

## Moving Forward, Looking Back

A rearview mirror is a very handy thing. Most automobiles are equipped with one or more of them. By letting you see the area behind and beside your vehicle, rearview mirrors help you change lanes and make turns safely. It would be difficult to drive without a rearview mirror.

As helpful as rearview mirrors are, they are not all you need to drive safely: you must see what is **ahead**. Have you ever tried to drive looking only in the rearview mirror? The result would be disastrous! It is impossible to drive forward while only looking backward. The same is true for walking – if you walk forward while looking backward you are sure to run into a wall.

In this lesson you will see that the Israelites left Mount Sinai and began traveling to the Promised Land. Unfortunately, however, some of them started looking back to things they enjoyed in Egypt. This caused the people to stray off course and run into trouble.

**Num. 10:11**      What happened on the 20<sup>th</sup> day of the 2<sup>nd</sup> month of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year after they left Egypt (early May, 1444 B.C.)?

What did this mean (see Lev. 9:21)?

**Num. 10:12**      God, through the pillar of cloud, led the Israelites to leave \_\_\_\_\_ and go to \_\_\_\_\_.

**Num. 10:13**      “And they first took their \_\_\_\_\_ according to the commandment of the \_\_\_\_\_ by the hand of \_\_\_\_\_.”

All the tribes set out in order, as God instructed in chapters 2 – 4.

**Num. 10:33**      How far did they go into the wilderness?

**Num. 10:34**      How did God lead them?

After spending eleven months at Mount Sinai, the children of Israel were finally on their way to Canaan. All their needs were met: God gave them food every day, they had a beautiful new worship facility, and they had an orderly method of travel. God’s presence was evident in the pillar of cloud and they traveled under His direction and protection. What more could they want? Surely these ancient Israelites must have been happy, contented people.

**Num. 11:1**      What did the people do?

How did God feel about this?

What did He do?

**Num. 11:2-3**      What did Moses do for them?

They named the place Taberah (“*burning*”).

**Num. 11:4**      What did the people lust for?

**Num. 11:5** What did they think back upon?

**Num. 11:6** How did they feel about God's manna?

It is a dangerous thing to disdain and reject the Lord's provision, desiring instead the things of the world.

**Num. 11:18** What did God say He would give them?

**Num. 11:19-20** How long did He say they would eat it?

How were they going to feel about it?

Why was God doing this?

**Num. 11:31** What did God give them?

**Num. 11:32** What did the people do?

**Num. 11:33** While they were eating "the \_\_\_\_\_ of the LORD was kindled against the people, and the LORD smote the people with a very great \_\_\_\_\_."

**Num. 11:34** They named the place "*graves of lust.*" What did they do there?

**Num. 11:35** The Israelites continued their journey.

**Concluding Thoughts:** The verses you just read include the first mention of graves on the Israelites' journey to the Promised Land – but it won't be the last. Sadly, their path through the wilderness was marked by thousands of graves – the graves of the disobedient.

Even though the ancient Israelites experienced God's presence, provision, and protection every day, they kept looking back to the pleasures and attractions of Egypt. They were free, happy, and prosperous in the wilderness; but incredibly, they looked with longing back to the time when they were slaves in Egypt.

Do you realize Christians often do the same thing? Even though we have been set free from sin's bondage, we often look back with desire to the things of the world: the very things that enslaved us before we came to know Christ. It is like driving while looking only in the rearview mirror – you are sure to crash!

The Bible says it this way: "*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world*" (1 John 2:15-16).

Confess your desire for worldly things. Turn away from those things and follow God forward toward godliness and holiness.

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**Project:** Memorize **1 John 2:15**. Resist the temptations of the world. Keep your eyes focused on the Lord and His Word.