

Murmuring (Num. 14)

Part 1

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[00:00:01] The verses that I wish to bring to your attention this evening are in the New Testament.

But I was wondering during the week whether I would first of all read some verses from the Old Testament.

And remarkably enough, I was going to read some verses from the 14th of Numbers. And believe it or not, I was going to read the very verses that our brother omitted this afternoon. So I think after all, I will read those verses. Perhaps the Lord has a message for us from this 14th of Numbers.

And so I will read the verses that were omitted from Numbers 14.

I think you'll see later how they bear upon the verses we should consider in the New Testament.

[00:01:05] Verse 26, And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, How long shall I bear with this evil congregation which murmur against me?

I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me.

Say unto them, As truly as I live, saith the Lord, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you.

Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness, and all that were numbered of you according to your whole number from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me.

[00:02:12] Doubtless ye shall not come into the land concerning which I swear to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun. But your little ones, which he said should be of prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised.

But as for you, your carcasses, they shall fall in the wilderness.

And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness. After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise. [00:03:12] I, the Lord, have said, I will surely do it unto all this evil congregation that are gathered together against me, and in this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die. And the men which Moses sent to search the land, who returned and made all the

congregation to murmur against him by bringing up a slander upon the land, even those men that did bring up the evil report upon the land died by the plague before the Lord. But Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of the men that went to search the land, live still. And Moses told these sayings unto all the children of Israel, and the people mourned greatly.

[00:04:09] You see that those verses show how very grievous and simple a thing in God's sight is murmuring.

Now I want to read the first few verses of the sixth chapter of Acts.

The sixth chapter of Acts.

And in those days when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations.

Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God and serve tables.

[00:05:17] Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.

And the same pleased the whole multitude, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochris, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicholas, a proselyte of Antioch, [00:06:08] whom they set before the apostles, and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them. And the word of God increased, and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly, and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

The early chapters of the book of Acts inform us of the progress of the early church after the day of Pentecost.

So great was the power of the Spirit of God working through the apostles that the early church went from strength to strength, [00:07:10] gaining not only in numbers, but giving a witness before all men that was startling, and which was also attractive, because great numbers were added to the faith.

And then from chapter 5 onwards, for the next two chapters at any rate, we are told some of the things which threatened the early church, which threatened to spoil the testimony, and to come in and hinder this work of God.

[00:08:01] And in the beginning of chapter 5, you have the startling case of Ananias and Sapphira, who were guilty of lying, and of hypocrisy, and of acting together for that which was not for the glory of Christ, but which was for their own self-exaltation.

And we are distinctly told that this was the work of Satan. Why hath Satan filled thy heart to do this thing?

It was the enemy's first great attempt to come in and ruin the church, and he attacked them in that

which was particularly beautiful, and that was their love one for another, their care for those who were poor in this world's goods.

[00:09:16] It was a marvelous outpouring of the grace of God upon those early believers that they were able to bring their material things together, and to make available to those who were poor the surplus which the wealthy possessed.

And into that very situation Satan came to try and spoil it all.

But that effort of Satan was hindered by the action of the apostles. They had these two people before them, they convicted them of their wickedness, and God's summary judgment came upon them both for what they had done.

[00:10:09] And as a result of that judgment, as a result of that, fear fell upon all the early people of God, and this thing was noised abroad, and instead of finding that no one dared to join themselves to them, they did it, they feared considerably in a way, fearing to join the company amongst whom God was so obviously present.

But the ultimate outcome of it was that great multitudes came to believe. The witness of the apostles was established, their authority was built up, and they went forth and preached, and they performed their miracles, and great numbers were added to the church. [00:11:08] So Satan's first effort, so to speak, was defeated by the action of the apostles. Then it seems to me Satan says, well if that is so, obviously I must go for the apostles.

They seem to have these powers to control and to repel the evil that I seek to bring in, so I'll do what I can to shut up the apostles. These men must be dealt with.

And the enemy made a very special attack upon the apostles themselves, through the authorities, who called the apostles before them, and seeing the wonderful spread of the work of God, and the increase in the witness for Jesus Christ, they came together and they called the apostles before them, and they forbade them to speak in the name of Jesus. [00:12:20] And don't make any mistake about it my friends, it was a very terrible thing to be forbidden by the highest authorities in the land, forbidden to speak in the name of Jesus. It was no light thing. To be threatened with all the punishments that counsel could mete out to those who disobeyed their instructions was no light thing.

And would Satan triumph? Would he manage to shut up the apostles, to shut their mouths in witness for Christ? And the apostles were given strength to defy the authorities in that matter because they were commanding something that was directly contrary to the command of God, and they said with all boldness, [00:13:17] they said, if it's right to listen to man rather than God, you must judge, but we must speak the things which we have been commanded to speak. And they went out and they continued boldly to preach the name of Jesus Christ. And when the apostles put them in prison, the angel of God brought them out.

And these men who had been so threatened were found in the marketplace preaching Jesus Christ. So once again, the devil seemed to be defeated.

Because when they brought the apostles before the council the second time, one of their own

number, just to show you how God can use even secular authorities and powers to achieve his purposes, one of the council, a man who was highly respected and thought of, he got up and in the council he warned his fellow councillors to be careful what they were doing with these men. [00:14:26] He says, if this is of God, if this is not of God, it'll come to nothing anyway. If it happens to be of God, you'll find yourselves fighting against God. And here was a member of this hostile council used by the power of God to defend the servants of God. And all that the council could do in consequence of that was to charge them again, very strictly not to preach, and they beat them unmercifully. And the apostles were caused the physical suffering for the name of Christ. Well that will crush them, says the devil. And it didn't. It says they went forth from the council full of joy, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ. [00:15:22] What men! What a triumph! Oh, Satan was beaten at the second battle. But you know, Satan is a wily foe. If he can't get at us one way, he'll try another. You know that in your own personal life. And it's also been true in the church of God.

And so he comes into the company of God's people. And although his name is not mentioned in chapter six, who can doubt that Satan himself was behind this effort to stir up discontent and murmuring amongst the people of God. [00:16:11] And it's well to note the importance that the apostles set upon that. They were onto this thing like a streak of lightning. Do you think the lessons of the Old Testament hadn't been learned? I'm sure the apostles had learned them.

We've been having this very story this afternoon. The very thing that has been passing through my mind this week. I thought of the murmurings of the children of Israel and how God, how severely God had to deal with them because of their complaining. It was so, our brother began to speak of it this afternoon. No sooner had they come out of Egypt, when they were on the edge of the sea, they started complaining and said, now what are we going to do? As though the God that had brought them out of Egypt couldn't find them a way of escape. [00:17:09] Well, God found them a way of escape through the Red Sea as we were listening. And then the waters were bitter and they started to complain. All the waters are bitter, we can't drink them. Well, God was equal to that. He showed Moses the way to make the water sweet. And before many days had passed, oh, we are so hungry. What are we going to do for food? And God supplied their food. He supplied them with manna. God had a great company that are available around his throne to serve mankind. And men did eat angels' food. The angels brought it. The angels were instrumental in giving them what they were to feed upon. God was looking after their needs. And then a little later, we're thirsty, no water to drink. [00:18:07] They murmured again. And God told Moses to smite the rock. And when he smote it, the water came out, as we heard, gushed forth so that the people's thirst might be quenched. And when you come to the Book of Numbers, it's the same story. They murmured because their food was so samey, nothing but this manna. Nothing but this manna. And God was very angry with them because they complained against his provision. In his mercy, he gave them quails.

But what he gave them for blessing, they soon gave it up, became evil in their sight. And then we come to what we had this afternoon. They were brought onto the very borders of the land, and they couldn't go forward. [00:19:08] And when they'd sent the spies, and when the spies had come back, and two of them had said, well, it's all right, the Lord delights in us, they're strong indeed, but we're able, they said, we're well able to go forward and to take them. And the people were complaining and murmuring against God and against Moses. And they provoked God to anger by their bitter complaints and their murmuring. And there in those verses, as we heard, and it's most important to see this, that God in his discipline refused to allow those people that had murmured to go in. He would fulfill his word. His honour was bound up in that as we were hearing. And he brought the nation into the land of Canaan. His glory demanded that. But the individuals, the adult people, who had

been guilty of that, complaining and murmuring before him, they were forbidden. Their carcasses died in the wilderness. [00:20:16] And then again later on, when they complained against Moses and the power and authority he exercised, they murmured because the judgment of God fell upon those who opposed Moses. Always murmuring and complaining. Nothing was ever right for them. Do you wonder that when this deadly sin began to crop up in the early church, do you wonder that the apostles, as we say, jumped on it quickly? Do you wonder that they didn't allow this path to pass? Not for a moment. They said this is something that is deadly in its effect. This is something that will ruin the church, that will spoil the testimony. And they were on to it. As soon as they became aware of this murmuring that was going on, they were on to it, as we shall see, in a very practical way. [00:21:14] Up to the 6th of Acts, from the references that there are, the apostles had kept this work of distributing the bounty more or less in their own hands.

No doubt they had made use of other brethren to do the work of distribution, and we know from the 5th of Acts that even the young men had a certain work to do. But the apostles seemed to have kept the work of the distribution very largely in their own hands. But now, here is this murmuring and this complaining.

Oh friends, first of all, just let us challenge ourselves as to that thing. Let us be very careful about this deadly sin.

[00:22:09] Now the first thing I want you to notice about the apostles dealing with this is that they took positive action. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them.

We are very inclined, you know, when any sort of trouble comes up, to say, well of course we must pray about it. Now no one is going to suggest to me that the apostles didn't pray about this matter.

But it's equally true that the fact of their praying is not mentioned here, nor does it receive the emphasis. If our verse had started off, then the twelve took themselves to prayer, and after praying about it they called the multitude of the disciples together and so on. [00:23:05] Well, we should have said, well there's where they went to prayer first. The emphasis must be put there, but the scripture doesn't, strangely enough. There's prayer afterwards, as we shall see. But they called the multitude together. The twelve called the multitude of the disciples together. Those twelve were the men that the Lord had appointed to be apostles. They were the leaders in the early church. They were men of vision and of wisdom, and they saw this evil thing coming up, and they knew what it would lead to, and they knew that it would hinder the testimony. And so they quickly called the multitude together. Those apostles were men of action. Do you remember in the Old Testament when Abraham, on one occasion, that man who was remarkable for his faith and his quiet faith in God, he lived a very peaceful and lonely sort of life, but there was a time when his nephew Lot was taken captive. [00:24:12] And we see that man of faith arming the servants of his house, taking vigorous action for the recovery of his nephew. Faith shows itself not only in prayer, it does that, but it seems to me the lesson from this is that faith also shows itself in action. And these leaders were too wise to allow the murmuring to pass without immediately taking steps to see that something was done. And they called, to use one of our modern words, they called a conference. They called the multitude together. I do wonder sometimes, friends, I know the difficulties of the day, having been amongst you for nearly 50 years, one hasn't gone on without seeing all these problems grow and increase around us. [00:25:10] And we scarcely know what to do. We see things getting weaker and weaker and lower and lower. And we say to ourselves, what are we to do? And I do wonder at times whether we ought not to confer, whether there oughtn't to be something that answers to this, even in our day.

Cannot we face up to the problems? Is one to be condemned as a pessimist because we face up to the facts of what's happening all around us? We are becoming weaker. As you move in the country you hear of old folk going, where are the young ones to take their place? There are many assemblies today, we must say that to all appearances are dying out. [00:26:05] And do we do nothing about it? You say, well we do pray, I know. Do we take any action? Do we confer?

One doesn't want to criticize others. We know the reason why some people do take the line they do. But I suggest to you, my brethren and sisters, that the things, the problems of the day are matters that should give us far more concern than they do and should bring us together to confer in brotherly love to see what can be done. The apostles seized upon this thing. They saw the drift of things and they said we'll call the multitude together. You say, well I don't hear much grumbling. No, possibly you don't. But you know there are two stages with grumbling. [00:27:01] There's the stage when we murmur with our lips and our words and we outwardly complain, but there's a second stage. And we say, well I might as well talk to a brick wall because my complaints bring nothing. And there's a sort of sullen resignation to the thing that we can't do anything about. And the very problems that we ought to be facing, we bury them and say, well it's better to forget them. We can't do anything about it. Brethren and sisters, I wonder, the apostles seem to me here in this chapter to set an example in their leadership amongst the people of God. They called the multitude together. This matter must be considered or discussed because if we don't, there'll be evil consequences. And when they had called the multitude together, they said it is not reason that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. [00:28:06] Now the first thing that needed to be put right was the thinking of these people. They needed their priorities right.

You can well imagine that the widows themselves and many of those who were concerned with these complaints, they felt, well these are the things that must be put right. Our widows, the Hellenist Greeks, the Grecians as they are called here, the Hellenist Jews, our widows are being neglected and this must be put right. And you know the apostles' words contain in a way a rebuke to over-preoccupation with material things.

These were the early days of the church. These were the days when the Lord had said go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. [00:29:02] And he's saying to these people, is it right that we with this great task, this great mission that the Lord has given us, have we got to come down and have we got to concern ourselves and busy ourselves all the time about these material things? It isn't reason that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. And you know my friend, one of the things that happens when we murmur is that we become self-occupied. We become occupied with the small things that surround ourselves.

Intensely self-occupied. Self-pity is a terrible thing and self-occupation.

And you know within all our hearts is this terribly selfish motive. We look at everything as it affects us. And the apostles seem to imply by what they say, look there's a much greater thing that has to be done. [00:30:03] There's the spreading of the word of God. There's the ministry for God in this world. There are things that God commands to be done. The preaching of the gospel in every land to every creature. And it isn't right that we should leave the word of God and serve tables.

My dear friend, I do say to us all we need to have our minds enlarged and to try and think of the work of God everywhere that's going on in this world. It's one thing to be concerned with our own internal difficulties and troubles. But look at the witness for God. Look at the growth of evil teaching that there

is. Look at the men that are preaching what is false and evil. Misleading men and women. It's a terrible evil a day.

There's apostasy abroad. There's the giving up of the truth. [00:31:01] There are men in pulpits today who are preaching what is false and dishonoring to the name of God. Are we concerned about this big thing, God's testimony in the world? Or are we wholly occupied with the little things that surround ourselves? We need to be careful. The apostle says it isn't right that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. He wants to adjust their thinking. The apostles wanted them to think as they should about the all-important fact of the word of God and of its spread in the world. Wherefore brethren, he says, look ye out seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. Now here were the apostles devising a practical method to meet the trouble, the thing that these people were complaining about.

[00:32:09] And I say again, I cannot help feeling how wonderfully wise they were. Surely this was the wisdom that God gave them. Now the Spirit of God operating in those leaders of the church, they proposed a practical solution. Having the multitude together, they found a constructive answer to the murmuring that was amongst them. You know in the world we know that it's no good going on complaining all the time. We've got to find a positive answer. We've got to be constructive in our thinking and in our planning. And I do think and I do suggest to you that perhaps these are days in which we forget that. We forget that we need to find some positive answer to some of the problems with which we are beset. [00:33:02] Wherefore brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report. You can see their suggestion that lies behind their words. You remember when Moses in his early days, when he was appointed by God to lead the people and to come up into the mountain to hear the law of God and to teach the people God's commandments and his statutes. You remember how Jethro, Moses' father-in-law came to him and said, you know, you'll have a nervous breakdown if you go on like this. Here are the people round you from morning to night. You never get a moment's quiet. You can't carry all this burden yourself. And he says, if God commands you so, even Jethro brought that in, I think you'll find. He says, you should appoint others to hear the lesser causes and you reserve the big causes for yourself. [00:34:05] Isn't that the wise course? And Moses did that thing. With the consent and the permission of God, and Moses reserved the big matters, the important matters of principle as we should say. He kept those and he advised when there were difficulties, but he appointed leaders from amongst the people to help in the smaller causes. And the apostles followed that line it seems to me here. They said, we can't do it. We can't spend our time day by day serving tables and spreading the bounty. We've got more important work to do than that. We have the word of God to think about in the testimony. The carrying of the gospel into other lands that our Lord has committed to us. And so they said, you find men, men full of the Holy Ghost, men of good report. [00:35:02] And you find these men and you give them the work of seeing that the widows are duly provided for. I think this is an evidence of the wisdom that God gave by his spirit and of the leadership that they gave the people in those early days. And they were able to delegate the responsibility of ministering to tables to these men of honest report. And I want you to notice one thing because it's very striking. They said, we want men full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom.

And I hear someone saying, but look if they're full of the Holy Ghost, isn't that all that's necessary?

Full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom.

[00:36:08] That's what it says.

So that in looking for the men to do this work, they had to find men with the necessary outlook, tact surely, and wisdom to do this work properly and well.

They had to be full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom.

You know, we all have that which we can do. God has given us natural talents.

And one of the mistakes we often make is by trying to do things that we're not fitted to do. We haven't the power, we haven't the talent for them.

[00:37:03] And the apostles were quite definite. Find men full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom. Men who will take this work up and do it properly with judgment and discernment in a wise way that will commend itself. They must be men of honest report, of course, because they're handling the gifts of other believers. But they must be men full of the Holy Ghost and of wisdom. I do emphasize that because the two things are necessary. There is that which the Holy Ghost is and that power that he gives. But there are those natural talents that may be used by his power. And we're not to neglect them.

You remember later on when God raised up the Apostle Paul. The Apostle Paul says, but I was separated from my mother's womb for this work that I was given. [00:38:04] What did he mean? He meant that all the experiences of his youth, the home, and upbringing, and even his education. All those things which at one time had been used against God, they were all now devoted to the fulfillment of the will of God. And he says, I can look back now and I can see that from my very earliest days, from my mother's womb, that I've been separated for this work. Those natural powers and talents, that power of intellect, that ability to debate and argue with cogency and to overcome those who oppose the truth. All those powers which had been developed in him by even the natural education he'd had when the Spirit of God took over that man. All those powers were used for him. And we need to remember that side of it. [00:39:02] My brother and my sister, wouldn't it be better if some of us tried to do the thing for which we are really fitted, instead of attempting work that other people can see we were never meant to do? All of the Holy Ghost and wisdom.

Well, I commend you that expression to you to think over. It's a striking one. I'd like to spend the evening going through the Book of Acts, developing that very theme because it comes up again. In the council at Jerusalem, when they sent out the letters to the churches, do you know what the apostles said? They said, it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us. Not only did it seem good to the Holy Ghost, but to us. They used the wisdom and the judgment which God had given them, and they were able to say, it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us. So these men had to be full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom. [00:40:06] And of course, they were men of honest rapport, as I said, because they were handling the gifts of the assembly, the money that others would give. They had to be men in whom there was full confidence. But the apostles said, you know, we can't spend our time doing that. Oh, there are more important things that the Lord has given us to do, the ministry of the Word. He says, but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word. I wonder again sometimes whether we give the priority here. You know, in the established church, it's well known, quite apart from the evil that there may be, even godly men find that their ministry of the Word is hindered by all the duties that they have to perform. [00:41:06] There's so much other that comes in to clutter up their activities, to hinder them in what should be the main object and purpose, their ministry of the Word of God. And it can be equally true amongst us. It can be equally true in the circles in which you and I move and where we believe we have the more liberty and the Spirit of God

that guides us by His Word. It's possible to neglect the Word of God for the serving of tables. Oh, where are the men? Where are those who will give themselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word? You know, in the early days of brethren, I'm speaking terribly frankly tonight. I'm using terms which you'll understand, but in the early days of brethren, there were men who did this. No wonder the movement spread. [00:42:02] No wonder the meetings grew. No wonder people were attracted to men who spent their time ministering the Word, feeding the people of God, and didn't allow themselves to be cluttered up with the serving of tables. That had to be done, but others could do that. There are those who are fitted for those tasks. But oh, where are the men to give themselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word? And the apostles would not allow themselves to be taken away from the main work which God had given them to do, which the Lord had appointed them to do. They said, we will give ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word. Of course, we all pray, yes, and we all help to spread the Word of God. That may be, but this was the particular work of the apostles, and they said nothing is going to take us away from it. [00:43:01] This is a great work we're doing, and we cannot come down. And what they said commended itself to the whole multitude. That was very beautiful in a way, you know. They didn't have to impose it upon them and say, look here, you saints of God, this is what you've got to do. Whether you like it or not, this is what we appoint, we're the apostles, you must do this. It wasn't like that. They didn't lord it over God's heritage, but what they said. And what they said, and the way they said it, and their ordering of priorities, commended itself to the multitude, so that the multitude were pleased by the saying of the apostles. It's very lovely, isn't it, when something that one suggests commends itself to all. When by its inherent excellence or rightness, others are carried. And you know, my dear friends, there is the duty both ways. [00:44:03] There's the duty of those who lead in the things of God as the apostles did, and there's the duty of the rest of us to regard and respect the lead of those who pray and who seek to lead us in the right way. Let us be careful on this. That we acknowledge the leadership that God gives in his things. The saying pleased the whole multitude and they appointed these seven men.

And I'm sure you've often had it pointed out to you, that these men, the seven of them that were appointed to do this thing, were Hellenists. They had Greek names, they were Hellenists, they were on the side of the people who made the complaints. You know, you and I wouldn't have done that. We would have said this, we would have said, look, how many Hellenists are there? Three thousand. And how many Hebrews? Four thousand. [00:45:02] All right then, we'll have three men from the Hellenists and four from the Hebrews. Or we'd have said it must be properly worked out and there must be proper representation all around. Minds are often soaked with the things of the world and the principles of the world and the parliaments of the world and the way in which the world goes on. And as one writer says, the very atmosphere of the law court seems to pervade some of our things. This was grace, wasn't it?

The Hellenists have complained, all right, all seven shall be from the Hellenists. Would you say the Hebrews have been elected now? No, no, no. You never hear of this complaining again. The very people that had been complaining from amongst them were these men appointed to superintend the giving of the bounty. [00:46:03] It was a lovely expression of the grace that existed in the early church. And so they did and they carried out the work and one of them was the great man Stephen who later gave his life for the Lord. But there it was, whom they set before the apostles and when they had prayed, now comes your prayer. This thing wasn't done without prayer. And when they had prayed they laid their hands on them.

And we may be quite sure, because there's no word in scripture to suggest anything else, that as a result of this measure which the apostles took, this murmuring ceased and the widows of the

Hellenists were properly looked after and there was happiness and concord once again in the assembly at Jerusalem. And the word of God increased. Ah, there was it. [00:47:05] The word of God increased. After all, that is what matters, isn't it? Here was this great thing which the Lord had set up in the world and now the word of God increased. Oh, that we might see something of this. That we might have our thoughts less upon small distracting things and that we might be concerned with the greater thing and that is the witness for God in this world where we live. The word of God increased and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly and a great company of the priests. Why in the Jewish circles it was the priests who looked after the poor. That was part of their job. And when they saw this wonderful thing amongst the church of God and this divine order and this proper looking after of all [00:48:01] and the appointment of these elders who saw that no one was neglected, we are told that a great number of the priests were obedient to the faith. Such was the witness of the order amongst them that others were attracted to the church and even a great number of the priests believed. These are wonderful verses and I've just brought them tonight and mentioned them and put them before you because it seems to me they are verses that we perhaps might consider in these days in which we live because we have our problems. Are we facing up to them as the apostles did to theirs? And are we determined to find the answer as the apostles found for the murmuring of that day? May God bless to us this scripture and give it to us all as food for thought in the difficulties of our day.