

# A Study in the Book of Numbers



***By Cecilia Perh***



Entrusting the Word  
to the Faithful



| <b>Book</b>            | <b>Genesis</b>             | <b>Exodus</b>              | <b>Leviticus</b>  | <b>Numbers</b>   | <b>Deuteronomy</b>      |
|------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Key Idea</b>        | <b>Beginnings</b>          | <b>Redemption</b>          | <b>Worship</b>    | <b>Wandering</b> | <b>Renewed Covenant</b> |
| <b>The Nation</b>      | <b>Chosen</b>              | <b>Delivered</b>           | <b>Set Apart</b>  | <b>Directed</b>  | <b>Made Ready</b>       |
| <b>The People</b>      | <b>Prepared</b>            | <b>Redeemed</b>            | <b>Taught</b>     | <b>Tested</b>    | <b>Re-taught</b>        |
| <b>God's Character</b> | <b>Powerful, Sovereign</b> | <b>Merciful</b>            | <b>Holy</b>       | <b>Just</b>      | <b>Loving Lord</b>      |
| <b>God's Role</b>      | <b>Creator</b>             | <b>Deliverer</b>           | <b>Sanctifier</b> | <b>Sustainer</b> | <b>Rewarder</b>         |
| <b>God's Command</b>   | <b>"Let there be!"</b>     | <b>"Let My people go!"</b> | <b>"Be holy"</b>  | <b>"Go in!"</b>  | <b>"Obey!"</b>          |

# Numbers in the Pentateuch

| Genesis                         | Exodus  | Leviticus   | Numbers   | Deuteronomy                       |
|---------------------------------|---|---|---|-----------------------------------|
| <b>ORIGINS</b><br>of the nation | <b>DELIVERANCE</b><br>of the nation   | <b>LIFE</b><br>of the nation  | <b>TEST</b><br>of the nation                                  | <b>REMINDERS</b><br>to the nation |
| <b>THEOCRACY BORN</b>           | <b>THEOCRACY ESTABLISHED</b>  |   | <b>THEOCRACY TESTED AND PREPARED FOR THE NEW HOME</b>         |                                   |
|                                 | <p><b><u>COVENANT</u></b><br/><b>IS AMPLIFIED</b><br/>“Keep my covenant to be a peculiar treasure:<br/>“Kingdom of priests”<br/>“holy nation”<br/>(Exo. 19:5-6)</p> | <p><b><u>LAWS</u></b><br/><b>ARE PRESCRIBED</b><br/>“which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the LORD”<br/>(Lev. 18:5)</p> | <p>Irvin L. Jensen, p 102<br/>(Jensen’s Survey of the OT)</p> |                                   |

# The Generation of Those Who Had Come Out of Egypt

## Preparation

- organization
- consecration
- instruction

## The Test

- of faith
- of obedience

## The Judgment

- wandering
- death

Wilderness

SINAI

KADESH

# A New Generation

## Reorganisation

- repair

Plains of Moab

MOAB

**Leviticus covered only one month, but Numbers stretches over almost 39 years (about 1444 BC to 1405 BC – traditional dating).**

**It records Israel's movement from the last 19 days at Mt Sinai (1:1; 10:11) to the arrival in the plains of Moab in the 40<sup>th</sup> year (22:1; 26:3; 33:5; Deut 1:3).**

**Most of this time was spent wandering in and around Kadesh-barnea. Their tents occupied several square miles whenever they camped since there were over 2.5 million people. God miraculously fed and sustained them in the desert – He preserved their clothing and gave them manna, meat, water, leaders, and a promise.**

## **Date and Setting of the Book of Numbers**

| The Old Generation                  |                         |   | The Tragic Transition           |                        |                              | The New Generation   |                                  |                        |                                     |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|---|---------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Counting and Ordering of the People | Cleansing of the People | Complaints and Disbelief of the People        | Instructions for Life in Canaan | The Rebellion of Korah | Aaron, the Levites and Moses | Serpent of Brass and Story of Balaam                       | Second Census and Laws of Israel | Setting east of Jordan | Preparations for Settling in Canaan |
| 1 4                                 | 5 10:10                 | 10:11 14                                      | 15                              | 16                     | 17 20                        | 21 25  | 26 30                            | 31 33                  | 34 36                               |
| Preparation                         |                         |   | Postponement                    |                        |                              | Promise  |                                  |                        |                                     |
| Waiting                             |                         |   | Wandering                       |                        |                              | Waiting  |                                  |                        |                                     |
| Census, Instruction, Travel         |                         |   | -                               |                        |                              | Travel, Census, Instruction                                |                                  |                        |                                     |
| At Sinai                            |                         |   | To Moab                         |                        |                              | At Moab  |                                  |                        |                                     |
| Sinai to Kadesh                     |                         |   | Wilderness                      |                        |                              | Kadesh to Moab   |                                  |                        |                                     |
| Preparation for the Journey         |                         |   | The Journey                     |                        |                              | At the Gate of the Land                                    |                                  |                        |                                     |
| About 2 months (39%)                |                         |   | 38 years (17%)                  |                        |                              | A few months (44%)   |                                  |                        |                                     |
| Mobilizing the People Numbers 1-9   |                         | Displeased with His People Numbers 10-19      |                                 |                        |                              | Reading a New Generation Numbers 20-36                     |                                  |                        |                                     |
| Getting Ready to Possess the land   |                         | Steps to Disqualify Self from Serving the ORD |                                 |                        |                              | An Examination of their Readiness to enter the Lord's Land |                                  |                        |                                     |
| Structuring                         |                         | Testing                                       |                                 |                        |                              | Enduring   |                                  |                        |                                     |

## Numbers: Man's Failure and God's Faithfulness (Num 14:8-9) (Wiersbe)

### I. At Sinai: Obeying the Lord (1:1-9:14)

1. Numbering the Soldiers (1:1-54)
2. Organizing the Tribes (2:134)
3. Assigning the Duties (ch 3-4)
4. Purifying the People (ch 5-6)
5. Dedicating the Tabernacle (ch 7-8)
6. Celebrating the Passover (9:1-14)

### II. To Kadesh: Tempting the Lord (9:15-12:16)

1. The Camp Marches (9:15-10:36)
2. The People Complain (ch 11)
3. Aaron and Miriam Criticize Moses (ch 12)

### III. At Kadesh: Rebelling Against the Lord (ch 13-14)

1. Exploring the Promised Land (ch 13)
2. Refusing the Claim the Land (14:1-9)
3. Turning away from the Land (14:10-45)

### IV. In the Wilderness: Learning from the Lord (15:1-20:13)

1. About Sacrifices (15:1-31)
2. About Authority (15:32-17:13)
3. About Responsibility (ch 18)
4. About Purity (ch 19)
5. About Humility (20:1-13)

### V. In Moab: A New Beginning from the Lord (20:14-36:13)

1. New Victories (20:14-21; 21:1-35)
2. A New Priest (20:22-29)
3. New Dangers (ch 22-25)
4. A New Generation (ch 26)
5. New Regulations (27:1-11)
6. A New Leader (27:12-23)
7. New Commitment to the Law (ch 28-30)
8. New Commitment to Battle (ch 31-32)
9. New Laws for the New Land (ch 33-36)



## Numbers 16 – Korah's Rebellion

- v1-3 Korah's Accusation
- v4-7 Moses' Answer
- v8-11 Moses Defends Aaron
- v12-14 Dathan and Abiram Defy Moses
- v15-19 Moses' Proposal to Korah and 250 Men
- v20-21 The Lord's Judgment
- v22 Moses and Aaron Intercede for the People
- v23-24 The LORD's Mercy
- v25-27 Moses' Word to the Congregation
- v28-30 Moses' Word to the Rebels
- v31-35 The Judgment Falls on the Rebels
- v36-38 The Lord's Word to Eleazar
- v39-40 Eleazar's Obedience
- v41-50 The Aftermath of Korah's Rebellion



The Modern Wilderness of Paran



- These 2 chapters record 2 challenges to the leadership of Moses and Aaron, one from a group of Levites (16:1-35) and one from the people as a whole (16:41-50).
- Out of each of these confrontations came a visible reminder to the Jews of their rebellion: the brass covering on the altar (16:36-40) and Aaron's rod that budded (17:1-13)
- **The First Confrontation (16:1-40)**
  - Korah, a notable leader (v1-3)
  - Moses, a humble leader (v4-11)
  - Moses, an angry leader (v12-17)
  - Jehovah, the righteous Judge (v18-35)
  - Eleazar the faithful priest (v36-40)
- **The Second Confrontation (16:41-17:13)**
  - A second reminder (v1-13)

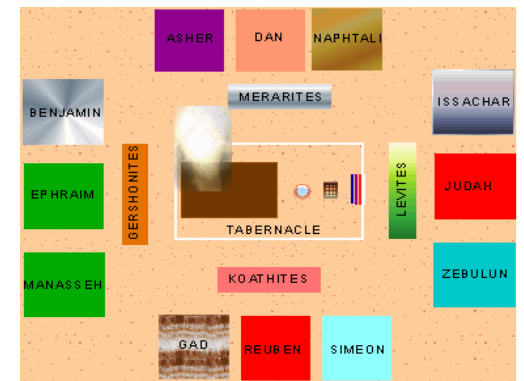
## The Authority of God's Servants (Numbers 16:1-17:13)

## v1-3 Korah's Accusation

1 **Now** Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took *action*,  
2 and they rose up before Moses, together with some of the sons of Israel, two hundred and fifty leaders of the congregation, chosen in the assembly, men of renown.

## Numbers 16 – Korah's Rebellion

**Num 16:1** Amram and Izhar were brothers (compare Exo\_6:18), and thus Korah, the “son,” i. e. descendant of Izhar, was connected by distant cousinship with Moses and Aaron. Though being a Kohathite, he was of that division of the Levites which had the most honorable charge, yet as Elizaphan, who had been made “chief of the families of the Kohathites” Num\_3:30, belonged to the youngest branch descended from Uzziel Num\_3:27, Korah probably regarded himself as injured; and therefore took the lead in this rebellion. Of the others, **On is not again mentioned. He probably withdrew from the conspiracy.** Dathan, Abiram, and On were Reubenites; and were probably discontented because the birthright had been taken away from their ancestor Gen\_49:3, and with it the primacy of their own tribe among the tribes of Israel. The Reubenites encamped near to the Kohathites (compare Num\_2:25 and plan), and thus the two families were conveniently situated for taking counsel together. One pretext of the insurrection probably was to assert the rights of primogeniture - on the part of the Reubenites against Moses, on the part of Korah against the appointment of Uzziel.



## Albert Barnes on Numbers 16:1

## v1-3 Korah's Accusation

**3 And they assembled together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "You have gone far enough, **for** all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is in their midst; **so** why do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?"**

## Numbers 16 – Korah's Rebellion

- **Clarke - Num 16:3 - Ye take too much upon you** - The original is simply רב לכם rab lachem, too much for you. The spirit of this saying appears to me to be the following: - “Holy offices are not equally distributed: you arrogate to yourselves the most important ones, as if your superior holiness entitled you alone to them; whereas all the congregation are holy, and have an equal right with you to be employed in the most holy services.” Moses retorts this saying Num\_16:7 : Ye take too much upon you, רב לכם rab lachem; Ye have too much already, ye sons of Levi; i.e., by your present spirit and disposition you prove yourselves to be wholly unworthy of any spiritual employment.
- **Barnes - Num 16:3 - All the congregation are holy** - Compare the marginal reference. Korah’s object was not to abolish the distinction between the Levites and the people, but to win priestly dignity for himself and his kinsmen Num\_16:10. This ultimate design is masked for the present in order to win support from the Reubenites by putting forward claims to spiritual equality on behalf of every Israelite.

## Adam Clarke & Albert Barnes on Numbers 16:3

**Korah must have been a distinguished leader to be able to enlist the support of 250 “men of renown” from the other tribes.**

**The Kohathites carried the tabernacle furniture when Israel marched to a new location and they camped on the south side of the tabernacle, across from Gad, Simeon and Reuben. Perhaps this explains how Korah was able to get Dathan, Abiram and On, three Reubenites to join him.**

**Korah’s public complaint was that Moses and Aaron were “running things” and not giving the people opportunity for input. He wanted more democracy in the camp. After all, the Lord dwelt in the entire camp and all the people were “a kingdom of priests” (**Exodus 19:3-6**).**

**His hidden reason was that he wanted the Levites to have the same privileges as Aaron and his sons (**Numbers 16:10**). He wasn’t satisfied to be assisting the priests, he wanted to be a priest!**

## **Korah, a notable leader (16:1-3)**

- The selfish desire for greatness and authority is a common theme in Scripture whether it's Korah opposing Moses and Aaron (**Numbers 16**), Absalom defying his father (**2 Samuel 15**), Adonijah claiming the crown (**1 Kings 1**), the disciples arguing over which of them was the greatest (**Luke 22:44**), or Diotrephes loving to have the preeminence in a local church (**2 John 9-10**).
- Yet the most important place in the Christian life is the place of God's choice, the place He has prepared for us and prepared us to fill.
- The most important thing isn't status, but faithfulness, doing the work God wants us to do.

## Application

## v4-7 Moses' Answer

4 **When** Moses heard *this*, he fell on his face; 5 and he spoke to Korah and all his company, saying, "**Tomorrow morning** the LORD will show who is His, and who is holy, and will bring *him* near to Himself; even the one whom He will choose, He will bring near to Himself. 6 **Do this: take censers for yourselves, Korah and all your company, 7 and put fire in them, and lay incense upon them in the presence of the LORD tomorrow; and the man whom the LORD chooses shall be the one who is holy.** You have gone far enough, you sons of Levi!"

## Numbers 16 – Korah's Rebellion

- As he had done before, Moses fell on his face before the Lord (**Numbers 14:5,22; 16:22;45; 20:6; 22:31**).
- He didn't debate with Korah and his crowd to try to change their minds because he knew their aim was to seize the priesthood, something the Lord would never permit.
- The Lord would show Korah and his followers how wrong they were, and their pride would ultimately lead to their destruction (**Proverbs 16:18**).

### Proverbs 16:18

Pride goes before destruction,  
And a haughty spirit before stumbling.

**Moses, a humble leader (v4-11)**

**Num 16:5 - The Lord will show who are his** - It is supposed that St. Paul refers to this place, 2Ti\_2:19 : The foundation of God - the whole sacrificial system, referring to Christ Jesus, the foundation of the salvation of men; standeth sure, notwithstanding the rebellions, intrusions, and false doctrines of men; having this seal - this stamp of its Divine authenticity, The Lord knoweth them that are his; εγὼ Κυριος τους οντας αυτου, a literal translation of וידע יהוה את אשר לו veyoda Yehovah eth asher lo; and both signifying, The Lord approveth of his own; or, will own that which is of his own appointment. And let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity, alluding to the exhortation of Moses, Num\_16:26: Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men.

## Adam Clarke on Numbers 16:5

## v8-11 Moses Defends Aaron

8 **Then** Moses said to Korah, "Hear now, you sons of Levi, 9 is it not enough for you that the God of Israel has separated you from the *rest of* the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to Himself, to do the service of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the congregation to minister to them; 10 and that He has brought you near, *Korah*, and all your brothers, sons of Levi, with you? And are you seeking for the priesthood also? 11 **Therefore** you and all your company are gathered together against the LORD; **but as** for Aaron, who is he that you grumble against him?"

## Numbers 16 – Korah's Rebellion

- **Num 16:11** - The words of Moses in his wrath are broken. The Aaronic priesthood was of divine appointment; and thus in rejecting it, the conspirators were really rebelling against God.

## Albert Barnes on Numbers 16:11

## v12-14 Dathan and Abiram Defy Moses

12 **Then** Moses sent a summons to Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab; **but** they said, "We will not come up.  
13 Is it not enough that you have brought us up out of a land flowing with milk and honey to have us die in the wilderness, **but** you would also lord it over us?  
14 **Indeed**, you have not brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey, nor have you given us an inheritance of fields and vineyards. Would you put out the eyes of these men? We will not come up!"

## Numbers 16 – Korah's Rebellion

- **Num 16:13** - With perverse contempt for the promises, Dathan and Abiram designate Egypt by the terms appropriated elsewhere to the land of Canaan.
- **Num 16:14** - **Wilt thou put out the eyes of these men?** -  
i. e. “blind them to the fact that you keep none of your promises;” “throw dust in their eyes.”

## Albert Barnes on Numbers 16:13-14

## v15-19 Moses' Proposal to Korah and 250 Men

15 **Then** Moses became very angry and said to the LORD, "Do not regard their offering! I have not taken a single donkey from them, nor have I done harm to any of them." 16 And Moses said to Korah, "You and all your company be present before the LORD tomorrow, both you and they along with Aaron. 17 And each of you take his firepan and put incense on it, and each of you bring his censer before the LORD, two hundred and fifty firepans; also you and Aaron shall each bring his firepan."

## Numbers 16 – Korah's Rebellion

- **Moses called Dathan and Abiram to come to the meeting but they refused. On wisely dropped out.**
- **The arrogance of these two men is plain to see.**
- **Again, Moses did not argue with the rebels but he prayed to the Lord and asked Him to vindicate His servant.**

## **Moses, an angry leader (v12-17)**

## v15-19 Moses' Proposal to Korah and 250 Men

18 **So** they each took his *own* censer and put fire on it, and laid incense on it; and they stood at the doorway of the tent of meeting, with Moses and Aaron.

19 **Thus** Korah assembled all the congregation against them at the doorway of the tent of meeting. **And the glory of the LORD appeared to all the congregation.**

## v20-21 The Lord's Judgment

20 **Then** the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying,

21 "Separate yourselves from among this congregation, **that I may consume them instantly.**"

# Numbers 16 – Korah's Rebellion

## v22 Moses' and Aaron Intercede for the People

22 **But** they fell on their faces, and said, "O God, Thou God of the spirits of all flesh, **when** one man sins, wilt Thou be angry with the entire congregation?"

## v23-24 The Lord's Mercy

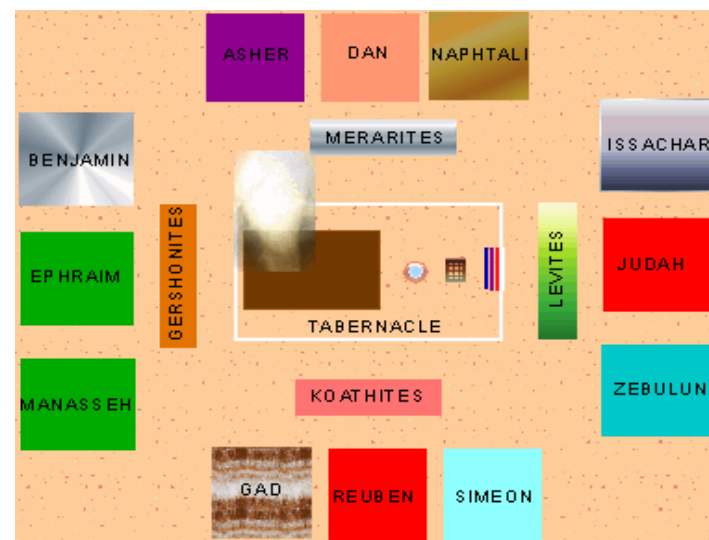
23 **Then** the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 24 "**Speak to the congregation, saying, 'Get back from around the dwellings of Korah, Dathan and Abiram.'**"

# Numbers 16 – Korah's Rebellion

- **Num 16:22 - they fell upon their faces, and said, O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh —** The benevolent importunity of their prayer was the more remarkable that the intercession was made for their enemies.

## Robert Jamieson on Numbers 16:22

**Num 16:24** - The tent, “the tabernacle” of Korah, as a Kohathite, stood on the south side of the tabernacle of the Lord; and those of Dathan and Abiram, as Reubenites, in the outer line of encampment on the same side. Yet though the tents of these three were thus contiguous, they did not share the same fate. Korah and his company who dared to intrude themselves on the priestly office were destroyed by fire from the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of the Lord Num\_16:35; the Reubenites, who had reviled Moses for the failure of the promises about the pleasant land, were suddenly engulfed while standing at their own tent-doors in the barren wilderness Num\_16:31-33.



## Albert Barnes on Numbers 16:24

## v25-27 Moses' Word to the Congregation

25 **Then** Moses arose and went to Dathan and Abiram, with the elders of Israel following him, 26 and he spoke to the congregation, saying, "Depart now from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing that belongs to them, lest you be swept away in all their sin." 27 **So** they got back from around the dwellings of Korah, Dathan and Abiram; and Dathan and Abiram came out *and* stood at the doorway of their tents, along with their wives and their sons and their little ones.

## Numbers 16 – Korah's Rebellion

- **Num 16:24-26 - Speak unto the congregation, ... Get you up from about the tabernacle** — Moses was attended in the execution of this mission by the elders. The united and urgent entreaties of so many dignified personages produced the desired effect of convincing the people of their crime, and of withdrawing them from the company of men who were doomed to destruction, lest, being partakers of their sins, they should perish along with them.

## Robert Jamieson on Numbers 16:24-26

## v28-30 Moses' Word to the Rebels

28 And Moses said, "By this you shall know that the LORD has sent me to do all these deeds; **for** this is not my doing. 29 **If** these men die the death of all men, **or if** they suffer the fate of all men, *then* the LORD has not sent me. 30 **But if** the LORD brings about an entirely new thing and the ground opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that is theirs, and they descend alive into Sheol, *then* you will understand that these men have spurned the LORD."

## Numbers 16 – Korah's Rebellion

## v31-35 The Judgment Fell on the Rebels

31 **Then** it came about as he finished speaking all these words, that **the ground that was under them split open;**  
32 **and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, and their households, and all the men who belonged to Korah, with *their* possessions.** 33 **So** they and all that belonged to them went down alive to Sheol; and the earth closed over them, and they perished from the **midst of the assembly.** 34 **And all Israel who were around them fled at their outcry, **for** they said, "The earth may swallow us up!"** 35 **Fire also came forth from the LORD and consumed the two hundred and fifty men who were offering the incense.**

## Numbers 16 – Korah's Rebellion

**Num 16:28-35 - Moses** then issued the guidelines of the contest. If the rebels should live on and **die** of old age, the nation would **know** that Moses had no special call from God. **If**, however, **the Lord** should do **something** unique — open **the earth** and swallow Korah and the others — the people would **know** that Moses' leadership was from God and that Korah had acted presumptuously and sinfully.

**As soon as** the conditions had been spelled out, **the ground... split apart and** Korah, his friends, their families, **and all their possessions** disappeared from sight. **The earth** then came together again, concealing the evidence that they had ever existed. Terrified by all this, the assembly of **Israelites... fled** for their lives lest **the earth... swallow** them as well. A **fire** then destroyed **the 250... offering the incense**.

The fact that the wives and children of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram were included in the awful judgment of God (Num\_16:27, Num\_16:32) illustrates again the Old Testament principle of family solidarity and the collective punishment if not guilt of the offspring of those who sin against God (Exo\_20:5-6; 34:6-7; Jos\_7:16-26). Since, however, each individual was accountable for his own sin only (cf. Deu\_24:16), one must conclude that the families of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram collaborated some way in their rebellion (cf. Jos\_7:22-25).

**Grave** (Num\_16:30, Num\_16:33) is a translation of *šə'ōl* which can also refer to the place of the departed dead generally. It is therefore occasionally understood as “the underworld” or as “hell” (cf. Gr. *hadēs*). Here, however, nothing more is in view than the fact that the earth opened up a great crevice which became in effect a mass grave.

## Bible Knowledge Commentary on Numbers 16:28-35

The glory of the Lord appeared (**Numbers 14:10; 20:6; Exodus 16:10-12**) and the hour of God's judgment arrived!

Moses and Aaron, being true leaders, immediately fell on their faces before the Lord and interceded for the nation. "Why should all the people die because of the sin of these men?" On two occasions, God was ready to destroy the entire nation, but Moses' intercession saved them (**Numbers 14:10-12; Exodus 32:7-14**).

God warned the Jews to move away from the tents of Korah, Dathan and Abiram and the earth opened up and swallowed these evil men and their households, and fire from God destroyed the 250 would-be priests (**Numbers 11:1-3; Leviticus 10:1-7**).

God made it very clear that the Jews were to accept their appointed leaders and respect their authority. It's a dangerous thing to challenge God's order and promote themselves to become leaders. They not only rebel against the Lord (**Numbers 16:11**) but against their own lives (**Numbers 16:38**).

A W Tozer said, "Never follow a leader until you see the anointing oil on his head."

## Jehovah, the righteous Judge (v18-35)

## v36-38 The Lord's Word to Eleazar

36 **Then** the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 37 "Say to Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, that he shall take up the censers out of the midst of the blaze, for they are holy; and you scatter the burning coals abroad. 38 **As** for the censers of these men who have sinned at the cost of their lives, let them be made into hammered sheets for a plating of the altar, since they did present them before the LORD **and they are holy; and they shall be for a sign to the sons of Israel.**"

## Numbers 16 – Korah's Rebellion

## v39-40 Eleazar's Obedience

39 **So** Eleazar the priest took the bronze censers which the men who were burned had offered; and they hammered them out as a plating for the altar, 40 **as a reminder to the sons of Israel** that no layman who is not of the descendants of Aaron should come near to burn incense before the LORD; **that he might not become like Korah and his company** - **just as** the LORD had spoken to him through Moses.

## Numbers 16 – Korah's Rebellion

- Since the censers could not be treated like common metal, Eleazar was commanded to beat them into plates and put them on the altar of burnt offering.
- These plates would be a lasting reminder to the people that “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Hebrews 10:31).

## Eleazar, the faithful priest (v36-40)

- When Jude wrote to warn the early church about false teachers, he used Korah as an example, associating him with Cain and Balaam (**Jude 11**).
- Paul warned about proud people who would seek to seize authority in the local church and promote themselves (**Acts 20:28-31**).
- It's likely that **more churches have been divided because of arrogant leadership than because of false doctrine.**

### Acts 20:28-31

28 "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. 29 I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. 31 Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears."

## Application

## v41-50 The Aftermath of Korah's Rebellion

41 **But** on **the next day** all the congregation of the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron, saying, "You are the ones who have caused the death of the LORD's people."

## Numbers 16 – Korah's Rebellion

**Num 16:41 - On the morrow all the congregation - murmured - It is very likely that the people persuaded themselves that Moses and Aaron had used some cunning in this business, and that the earthquake and fire were artificial; else, had they discerned the hand of God in this punishment, could they have dared the anger of the Lord in the very face of justice?**

## Adam Clarke on Numbers 16:41,46

- What began with Korah and 250 men had now become a national uprising! Instead of falling to their knees and crying out to God for forgiveness and mercy, the Jews were rebelling against Moses and Aaron just as Korah had done!
- Carnally minded people can't perceive the spiritual meaning of what God does because they lack spiritual discernment (**1 Corinthians 2:14**).
- The nations beheld God's acts, but Moses understood God's ways (**Psalms 103:7**).

#### 1 Corinthians 2:14

But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

#### Psalms 103:7

He made known His ways to Moses,  
His acts to the sons of Israel.

## The Second Confrontation (16:41-17:13)

## v41-50 The Aftermath of Korah's Rebellion

42 It came about, **however**, **when** the congregation had assembled against Moses and Aaron, that they turned toward the tent of meeting, **and behold, the cloud covered it and the glory of the LORD appeared.** 43 **Then** Moses and Aaron came to the front of the tent of meeting, 44 and the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 45 "Get away from among this congregation, **that I may consume them instantly.**" **Then** they fell on their faces.

## Numbers 16 – Korah's Rebellion

## v41-50 The Aftermath of Korah's Rebellion

46 And Moses said to Aaron, "Take your censer and put in it fire from the altar, and lay incense on it; then bring it quickly to the congregation and make atonement for them, for wrath has gone forth from the LORD, the plague has begun!" 47 Then Aaron took it as Moses had spoken, and ran into the midst of the assembly, for behold, the plague had begun among the people. So he put on the incense and made atonement for the people. 48 And he took his stand between the dead and the living, so that the plague was checked. 49 But those who died by the plague were 14,700, besides those who died on account of Korah. 50 Then Aaron returned to Moses at the doorway of the tent of meeting, for the plague had been checked.

## Numbers 16 – Korah's Rebellion

**Num 16:47-48** - A striking proof of the efficacy of that very Aaronic priesthood which the rebels had presumed to reject. The incense offering which had brought down destruction when presented by unauthorised hands, now in the hand of the true priest is the medium of instant salvation to the whole people. Aaron by his acceptable ministration and his personal self-devotion foreshadows emphatically in this transaction the perfect mediation and sacrifice of Himself made by Christ.

## Albert Barnes on Numbers 16:47-48

**Num 16:48 - He stood between the dead and the living; and the plague, etc.** - What the plague was we know not, but it seems to have begun at one part of the camp, and to have proceeded regularly onward; and Aaron went to the quarter where it was then prevailing, and stood with his atonement where it was now making its ravages, and the plague was stayed; but not before 14,700 had fallen victims to it, Num\_16:49.

If Aaron the high priest, with his censer and incense, could disarm the wrath of an insulted, angry Deity, so that a guilty people, who deserved nothing but destruction, should be spared; how much more effectual may we expect the great atonement to be which was made by the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom Aaron was only the type! The sacrifices of living animals pointed out the death of Christ on the cross; the incense, his intercession. Through his death salvation is purchased for the world; by his intercession the offending children of men are spared.

## Adam Clarke on Numbers 16:48

Hence St. Paul, Rom\_5:10, says: If, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved through His Life, i. e., by the prevalence of his continual intercession. 2Co\_5:18, 19 : “And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.” By the awful transactions recorded in this chapter, we may see how jealous God is of the sole right of appointing the way and means of salvation. Had any priesthood, and any kind of service, no matter how solemn and sincere, been equally available in the sight of Divine justice and mercy, God would not have resented in so awful a manner the attempts of Korah and his company in their new service. The way of God’s own appointment, the agony and death of Christ, is the only way in which souls can be saved. His is the priesthood, and his is the only available sacrifice. All other modes and schemes of salvation are the inventions of men or devils, and will in the end prove ruinous to all those who trust in them. Reader, forget not the Lord who bought thee.

## Adam Clarke on Numbers 16:48

- **Num 16:44-50** - The man they rebelled against is the very man who saved them. He stood between them and God. Likewise, the very One whom the human family crucified on the Cross is the One who saves us. He stands between God and the sinner.

## J Vernon McGee on Numbers 16:44-50

## Numbers 16 – Korah's Rebellion

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The Modern Wilderness of Paran

