

# Numbers 16 - Korah's Devastating Influence

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## The influence of Korah's rebellion

Num 16:1-3 ESV Now Korah the son of Izhar, son of Kohath, son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men. 2 And **they rose up before Moses, with a number of the people of Israel, 250 chiefs** of the congregation, chosen from the assembly, **well-known men**. 3 They assembled themselves together against Moses and against Aaron and said to them, "You have gone too far! For ***all in the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?***"

## **The book of Jude describes Korah's sin as rebellion**

- Jude 1:11 ...Describes this event as **Korah's rebellion** ...
- It is the jealousy of one person that infected many - **here over 250 people**

## **His poison affected others**

- **They rose up before Moses** - Was there is no other recourse?
- **Well-known men** - He chose people that could spread the influence
- **All are holy, the LORD is among them** - He took his complaint to the congregation -- FIRST
- **You exalt yourself above the assembly** - He created an US vs THEM mentality

## Moses left it to the LORD to sort it out

Num 16:4-5 & 11 ESV When Moses heard it, **he fell on his face**, 5 and he said to Korah and all his company, "In the morning **the LORD will show who is his**, and who is holy, and will bring him near to him. **The one whom he chooses** he will bring near to him ... 11 Therefore ***it is against the LORD*** that you and all your company have gathered together. ***What is Aaron that you grumble against him?***"

- Korah's rebellion against Aaron and Moses is actually a rebellion against the LORD
- ...AND BECAUSE IT IS - **Moses does not have to defend himself**

## Korah continues to stir up the rebellion - infecting more people

18 So every man took his censer and put fire in them and laid incense on them and stood at the entrance of the tent of meeting with Moses and Aaron. 19 ***Then Korah assembled all the congregation against them at the entrance of the tent of meeting.*** And the glory of the LORD appeared to all the congregation. 20 And the LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, 21 "Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that **I may consume them in a moment.**"

- ***Now it is all the congregation*** --- Peer pressure now comes into play
- **Which group would you rather be in?**
  - All the congregation? -- *Or with Aaron and Moses to whom the LORD spoke?*

## Moses intercedes for the rebellious

22 **And they fell on their faces** and said, "O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and will you be angry with all the congregation?" 23 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, **24 "Say to the congregation, Get away from the dwelling of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram."**

- **The infectious nature of his sin** - "Shall ONE MAN sin - angry with all the congregation"

## Their wives, their sons, their little ones were swept up on the rebellion

25 Then Moses rose and went to Dathan and Abiram, and the elders of Israel followed him. 26 And he spoke to the congregation, saying, ***"Depart, please, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest you be swept away with all their sins."*** 27 So they got away from the dwelling of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. And Dathan and Abiram came out and stood at the door of their tents, **together with their wives, their sons, and their little ones.**

- Children most likely innocent bystanders are drawn in and affected

## Korah's jealousy ultimately destroyed many families and people

28 And Moses said, ***"Hereby you shall know that the LORD has sent me to do all these works, and that it has not been of my own accord."*** 29 If these men die as all men die, or if they are visited by the fate of all mankind, then the LORD has not sent me. 30 But if the LORD creates something new, and the ground opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into Sheol, ***then you shall know that these men have despised the LORD."*** 31 And as soon as he had finished speaking all these words, the ground under them split apart. 32 And ***the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all the people who belonged to Korah and all their goods.*** 33 So they and all that belonged to them went down alive into 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 cry, for they said, "Lest the earth swallow us up!" 35 And ***fire came out from the LORD and consumed the 250 men offering the incense.***

## The congregation is so blinded by the poison of Korah

41 ***But on the next day*** all the congregation of the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and against Aaron, saying, "You have killed the people of the LORD." 42 And when the congregation had assembled against Moses and against Aaron, they turned toward the tent of meeting. And behold, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the LORD appeared. 43 And Moses and Aaron came to the front of the tent of meeting, 44 and the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

## Once again Moses and Aaron fall on their faces

**45 "Get away from the midst of this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment."** And they fell on their faces.

## 14,700 more people die because of the rebellion of Korah

46 And Moses said to Aaron, "Take your censer, and put fire on it from off the altar and lay incense on it and carry it quickly to the congregation and make atonement for them, for wrath has gone out from

the LORD; the plague has begun." 47 So Aaron took it as Moses said and ran into the midst of the assembly. And behold, the plague had already begun among the people. **And he put on the incense and made atonement for the people. 48 And he stood between the dead and the living, and the plague was stopped. 49 Now those who died in the plague were 14,700**, besides those who died in the affair of Korah. 50 And Aaron returned to Moses at the entrance of the tent of meeting, when the plague was stopped.

### Korah became a name people did not want to be associated with

- Num 27:1-3 ESV Then drew near the daughters of Zelophehad... ... they stood before Moses and before Eleazar the priest and before the chiefs and all the congregation, at the entrance of the tent of meeting, saying, 3 "Our father died in the wilderness. **He was not among the company of those who gathered themselves together against the LORD in the company of Korah**, but died for his own sin. And he had no sons.

### But..... the sons of Korah did not die

Num 26:9-11 ESV The sons of Eliab: Nemuel, Dathan, and Abiram. These are the Dathan and Abiram, chosen from the congregation, who contended against Moses and Aaron in the company of Korah, when they contended against the LORD 10 and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up together with Korah, when that company died, when the fire devoured 250 men, and they became a warning. 11 **But the sons of Korah did not die.**

- **Stand Alone** --With all the poison that came from the jealousy and rebellion of Korah and the thousands of people influenced by it - **His sons had the fortitude to stand apart**

### How the sons [descendants] of Korah turned out

- **Some became warriors and served with David at Ziklag** - 1Ch 12:1-6 ESV
- **The prophet Samuel was - a son in the lineage of Korah** - 1Ch 6:33-38 ESV

**Eleven Psalms were written by them** - (42, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 84, 85, 87, 88)

- (18 generations - maybe as much as 720 years) - they called the band **the sons of Korah** -- Not the people of Heman, not chief of the Korahite singers. Not as the sons of Samuel
- They identified those who DID NOT REBEL - who stood with the LORD - to let all the world know that **EVEN IN THE MIDST OF EXTREME PRESSURE YOU CAN STAND ALONE**

### Here are a few excerpts from their psalms

**I'd rather be a doorkeeper than dwell in the tents of wickedness**

- Psa 84:10 ESV For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God **than dwell in the tents of wickedness.**
- Psa 42:1-2 ESV To the choirmaster. **A Maskil of the Sons of Korah.** As a deer pants for flowing streams, **so pants my soul for you, O God. 2 My soul thirsts for God**, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?

- Psa 46:1-2 ESV To the choirmaster. Of the Sons of Korah. According to Alamoth. A Song. **God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.** 2 Therefore ***we will not fear though the earth gives way***, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea,
- Psa 47:1 & 6-89 ESV To the choirmaster. A Psalm of the Sons of Korah.....6 Sing praises to God, sing praises! **Sing praises to our King, sing praises! 7 For God is the King of all the earth;** sing praises with a psalm! 8 **God reigns over the nations; God sits on his holy throne.**

### This is a message about power

- The power of influence that destroyed 15,000 people (Korah over others)
- The power of trust that led to their restraint (Moses and Aaron)
- The power of choosing what's right and the legacy it leaves (the sons of Korah)
  - **Korah's poison had no power here**, his influence was limited with his sons

### Who do you identify with the most in this story?

- 1) **Korah** as the instigator?
  - 2) As **those easily lead into rebellion?** - or to cave in to peer pressure?
    - a) Are you poisoned by the sin of others?
  - 3) **Moses and Aaron?** who fall on their face before the LORD?
  - 4) **Sons of Korah** who are willing to stand apart and stand alone to honor the LORD?
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