

## The Rebellion of Korah (*part 2*)

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What do you do when the ground opens up and swallows all of your friends? Let me explain:

The children of Israel had been told that everyone over 20 years old would die in the wilderness and that their little ones would suffer for 40 years, because of their unbelief. Instead of repenting or asking for mercy from God, they decide three things:

- That Moses acted on his own, without direction from God
- That they were just as holy as Moses and heard from God just as he did
- That God was with them just as much as He was with Moses

As a result of this they, led by Korah, rebelled against Moses, and a leadership contest followed. All who rebelled were judged by God – the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households, the men that were with Korah, and all of their goods. Also, fire came out from the LORD and consumed the 250 men who were offering incense.

So, what do you do when the ground opens up and swallows all of your friends?

**Num 16:41** - On the next day all the congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, saying, "You have killed the people of the LORD."

How crazy can you get? God has clearly brought forth judgment on these people for rebellion against Moses and Aaron, yet by the next day they blame Moses. Why?

Because they were stubborn  
Because they were blind  
Because they were rebellious  
Because this is the true nature of the heart of man:

**Jer 17:9** - "The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*,  
And desperately wicked;  
Who can know it?"

**Jer 17:10** - I, the LORD, search the heart,  
/ test the mind,  
Even to give every man according to his ways,  
According to the fruit of his doings.

What happened next?

**Num 16:42** - Now it happened, when the congregation had gathered against Moses and Aaron, that they turned toward the tabernacle of meeting; and suddenly the cloud covered it, and the glory of the LORD appeared.

**Num 16:43** - Then Moses and Aaron came before the tabernacle of meeting.

**Num 16:44** - And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

**Num 16:45** - "Get away from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment." And they fell on their faces.

Once again, we see justice and mercy working hand in hand. They have sinned and they deserved to be judged, so God pronounces sentence. But why does God say this to Moses? Because He knows that Moses will intercede and make atonement for their sin. Mercy will triumph over judgment.

**Num 16:46** - So Moses said to Aaron, "Take a censer and put fire in it from the altar, put incense *on it*, and take it quickly to the congregation and make atonement for them; for wrath has gone out from the LORD. The plague has begun."

**Num 16:47** - Then Aaron took *it* as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the assembly; and already the plague had begun among the people. So he put in the incense and made atonement for the people.

Their sin cannot simply be overlooked; there had to be an "atonement" for their sin. What is atonement?

English definition: the action of making amends for a wrong or injury.

Hebrew "kaphar" - to cover, purge, make an atonement, make reconciliation

Something had to be done to make amends for this wrong. Their sin had to be covered, purged. There had to be reconciliation. This is what God always wants; He does not want to destroy us or judge us – He wants us to be right with him:

**Eze 33:11** - Say to them: 'As I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?'

**2Pe 3:9** - The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

Once the atonement was made, the plague stopped:

**Num 16:48** - And he stood between the dead and the living; so the plague was stopped.

**Num 16:49** - Now those who died in the plague were fourteen thousand seven hundred, besides those who died in the Korah incident.

**Num 16:50** - So Aaron returned to Moses at the door of the tabernacle of meeting, for the plague had stopped.

Even when the ground opened up and swallowed those who rebelled, the people still murmured, would not repent, and continued to rebel. Their unbelief was strong! This is why they were not able to enter into the promised land.

God did everything possible to help them to succeed:

- He saved them
- He protected them
- He provided for them
- He taught them
- He directed them
- He warned them
- He even revealed Himself to them!

And after all of this, they still did not learn! They were still His people, but they were not able to receive all that they were promised, because of unbelief.

Let us do our best to learn from their example.

**Heb 3:7** - Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: "TODAY, IF YOU WILL HEAR HIS VOICE,

**Heb 3:8** - DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS AS IN THE REBELLION, IN THE DAY OF TRIAL IN THE WILDERNESS,

**Heb 3:9** - WHERE YOUR FATHERS TESTED ME, TRIED ME, AND SAW MY WORKS FORTY YEARS.

**Heb 3:10** - THEREFORE I WAS ANGRY WITH THAT GENERATION, AND SAID, 'THEY ALWAYS GO ASTRAY IN THEIR HEART, AND THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN MY WAYS.'

**Heb 3:11** - SO I SWORE IN MY WRATH, 'THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST.' "

**Heb 3:12** - Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God;

**Heb 3:13** - but exhort one another daily, while it is called "TODAY," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.