

## MORDEKAI'S DRASH — KORACH



**Torah: *Korach* (Korah/bald), *B'midbar* (Numbers) 16.1-18.32**  
**Haftorah: *Sh'muel Alef* (1 Samuel) 11.14-12.22**  
**Suggested Messianic Writings: Acts 5.1-11**

Shalom,

“Vanity of vanities<sup>1</sup>; Pointless! Pointless!<sup>2</sup>; Smoke, nothing but smoke<sup>3</sup>” – with this statement, the wisest man on earth, King *Shlomo* (Solomon), began and closed his writing known as the book of *Kohelet* (Ecclesiastes). The vain strivings of the first subject of this week’s parashah exemplifies this phrase to the max. Korah was not the typical person you might expect to challenge the leadership of Moshe and Aharon. Korah was not of the rabble that had followed Israel out of Egypt, but rather, Korah was from the tribe of Levi, he was a Levite. The tribe of Levi had by now been set aside to be the ones who served in the Tabernacle. But this was not enough for Korah. He wanted more.

We see in Scripture differences in kinds of jealousy – there is that which is righteous, such as HaShem’s jealousy for Israel, and that which is unrighteous, as we see in the actions of Korah. Shlomo also tackled this subject a few times, for instance in this verse from *Mishlei* (Proverbs) 27.4: “Fury is cruel and anger overwhelming, but who can stand up to jealousy?” When a man becomes insanely jealous for something, he will do what he has to do to gain what he wants, never mind who gets in his way. Danger! Danger!

The previous parashah closed with the commandment that all of Israel was to put a *tzitzit* on each of the four corners of their garments. All of Israel was to be holy, and the *tzitzit* were to be a visual reminder of that holiness. Some commentators believe this is possibly what fueled the jealousy of Korah. “Who are Moshe and Aharon, that they should be our leaders? Aren’t we all holy now? Why shouldn’t I be the leader?”

What Korah failed to see in his jealousy was that the people of Israel had not set Moshe and Aharon in their positions, but rather they were placed by HaShem Himself. HaShem had separated the tribe of Levi from the rest of Israel, but there was also a separation within the tribe itself. All of the *Levi'im* were to serve in the work of the Tabernacle, but only the *Cohanim* (Priests) could perform the holy rituals and wear the holy garb. When we see the phrase “Levites and Priests” used over and over, it is not a phrase of redundancy. Only the direct family of Aharon was to be in the Priesthood. And Korah was angered by that fact.

The tribe of Levi was divided into three family encampments around the Tabernacle. The three groups were named after the three sons of Levi – Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. Each subtribe had specific duties in regards to the Tabernacle for setup, travel and teardown. Eleazar, son of Aharon, was supervisor of these groups. If you look at a chart of the encampment of Israel around the Tabernacle, you see that the Levite family of Kohathites encamped on the south side of the courtyard. Their specific duties were to have charge of the Ark, the table of the bread of the Presence, the lampstands, the altars of burnt offering and of incense, the sacred vessels used in the service, and the veil. Yet Korah wanted more.

The tribe of Reuben was camped next to Korah. Thus, Korah came into contact with a couple of disgruntled characters from Reuben, Dathan and Abiram. While Korah was in particular after the position held by Aharon, Dathan and Abiram had a gripe against Moshe. Their jealousy was a tribal jealousy wherein they felt that since their ancestor Reuben had been the firstborn son of Ya’akov, by custom Reuben’s tribe should have been handed the leadership of Israel upon the death of Ya’akov, and they wanted to be the leaders of Israel. “Birds of a feather flock together” goes an old phrase, and Korah, Dathan and Abiram found each other at the same watering hole.

Life in the desert (anyone ever been there?) can prompt boredom, and boredom can prompt wrong thoughts, which can lead to wrong doings. Or as the *Messianic Writings* book of *Ya’akov* (Jacob/James) 1.13-15 says, “No one being tempted should say, ‘I am being tempted by God.’ For God cannot be tempted by evil, and God himself tempts no one. Rather, each person is being tempted whenever he is being dragged off and enticed by the bait of his own desire. Then, having conceived, the desire gives birth to sin; and when sin is fully grown, it gives birth to death.” If Korah had been studying and teaching the newly given Torah, things might have gone differently. “But NOOOOOOOOOO!!!!” as Steve Martin used to say. Instead, these three even went out and found 250 more unhappy people to side with them. The majority is not always correct if it conflicts with the will of HaShem. “Everybody else is...” holds no weight in the courtroom of Heaven. If you’ve read these

chapters, you know that a terrible fate awaited these people, who had challenged the authority of Heaven itself. If HaShem has seated someone into a position of ministry and leadership, to challenge that position is to challenge the will of the Almighty, and that can only lead to judgment. King David said, when given an opportunity to destroy Sh'aul, who had been intent on murdering David, in 1 Samuel 26.9 (Msg), "Who could lay a hand on GOD's anointed and even think of getting away with it?" If you have ever complained against any spiritual leader that has been established by HaShem, that is *lashan hara* (evil talk), and is the same as seeking their death. "For I tell you that unless your righteousness is far greater than that of the Torah-teachers and P'rushim, you will certainly not enter the Kingdom of Heaven!" said Yeshua in Matthew 5.20.

So, if you find yourself "wondering as you wander" in the desert, it's time for a spiritual check. Are you bored? Then it's time to slow down, shut up, sit down and get into the Word. And that means the written Word *and* the Living Word, Yeshua. Get into the mind of Yeshua. Don't give in to vain strivings, don't get into the wrong crowd. Be into the right crowd, and swim upstream if necessary.

The mind of Yeshua desires His people Israel. If you are non-Jewish, thank the Messiah for the gift of being grafted into the olive tree of the people of Israel. And stand with Israel, the Jewish people, and in particular the Messianic Jewish people. They are hated by the religious Jew and misunderstood by much of the Church. The prophet *Sh'muel* (Samuel) closes out this week's haftorah reading with these words (1 Sam 12.22-24): "For the sake of his great reputation, Adonai will not abandon his people; because it has pleased Adonai to make you a people for himself. As for me, far be it from me to sin against Adonai by ceasing to pray for you! Rather, I will continue instructing you in the good and right way. Only fear Adonai, and serve him faithfully with all your heart; for think what great things he has done for you!"

יְרוּשָׁלַם יְרֻשָׁלוֹם – *Sha'alu shalom Yerushalayim* – Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!

B'rakhot v'todah rabbah

(Blessings & thank you very much)

**Mordekhi (Marc)**

This Yeshua, who has been taken away from you into heaven, will come back to you in just the same way as you saw him go into heaven.

(Acts 1.11 CJB)

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<sup>1</sup> ESV, KJV, NAS

<sup>2</sup> CJB

<sup>3</sup> Msg