



CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

JUNE 2015

Scripture Story: Numbers 16; 17.

Commentary: *Patriarchs and Prophets* (or *Beginning of the End*), chapter 35.

the “wannabes”



Photo by Juan González Nieves

flashlight

“The Israelites were continually losing sight of the fact that they were under divine guidance. They forgot that the Angel of the covenant was their invisible leader, that, veiled by the cloudy pillar, the presence of Christ went before them, and that from Him Moses received all his directions” (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 395, 396).

keytext

“When Moses heard this, he fell facedown. Then he said to Korah and all his followers: ‘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.’”

(Numbers 16:4, 5, NIV)

what do you think?

From least (1) to greatest (10), rank which of the following people and people groups others are most jealous of.

- ___ Politicians
- ___ Preachers and Pastors
- ___ Actors
- ___ Rap Artists
- ___ Lawyers
- ___ Corporate CEOs
- ___ Sports Stars
- ___ Doctors
- ___ Teachers
- ___ Friends

did you know?

• **Korah means “baldness.”** Whether or not this “wannabe” had much on top of his head, he doesn’t seem to have had very much inside of it. Today the name is synonymous with being swallowed up and buried alive.

• **Incense.** A mixture of fragrant substances, such as gum resins and spices, used in connection with religious worship. The incense prescribed for use in the tabernacle was made with a special recipe. It was forbidden to use a mixture made according to this recipe for other purposes (Exodus 30:34-38). The incense was burned morning and evening upon a special altar that stood in the holy place of the sanctuary in front of the curtain that separated it from the Most Holy Place.

• **Censer.** A vessel for the burning of incense. Censers having the form of a hollow hand have been excavated. The censers used in the tabernacle were of bronze, but the ones used later in the Temple were of gold.

INTO THE STORY

“Korah son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and certain Reubenites—Dathan and Abiram, sons of Eliab, and On son of Peleth—became insolent and rose up against Moses. With them were 250 Israelite men, well-known community leaders who had been appointed members of the council. They came as a group to oppose Moses and Aaron and said to them, ‘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. Then he said to Korah and all his followers: ‘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, Korah, and all your followers are to do this: Take censers and tomorrow put burning coals and incense in them before the Lord. The man the Lord chooses will be the one who is holy. You Levites have gone too far!’

“Moses also said to Korah, ‘Now listen, you Levites! Isn’t it enough for you that the God of Israel has separated you from the rest of the Israelite community and brought you near himself to do the work at the Lord’s tabernacle and to stand before the community and minister to them? He has brought you and all your fellow Levites near himself, but now you are trying to get the priesthood too. It is against the Lord that you and all your followers have banded together. Who is Aaron that you should grumble against him?’

“Then Moses summoned Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab. But they said, ‘We will not come!’”

“Moses said to Korah, ‘You and all your followers are to appear before the Lord tomorrow—you and they and Aaron. Each man is to take his censer and put incense in it . . . and present it before the Lord.’ . . . So each of them took his censer, put burning coals and incense in it, and stood with Moses and Aaron at the entrance to the tent of meeting. When Korah had gathered all his followers . . . , the glory of the Lord appeared to the entire assembly.”

(Numbers 16:1-12, 16-19, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

Have you ever heard this story before?

What part of it was most startling?

Underline all the key parts of this week's story.

Highlight two emotional speeches given by characters in the story. (*Circle* them.)

After reading this story, what would you say is the main point?

What did you learn about God from this story?

What lesson will you apply to your life this week?

For the rest of the story read Numbers 16:23-35.

punch lines

“All your pomp has been brought down to the grave, along with the noise of your harps; maggots are spread out beneath you and worms cover you. . . . You said in your heart. . . . ‘I will ascend above the tops of the clouds, I will make myself like the Most High.’ But you are brought down to the realm of the dead, to the depths of the pit” (**Isaiah 14:11-15, NIV**).

“To do what is right and just is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice” (**Proverbs 21:3, NIV**).

“Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble” (**1 Peter 3:8, NIV**).

“At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, ‘Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?’ He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. And he said: ‘Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven!’” (**Matthew 18:1-4, NIV**).

“This is what the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One of Israel, says: ‘In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it!’” (**Isaiah 30:15, NIV**).

other eyes

“A person starts to live when he can live outside himself.”—Albert

Einstein, U.S. (German-born) theoretical physicist, regarded as the greatest scientist of the 20th century.

“He that hath promised pardon on our repentance hath not promised life till we repent.”—Francis Quarles, 17th-century British poet.

making it real

Sabbath

How did you rank the items on the jealousy scale in the *What Do You Think?* section of the lesson? Jealousy has a tendency to make people do weird things. Which group would you say people are most jealous of? List three ways that people express their jealousy of others.

Sunday

Read the *Into the Story* section. Few stories in the Bible offer us a glimpse at an all-out rebellion. This one does. When Korah and the 250 princes confronted Moses, what did they say about Moses? How did Moses react? Why was Moses so distraught at their charge?

Have you ever been falsely accused for doing what God asked of you? (Write your answer below.)

Monday

It is clear from this week's *Key Text* that a really big showdown is about to happen. Korah and his followers have been "called out" by Moses. Read the *Key Text* again to see if you notice anything strange. Did you see it?

Who did Moses say would settle this dispute? Moses had the authority to raise an army and destroy Korah and his followers. Why do you think he didn't do this? How are Moses' actions similar to the grace God gave Lucifer when he led a rebellion in heaven?

Tuesday

In this week's *Flashlight* quote, Ellen White lights up a major problem faced by Israel

and by many of us today. Israel forgot who was leading them. It wasn't Moses; it was God. But there was another reason that many of the Israelites tried to overthrow Moses. To find out what that reason was, read Numbers 14:20-25.

As you can tell, God is quite upset at the fact that the Israelites did not believe that He could help them defeat the strong nations that inhabited Canaan, the land He had promised to them. After all of God's miracles on their behalf, this is how the Israelites had repaid God—they refused to believe in Him. Ellen White notes that it was this rejection of them by God that led them to level their anger at Moses (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 397, 398). Do you ever find fault with people who deliver difficult messages from God, messages you don't like?

Wednesday

This week's *Punch Lines* have rich food for thought. For instance, God says through His servant Isaiah: "In repentance and rest is your salvation" (Isaiah 30:15, NIV). In your own words, explain what this brief statement means to you.

Repentance means much more than just feeling sorry for what you've done. It also means being willing to turn away from what you've done to hurt God. God even promises to give us power to make the change stick. A frightening scene took place the day after Korah confronted Moses. What happened? (Read Numbers 16:23-35.)

Thursday

Sadly, the story of Korah's rebellion did not end with his death and the deaths of Dathan, Abiram, and the 250 princes. Read Numbers 16:41. How did the people react to what happened the day before? How did God respond to them (verses 43-45)? What did

Moses tell Aaron to do (verses 46-48)? How many people were killed by the plague God sent on the Israelites?

What does this lesson teach you about the effect that one person's actions might have on other people? Korah's influence led to the death of close to 15,000 people.

Friday

One of the truly startling parts of this story is contributed by Ellen White in the last part of chapter 35 of *Patriarchs and Prophets*. Read the whole chapter.

"God had given overwhelming evidence that He was leading Israel. But Korah and his companions rejected light until they became so blinded that the most striking manifestations of His power were not sufficient to convince them; they attributed them all to human or satanic agency. . . .

"God works by the manifestation of His Spirit to reprove and convict the sinner; and if the Spirit's work is finally rejected, there is no more that God can do for the soul. . . . The transgressor has cut himself off from God. . . . There is no reserved power by which God can work to convict and convert the sinner" (pp. 404, 405).

May God bless you as you seek to serve Him. Have a terrific Sabbath!

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this week's reading*

Patriarchs and Prophets (or *Beginning of the End*), chapter 35.

**Beginning of the End* is a special adaptation of *Patriarchs and Prophets*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rB09s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.