

# Korah

My name is Korah, and I have an issue concerning equal rights. You see, we are ALL the LORD's chosen people and yet there are a few who want to lord it over the rest of us. I have suffered for demanding my rights. I believe that the reason I have been allowed to communicate with you, people of the future, is because you understand rights.

Let me explain. Our ancestors were promised that their descendants would become a great nation. We are twelve tribes, coming from the 12 sons of Israel. I am of the tribe of Levi, charged with the care of the tabernacle. A small part of our tribe was chosen to be priests – Moses' brother Aaron and his sons. Moses was chosen to be the overall leader to take us out of Egypt. We did not have a say in these choices. We did not pick the leader and did not even decide whether or not to leave!

Moses did not actually want the job to start with and only took it when his brother Aaron was selected as his spokesman. He was given power to bring plagues\* on the Egyptians. To start with, it just made things worse. Moses made Pharaoh angry and he ordered that since we appeared to be lazy, our duties were to be made even more difficult. True, we were slaves, but we actually had a pretty good life. We were living and working in the world's most powerful nation.

There was never a vote on whether to sue for our freedom. Moses and Aaron did all the negotiating on their own. They did make a presentation to the elders that promised "a land flowing with milk and honey." The elders agreed with the plan as presented, but the promise was not kept, and as time went on, the prospects looked worse and worse.

When Pharaoh released us, we left in a hurry with our families and herds only to come right up against the Red Sea. Did that show poor planning? I will admit that the sea parted to get us out of that dilemma, but can you build a policy on unanticipated miraculous interventions? Then we ran out of water and needed another intervention. Food was provided but it was bland and uninteresting. When we were given meat in the form of an immense flock of quail, it ended up making us sick. In Egypt we had a safe and abundant food supply!

Moses did not set up a sustainable system of arbitration for issues that came up among the people. He had to handle everything! Finally, he took advice from his father-in-law on delegating authority. You can see he was power-hungry! When we reached Mount Sinai, Moses and his assistant went up to meet with the LORD for an incredibly long time. Even Aaron got impatient and made a calf idol for the people to worship, like what was done in Egypt. Moses brought a plague\* on those innocent people. If he had just kept them informed of what was happening, there would not have been a problem!

For all of Moses' insistence that we keep the Law, he himself married a woman who was not of the tribes of Israel. Miriam his sister and Aaron his brother called him to task on that. Moses called down leprosy\* on Miriam rather than admitting he was wrong.

When we got to the borders of the land that had been promised, twelve spies were sent out to gather intelligence. Only two of them voted to go ahead with the invasion. The vast majority noted that practically speaking, we had no chance of taking the fortified cities and defeating the powerful

defenders. Rather than admitting that the whole thing was a disaster, Moses called down a plague\* on the honest spies and promised future rewards for the overly optimistic minority.

Then a Sabbath-breaker was stoned to death and Moses kept adding more and more laws and regulations. I, Korah of the tribe of Levi, had finally reached my limit! I was supported by Dathan and Abiram of Reuben, and 250 prominent leaders of the whole nation. We confronted Moses, "You have gone too far! The whole community is holy, every one of them, and the LORD is with them. Why then do you set yourselves above the LORD's assembly?"

When Moses heard this, he fell facedown. I don't know what that was all about! But he said to me, "In the morning the LORD will show who belongs to him and who is holy, and he will have that person come near him. The man he chooses he will cause to come near him. You Levites have gone too far." He claimed that we should be satisfied with being Levites and not grasp for the priesthood.

Then Moses summoned Dathan and Abiram. But they said, "We will not come! Isn't it enough that you have brought us up out of a land flowing with milk and honey to kill us in the desert? And now you also want to lord it over us? Moreover, you haven't brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey or given us an inheritance of fields and vineyards. Will you gouge out the eyes of these men? No, we will not come!" Then Moses became very angry and said to the LORD, "Do not accept their offering. I have not taken so much as a donkey from them, nor have I wronged any of them."

So, Moses showed his true character and called for vengeance on his critics. The 250 respected leaders who supported me were to present censors with incense to the Lord. I, Dathan and Abiram and our families were to stand in front of our tents and Moses warned the rest of the people to keep their distance. He made a vague and general prediction which showed that he really did not know what would happen, "This is how you will know that the LORD has sent me to do all these things and that it was not my idea: If these men die a natural death and experience only what usually happens to men, then the LORD has not sent me. But if the LORD brings about something totally new, and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them, with everything that belongs to them, and they go down alive into the grave, then you will know that these men have treated the LORD with contempt."

The last thing I remember is seeing the earth opening before me in a deep crack as fire came down from heaven and destroyed the 250 respected leaders of the nation holding their censors!

Now I am in a place where everybody has a grievance, not only against Moses but against the LORD as well. And they all make a lot of sense.

\*The LORD actually brought about all the consequences that Korah blames on Moses. In fact, Moses sincerely pleaded many times with the LORD to forgive and spare the people despite their sins.

Exodus 3 – 13, Numbers 13 - 16