



CELL GUIDE

TOPIC Rebellion of Korah (Numbers 16) **SPEAKER** Senior Pastor Daniel Foo
THEME Be Alert and Vigilant **DATE** 21 & 22 Mar 2020

MESSAGE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Korah, Moses and Aaron were from the tribe of Levi, which had been chosen by God for full-time service to Him in temple matters. However, only the descendants of Aaron were allowed to serve as priests. Korah, together with Dathan and Abiram from the tribe of Reuben, accused Moses and Aaron of exalting themselves above the congregation of the Lord and led a rebellion of 250 leaders and thousands of community members against them.

Although Korah led a rebellion against his leaders Moses and Aaron, he and his followers were ultimately rebelling against God by challenging the authority of those whom He had divinely appointed. As a judgment for their sin, Korah, Dathan, Abiram and their followers were destroyed by God in earthquake, fire, and plague.

ROOT CAUSES OF THE REBELLION

Korah was jealous of his younger cousin Elizaphan who was made chief of their family tribe, and of his cousins Moses and Aaron who were given more the more honourable priestly duties while he was relegated to more “menial” tasks in the tabernacle. He felt that he could do better, and his sense of entitlement gave rise to selfish ambition, which eventually manifested itself in rebellion.

Dathan and Abiram’s motivation for rebelling was different; they were aggrieved as their tribe of Reuben was the firstborn of Jacob, but had been replaced by Judah to be the leader among the 12 tribes of Israel.

LESSONS FROM THE REBELLION

1) GUARD OUR HEARTS FROM COMPARISON

Comparison is the devil’s snare. We can learn from others who are better than us, but we must guard our feelings towards them. When comparison occurs from a posture of entitlement, this leads to envy, jealousy and every wrongdoing.

Comparison affects our attitudes and motivations which in turn affect our words and actions. This is why Proverbs 4:23 tells us to guard our hearts with all diligence. We can do this by dealing with the selfish ambition and conceit in our hearts, esteeming others better than ourselves, and looking out for others’ interests and not just our own (Philippians 2:1-4).

2) Watch out for the Company we keep

Moses commanded the congregation to stay away from the tents of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, lest they too get swept up in the rebellion (Numbers 16:26). Likewise, exercise caution over what we see and hear, including what we consume on social media, as what we constantly feed on will eventually manifest outwardly. Romans 16:17-18 tells us to stay away from divisive and argumentative people even in the Body of Christ; such people engage in subtle deception with their smooth and flattering speech, while operating in the spirit of Korah.

3) Seek wisdom from above and wise godly counsel

In Joshua 9:14, we learn that the Israelites were deceived by the Gibeonites because they did not seek the counsel of God. Rebellion appeals to human pride, which is the nature of man's fallenness. 250 leaders of the congregation who persisted with the rebellion were destroyed; this shows that even leaders can be misled.

4) Be established in Christ, our Righteousness

Unlike Korah, Dathan and Abiram who were dissatisfied with their calling and portion, the righteous live in godly contentment (1 Timothy 6:6, Philippians 4:11-12) and know their position, boundaries and honour God's appointed leadership (Romans 13:1-2, Lev 10:1-2). The righteous are those who live out from their right-standing with God and from the living Word in them. They are not shaken by life's adversities (Psalm 112:6-8, Matthew 7:24-25); they understand the ways and thoughts of God and can therefore pray powerfully and effectively (James 5:16); they are protected by the Lord always (Proverbs 18:10, Isaiah 54:14); and they are assured of God's vengeance when they surrender revenge to Him (Deut 32:35, Romans 12:19).

CONCLUSION

Following the destruction of Korah, Dathan, Abiram and their followers, the entire Israelite community gathered to blame Moses and Aaron for their brethren's deaths. To stop God's wrath from consuming the entire community, Aaron stood in the gap to make atonement for the people, and God stopped His plague against the Israelites. Just as how Aaron interceded for his people, God is calling for righteous men and women to rise up and stand in the gap between the living and the dead today. As the Church, we are here for such a time as this.

QUESTIONS

1. Can you think of a time when you did not follow an instruction/act on a task that someone in authority gave to you? Why did you find it difficult to comply/obey? What might be some unintended effects of such non-compliance/disobedience?

2. What is your portion and calling? Have you compared it to others and felt that it was not good enough? Why?

3. The next time you find yourself in the same situation as in Question 1, how can you respond differently?