### Numbers

## Chapter 16

[Editor note: The story resumes here.]  
  
  
1But then KorAh (son of IsaAr, of CaAth, of Levi), Dathan, and AbiRam (the sons of EliAb), and Aun (son of Phaleth of ReuBen) started speaking 2rebelliously against Moses, along with 250 men from the sons of IsraEl that were chiefs of the assembly, chosen advisors, and men of fame.  
  
3They went up to Moses and Aaron and said:  
  
 ‘That’s enough of you!  
  
 ‘Since the whole gathering of IsraEl is holy, and Jehovah is among them, why have you elevated yourselves over the gathering of Jehovah?’  
  
4Well when Moses heard this, he fell to his face.  
  
5Then he spoke to KorAh and his group and said:  
  
 ‘God has visited us, and He knows who are His, who are holy, who are set aside to Him, whom He’s chosen, and whom He’s purchased for Himself. 6So, we’ll allow Jehovah to choose [the ones whom He finds] to be holy.  
  
 ‘KorAh and his entire group should take their incense holders 7and put fire and incense in them, then go and stand before Jehovah tomorrow.  
  
 ‘May this settle the matter for you, you sons of Levi!’  
  
8Then Moses [turned and] addressed KorAh, saying:  
  
 ‘Listen to me, you son of Levi.  
  
 9‘Is it so unimportant to you that the God of IsraEl has separated you from the rest of the gathering of IsraEl, and brought you close to Him to serve His people at His Tent, 10that you and all your brothers (the sons of Levi) also want to become the Priests?  
  
 11‘[Understand that] you and your group have now gathered in opposition to God!  
  
 ‘For, who is Aaron that you should be complaining against him?’  
  
  
12Then later, Moses sent for Dathan and AbiRam (the sons of EliAb), and they told him that they wouldn’t be coming. 13They asked:  
  
 ‘Doesn’t it matter to you that after you brought us to a land flowing with milk and honey, you chose to just kill us here in this desert? And now you even want to rule over us!  
  
 14‘If you’re really our leader, why don’t you just go ahead and carry us into the land that flows with milk and honey and give us our inheritance of land and our vineyards?  
  
 ‘For, couldn’t you just blind the eyes of the men [in that land]?  
  
 ‘No, we aren’t coming!’  
  
15Well, this upset Moses, and he said to Jehovah:  
  
 ‘Please don’t accept their sacrifices, because I haven’t taken anything that they desire from them, nor have I harmed any of them.’  
  
  
16Then Moses told KorAh:  
  
 ‘You must be sure that your whole group is holy, and then you must get them ready to stand before Jehovah along with Aaron tomorrow. 17Each man must bring his incense holder and put incense in it, then carry it up before Jehovah… All 250 of you.  
  
 ‘And of course, you and Aaron must also bring your incense holders.’  
  
  
18So [the next day], each man brought his incense holder and they put fire and incense in them. Then they stood themselves next to Moses and Aaron at the entrance to the Tent of Proofs, 19and KorAh and his group just stood there defiantly, as the glory of the Lord appeared before the whole gathering.  
  
20Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron and said:  
  
 21‘Move away from the whole gathering [of IsraEl], for I’m going to consume them all!’  
  
22But [Moses and Aaron] fell to their faces, and begged:  
  
 ‘Oh God… The God of all that breathes and all that is flesh... If just one man has sinned, must You bring Your rage against the whole gathering?’  
  
23And the Lord spoke to Moses and said:  
  
 24‘Then, tell the gathering that they must move away from KorAh and his group!’  
  
25So Moses got up and walked over to Dathan and AbiRam (and all the elders of IsraEl went with him).  
  
26Then he spoke to the gathering and said:  
  
 ‘Now, get away from the tents of these stubborn men and don’t touch anything that belongs to them, or you’ll be consumed along with them for their sins!’  
  
27So everyone moved away from their tents, as KorAh, Dathan, and AbiRam went over and stood at the entrances to their tents, along with their women, their children, and all their belongings.  
  
28Then Moses said:  
  
 ‘Now you’ll know that when Jehovah sent me to do these things, I wasn’t doing it on my own!  
  
 29‘For if these men just die a natural death, and if what happens to them is the same as what happens to all men, then Jehovah hasn’t sent me... 30But if the Lord brings a miracle and the ground opens its mouth and swallows them, their households, their tents, and everything that belongs to them, and they go down into their graves alive...  
  
 ‘You must know that these men have angered Jehovah!’  
  
31And just as he finished saying those words, the ground rumbled underneath them!  
  
32Then the ground opened and swallowed them, their households, all the men who were with KorAh, and all their cattle… 33They and all that they had went down into their graves alive, as the ground covered them over!  
  
So, they perished there in the midst of the gathering.  
  
34Well at that, all the IsraElites that were standing nearby fled from the noise, shouting:  
  
 ‘[Run], so the earth doesn’t swallow us too!’  
  
35Then fire came from Jehovah, which consumed the 250 men who were offering the incense.  
  
36And thereafter, the Lord said to Moses:  
  
 37‘Now, tell EliEzer (son of Aaron the Priest) to pick up the bronze incense holders from where those men were burned and then melt them all down, for these things are holy, 38[and they must now serve as a sign against] those sinners and against their lives.  
  
 ‘Beat [the metal] into plates to cover the Altar; for, since these [censors] were brought before Jehovah as holy, they must be used as a sign to the children of IsraEl!’  
  
39So, EliEzer (son of Aaron, the Priest) took the bronze incense holders that the men who were burned carried, and he had them shaped into a covering for the Altar, 40as a reminder to the children of IsraEl that no one other than the offspring of Aaron might approach to offer the incense before Jehovah, and so that what happened to KorAh and those who conspired with him wouldn’t happen to them.  
  
[He did just] as Jehovah told him through Moses.  
  
  
41But the next day, the people again started grumbling against Moses and Aaron, and they shouted:  
  
 ‘You’ve killed the people of Jehovah!’  
  
42So, a mob gathered against Moses and Aaron, and they foolishly ran into the Tent of Proofs – and at that, the cloud immediately covered it and the glory of Jehovah appeared!  
  
43Then Moses and Aaron entered through the front of the Tent of Proofs, 44and the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron there and said:  
  
 45‘Get away from the whole gathering, because I’m going to consume them all!’  
  
Well, [Moses and Aaron] dropped to their faces, 46and Moses said to Aaron:  
  
 ‘Take an incense holder, put some incense into it, and light it with some of the fire from the Altar. Then, quickly carry it into the camp to atone for [the people’s] sins... For, Jehovah’s rage has come upon us and He’s already started destroying them!’  
  
47So Aaron took it (just as Moses had told him) and he ran around throughout the whole gathering, since a plague had already started among them! And he used the incense to atone for the sins of the people.  
  
48Then he stood himself between the living and the dead, and the plague stopped.  
  
49Altogether, some 14,700 died from the plague… In addition to those who died because of KorAh. 50And when Aaron returned to Moses (who was at the entrance to the Tent of Proofs), the plague ended.