 14:21-23, 10x)

- b. They never seem to learn.
- 3. Impatience and fatigue result in sin.
 - a. Rather than speaking to the rock, Moses strikes it with his staff – twice.
 - b. Rather than giving God glory for making water flow from a rock, Moses includes himself in the credits – “*Must we bring forth water...*”
- 4. For one brief, unguarded moment, **Moses’ God was too small.**

CLOSING

- A. The Israelites miscalculated God on a number of occasions.
 - 1. They underestimated His power.
 - 2. They rebelled against His leadership.
 - 3. They horned in on His credit.
 - 4. In each case, God protected His honor.
- B. How Big is Your God?**
 - 1. Have we made Him into our image?
 - 2. Our way of thinking and feeling?