

## There Died In The Plague Twenty-Four Thousand

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There Died of the Plague Twenty-Four Thousand (Nu. 25:9).

There Died of the Plague but Twenty-Three Thousand (1Cor. 10:8).

Commenting on a plague that occurred during the time of Moses, the Apostle Paul arrived at a different death toll than the one recorded in Numbers 25:9. At first glance this might appear to be a contradiction in scripture. However, upon closer examination it will become apparent that Paul's account of this event provided details that otherwise would not have been known,

And those who died in the plague were twenty-four thousand (Nu. 25:9; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted).

Unlike the plague that occurred at an earlier date when Korah rebelled against the authority that God had bestowed upon Moses (Nu. 16:1-50), the plague in Numbers 25:9 did not differentiate between the number of leaders in the rebellion and those who died because they followed these leaders,

Now those who died in the plague were fourteen thousand seven hundred, **besides those who died in the Korah incident** (Nu. 16:49; emphasis added).

So Numbers 16:49 makes a distinction between the leaders who died and those that followed them and the total number of leaders that were involved was recorded earlier,

And they (the leaders of the rebellion) rose up before Moses with some of the children of Israel, **two hundred and fifty leaders of the congregation**, representatives of the congregation, men of renown (Nu. 16:2; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Therefore, if the fourteen thousand seven hundred that died during the plague are added to the two hundred and fifty leaders, the total number of deaths was fourteen thousand nine hundred and fifty. The point is that God does not provide every minute detail when commenting on various events, including numerous plagues. However, he does provide enough information to allow the reader to make calculations and come to a greater understanding of what occurred in any given situation (cf. Isa. 28:10, 13). With this principle in mind, Numbers 25:9 can now be examined more closely starting with the leaders who were involved in this separate rebellion,

So Israel was joined to Baal of Peor, and the anger of the Lord was aroused against Israel. <sup>4</sup>Then the Lord said to Moses, '**Take all the leaders of the people and hang the offenders before the Lord**, out in the sun that the fierce anger of the Lord may turn away from Israel.' <sup>5</sup>So Moses said

to the judges of Israel, 'Every one of you kill his men who were joined to Baal of Peor ' (Nu. 25:3-5; emphasis added).

Unlike the rebellion that took place in Numbers 16:1-50, the number of leaders is not mentioned. In order to determine how many leaders were involved, it is necessary to look elsewhere in scripture for clues. Thankfully, the Apostle Paul provides the information necessary to calculate the number of leaders,

Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell (from the plague) (1Cor. 10:8; Ed. note in parenthesis).

The twenty-three thousand that died from the plague do not represent any of the leaders who were executed for their rebellion. Therefore, by subtracting the total number of deaths associated with the action of both the leaders and their followers, which is twenty-four thousand, from the twenty-three thousand that died from the plague in one day, the balance remaining is one thousand. This one thousand represents the total number of leaders who rebelled against Almighty God.

In conclusion, it is inaccurate to state that Numbers 25:9 provides a total number of people that died from the plague. Instead, the twenty-four thousand is a combination of the leaders who were executed and those who followed their sinful example. Also, the translators of most versions of the Bible do not render the phrase "died in (during the course of) the plague" as "died from the plague," which is a very important distinction. So all the deaths, that occurred during the short duration of the plague, was twenty-four thousand, which included one thousand leaders who did not die as a direct result of the plague.

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