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The Response of Moshe

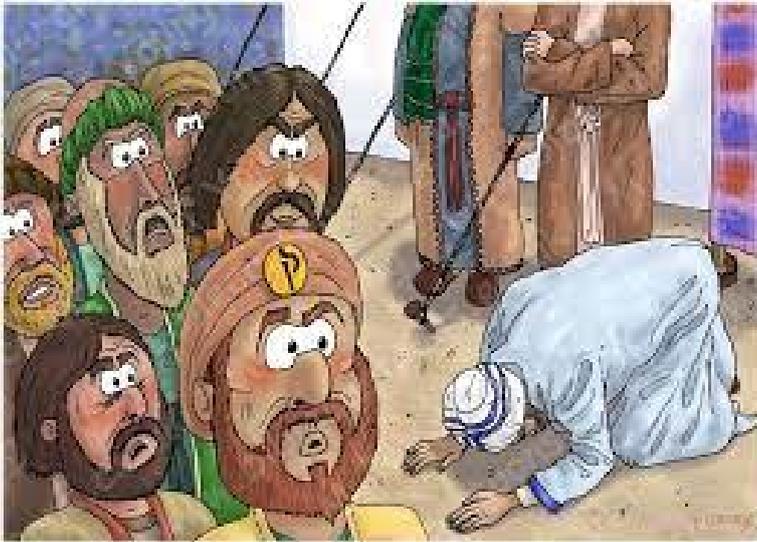
16: 4-11

The response of Moshe DIG: Why was Moses and Aaron's leadership challenged by Korah and his followers? How did Moshe react? How did Moses' reaction display the kind of characteristics necessary for God's leader? How was Aaron's position of leadership challenged in this parashah? Whose idea was it to bring censers with burning coals and incense before ADONAI?

REFLECT: Ask the Lord to give you the ability to honor those He has placed in authority over you. What should be the proper attitude toward our spiritual leaders today? When would it be right to remove a Messianic rabbi or pastor from a position of responsibility? Ask the Lord to show you His purpose for your life. Ask Him to help you to be faithful and content in the purpose.

Moshe had six responses to the attack by Korah and his followers.

Discontent with merely serving as **Levites**, the men of **Korah's** rebellion sought the privileges of **the priesthood** (**to see link click [Co](#) - The Rebellion of Korah**). **Moses** answered **their** complaint by giving **them** exactly what **they** wanted. **He** gave **them** the opportunity to step over the line and enter the **priestly** service by attempting to offer **incense** with the morning sacrifice.³⁰⁷



First, Moses fell on his face in a gesture of intercession to God: As happened so frequently, **Moses'** response before this band of **rebels** was that of a true prophet. **He** was sudden, dramatic, and decisive. **When Moshe heard this he fell on his face** in despair as a gesture of intercession to **YHVH**, since **he** knew this conspiracy was an attack on **God** more than an attack on **himself** and **Aaron (16:4)**. Why should all **the people** die because of the sin of these **men**? **Moses** frequently had to intercede for **the people**, and **they** probably didn't appreciate what **he** had done for **them**. On two occasions, **God** was ready to destroy **the entire nation**, but **Moshe's** intercession saved **them (Exodus 32:7-14 and Numbers 14:10)**.³⁰⁸ The text does not say how long **Moses** was on **his face**. But between **verses 4** and **5** there seems to have been a conversation between **Moshe** and **YHVH**. When **he** arose, **he said to Korah and his whole group, "In the morning, ADONAI will show who are His, and who is the holy person to lead Isra'el and the priesthood, respectively. Yes, He will bring whomever He chooses near to himself"** (16:5).

Second, Moshe challenged Korah and his followers to a showdown: His enemies had asked for a showdown and **Moses** would give it to **them**, but it would be far more than **they** had bargained for. Once and for all the role of **Moses** in **Isra'el** would be defined. One way or another . . . **tomorrow** would tell.³⁰⁹ **You, Korah, and all your followers are to do this: Tomorrow take censers and put burning coals and incense in them before ADONAI** at the entrance of **the Tabernacle (16:6-7a)**. The offering of **incense** was an exclusive **priestly** prerogative and anyone else who offered **it** did so at the risk of their own lives.³¹⁰ By

putting the test off to the next **morning**, **Moshe** was granting **them** the time to think seriously about the consequences of **their** rebellion (**Second Peter 3:9**). Would **they** be willing to stake **their** lives on **their** claims? Moreover, the test also put the burden of proof upon **ADONAI Himself** and not upon **Moshe, Aaron** or **Korah**. **Moses** was completely trusting **God** to either vindicate **him** or show that **Korah** was correct. **The one whom ADONAI chooses will be the one who is holy (16:7b)! They** were to stand in front of **the Tabernacle** and wait for **the LORD's** response. This was a life and death test. If **their incense** was acceptable, **they** would live. If not, then **they** would follow the fate of **Nadab** and **Abihu** (see [Leviticus Bh - The Death of Nadab and Abihu](#)).

The third response by Moshe was to Korah alone: **Moses** reminded **Korah** that **the Levites** were greatly privileged. **They** were allowed to approach **Ha'Shem** by assisting **the priests** and to serve **the people** in a place of honor, as a buffer between **God's** presence and the rest of the twelve tribes. Not content with that great honor, **they** aspired to the office of **priest** as well. **Their** envy in not being **priests**, however, was equivalent to mutiny.³¹¹ **Then Moshe** threw the words of **Korah (16:3)** right back in **his** face, "It is **you** who **have gone too far, you sons of Levi! Isn't it enough that the God of Isra'el has separated you from the community of Isra'el to bring you close to Himself, so that you can do the work in the Tabernacle of ADONAI and stand before the community serving them" (16:7c-9)?**

Korah was the ringleader, but all in **his company** were culpable. **He has brought you close and all your brothers the sons of Levi with you.** Not only that, but **they** also had the privilege of transporting the most holy things when **the Tabernacle** and **the nation** were on the move (see [At - The Clan of Kohath](#)).³¹² **Now you want the office of priest too (16:10)! The Levites** were a special tribe, **they** were the caretakers of **the Tabernacle**, and the teachers of **Isra'el**. But **they** weren't satisfied with that, and just like **Satan**, **they** wanted more. **Lucifer** wanted **to be like God** (see the commentary on [Isaiah Dp - How You Have Fallen from Heaven, O Morning Star](#)). The same action is duplicated in all those who do not recognize **God's** order and blessing in their lives. **That's why you and your group have gathered together against ADONAI! After all, what sin has Aaron committed that you complain against him (16:11)? Moshe's** language was incredulous, as though to say, "What did **Aaron** ever do to **you** that **you** should go **against him?**

In contrast with the humility and gratitude of **Moses** and **Aaron**, we can see **the**

pride (Proverbs 16:18-20) and selfishness of **Korah** and **his followers**. A humble, grateful person thanks **the LORD** for any task, and carries it out faithfully. In the Dispensation of Grace, each believer has his or her own spiritual gift that **God** has given them (see the commentary on **First Corinthians Cj - The Varieties of Spiritual Gifts**). However, a prideful person such as **Korah**, selfishly desiring a bigger role and a larger slice of the action in **God's** Kingdom, was, in fact, **an enemy of God**. And **anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God (James 4:4b)**. Anytime one begins to view his or her ministry as "my ministry," such a one is in danger of standing in **Korah's** sandals.³¹³

*Dear Great Father, Praise **You** for how wonderful and Awesome **You** are! Thank **You** that though **You** are Almighty in power and could immediately wipe out anyone who is full of pride in themselves, **You** offer repentance for those who turn from their sinful heart attitude to lovingly follow **You**. **The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some consider slowness. Rather, He is being patient toward you - not wanting anyone to perish, but for all to come to repentance (Second Peter 3:9)**. Even when we have a ministry that honors **You** - it is still not 'Our ministry,' but rather it is "**Your** ministry' and a joy that **You** allow us the blessing and privilege of serving **You**, our great and gracious **King** and **Savior**! We love to give **You** glory by thinking of **Your** awesome qualities, which also brings great peace to our hearts and minds! In **Messiah Yeshua's** holy **Name** and power of **His** resurrection. Amen*