

## Numbers 16-18

### Korah's Rebellion

**16:1** Now Korah the son of Izhar, son of Kohath, son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men. <sup>2</sup> And they rose up before Moses, with a number of the people of Israel, 250 chiefs of the congregation, chosen from the assembly, well-known men. <sup>3</sup> They assembled themselves together against Moses and against Aaron and said to them, “You have gone too far! For all in the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?” <sup>4</sup> When Moses heard it, he fell on his face, <sup>5</sup> and he said to Korah and all his company, “In the morning the LORD will show who is his, and who is holy, and will bring him near to him. The one whom he chooses he will bring near to him. <sup>6</sup> Do this: take censers, Korah and all his company; <sup>7</sup> put fire in them and put incense on them before the LORD tomorrow, and the man whom the LORD chooses shall be the holy one. You have gone too far, sons of Levi!” <sup>8</sup> And Moses said to Korah, “Hear now, you sons of Levi: <sup>9</sup> is it too small a thing for you that the God of Israel has separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself, to do service in the tabernacle of the LORD and to stand before the congregation to minister to them, <sup>10</sup> and that he has brought you near him, and all your brothers the sons of Levi with you? And would you seek the priesthood also? <sup>11</sup> Therefore it is against the LORD that you and all your

company have gathered together. What is Aaron that you grumble against him?”

*12* And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and they said, “We will not come up. *13* Is it a small thing that you have brought us up out of a land flowing with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, that you must also make yourself a prince over us? *14* Moreover, you have not brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey, nor given us inheritance of fields and vineyards. Will you put out the eyes of these men? We will not come up.” *15* And Moses was very angry and said to the LORD, “Do not respect their offering. I have not taken one donkey from them, and I have not harmed one of them.”

*16* And Moses said to Korah, “Be present, you and all your company, before the LORD, you and they, and Aaron, tomorrow. *17* And let every one of you take his censer and put incense on it, and every one of you bring before the LORD his censer, 250 censers; you also, and Aaron, each his censer.” *18* So every man took his censer and put fire in them and laid incense on them and stood at the entrance of the tent of meeting with Moses and Aaron. *19* Then Korah assembled all the congregation against them at the entrance of the tent of meeting. And the glory of the LORD appeared to all the congregation.

*20* And the LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, *21* “Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment.” *22* And they fell on their faces and said, “O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and will you be angry

with all the congregation?” <sup>23</sup> And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>24</sup> “Say to the congregation, Get away from the dwelling of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.”

<sup>25</sup> Then Moses rose and went to Dathan and Abiram, and the elders of Israel followed him. <sup>26</sup> And he spoke to the congregation, saying, “Depart, please, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest you be swept away with all their sins.” <sup>27</sup> So they got away from the dwelling of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. And Dathan and Abiram came out and stood at the door of their tents, together with their wives, their sons, and their little ones. <sup>28</sup> And Moses said, “Hereby you shall know that the LORD has sent me to do all these works, and that it has not been of my own accord. <sup>29</sup> If these men die as all men die, or if they are visited by the fate of all mankind, then the LORD has not sent me. <sup>30</sup> But if the LORD creates something new, and the ground opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into Sheol, then you shall know that these men have despised the LORD.”

<sup>31</sup> And as soon as he had finished speaking all these words, the ground under them split apart. <sup>32</sup> And the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all the people who belonged to Korah and all their goods. <sup>33</sup> So they and all that belonged to them went down alive into Sheol, and the earth closed over them, and they perished from the midst of the assembly. <sup>34</sup> And all Israel who were around them fled at their cry, for they said, “Lest

the earth swallow us up!” <sup>35</sup> And fire came out from the LORD and consumed the 250 men offering the incense.

<sup>36</sup> Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>37</sup> “Tell Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest to take up the censers out of the blaze. Then scatter the fire far and wide, for they have become holy. <sup>38</sup> As for the censers of these men who have sinned at the cost of their lives, let them be made into hammered plates as a covering for the altar, for they offered them before the LORD, and they became holy. Thus they shall be a sign to the people of Israel.” <sup>39</sup> So Eleazar the priest took the bronze censers, which those who were burned had offered, and they were hammered out as a covering for the altar, <sup>40</sup> to be a reminder to the people of Israel, so that no outsider, who is not of the descendants of Aaron, should draw near to burn incense before the LORD, lest he become like Korah and his company—as the LORD said to him through Moses.

<sup>41</sup> But on the next day all the congregation of the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and against Aaron, saying, “You have killed the people of the LORD.” <sup>42</sup> And when the congregation had assembled against Moses and against Aaron, they turned toward the tent of meeting. And behold, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the LORD appeared. <sup>43</sup> And Moses and Aaron came to the front of the tent of meeting, <sup>44</sup> and the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>45</sup> “Get away from the midst of this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment.” And they fell on their faces. <sup>46</sup> And Moses said to Aaron, “Take your censer, and put fire on it from off the altar and lay

incense on it and carry it quickly to the congregation and make atonement for them, for wrath has gone out from the LORD; the plague has begun.”<sup>47</sup> So Aaron took it as Moses said and ran into the midst of the assembly. And behold, the plague had already begun among the people. And he put on the incense and made atonement for the people.<sup>48</sup> And he stood between the dead and the living, and the plague was stopped.<sup>49</sup> Now those who died in the plague were 14,700, besides those who died in the affair of Korah.<sup>50</sup> And Aaron returned to Moses at the entrance of the tent of meeting, when the plague was stopped.

#### Aaron's Staff Buds

**17:1** The LORD spoke to Moses, saying,<sup>2</sup> “Speak to the people of Israel, and get from them staffs, one for each fathers' house, from all their chiefs according to their fathers' houses, twelve staffs. Write each man's name on his staff,<sup>3</sup> and write Aaron's name on the staff of Levi. For there shall be one staff for the head of each fathers' house.<sup>4</sup> Then you shall deposit them in the tent of meeting before the testimony, where I meet with you.<sup>5</sup> And the staff of the man whom I choose shall sprout. Thus I will make to cease from me the grumblings of the people of Israel, which they grumble against you.”<sup>6</sup> Moses spoke to the people of Israel. And all their chiefs gave him staffs, one for each chief, according to their fathers' houses, twelve staffs. And the staff of Aaron was among their staffs.<sup>7</sup> And Moses deposited the staffs before the LORD in the tent of the testimony.

<sup>8</sup> On the next day Moses went into the tent of the testimony, and behold, the staff of Aaron for the house of Levi had sprouted and put forth buds and produced blossoms, and it bore ripe almonds. <sup>9</sup> Then Moses brought out all the staffs from before the LORD to all the people of Israel. And they looked, and each man took his staff. <sup>10</sup> And the LORD said to Moses, “Put back the staff of Aaron before the testimony, to be kept as a sign for the rebels, that you may make an end of their grumbings against me, lest they die.” <sup>11</sup> Thus did Moses; as the LORD commanded him, so he did.

<sup>12</sup> And the people of Israel said to Moses, “Behold, we perish, we are undone, we are all undone. <sup>13</sup> Everyone who comes near, who comes near to the tabernacle of the LORD, shall die. Are we all to perish?”

#### Duties of Priests and Levites

**18:1** So the LORD said to Aaron, “You and your sons and your father's house with you shall bear iniquity connected with the sanctuary, and you and your sons with you shall bear iniquity connected with your priesthood. <sup>2</sup> And with you bring your brothers also, the tribe of Levi, the tribe of your father, that they may join you and minister to you while you and your sons with you are before the tent of the testimony. <sup>3</sup> They shall keep guard over you and over the whole tent, but shall not come near to the vessels of the sanctuary or to the altar lest they, and you, die. <sup>4</sup> They shall join you and keep guard over the tent of meeting for all the service of the tent, and no outsider shall come near you. <sup>5</sup> And you shall keep guard over the sanctuary and over the altar, that there may never again be wrath on

the people of Israel. <sup>6</sup> And behold, I have taken your brothers the Levites from among the people of Israel. They are a gift to you, given to the LORD, to do the service of the tent of meeting. <sup>7</sup> And you and your sons with you shall guard your priesthood for all that concerns the altar and that is within the veil; and you shall serve. I give your priesthood as a gift, and any outsider who comes near shall be put to death.”

<sup>8</sup> Then the LORD spoke to Aaron, “Behold, I have given you charge of the contributions made to me, all the consecrated things of the people of Israel. I have given them to you as a portion and to your sons as a perpetual due. <sup>9</sup> This shall be yours of the most holy things, reserved from the fire: every offering of theirs, every grain offering of theirs and every sin offering of theirs and every guilt offering of theirs, which they render to me, shall be most holy to you and to your sons. <sup>10</sup> In a most holy place shall you eat it. Every male may eat it; it is holy to you. <sup>11</sup> This also is yours: the contribution of their gift, all the wave offerings of the people of Israel. I have given them to you, and to your sons and daughters with you, as a perpetual due. Everyone who is clean in your house may eat it. <sup>12</sup> All the best of the oil and all the best of the wine and of the grain, the firstfruits of what they give to the LORD, I give to you. <sup>13</sup> The first ripe fruits of all that is in their land, which they bring to the LORD, shall be yours. Everyone who is clean in your house may eat it. <sup>14</sup> Every devoted thing in Israel shall be yours. <sup>15</sup> Everything that opens the womb of all flesh, whether man or beast, which they offer to the LORD, shall be yours. Nevertheless, the firstborn of man you shall redeem, and the firstborn of unclean

animals you shall redeem. <sup>16</sup> And their redemption price (at a month old you shall redeem them) you shall fix at five shekels in silver, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, which is twenty gerahs. <sup>17</sup> But the firstborn of a cow, or the firstborn of a sheep, or the firstborn of a goat, you shall not redeem; they are holy. You shall sprinkle their blood on the altar and shall burn their fat as a food offering, with a pleasing aroma to the LORD. <sup>18</sup> But their flesh shall be yours, as the breast that is waved and as the right thigh are yours. <sup>19</sup> All the holy contributions that the people of Israel present to the LORD I give to you, and to your sons and daughters with you, as a perpetual due. It is a covenant of salt forever before the LORD for you and for your offspring with you.” <sup>20</sup> And the LORD said to Aaron, “You shall have no inheritance in their land, neither shall you have any portion among them. I am your portion and your inheritance among the people of Israel.

<sup>21</sup> “To the Levites I have given every tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service that they do, their service in the tent of meeting, <sup>22</sup> so that the people of Israel do not come near the tent of meeting, lest they bear sin and die. <sup>23</sup> But the Levites shall do the service of the tent of meeting, and they shall bear their iniquity. It shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations, and among the people of Israel they shall have no inheritance. <sup>24</sup> For the tithe of the people of Israel, which they present as a contribution to the LORD, I have given to the Levites for an inheritance. Therefore I have said of them that they shall have no inheritance among the people of Israel.”

<sup>25</sup> And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>26</sup> “Moreover, you shall speak and say to the Levites, ‘When you take from the people of Israel the tithe that I have given you from them for your inheritance, then you shall present a contribution from it to the LORD, a tithe of the tithe. <sup>27</sup> And your contribution shall be counted to you as though it were the grain of the threshing floor, and as the fullness of the winepress. <sup>28</sup> So you shall also present a contribution to the LORD from all your tithes, which you receive from the people of Israel. And from it you shall give the LORD's contribution to Aaron the priest. <sup>29</sup> Out of all the gifts to you, you shall present every contribution due to the LORD; from each its best part is to be dedicated.’ <sup>30</sup> Therefore you shall say to them, ‘When you have offered from it the best of it, then the rest shall be counted to the Levites as produce of the threshing floor, and as produce of the winepress. <sup>31</sup> And you may eat it in any place, you and your households, for it is your reward in return for your service in the tent of meeting. <sup>32</sup> And you shall bear no sin by reason of it, when you have contributed the best of it. But you shall not profane the holy things of the people of Israel, lest you die.’”