

Conflict Resolution



Rebellion of Korah

Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men: and they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the congregation, called to the assembly, men of renown; and they assembled 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 Jehovah is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the assembly of Jehovah?" (Numbers 16:1-3).

Our present Conflict included two-hundred and fifty men of renown, princes of the assembly, men from various tribes, men who were prominent in the camp. These men were led by "Korah, the son of Izhar (the younger brother of Amram), the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben.

When Jehovah placed the tribes according to their marching orders the camp of the Reubenites and the camp of the Kohathites were placed on the same side of the tabernacle (Numbers 2:10; 3:29). As Reuben, the firstborn of Jacob, had lost

his birthright, and it fell upon Judah, so the priesthood had fallen upon the family of Amram, the father of Moses and Aaron, and not upon Izhar the second born of Kohath. Just as Miriam and Aaron were jealous of Moses, so also was Kohath of Moses and Aaron, and Korah was able to stir up the Reubenites in an attempted coup against Moses and Aaron.

The Conflict: “And when Moses heard it, he fell upon his face: and he spake unto Korah and unto all his company, saying, In the morning Jehovah will show who are his, and who is holy, and will cause him to come near unto him: even him whom he shall choose will he cause to come near unto him. This do: take you censers, Korah, and all his company; and put fire in them, and put incense upon them before Jehovah to-morrow: and it shall be that the man whom Jehovah doth choose, he shall be holy: ye take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi.” Moses did not attempt to justify himself, but rather to put the matter into the hands of Jehovah for a proper judgment.

“And Moses said unto Korah, Hear now, ye sons of Levi: seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself, to do the service of the tabernacle of Jehovah, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them; and that he hath brought thee near, and all thy brethren the sons of Levi with thee? and seek ye the priesthood also?” The matter of certain individuals to seek that which is not theirs to possess, or enter into a position of authority, which is not theirs to have is common in every aspect of life, and is generated by the age old transgression motivated by “the vainglory of life.” Moses takes this attempted coup, and says unto Korah, “Therefore thou and all thy company are gathered together against Jehovah: and Aaron, what is he that ye murmur against him?”

“And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab; and they said, We will not come up: is it a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of a land flowing with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, but thou must needs make thyself also a prince over us? Moreover thou hast not brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey, nor given us inheritance of fields and

vineyards: wilt thou put out the eyes of these men? we will not come up.” Korah and his company compounds their error, and refuses to hearken unto the words of Moses, therefore, the contest was set!

The Resolution: “Moses was very wroth, and said unto Jehovah, Respect not thou their offering: I have not taken one ass from them, neither have I hurt one of them. And Moses said unto Korah, Be thou and all thy company before Jehovah, thou, and they, and Aaron, to-morrow: and take ye every man his censer, and put incense upon them, and bring ye before Jehovah every man his censer, two hundred and fifty censers; thou also, and Aaron, each his censer. And they took every man his censer, and put fire in them, and laid incense thereon, and stood at the door of the tent of meeting with Moses and Aaron. And Korah assembled all the congregation against them unto the door of the tent of meeting: and the glory of Jehovah appeared unto all the congregation. And Jehovah spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment. And they fell upon their faces, and said, O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation? And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the congregation, saying, Get you up from about the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. And Moses rose up and went unto Dathan and Abiram; and the elders of Israel followed him. And he spake unto the congregation, saying, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins. So they gat them up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, on every side: and Dathan and Abiram came out, and stood at the door of their tents, and their wives, and their sons, and their little ones. And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that Jehovah hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of mine own mind. If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; then Jehovah hath not sent me. But if Jehovah make a new thing, and the ground open its mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down alive into Sheol; then

ye shall understand that these men have despised Jehovah. And it came to pass, as he made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them; and the earth opened its mouth, and swallowed them up, and their households, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. So they, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into Sheol: and the earth closed upon them, and they perished from among the assembly.”

It is beyond our understanding to comprehend the magnitude of the events, but the affect upon the rest of Israel gives us a glimpse of the resulting fear, saying, “And all Israel that were round about them fled at the cry of them; for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up. And fire came forth from Jehovah, and devoured the two hundred and fifty men that offered the incense.”

This event was of such magnitude that Jehovah determined to do something that would always serve as a reminder to those who would attempt to do as Korah and those influenced by him, saying, “And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, that he take up the censers out of the burning, and scatter thou the fire yonder; for they are holy, even the censers of these sinners against their own lives; and let them be made beaten plates for a covering of the altar: for they offered them before Jehovah; therefore they are holy; and they shall be a sign unto the children of Israel. And Eleazar the priest took the brazen censers, which they that were burnt had offered; and they beat them out for a covering of the altar, to be a memorial unto the children of Israel, to the end that no stranger, that is not of the seed of Aaron, come near to burn incense before Jehovah; that he be not as Korah, and as his company: as Jehovah spake unto him by Moses.”