



Lesson 60

Korah's Rebellion

Story Elements

- **Text:** Numbers 16:1-50
- **Setting:** circa 1447 B.C., near Canaan
- **Characters** God, Moses, Aaron and Korah
- **Plot:** Korah and other tribal leaders grow disillusioned and rebel against Moses and Aaron.
- **Key word(s)** “the LORD will _____ who are his” (v 5)
- **Climax:** “And Moses said unto Korah, Be thou and all thy company before the LORD, thou, and they, and Aaron, tomorrow.” (v 16)

The Reason for the Rebellion

1. The tribe of Levi was divided into 3 major families: the Kohathites, the Gershonites, the Merarites. Each family had different priestly functions.
 - a. The Gershonites and the Merarites were responsible for the takedown, _____, and the setup of the Tabernacle.
 - b. The Kohathites were involved in the actual service _____ the Tabernacle. (Num. 4)
2. The Kohathites were further divided according to the four sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel.
 - a. Moses and Aaron were sons of _____;
 - b. Korah was a son of Izhar, making them _____.
 - c. Only the descendants of Aaron could be _____.
3. Formerly, the mixed multitude murmured against Moses, but now it is men of rank. They accused Moses of thinking too highly of himself.

*Num 16:3 And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: **wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD?***

4. Discontent and _____ were at the root of this rebellion. Korah especially seemed to desire the high priesthood (*cf vv 9-10*). “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 (v. 10).”¹

The Result of the Rebellion

5. (vv 4-5) Moses’ response to their accusations was that he “_____ on his face” (v 4).
 - a. (vv 6-11) Then Korah and his followers were invited to burn incense in censers before the tabernacle – if God was willing to accept them as high priests, then their incense would be accepted by God.
 - b. Moses rebuked Korah and his followers for despising their God-appointed roles by envying others. Matthew Henry said, “Instead of fretting that any are preferred before us in honour, power, estate, or interest, in gifts, graces, or usefulness, we have reason to bless God if we, who

¹ Albert Barnes, [Notes on the Old Testament: Exodus to Ruth](#), ed. F. C. Cook and J. M. Fuller (London: John Murray, 1879), 217.

are less than the least, are not put among the very last.”²

- c. Moses summoned Dathan and Abiram, fellow conspirators with Korah, but they refused to come and accused Moses of fraud and manipulation. Dathan and Abiram were so wicked, they even referred to Egypt as the “land of _____ and honey” (v 13). Henry exclaims, “Ungrateful wretches, to represent that as an injury to them which was really the greatest favour that ever was bestowed upon any people!”³

- 6. (vv 28-30) Moses announced to the congregation that proof of his God-given authority would be the unusual manner of death of the dissenters.
 - a. (vv 32-33) All the men, and their families, involved in the rebellion were swallowed by an _____.
 - b. (v 35) Korah and the others that burned incense were themselves burned up from _____ from heaven.
 - c. (v 38) The censers of the rebels were gathered up and made into a covering for the brazen altar as a _____ of the danger of sin.

- 7. (v 41) The very next day, the entire congregation accused Moses of the murder of Korah and his followers. Matthew Henry shares our shock: “Be astonished, O heavens, at this, and wonder, O earth! Was there ever such an instance of the _____ corruption of sinners? ...The shrieks of those sinking sinners, those sinners against their own souls, were yet sounding in their ears, the smell of the fire yet remained, and the gaping earth was scarcely thoroughly closed, and yet the same sins were re-acted and all these warnings slighted.”⁴
 - a. God punished the people with a _____.
 - b. But Aaron intervened, and with _____ incense the plague was stayed. Yet, 14,700 people perished in the plague.

Application

- 8. How stubborn is sin! In spite of all the miracles, blessings, and judgments, people still persist in their rebellion against God. Is it any wonder to us that the torments of hell are eternal? A moment’s reprieve and the wicked would still curse God and rebel.

Notes: _____

Answer Key: Key word(s): “show” • 1. a. transportation; b. inside • 2. a. Amram; b. cousins; c. high priests • 4. Envy • 5. Fell; c. milk • 6. a. earthquake; b. fire; c. memorial • 7. Incurable; a. plague; b. atoning

How to use this worksheet for personal Bible study: (1) Read the Bible passage given in the **Story Elements** section. (2) Read through the worksheet and try to fill in the blanks without looking at the **Answer Key**. (3) Check your answers with the key and make the necessary corrections. (Note: some answers are a matter of opinion, and often more than one answer is correct. (4) Write down your own thoughts, applications, and questions for further study in the **Notes** section.

² Matthew Henry, [Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume](#) (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 209.

³ Ibid, 210.

⁴ Ibid, 212.