

## 40 God's High Priest

MEMORY VERSE: "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding"

Prov. 3:5

SCRIPTURES: Numbers 16

AIM: To teach that God does not tolerate rebellion against His ways.

Korah was a Levite from the same tribe as Moses and Aaron, which meant that he was responsible for helping the Israelites worship in the proper way. Yet, he wasn't satisfied with just helping. He wanted to be in charge. Dathan and Abiram were from a different tribe, but they wanted to be in charge too. So the three of them stirred up 250 men to rebel against Moses. They went to Moses and Aaron and said, "Why do you think you're so much better than anyone else? We're part of the Lord's holy people, and He's with all of us. What makes you think you're the only ones in charge?"

When Moses heard this, he fell face down to pray. Then he said to the men and their followers: Tomorrow morning the Lord will show us the person he has chosen to be his priest, and that man will faithfully serve him.

The next morning, the Lord answered Moses, "Tell the people to stay away from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram."

Moses warned the people, as God instructed, then he said to the crowd, "The Lord has chosen me to be your leader — it wasn't my idea. And here's how you will know: If these men die a natural death, it means the Lord hasn't chosen me. But suppose the Lord does something that has never been done before. For example, what if a huge crack appears in the ground, and these men and their families fall into it and are buried alive, together with everything they own? Then you will know they have turned their backs on the Lord!"

As soon as Moses said this, the ground under the men opened up and swallowed them alive, together with their families and everything they owned. Then the ground closed back up, and they were gone.

Then the Lord told Moses: "Call together the twelve tribes of Israel and tell the leader of each tribe to write his name on the walking stick he carries as a symbol of his authority. Make sure Aaron's name is written on the one from the Levi tribe, then collect all the sticks.

"Place these sticks in the tent right in front of the sacred chest where I appear to you. I will then choose a man to be my priest, and his stick will sprout. After that happens, I won't have to listen to any more complaints about you."

Moses told the people what the Lord had commanded, and they gave him the walking sticks from the twelve tribal leaders, including Aaron's from the Levi tribe. Moses took them and placed them in the Lord's sacred tent.

The next day when Moses went into the tent, flowers and almonds were already growing on Aaron's stick. Moses brought the twelve sticks out of the tent and showed them to the people. The people were convinced that Aaron was God's chosen priest.

And the Lord told Moses, "Put Aaron's stick back! Let it stay in the tabernacle as a warning to anyone who might think about rebelling. If these people don't stop their grumbling about me, I will wipe them out."

This is how God showed that he had chosen Moses to lead the Israelites, and that He had chosen Aaron to be the leader of all the priests.

Korah and his followers did not pass the test, and God opened up the earth and swallowed the rebels, their families, and all their possessions. Furthermore, “fire came out from the LORD” and consumed the other 250 men who were party to Korah’s rebellion. The rest of the Israelites were terrified and fled

The following day, instead of being convinced that God had chosen Moses and Aaron, the congregation began complaining that they had “killed the LORD’s people.” For this act of rebellion, God threatened to destroy the whole congregation and sent a plague among them. However, Moses and Aaron interceded for the rebels and averted a complete catastrophe. In the end, 14,700 Israelites had died.