

Portion Korach Numbers – Bamidbar (16-18.32)

God has just told the Hebrews to wander for 40 years in the wilderness because they showed fear of the giants in God's Promised Land instead of faith in an Almighty God who could beat any enemy.

Now Korach, a Levite, along with two sons of Eliab, gathered 250 community leaders to fight against Moses and Aaron and take over leadership of the Hebrews. They said, "It is you, Moses, and not God who forces us to die wandering in the wilderness!" Moses answered, "In the morning God will show who God is and who is holy. Now make a priestly fire and give incense offerings to God."

In the morning Moses and Aaron gathered everyone in front of the Tent of Appointed Meeting. The Presence of God appeared. The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, "Stand back. It is time to kill these rebels!" The Hebrews cried out, "O God, if one man sins, will you be angry with the whole community?" God answered, "Moses you tell those Hebrews to get away from these wicked men or I will kill them too." And the people moved away. "Now," Moses shouted, "soon you shall know it is the Lord who sent me. But if the Lord creates a miracle so that the ground opens and swallows them and they go to the grave alive then you will know that these people have been punished by God." Just then the ground under Korach and his followers opened and swallowed them and all their belongings. They went into the grave alive and the earth closed over them. Then God sent a fire and killed the 250 Korach's followers offering incense.

The next day the Hebrew were mad and said, "Moses and Aaron brought death upon God's people." God quickly sent a plague. Moses told Aaron to make an offering to ask forgiveness for the sins of the Hebrews. The plague was then stopped even though over 14,000 died because of the Korach rebellion.

Then God had Moses get each of the leaders of the twelve tribes to carve a rod. God said, "The staff of the man whom I choose shall sprout and leave that staff in front of the Ten Commandments as a warning that those who fight against Me will die." And Aaron's rod sprouted with blossoms and almonds. The Lord then said to Aaron, "You and your sons shall be the priests. You shall take 1/10th of each offering the people bring to God. Instead of land, these offerings shall be your portion before God. Do not profane the sacred donations or you will die.

Questions: 1) Is there a difference between rebelling against God and rebelling against the Jewish religion? How do you test God? 3) Why do you think Moses is so dedicated to the Hebrew community even though they rebel against them?

Illustration Ideas: Korach and followers rebelling against Moses...Korach's followers making an incense offering...the earth eating the rebels...Aaron's rod sprouting...Aaron's rod in front of the 10 Commandments.