

Rebels in the Wilderness

During Israel's time in the wilderness, more than 250 rebels came against Moses and Aaron (Numbers 16:1-3). These men were fed up and felt that Moses was a poor leader, and they were just as qualified to lead the nation (Numbers 16:12-14). Many felt that Moses was power-hungry and had arbitrarily set himself and Aaron up as leaders.

How did Moses respond to this rebellion? He proposed that they allow God to decide who He wanted to lead the nation (Numbers 16:4-7). As the rebellion grew larger, the next day, God unleashed His judgment (Numbers 16:31-35). He caused the earth to open its mouth and swallow the rebels alive.

Many in the camp blamed Moses and Aaron for what happened to the rebels, and God sent a plague that killed more than 14,000 people (Numbers 16:41-50). This rebellion seems to have been led by Korah. Korah was a first cousin of Moses and Aaron.

The evil actions of Korah

- He was an "armchair quarterback." He criticized and determined that he could be a better leader than Moses. He didn't want to accept that God chose Moses and Aaron.
- He was discontent (Numbers 16:8-11). He wasn't satisfied with his current position. He was not content with the work he had been assigned at the Tabernacle. He wanted his family to be the family of priests.
- He formed a faction. Rather than go to Moses privately with his complaints, Korah stirred up a large group of people. He voiced displeasure and complained. He organized a mutiny and tried to remove the current leadership.
- He rebelled against God (Numbers 16:11). God appointed Moses and Aaron to their leadership positions. When these rebels revolted against them, they also revolted against God!
- We must avoid following in the wicked footsteps of Korah. We must avoid becoming complainers, grippers, gossipers, forming factions, and bringing our leaders grief (Hebrews 13:17).

How do we avoid becoming rebels in the church?

- We must submit to our elders (Hebrews 13:17). Submission carries the idea of "yielding." God demands that we yield to elders in matters of judgment. While elders do not make laws in the church, they are given authority to make various judgment calls for the flock. We must avoid rebelling and submit to their judgments even if we don't get our way.
- We must honor and esteem our elders (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13). This requires that we appreciate the sacrifices elders make to lead the flock. We must be grateful and praise them for kingdom work.
- We bring our elders joy and not grief (Hebrews 13:17). We bring joy to our leaders by submitting, being gracious, and not complaining, griping, pouting, and refusing to get involved when we don't get our way. We bring them joy when we encourage them, assume the best in their actions, and give them all the things that love demands (1 Corinthians 13:4-7).

Conclusion:

Let us always respect our appointed leaders and pursue peace and unity.

- Shawn Jeffries