

## Korach “Korah”

**Torah Reading: Numbers 16:1 - 18:32**

**Haftarah Reading: I Samuel 11:14 - 12:22**

### Study Notes

#### Rebellion

- This week’s parasha illustrates how far the seeds of rebellion had spread in the camp of the Israelites.
- How just one incident of mutiny multiplied itself and resulted in the deaths of nearly 15,000 Israelites - and the forty years of wandering had only just begun!

#### The Challengers

- Three sets of people set out to challenge the leadership of Moshe and Aaron according to 16:1-3.
- First, we have Korach, the leader of the rebellion. A Levite, he was a close relative of Moshe and Aaron.
- Second, people from the tribe of Reuven (Reuben). Reuven was the firstborn of the sons of Jacob. As such he was normally entitled to family leadership. Bereshit 49 (Gen. 49) tells us that he was bypassed in favor of Joseph and Judah.
- l. Couple these two with the fact that they camped together around the Mishkan and marched together. This may have given them opportunity to gripe together.
- The third set of people is the 250 who stood with Korach, Dathan, and Abiram.
- These 250 were some sort of leaders and as the Hebrew says “men of a name”. They were known leaders.

#### Their Contention

- The challengers accused Moshe and Aaron of “...selfishly taking power and prestige for themselves at the expense of the rest of the nation which was just as qualified as they (for the entire assembly...was holy).”
- Basically they are accusing Moshe and Aaron of profiting from their positions. Moshe gives the law and Aaron reaps the profits of all that is brought to the Mishkan.
- Also, there is probably some natural envy involved. Some will always believe they should be in charge.

Egypt - a land flowing with milk and honey?

- Dathan and Abiram had two issues. One, they believed that Moshe had dominated them.
- Their bigger issue was stated in 16:13-14. Their perception of the reality of their freedom and seemingly insecure life in the wilderness gradually worsened.
- In the beginning the people were worried about dying in the desert and wanted to go back to Egypt.
- I. Now they have "...a complete reversal of values, calling black white and white black. What was slavery is termed freedom, the land of uncleanness is given the title exclusively applied to the holy land."
- Let us not forget that our freedom is a freedom from sin. It is not a freedom from all cares and worries. As hard as it may be, life in the world will always be full of troubles. We are not going to be free of these. Our freedom, in Yeshua, is freedom from sin and a slavery to righteousness in Him.

Our perceptions in Messiah

- This lesson is still critical for life in the body of Messiah.
- When we make judgements about others, it distorts the truth of who they are in Messiah. (II Cor. 5:16).
- It may be true that some may walk in their flesh much of the time, but we need to remember their real identity, our real identity.
- We are saints and not sinners. We should refer to all believers as they are, "children of God", and not let this world darken our perception of reality.

Moshe's Counter

- Moshe proposes a test. All would offer incense before God. This would be a life or death test. The parties found wanting would die.
- Moshe put the test off until the next morning. Most likely to give them time to come to their senses and humble themselves.
- This test also put the burden of proof on God, not Moshe, Aaron, or Korach.

God's Choice

- The first step was to command everyone to stand clear of the dwelling places of the rebels. Every time such rebellion happens in the camp of God - stand clear of the rebels! The earth swallowed Korach, Dathan, and Abiram and their families.
- Second, God's fire came and consumed the 250 who were holding the fire pans in the Mishkan.
- God's last step was to have the incense burners hammered into a covering for the altar.

- By having the altar covered with the metal of the fire pans, God was demonstrating how horrible the sin of rebellion is. All sin starts as rebellion against God.
- Also, the atoning blood also covered the rebellion that was at the core of the sin.

#### The Aftermath

- One would think that upon witnessing all of this that every child of Jacob would have walked closely with the Lord for the rest of their lives.
- Yet, the next morning the people accused Moses and Aaron of killing the people of the Lord!
- God sent a plague into the camp and 15,000 more died. The Lord sent Aaron into the camp with incense and through this the people were saved.

#### The Buds

- God settles once and for all who His chosen priest is as Aaron's rod buds.
- "...as a sign for rebellious ones, let their complaints cease from me that they not die."  
17:25.