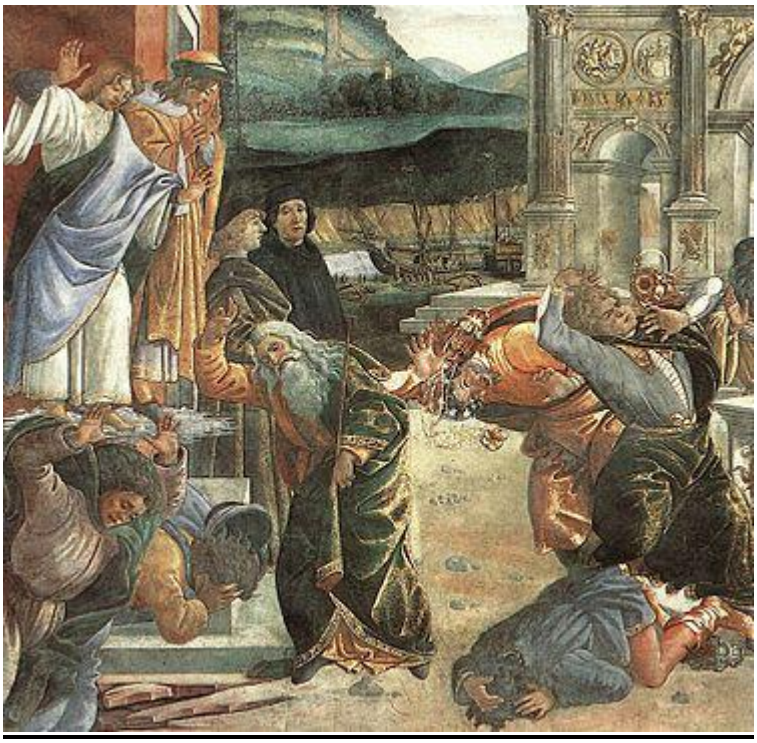
KORACH { קֹרַח } (Korah – Bald)

Numbers 16:1 – 18:32, 1 Samuel 11:14-12:22, Acts 5:1-11

A Messianic Jewish Commentary
By Hannah Nesher www.voiceforisrael.net



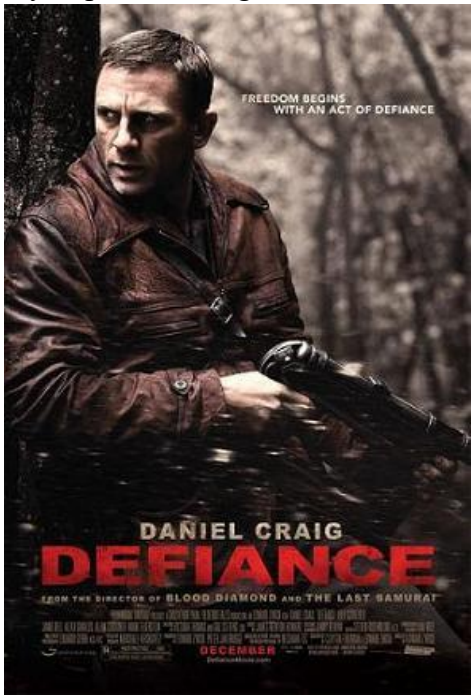
The Punishment of Korah (detail from the fresco *Punishment of the Rebels* by Sandro Botticelli (1480–1482) in the Sistine Chapel)

"Now Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took *men;* and they rose up before Moses with some of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty leaders of the congregation, representatives of the congregation, men of renown. " (Numbers 16:1-2)

In last week's study (Shlach L'cha), we could already see the seeds of rebellion being sown within the community of Israel as, in fear and unbelief, the Israelites threatened to select a leader (other than Moses) and return to Egypt. The seeds of revolt had already been planted and were just waiting to break out into full blown rebellion.

In this week's Torah study, the rebellion continued with the mutiny against Moses' leadership by a man named Korach קֹרַח, which means 'baldness, ice, hail, or frost'. The Torah portion opens with '*Vayikash Korach'* ('And Korach took...') – an act of selfishness which led to division and disaster in Israel.

Basically, two groups expressed discontentment with the leadership of Moses and Aaron: Datan & Aviram (from the tribe of Reuven) led one group of rebels and Korach (a Levite) led the other. In the end, God vindicated Moses and Aaron while severely punishing those who joined the rebellion. This was necessary to prevent the growth of anarchy which would have destroyed Israel's national unity.



I clearly remember watching a powerful movie called Defiance,[1] based on a true story of two brothers who saved the lives of many Polish Jews by hiding them from the Nazis in the forest during World War II.

At one point in the movie, however, rebels rose up against the authority of the leader at a time when he had become weakened through sickness. The rebellion began to spread through the camp until the leader came out and dealt with it severely and decisively by shooting the rebel on the spot.

This leader understood that rebellion cannot be allowed to take root lest it flourish and blaze out of control. I'm not advocating violence, but we can see from this study that rebellion must be dealt with.

Parashat Machloket (Strife)

This Torah study is also called the '*Parashah of Machloket'* (strife) since Korach created strife within the people of Israel with his rebellion, discontent and dirty politics. Wicked people sow strife wherever they go; a negative quality which leads to their ultimate destruction.

" **A worthless person, a wicked man... he sows discord.**
Therefore his calamity shall come suddenly;
Suddenly he shall be broken without remedy." (Proverbs 6:12,14,15)

[1] ***Defiance*** is a 2008 World War II film written, produced, and directed by Edward Zwick, and set during the occupation of Belarus by Nazi Germany. The film is an account of the Bielski partisans, a group led by Polish Jewish brothers who saved and recruited Jews in Belarus during the Second World War.

God loves peace and His Holy Spirit dwells in peace (shalom). Causing strife, discord and division between brothers is one of the things that God hates and calls an abomination:

"These six things the LORD hates, yes, seven are an abomination to Him:"

God then lists six things He hates (look it up ☺) and ends with the last one: "**And one who sows discord among brethren.**" (Proverbs 6:16,19)

It is so important that we do whatever we can to maintain 'shalom bayit' (a peaceful home). Strife in families will cause all kinds of trouble and prevent many of God's blessings from reaching us. "**Better is a dry morsel and quietness with it than a house full of feasting with strife."** (Proverbs 17:1)

What causes strife? It is the sin of pride: "**He who is of a proud heart stirs up strife**." (Proverbs 28:25) This deadly disease of the soul cannot co-exists with the virtue of humility. Is there someone in our life stirring up strife that needs to be dealt with? Or could there be some pride in ourselves that we need to nail to the cross in order to bring peace back into our relationships?

Strife is an evil spirit that we must avoid like the plague! Strife will destroy the unity that brings blessing, anointing, power, and prosperity of a home, family, business, or ministry.

The Power of Unity

Unity is precious and powerful - it is where God commands His blessing: "**Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious oil upon the head, running down on the beard, the beard of Aaron**...(oil represents anointing)...**For there** (upon unity), **the Lord commanded the blessing – Life forevermore.**" (Psalm 133:1-3)

This is a well known Hebrew song to which we also dance*," Hinei Matov U'manayim, shevet achim gam yachad."{* הִנֵּה מַה טּוֹב וּמַה נָּעִים שֶׁבֶת אַחִים גַּם יָחַד*}*

But we must do more than just sing and dance unity, we must live it! We must earnestly pray for unity '**that there be no divisions among us – that we be perfectly united in mind and thought**" (1Corinthians 1:10)

We may have been wondering where our blessings have run off to lately? Why our bank account is in the red and our bills are piling up? Perhaps here we have our answer. God cannot command his blessings where strife runs rampant.

The Holy Spirit is a gentle dove that flees away quickly when startled. Raised voices and arguments do not invite the presence of the Holy Spirit, but rather repel Him. We must pray, like David in Psalm 51,

"*Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me, Cast me not away from Your presence and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me!"*

When we understand how important it is to maintain peace and unity we will do whatever we can to guard it.

The Tower of Babel by Pieter Bruegel the Elder (1563)

Unity is so powerful that when the people of Babylon came into unity of heart and mind and purpose to build the Tower of Babel, God actually had to confuse their languages, thereby destroying their unity in order to stop them. Even though their motive in building the tower was 'to make a name for themselves', had God not intervened, they likely would have succeeded because the people had come into unity and 'become one' (echad). Therefore "***nothing they proposed to do would be withheld from them."*** (Genesis 11:6)

Are we frustrated and unable to get anything accomplished? Maybe we need to come into unity with others and get rid of the strife that is causing blessings to be withheld.

Bad Company Corrupts Good Character

With an utter lack of humility, Korach, a Levite, joined forces with Datan and Aviram, from the tribe of Reuven, along with On, son of Pelet and 250 chieftains from the Israelite community to rise up against Moses.

The rabbis consider this the most perilous moment for Israel during its wilderness journey; and Korach is remembered as the 'Torah's professional troublemaker and the most famous rabble-rousing Jew of all time.' [2]

What circumstances aided their joint conspiracy? According to rabbinic commentary, the tribes of Reuven and Levi marched side by side in the desert, giving them ample opportunity to discuss their grievances and come up with a plan.

We must be so careful about with whom we choose to walk closely!

[2] Torah with a Twist of Humor by Joe Bobker, p. 298

Pointing to the negative example of Korach as a 'peddler of hatred'; the rabbis teach, '*al titchaber im rashah*' (don't befriend evil people). This is one of the main lessons that we may learn from this portion of the Torah: "**A companion of fools will suffer harm**." (Proverbs 13:20)

King Solomon (Shlomo), whose very name comes from the Hebrew word for peace (shalom), also wrote these words of wisdom,

"Wisdom will save you from the ways of wicked men, from men whose words are perverse, who have left the straight paths to walk in dark ways, who delight in doing wrong and rejoice in the perverseness of evil, whose paths are crooked and who are devious in their ways." (Proverbs 2:12-15)

The New Testament Scriptures also agrees with the rabbis and King Solomon's advice: "**Do not be misled. Bad company corrupts good character."** (1Corinthians 15:33)

I want to stick my neck out and say something here; and since I've got the floor it seems I have the liberty of doing so. I believe that we are doing our children a great disservice by placing them in situations where they are forced to be in close association with the foolish and the ungodly day after day for hours on end.

Now I'm not saying that all public schools are terrible - there may be some that are acceptable; and I also know that there are some very fine teachers in the public school system working very hard to make it a good place for their students.

The fact is, however, that our children do not have a choice (when they are younger) over whose company they are in for the majority of their waking hours if we put them in a school. And a great deal depends on what sorts of kids are in their class!

One of my grandsons (Aden) happened to be in a grade 2 class with the sons of a violent man who is a known thief and mafia-type guy in our village (moshav). Although Aden didn't choose to be a close friend of these boys, they negatively influenced the entire class, creating a disrespectful and rebellious atmosphere which eventually rubbed off on Aden.

Thankfully my daughter, Courtney, noticed the changes, switched him to a different class where he is now doing much better; but their neighbors have boys who are also naughty and disrespectful to their parents. Courtney said that every time her boys have been playing over at their house, they come home with an 'attitude' (and not a good one!)

My youngest son, Avi, has been in public Israeli school from kitah aleph (grade 1) until this year when he graduates from kitah vav (grade 6). Thank God he has been blessed with good friends who love and respect him and come from decent families. Avi has also had teachers who loved him and defended him against bullies on occasion.

But I see now, at the end of elementary school, a change in these boys. I drove them to a Bat Mitzvah party the other night and they (not Avi) spent the whole time on their 'smart phones', sending messages to girls and calling them up to 'prank them'. They would invite Avi to come to the park where they meet girls and play silly boy-girl games. Avi has chosen to decline.

It is getting to the point where Avi can't really keep such close company with these boys anymore . As they are maturing and entering into adolescence, the gap between living a godly life and an immoral one is growing wider. Some watch pornography on their phones on the bus ride home. It won't be long before they are entering into relationships.

What would happen if I would throw Avi into this kind of fellowship every day? How can we throw our children into a cesspool to swim around in the filth for 8 hours a day five days a week and then expect them to come out clean and holy?

I know of a Messianic family that pulled their kids out of the Messianic Believer's school and put them in public schools. The boy, who had his bar mitzvah a couple years ago, and used to play worship on his guitar is now in full blown rebellion after a few years in public Israeli junior high school. The other night they had to call the police to their home when he became physically violent against his parents.

I am not trying to say that we have to keep our kids in a bubble and protect them from all the darkness in the world (nor can we possibly do so); but I am saying that we have a responsibility (especially while they are young and impressionable) to make it at least possible that they can avoid bad company which will likely corrupt even their good character.

Let's make it easy for them to choose good, godly friends who will encourage them in their relationship with Adonai; and not pull them down into the miry pit. So what am I going to do with Avi next year as he enters Junior High? I'm going to pray alot! And then I'm going to send him to the Messianic Believers school in Jerusalem (hoping that works out for him). My daughter, Liat, who is in high school now homeschools.[3]

Okay, I will now climb off my soapbox and continue with our parashah study. ☺

Selfish Ambition Causes Strife

For what reason did Korach instigate a rebellion against Moses' leadership? What was his true motivation? Datan and Aviram, of the tribe of Reuven, still carried the sting of having lost the 'birthright' of Israel and, it seems, were striving for recovery of that primary position. Korach, a Levite, was consumed by jealousy of Moses and Aaron's leadership position.

[3] Makor Hatikvah, the only Messianic Believers school in Jerusalem (and 1 of only 2 in the country) only goes up to grade 9. The kids then need to enter into Israeli high schools or find other solutions. Home schooling is now legal in Israel and some are choosing this option. There are also pricey private schools.

Moses instinctively knew the darkness that lurked in his heart.

Then Moses said to Korah, "**Hear now, you sons of Levi: *Is it* a small thing to you that the God of Israel has separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to Himself, to do the work of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the congregation to serve them; and that He has brought you near *to Himself,* you and all your brethren, the sons of Levi, with you? And are you seeking the priesthood also?"** (Numbers 16:8-10)

God had already given the Levites a special position – to do the work of the tabernacle – but for Korach it wasn't enough. He coveted the priesthood as well. The Word of God warns us against this kind of selfish ambition.

"**For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice."** (James 3:16)

Envy and selfish ambition cause all kinds of trouble in our own personal lives and also in congregations, churches and fellowships as unqualified people vie for positions in which God never intended for them to occupy.

As New Covenant believers we are to walk with a humble attitude, not being arrogant or conceited: ***"Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself***. " (Philippians 2:3)

Rather than being jealous of the power, prestige, position or possessions of others, we should be content with what God has given us. "**Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you**." (Hebrews 13:5)

God places us in the Body of Messiah where He knows it is best for all concerned. Perhaps the promotion we are coveting would be the very thing that might destroy us. Are we content with our position in life? Do we appreciate how much God has already given us as His sons and daughters? Or do we covet what we see others having or doing - even 'for the Lord'? We need to learn contentment, as the apostle Paul has said, "I have learned ...to be content." (Philippians 4:12)

The Inner Motives of the Heart

What causes fights and quarrels? – selfish ambitions and wrong motives. In contrast, we can see that when David fought Goliath, his motives were pure, even though his brothers accused him of seeking his own glory. David declared, "**Now everyone will know there is a God in Israel."** [4] David battled Goliath to reveal God's greatness, not his own. Elijah also showed up the prophets of Baal to demonstrate God's power. [5]

[4] 1 Samuel 17:46
[5] 1 Kings 18

We may want to ask ourselves an important question, "What are my motives for doing what I do?" Envy and jealousy is of the Kingdom of Darkness. Korach served the powers of darkness who desired to discredit Moses and stir up rebellion and discontent among the people.

Jealousy, envy, and selfish ambition are of the devil, not of God. Only those things we do with pure motives for eternal purposes will stand the test of fire. The acts of the sinful nature, which must be crucified daily include envy and jealousy. People who live with envy and selfish ambition will not inherit the kingdom of God.

We should seek to be full of the fruit of the spirit – love, peace, joy, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control. Against these things there is no law. [6] Although we are to live by God's commandments, there is no law that can change our hearts in order that they are full of these wonderful qualities. Only the Spirit of God can do this work in us; and this is a work of God's grace.

Listen to Wise Counsel

A man named On is mentioned as one of the rebels in the first verse of this study but is never mentioned again. [7] What ever happened to On? Rabbinic legend has it that it was On's wife who rebuked him for taking part in a rebellion, and thus saved him from destruction.

Whether this particular story is true or not, it is truth that a good wife is extremely valuable and should be treasured more than precious gems.[8] A husband would be wise to listen to her advice when it is from the Lord. If the anti-Semite, Haman, would have listened to his wife about Mordechai being a Jew, he would have been saved from the gallows.[9] But no.....

Korach's wife and little ones stood with him and were destroyed. We see later in the New Testament portion that Ananais' wife, Saphira, stood with him in sin and was likewise destroyed. Although a wife is to submit to her husband, she is not to submit to his sin.

Be Not Deceived

We must not automatically assume that just because someone is in a position of power or high status that they are right. Who joined the rebellion? Not the riffraff of society, but the princes, the elect - 250 men of renown, men of status! We must not allow ourselves to be deceived by the status or position of a man or woman. Even the very elect of society can be misled.

---

[6] Galatians 5:17-26
[7] Numbers 16:1
[8] Proverbs 31
[9] Esther 6:13

There are some today in a high position in the Christian Church and in the political realm who are being deceived into taking a public stand against the nation of Israel and siding with the Palestinian 'cause'. Let us not be unaware of the schemes of the enemy; but rather hold to the truth of God's Word.

Yeshua warned us that in the last days, many will be deceived and let astray – even the very elect of society. "**For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect**." (Matthew 24:24)

Going Up... and Down...

The rebels were deceived into siding with the enemy of God's chosen leadership, just as many are today choosing to side against Israel. Moses called Datan and Aviram to go up (aleh); but they replied 'loh na'aleh' (we won't go up).

"**And Moses sent to call Datan and Aviram the sons of Eliab, but they said, "We will not come up!"**(Numbers 16:12)

Ironically, those who refused to 'go up' to negotiate peace with Moses ended up 'going down' to their deaths. The earth swallowed them up alive and they went down to Sheol (place of the dead).

"**So they and all those with them went down alive into the pit; the earth closed over them, and they perished from among the assembly**. " (Numbers 16:33)

The Death of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (1865 etching by Gustave Doré)

What charge did the rebels have against Moses? They accused him of 'exalting himself over the community':

"**They gathered together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "*You take* too much upon yourselves, for all the congregation *is* holy, every one of them, and the LORD *is* among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?**" (Numbers 16:3)

In fact, this sin that they accused Moses of was, in reality, their own sin – they exalted themselves over God's delegated authority. The Bible tells us that we often unknowingly judge others for the very sins that we ourselves are committing.

"**You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things**." (Romans 2:1)

This was not the first time that Moses was accused of exalting himself over others. The day after he killed an Egyptian slave master for beating a Hebrew slave, Moses came across two Hebrews fighting. When he confronted them, they replied,

"**Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you intend to kill me as you killed the Egyptian**?" (Exodus 2:14)

The truth of the matter was that Moses did not 'exalt himself' over others; it was God who raised him up into the position of leading Israel out of Egypt. Moses was called the most humble man on earth (Numbers 12:3); and it was not his own desire to be the leader of Israel; but rather an act of obedience to the Lord.

We are told to humble ourselves and allow Him to exalt us in His perfect way and time – not to exalt ourselves out of jealousy or discontentment. "**Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time**." (1 Peter 5:6)

Part of humility, however, is to be willing to walk in obedience to our calling when God does require us to come up to a higher place of leadership or responsibility.

The rebels also accused Moses of bringing them out of '*a land of milk and honey'* (as they referred to Egypt), and of trying to kill them in the wilderness. [10] We can easily see how they twisted the truth. Satan is a liar and the Father of all lies. We must beware of those who twist the truth.

When we look back at the past, we must take care that we do not filter our experiences through rose-colored glasses to see only the good and leave out any of the negatives; otherwise, deception may cause us to desire to return to the place of bondage from where God has just brought us out of. It is also a sad truth that sometimes, people will turn against those who are actually trying to help or rescue them.

Do Not Take Vengeance

How did Moses react to all these false accusations? When God wanted to consume the entire congregation for the second time, Moses again fell on his face and pleaded with God for mercy.[11] Of course he must have felt hurt and pain; but his reaction was again one of humility, just as we read about when his sister, Miriam slandered him.

Moses did not try to vindicate himself, but left it up to God defend his honor. Moses spoke to the rebels and said,

[10] Numbers 16:12 &13
[11] Numbers 16:20-22

"By this you shall know that the LORD has sent me to do all these works, for I have not done them of my own will. If these men die naturally like all men, or if they are visited by the common fate of all men, then the LORD has not sent me. But if the LORD creates a new thing, and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into the pit, then you will understand that these men have rejected the LORD." (Numbers 16:28-30)

We, too, should entrust ourselves to the God of justice who sees and hears. He says to leave vengeance to Him alone, and not to take revenge against those who malign us, but like Moses – to pray for them instead. [12]

Yeshua modelled this to us, as did Stephen, when they said, *"Father, forgive them..."*, even as they died at the hands of their accusers. Yeshua did not open his mouth in his own self-defence. Let us not lash out at those who speak against us or hurt us, but instead pray for them.

The rebels overlooked the fact that Moses and Aaron did not appoint themselves. God absolutely called and appointed them to serve Him for a specific purpose. Many people used by God have submitted to their calling only with struggle and reluctance; for example: Gideon and Jeremiah. We must be extremely careful not to speak against people in leadership whom God has appointed to that position.

Aaron's Rod Budding (illustration from the 1728 *Figures de la Bible*)

God confirmed His election of Moses and Aaron by causing their rods to blossom in the sight of all Israel. If God has chosen us, then our lives should also blossom and bring forth good fruit for our Father's glory. May God cause our lives to blossom as a sign of His favour.

"**And it shall be that the rod of the man whom I choose will blossom; thus I will rid Myself of the complaints of the children of Israel, which they make against you."** (Numbers 17:5)

The Split

The name Korach is also derived from Korcha, which means 'split'. The split between the Israelites caused the ground to split and swallow up those causing the trouble.

[12] Romans 12:9, Matthew 5:44

Today, the Jewish people still struggle with division and strife. In Israel, there is animosity and contention between various sects of Judaism: Ultra-Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, secular, and even Messianic.

Chasidic man, secular soldier, and Arabic woman on bus

Datan and Abiram Devoured by the Earth (illumination by Hesdin of Amiens from a circa 1450–1455 "Biblia pauperum" (Bible of the Poor))

Why is there so much discord and friction in the Jewish community between people who share a common history and heritage; and who worship the same God? The historian, Josephus, recorded of the Jews of his time that they "fought with each other, doing everything their besiegers could have desired."

At the time of the invasion of Jerusalem, Titus and his Roman warriors found no less than 24 different factions fighting amongst themselves, each convinced that only 'they' had the right way to ensure the salvation of the Jewish people. [13]

This problem of strife and division amongst brethren is not unique to Israel and the Jews. The Christian Church is also plagued by denominational division - each once convinced that they have the truth while all others are in error.

What then is the truth? It is that we all see through a glass dimly in this world[14]; but one day all truth will be revealed when the Messiah comes.

[13] Bobker, p. 304-5
[14] 1 Corinthians 13:12

The problem with all of this strife and division and church splits is that a house divided upon itself will not stand[15]; and a quarrel-ridden home is doomed to destruction. Moses has given us a wonderful example of how to deal with confrontation and strife. We are not to seek a show-down or create a power-struggle; but rather seek for harmony and peace, allowing God to judge between men.

The Bible tells us that a harsh word will stir up anger but a soft spoken tone of voice can help to dissipate wrath. "**A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.**" (Proverbs 15:1)

May we all learn to walk in greater humility, contentment and gentleness towards all people; and may God one day bring unity and peace between brothers, as it is written, "*Hinei mah tov u'manayim; shevet gam achim b'yachad*." "**Behold how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell together in unity**." (Psalm 133:1)

Come out of Her My People

Flee rebellion: The people had to make a choice – to join with the rebels or to get out of there - and fast! Moses spoke to the congregation of Israel, **"Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be swept away in their sins'**. (Numbers 16:26)

God seems to be warning the church today to separate themselves from idolatry, rebellion and paganism, since this is not the true worship He desires in spirit and truth. The first commandment is to have no other gods before Him. We, the covenant people of God, cannot keep one foot in His ways, and one foot in paganism and idolatry. This is a dangerous mixture.

God warns His people to 'Flee Babylon!" "**Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive her plagues**." (Revelation 18:4) Babylon represents all false religion and rebellion.

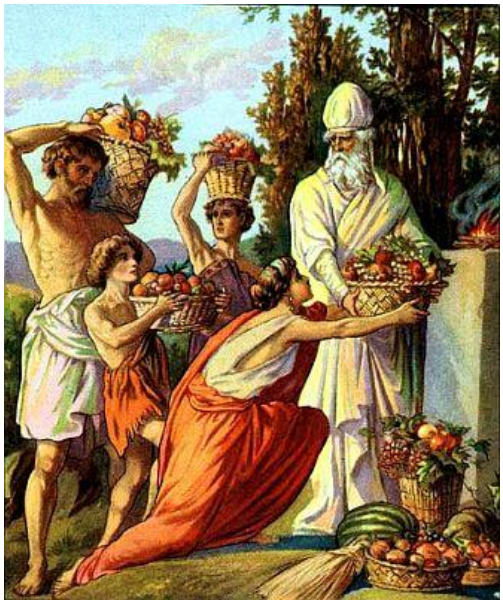
This warning sounds exactly like that which Moses is warning the children of Israel. The same alarm is being issued to the Church, "**Therefore come out from them and be separate says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you**." (2 Corinthians 6:17)

The vessels of the Lord must be pure and holy, not contaminated and defiled with rebellion. We must determine to keep ourselves apart, no matter how high the cost to separate from the rebels and leave that place of rebellion:

*"***Depart, depart, go out from there! Touch no unclean thing*!* Come out from it and be pure, you who carry the vessels of the Lord**." (Isaiah 52:11)

[15] Mark 3:25, Matthew 12:25

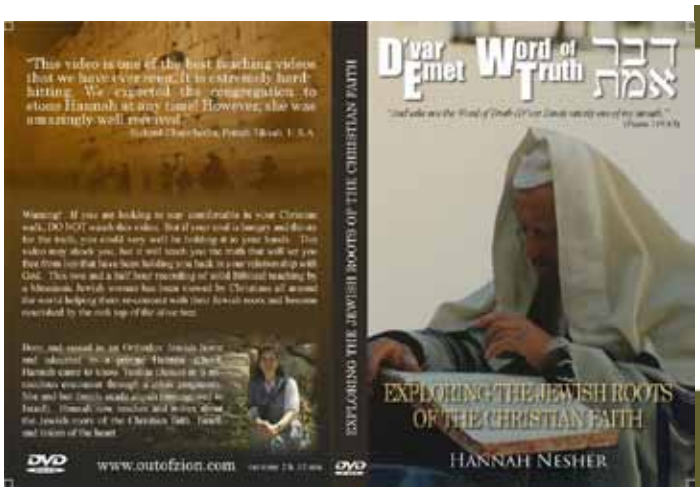
There are so many good and sincere Christians who just do not know that they are keeping a foot in Babylon - but ignorance is no excuse. God says, "**My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.**" (Hosea 4:6)

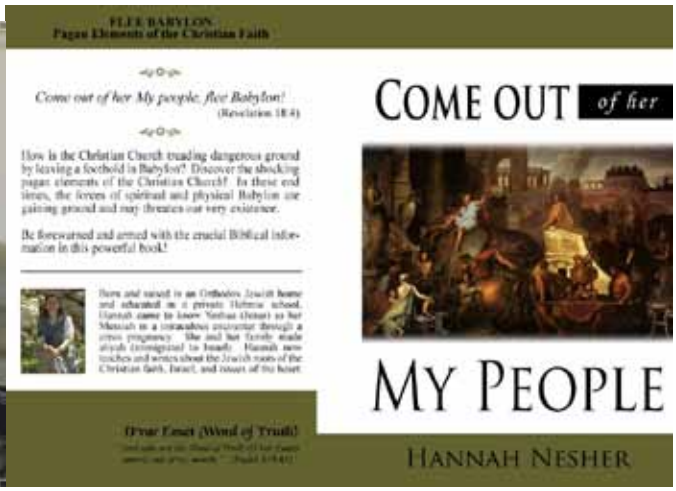


To just share one example, we know that Eashtar is the name of a pagan goddess of fertility, a Babylonian goddess, who claimed worship for herself. This is the root of the so-called Christian celebration of 'Easter'.

It is at the Biblical feast of 'Bikurrim' (First Fruits), that we should actually be remembering the resurrection of the Lord Yeshua the Messiah. The Feast of First Fruits is a biblical feast day that celebrates the first crop of barley – representing the first of life from the death of winter. This helps us to remember Yeshua's resurrection, the first-fruits offering to the Father, and the promise to us that we also will be resurrected.

Offering of firstfruits providence lithograph company





Let us come out of anything rooted in Babylon, people of the God of Abraham, and get back to His ways and His Appointed Times as written in the 23rd chapter of Leviticus and the 16th chapter of Deuteronomy. [16]

[16] See The Jewish roots of the Christian Faith (DVD), or Come out of her My People (book) by the author www.voiceforisrael.net

Rebels will be Thrown into the Pit of Sheol

The earth swallowed up Korah and the rebels supernaturally so that everyone would know that it was the judgement of God and not natural means.[17] They went down alive into the pit (Sheol) which is Hebrew for the place of the dead.

Some people think that is will be impossible for God's enemies to be selectively destroyed by a great earthquake in the end times, while the righteous stand unharmed and untouched by this 'natural disaster'. But we see here that it is possible with God, and those who know the Old Testament have evidence of this with Korach.

The Wicked Being Swallowed Up in the Ground
(illustration from the 1897 *Bible Pictures and What They Teach Us* by Charles Foster)

Yeshua's death on the cross is God's supernatural intervention to save us from the fiery pit of hell. In a movie I watched with my children called 'Toy Story 3', at one point in the film, the characters were all sliding down a slippery slope to their impending deaths in the devouring fire that awaiting them.

Each of us watching could feel the fear and even terror that Woody, Buzz Light Year and the others were experiencing. But at the last minute, the arm of a crane scooped them up and out of danger's way.

I felt that this was a word picture from the Lord. We are all sliding down this slippery slope to sure destruction in the pit of Sheol without the supernatural intervention of the 'arm of the Lord'.

Only when we put our faith and trust in Yeshua, God's son, and receive his death on the cross as the redemption for our souls, are we rescued from death and from hell.

May God's Spirit grant us the power and boldness to witness to others of God's marvellous grace - providing us with salvation through Yeshua Hamashiach (the Messiah).

[17] Numbers 16:32

Fire will Devour the Enemies of God

Fire devoured the 250 men who offered incense.[18] End-times prophecy tells us that the enemies of Israel who march against her in the final battle of God and Magog (after the thousand years are over and Satan is released from his prison) will all be devoured by fire which comes down from heaven.

The devil, along with the beast and all the false prophets who followed him are thrown into the Lake of Fire and brimstone where they will be tormented day and night forever. (Revelation 20:7-10)

Rebellion is not to be taken lightly. The seeds of rebellion have been planted in all of humanity through the venom of the serpent in the Garden of Eden, but thank God, through Yeshua, our names can be written in the Book of Life and we may be saved from fiery judgment.

The same cannot be said of those who refuse God's gift of salvation through Yeshua. "**If anyone's name was not found written in the Book of Life, he will be thrown into the lake of fire**." (Revelation 20:15)

The Hope of Eternal Life

Chapter 21 of the book of Revelation describes the New Jerusalem. We cannot imagine how wonderful it will be there; but we know that,

"**Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."** (Revelation 21:3-4)

This is our wonderful hope – to finally be free from this world of sin and tears and pain, and to live in Paradise with God. This promise is for all those whose names are written in the book of life - that will live eternally in this wonderful place with God.

How do we know that our name will be written in the Book of Life? John tells us that Yeshua (Jesus) said,

"**Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."** (John 3:14-16)

This is what we need to do – to believe – not to be perfect. When the son of God was lifted up on that cross,

[18] Numbers 16:35

and the criminal dying beside him put his faith and trust in the Lord, Jesus said, "**Today, you will be with me in Paradise**." (Luke 23:43)

We can cross over from death into life through faith in Yeshua the Messiah. Do not wait another day; we don't know what tomorrow may bring. Give your life over to God through the atonement He has provided for all of your sins through the sacrifice of His only son. Yeshua is the Passover lamb who was slain so that the angel of death would 'Pass-over 'us and our names would surely be written in the Book of Life.

As a dog returns to its vomit

Even after Israel was spared and saw the supernatural judgement of God on the rebels, they still murmured against Moses and Aaron, saying they killed the people of the Lord.[19] Can you believe it? Some people (the bible calls them fools) never learn. They return to their folly as a dog returns to its vomit. [20] May we be 'teachable people' who learn our lessons quickly.

God poured out his wrath against these people swiftly. Notice Moses and Aaron didn't say, "*Oh good, that'll teach them*!" They interceded and made atonement for them . This should also be our attitude towards people who are sinning or led astray. We should not be happy when they suffer because of their sin, but should have compassion and pray for them, remembering, '*But for the grace of God go I'*. Let us continually plead for God to have mercy on sinners and save them.

<u>The importance of intercession :</u> Just as did Moses and Aaron we are to do likewise. We must stand between the dead and the living, in the face of God's wrath. We are now the priests of the Lord to perform this act of mercy for the people. We are to be interceding for sinners' salvation that they be spared God's wrath which is coming upon this earth soon. We are to stand in the gap as an intercessor. 14,700 died before Aaron could stop the plague. We can only stand before God covered in the holy and perfectly righteous blood of the lamb. We cannot stand before him by our own righteousness.

The Tithe is to be Given to the Levites

Israel was to tithe (a tenth) to the Levites in return for their service. (Numbers 18:21) Those who serve the Lord in ministry should receive a tithe from the people's earnings so that their needs will be met and they can continue to serve.

Some people, in a reaction against the overemphasis on money in the church, or the misuse of people's money by some in ministry, have decided not to tithe, or they think that the tithe is done away with because the Temple is no longer in existence.

---

[19] Numbers 16:41
[20] Proverb 26:11

Still, the work of the Lord goes on, and there are those who serve him 'in the tent of the meeting.' The tithe belongs to God and is to be given to those who minister for him. There are good and sincere people who simply do not tithe; but this is a serious offense against God and brings a curse on the one who robs God.

'Return to me, and I will return to you', says the Lord Almighty. But you ask, 'How are we to return? Will a man rob God?' Yet you rob Me.

A 640 BC one-third stater electrum coin from Lydia

But you ask, "How do we rob you?"

In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse – the whole nation of you – because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house.

Test me in this, says the Lord Almighty, and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it." (Malachi 3:7b -10)

We are to give the first tenth of our earnings, and trust God to meet our needs with the rest. I have found that often, God saves us money as much as He brings money in when we are faithful to tithe. 'Test me on this', God says. It is the one time when we can put God to the test!

I have also found that on occasion when money has been tight and I have been negligent or slow in the giving of my tithe, often money will be wasted in foolish ways (parking tickets, etc.) God promises to rebuke the devourer for our sake when we give him the first and best of our money.

Everything belongs to Him. He doesn't ask us to give an excessive amount. I believe everyone can and should do this because it is a vehicle for God to pour out His blessings upon us. 'Give and it shall be given unto you, poured out, good measure…' [21] We are to honour God, not only with our lips, but also with our wealth, and He promises to meet our needs abundantly.

"**Honour the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.**" (Proverbs 3:9—10)

In Deuteronomy 14:22, the Word describes a second tithe – 10% is to be spent on ourselves and our families. We are to enjoy the blessing that God has poured out upon us. Some people work so hard and never save enough to even take their family on a vacation. I think this is slandering God – saying that He doesn't give us enough to even take a tithe to enjoy ourselves.

[21] Luke 6:38

HAFTARAH – The Rebellion Continues

In this prophetic portion of Scripture (haftarah), the theme of rebellion continues with the people of Israel rebelling against the Lord and Samuel by demanding an earthly King. God gave them a King even though it was not His perfect will, but He warned them not to rebel against His commandments – not even the King was above the commandments of God.

Grave of the Prophet Samuel, Jerusalem

"**And the Lord sent thunder and rain that day; and the people greatly feared the Lord and Samuel."** (1 Samuel 12:18)

Why were the people afraid of the thunder and rain? Because of the time of year, rain and thunder would be highly unusual and the people knew this was a sign of God's wrath. They asked Samuel to intercede for them so that they would not die for their sins. Here, again, we see the importance of intercession.

Also, we see that the people feared God, which the Bible says is the beginning of wisdom. We must teach our children, and understand ourselves that God is a God of love, patience, goodness, compassion, and is slow to anger; but as we have seen in Korach, He is also a God of justice, and is jealous for the love and devotion of His people.

He is very capable of pouring out His wrath upon the earth, as He will surely do one day, therefore we can be extremely grateful for the atonement we have in Yeshua the Messiah. Still, even though we are under grace, does that mean we have licence to sin? Paul says, heaven forbid! (Romans 6:15)

It is grace that gives us the power to live free from sin, and to live according to God's commandments. "**For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace."**(Romans 6:14)

"**If you rebel against the commandments of God, then the Lord will be against you**." (1 Samuel 12:15)

Do you sometimes feel the hand of the Lord against you? Perhaps we need to search our heart and ask the Holy Spirit to show us if we are perhaps rebelling against Him in some way, or living in a way that is not pleasing to Him. I believe He will be faithful to gently show each of us personally, that our relationship with God and place of blessed favor may be restored.

The prophet Samuel instructed the people that despite the evil they have done, they should not fear or turn away from serving the Lord. Even if we have made mistakes, walked out of the perfect will of God, we can still turn back to God and serve Him with all our heart, trusting in the goodness and mercy of God to restore and redeem. God has promised to never leave us or forsake us.

"**For the Lord will not forsake His people for His great name's sake; because it has pleased the Lord to make you a people unto Himself.**" (1 Samuel 12:22)

NEW TESTAMENT (ACTS 5:1-11)

The New Testament portion continues with this same theme of rebellion through the account of Ananias and Saphira. Some people think that after Jesus came, we can sin and its all forgiven by His sacrifice ('It's all under the blood'). Many people seem to think that the Old Testament is dead or obsolete.

The Death of Ananias, by Raphael

There are those who even believe that the God of the Old Testament has been replaced now by the God of the New Testament who is now a 'God of grace'; and not the God of judgement and justice. However ,the account of Ananias and Saphira tells that God is the same yesterday, today, tomorrow and forevermore.

With his wife's knowledge, Ananias kept back part of the money but brought the rest to the apostles' feet.[22] We are each accountable to God. Even if our spouse sins, we have a duty to correct them and refuse to join in their sin.

Satan filled their hearts to lie to the Holy Spirit. [23] Falsehood is of the devil, the father of lies. Beware all lies, deception, and manipulation. **"But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, idolaters, and all liars – their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur."** (Revelation 21:8)

If we have a problem with lying – we must get free now by asking for and receiving cleansing and forgiveness through the blood of Yeshua Hamashiach. God is faithful to forgive us when we repent and turn from our wicked ways. We can be set free from all sin that leads to death.

[22] Acts 5:2
[23] Acts 5:3

When we lie to people, we lie to God. Do we give all we should give to God or are we withholding a portion for ourselves? Ananias and Saphira did so, and they fell down dead on the spot! "**Great fear seized the church**" (Acts 5:11) Perhaps, in these end times, we need to pray for a return of the 'fear of the Lord', that we may live with wisdom.

In a Bible study, a pastor lamented that today's church does not seem to be operating in the power of the Holy Spirit that once was in the book of Acts. Another person said, "*That's true, but maybe it's a good thing, or there might be a lot of people falling down dead in church, and I might be the first*!" Let's get our lives right before God, by His grace, before the great and terrible day of the Lord that is coming.

"**Surely the day is coming, it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evil doers will be stubble and that day that is coming will set them on fire, says the Lord Almighty…But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings.**"
(Malachi 4:1-2)

What a terrible warning to rebels against God. What an awesome and wonderful hope of healing to those who revere the name of יהוה YHVH . Halleluiah!

Korach Study Questions

1. How did Korach, Datan and Aviram challenge the legitimacy of Moses and Aaron's leadership of Israel? What charges did they make against him and what 'slogan' did they use?
2. Do you see parallels to a situation in your own church, congregation or fellowship? Has anyone ever tried to cause strife and division? What tactics did they use? How did you handle it and how did it turn out? Share and discuss.
3. What do you think is a biblical way of dealing with a grievance against a spiritual leader?
4. What are some of the negative effects of strife? Have you experienced these?
5. Do you experience more unity or strife in your family (spiritual or natural)? What could possibly be done to increase the unity and decrease the strife?
6. Do you agree that bad company corrupts good character? Describe an experience you've had with this truth.
7. What sins cause strife? Do you struggle at times with these? Share & discuss.
8. How do you think it was possible that so many of the very elect of Israel were deceived into joining with the rebels? Can you relate this to those who join with the Palestinian cause against the people of Israel?
9. Have you ever had anyone bring all manner of false accusations against you? How did that make you feel? What did you do about it?
10. Why do you think there is such a problem with division within various Jewish sects as well as Christian denominations? What is a possible solution?
11. Do you feel that God dealt harshly with the rebels by opening the earth and causing them to go down alive into the pit?
12. What will God do, in the end, to the devil, the beast, the false prophets and anyone whose name is not written in the Book of Life? How do we make sure our names are written in the pages of this book?
13. We are called to stand in the gap between the living and the dead and to plead with God for mercy on their behalf. Is there anyone that you are praying for right now? Why not join your faith and prayers together and intercede in unity for the eternal salvation of these precious souls.

About the Author:

Hannah Nesher grew up in an Orthodox Jewish home and received her education in a religious Hebrew school in Canada. During a crisis pregnancy, she came to know Jesus (Yeshua) as her Messiah and Savior. She now lives in Israel with her children and grandchildren, teaching the Jewish roots of the Christian faith.

If you appreciate these teachings, your donations are greatly appreciated. It is through your generous financial and prayer support that we can continue to send the Word forth from Zion and Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:3).

To contribute on-line through paypal:

http://www.voiceforisrael.net/donate

Or by mail: # 313-11007 Jasper Ave.
Edmonton, Ab. T5K 0K6 Canada

e-mail: **nesher.hannah@gmail.com**

website: **www.voiceforisrael.net**

COPYRIGHT POLICY: **Articles by Hannah Nesher may be copied for free distribution or personal use, provided they are reproduced in their entirety and with no changes. If printed in a publication or included on a website, please include our name, address and website and please send us a copy of the publication containing the article.**

There is no cost to use the materials but if you appreciate the information, please do consider sending a donation to support the ministry. www.voiceforisrael.net