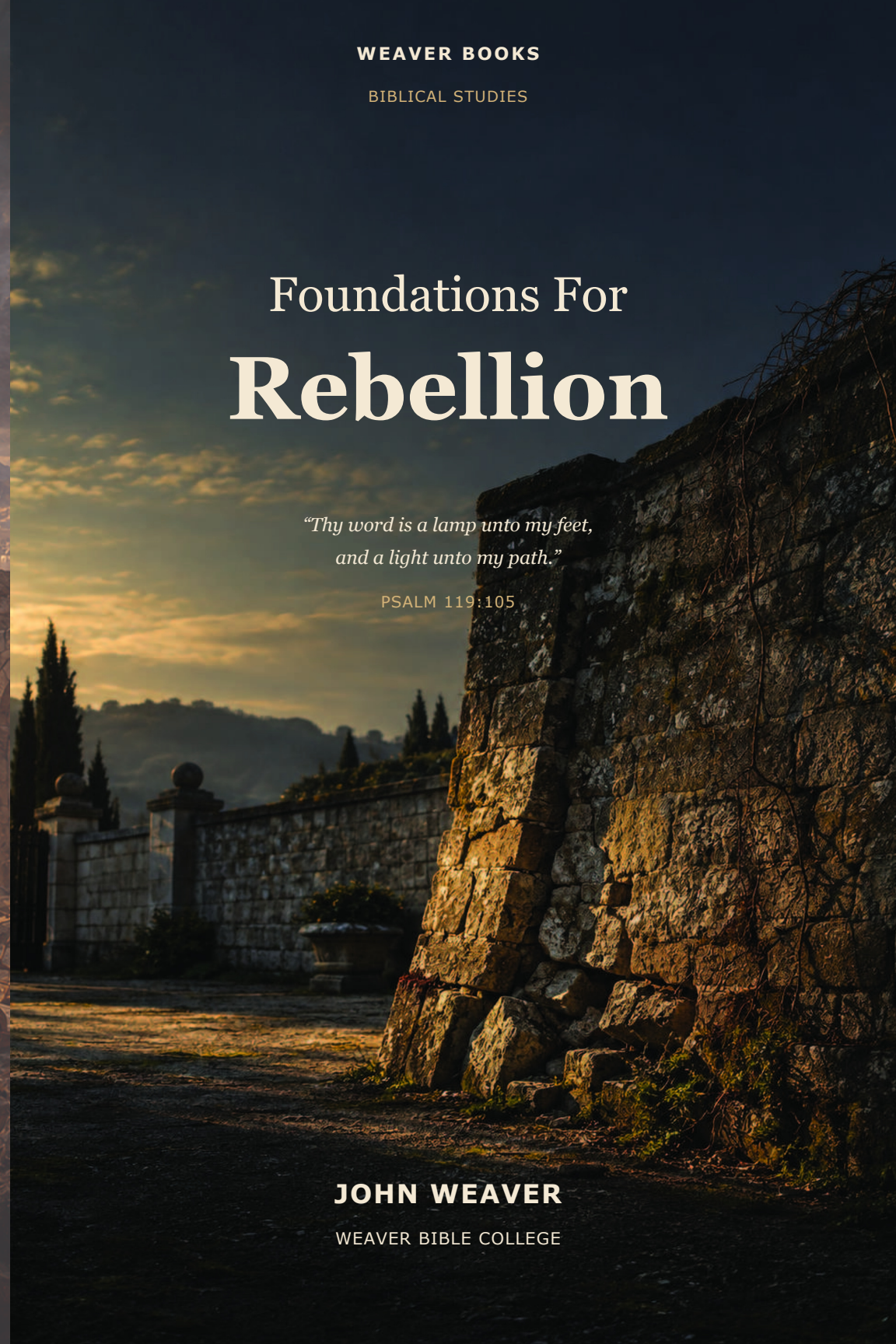
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Foundations For Rebellion

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path."

PSALM 119:105



JOHN WEAVER

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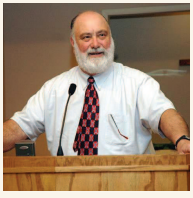
Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice.

1 SAMUEL 15:22, EXCERPT

Rebellion often develops before it becomes outwardly defiant. John Weaver examines discontent, dishonor, disobedience, and dissatisfaction with one's calling through biblical accounts. These messages ask readers to recognize the dispositions that undermine faithfulness and to consider contentment and obedience as matters of conviction rather than convenience.

“Anytime there is rebellion, there is a relationship that is discarded and dishonored.”

JOHN WEAVER



John Weaver

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CHAPTER 1

Foundations For Rebellion

Part One

Numbers chapter 16, beginning with verse 1: “Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and 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 certain of the children of Israel, 250 princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown. And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron and said unto them, ‘You take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them. Wherefore then lift up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?’ And when Moses heard it, he fell upon his face.’

Introduction: Rebellion as Old as Humanity

“And he spake unto Korah and unto all his company, saying, ‘Even tomorrow the Lord will show who are His and who is holy, and will cause him to come near unto Him; even him whom He hath chosen will He cause to come near unto Him. This do: take you censers, Korah and all his company, and put fire therein, and put incense in

them before the Lord tomorrow. And it shall be that the man whom the Lord doth choose, he shall be holy. You take too much upon you, you sons of Levi.'"

Rebellion is as old as humanity. Rebellion began, of course, with Adam and Eve and has continued down through history. Man, by nature, has a tendency to rebel because of total depravity. Sin was imputed to us because of our federal head and representative, Adam, who sinned against God. When he sinned, we sinned. That is why the Bible in Romans 5 and verse 12 says, "Wherefore, as by one man sin passed upon all men, and death by sin, for that all have sinned."

When you get to that phrase, "for that all have sinned," the scenario is passive, which means it happened once and for all. It was over with. When in the world did everyone sin once and for all? The answer is in Adam.

While it is true that fallen man is rebellious, there is nevertheless a modicum of truth in the consciousness of fallen man that he is answerable, accountable, and responsible to God. You will find that in Romans 2:14–15, where that principle is established. Rebellion is primarily a sin and a crime against God. However, it is usually directed and manifested against man. It manifests itself against the authority that God has ordained.

Rebellion is Primarily Against God, Manifested Against Man

A very easy and clear illustration is given to us in Ephesians 6:1–3, where God says, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor thy father and thy mother, which is the first commandment with promise, that your days may be long upon the earth." It is obvious, then, that Ephesians 6:1–3 is a quotation from the fifth commandment, which was given to us in Exodus 20 and also Deuteronomy 5.

When children disobey and dishonor their parents, in reality they are dishonoring and disobeying the God who gave the command to honor and obey their parents. Parents, in this sense of the word, represent God, in that He gave the parents the authority to rule and to raise those children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

We can see this principle expanded just about anywhere and everywhere. The same principle is obvious in many churches where the people rebel against the pastor. When I say the pastor, let me explain: when he is dealing from the Word of God and teaching the Word of God, then obviously he has the authority of God behind him. I know people who became really upset because a pastor was doing that which was biblical, holy, and right.

In fact, I can think of one church where there was a problem and the pastor was trying to do what was right. A woman stood up in church and said, “This is our church. We’ll do as we please.” This is exactly what I am talking about.

The principle is that when men fight against God, they manifest themselves by fighting against the pastor who has that authority. Likewise, when wives refuse to submit to their husbands, it is the same principle: they are in rebellion against God. Hold Numbers 16, but look in your Bibles to Genesis 3. Look, if you would please, at verse 16, and hold there in Genesis because we are going to be looking at another verse just momentarily. Note what Genesis 3:16 says. God is speaking, and He says unto the woman,

God said, “I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception. In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children, and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.” So very clearly, part of God's judgment upon the woman in this instance was that her desire was to her husband, and the husband was to rule over the wife.

Feminism and individualism, in which the wife seeks a separate life from her husband, are rebellion against God. There is a vast difference between a woman being feminine and modern-day feminism, which hates patriarchy, submission, and the headship of husbands. Let me make this clear at the very beginning: I do not care what sphere or area we are talking about when it comes to rebellion. All rebellion is primarily against God.

The Process of Rebellion: Changed Thinking, Attitude, and Desires

Rebellion does not happen when someone is submissive and obedient and wakes up the next morning and says, “Well, I think I'll

rebel and tear up everything, turn everything upside down, and destroy everything that I can destroy." No, rebellion normally requires a way of thinking and an established attitude as well.

This can be seen in the life of Eve in Genesis chapter 3, through verse 6. The serpent said to the woman, "You shall not surely die. For God doth know that in the day that you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took its fruit, ate, gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.

The Bible says, "When the woman saw that the tree was good." The word "saw" is the Hebrew word ra'ah, meaning to perceive or see in a different light, to consider and regard. Being seduced by the serpent, she saw the fruit and the tree in a totally different light. She changed her thinking and also changed her attitude concerning the fruit.

"When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes," the Hebrew word for "pleasant to the eyes" is avah, meaning to desire and lust after, to covet, to become greedy and covetous. Prior to this, her thinking concerning God and His commandment was fine. But now she had listened to the serpent. Her thinking had changed, and her attitude was changing. Evidently, she had not perceived the fruit in this way before.

Eve descended from a way of thinking of obedience to a change of attitude toward God and His Word. Her rebellion was furthered by desiring that which was forbidden. Take note of this fact: when your thinking changes, your attitude changes, and so do your desires. Her thinking changed toward the fruit; her attitude changed; therefore, her desires changed.

This fact alone should explain how spouses who have been faithful to each other for years suddenly fall into grievous acts of infidelity and adultery. Why? Because when their thinking changes, their attitude changes, and when their thinking and attitude change, so do their desires. "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make

one wise," the Hebrew word is chamad, meaning to delight greatly, desire greatly, take pleasure in, and covet.

Once her thinking changed, once her attitude changed, her desires became different, and she was thinking, "Wow, this is what I need. This is what I really, truly want." The final step—from her thinking, her attitude, and her desiring—was action. She took that action: she took the fruit, ate it, and gave it to her husband also. When you think wickedly, when you desire wicked things, and when you desire and covet wickedness, your attitude changes, and the last step is always disobedience and rebellion toward God. You can notice this throughout the Bible.

Rebellion Can Be Taught

Rebellion can be taught. This is another truth God revealed in His Word when He was talking about Hananiah and Shemaiah. In Jeremiah 28, verse 15, Jeremiah said to Hananiah, "Hear now, Hananiah, the Lord hath not sent thee, but thou makest his people to trust in a lie." Verse 16 continues: "Therefore thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will cast thee forth off the face of the earth. This year thou shalt die, because thou hast taught rebellion against the Lord." So Hananiah the prophet died the same year, in the seventh month. The Bible says that he had taught rebellion against the Lord.

Then, if you look in Jeremiah 29 and verse 32, you will see the same thing concerning Shemaiah. Jeremiah 29:32 says, "Therefore thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will punish Shemaiah the Nehelamite and his seed. He shall not have a man to dwell among this people, neither shall he behold the good thing that I will do for my people, saith the Lord, because he had taught rebellion against the Lord." He taught rebellion against the Lord. You must see the importance of homeschooling.

When you think about governmental education, fairly well known as public education—which is not really public education—if you think it is really public, try walking into one of those schools, see how far you get, offer your suggestions, and see how many are taken. Public schools today are a hotbed for communism and Marxism. These schools are training insurgents; they are training rebellious individuals. Think about Antifa, Black Lives Matter, and the

transgender movement. These people did not just pop up overnight. It may seem like that, but the truth of the matter is that they were taught this.

Their thinking changed, their attitude changed, their desires changed, and when the moment or the money was right, they took action. Oftentimes parents wonder what in the world happened to their loving and obedient children after they had sent those children to a government school or state college. The children end up turning against their parents, against everything the parents believe, and against everything the parents taught them. The answer is very simple: They were taught rebellion.

Here is a principle that we need to learn: If biblical principles and biblical morality are not instilled in our youth, wickedness and rebellion will be. Neither life nor learning operate in a vacuum. Martin Luther began the Reformation in 1517. In the 1500s, he made this statement: "I'm afraid that the schools will provide the very gates of hell unless they diligently labor in explaining the Holy Scriptures and engraving them in the heart of the youth."

Historical Warnings on Education

To show you how Massachusetts has become a hotbed of liberalism and modernism today, yet in 1647 the state of Massachusetts passed what is known as the Old Deluder Satan Act and mandated that the Bible had to be taught in every home and in every area of education. Horace Greeley, an ardent and radical abolitionist, said, "It is impossible to enslave mentally or socially a Bible-reading people. The principles of the Bible are the groundwork of human freedom."

When you leave the law of God and His commandments, you enter into rebellion and enslavement. Your rebellion is primarily against God, although it is manifested against man, and the enslavement is unto sin. It is only in Jesus Christ that we are free, for our Lord said in John 8 and verse 36, "If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed." So here is the question: How does rebellion begin?

The First Foundation of Rebellion

First Foundational Pillar: Disregard for Family and Friends

What are the powers of rebellion? What is the foundation of rebellion? How is it that someone seemingly with common sense and knowledge could become such a rebellious reprobate? I want to try to answer that for you from the book of Numbers, chapter 16, and I want you to look there with me. I want to give you the first foundational pillar of rebellion. The first foundational pillar of rebellion begins with a complete disregard for family and friends. I want you to think with me. This is important. The first foundational pillar of rebellion begins with a complete disregard for family and friends.

Numbers 16:1 says, “Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, the sons of Reuben, took men.” Now note that the Bible says, “Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi.” Korah was a great-grandson of Levi.

He was a cousin to Moses and Aaron. Amram was the father of Moses and Aaron, and Izhar was the father of Korah. Amram and Izhar were brothers. Amram was the oldest and Izhar was the second oldest. Exodus 6:18 says, “And the sons of Kohath: Amram and Izhar”—that is, they were brothers—“and Hebron and Uzziel. And the years of the life of Kohath were 133 years. And the sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi. These are the families of Levi according to their generations. And Amram took Jochebed, his father’s sister, to wife, and she bare him Aaron and Moses. And the years of the life of Amram were 137 years. And the sons of Izhar: Korah, and Nepheg, and Zichri.” Thus Moses and Korah were cousins.

Now I want to make a very important point: family ceases to be important when one is in rebellion against the Lord. In this instance in Numbers 16, it was a cousin against

These men had been raised together from their youth. They were relatives and probably previous friends. But when rebelliousness and lawlessness grip the heart, neither family nor friendship matters.

This is easily seen in the betrayal of husbands and wives through infidelity and adultery. Humanly speaking, there cannot be a closer bond than that of husband and wife, yet many eagerly defy and defile that bond in rebellion against God. While their rebellion is against God, it is manifested toward their spouse.

Here is a principle to observe and keep in mind: when a family member cools in his or her relationship, something is wrong. When husbands and wives cool in their relationship, defraud each other, ignore each other, and endeavor to become independent of each other, something is terribly wrong. The same is true of friendship. When children begin to dishonor, disobey, and disdain their parents, it is the beginning of rebellion.

It is foundational. It is impossible to rebel against one without disregarding a relationship. Anytime there is rebellion, there is a relationship that is discarded and dishonored. You cannot have rebellion without destroying family or friends. The very first foundational pillar of rebellion is that it disregards and dishonors family and friends.

Second Foundational Pillar: Discontent with One's Calling and Station

The second foundational pillar in rebellion is discontent with one's calling and station in life. Look back at verse 1: "Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi." Korah was a Levite and the ringleader in this rebellion against God, Moses, and Aaron. How do I know that? Jude 11 says, "Woe to them, for they've gone in the way of Cain and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward and perished in the gainsaying of Korah." Korah is therefore credited as the leader of this rebellion.

Korah was already called to the service of the tabernacle. The Levites had been given to Moses and Aaron, and their ministry involved caring for everything in the tabernacle and protecting Aaron and his sons, who were the priests. Evidently, Korah was not satisfied with being a Levite or content to serve God in the capacity to which he had been appointed. He wanted to be a priest. In Numbers chapter 16, beginning with verse 8, Moses said to these

Levites, "And Moses said unto Korah, 'Hear, I pray you, you sons of Levi.'"

There were more Levites than Korah, but he is the one who has been identified as the ringleader. Moses said unto Korah, “Hear, I pray you, you sons of Levi. Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to Himself, to do the service of the tabernacle of the Lord, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them? And He hath brought thee near to Him, and all thy brethren, the sons of Levi, with thee, and seek ye the priesthood also?”

Korah was discontented. Aaron and his family had been chosen by God to be priests, and Korah was probably upset over that. But something else probably upset him as well. Another cousin had been chosen to be over all the Levites—not Korah. Numbers 3:30 says, “And the chief of the house of the father of the families of the Kohathites shall be Elizaphan the son of Uzziel.” Elizaphan was chosen to be over the Levites; he was a son of Uzziel.

Leviticus 10:4 gives a revealing statement: “And Moses called Mishael and Elizaphan, the sons of Uzziel, the uncle of Aaron, and said unto them, ‘Come near, carry your brethren from before the sanctuary out of the camp.’” Uzziel is called the uncle of Aaron, which means Elizaphan was a cousin as well. He was chosen over and above Korah to be the head of the Levites.

Korah was upset because he was not chosen to be a priest and was not chosen to be over the Levites. The second foundational pillar for rebellion is discontentment with your calling and your station in life. It is not a sin to desire to improve yourself or your position in your vocation. However, it is discontent and rebellion to desire something to which you have never been called, appointed, or ordained by God. If you are a plumber, electrician, or carpenter, you should desire to be the best plumber, electrician, or carpenter you possibly can be, for God's honor and God's glory.

There's nothing wrong with that. We have a brother in our church who's a retired OB-GYN. He was a doctor for probably fifty years. I gave this illustration this morning: suppose there's a lady in our

church who is pregnant, comes to this assembly, has labor pains, and begins to have that child here in the church building. Here's my question, young lady: how would you rather have me, your pastor, deliver that child, or a retired OB-GYN who has done it for fifty years? Obviously, I'm not going to intrude upon the calling and vocation of an OB-GYN doctor. I'm content with what I've got right now.

The point is this: does anybody recognize the name Jethro Bodine? Jethro was that big, tall boy on The Beverly Hillbillies. It looked like he was about twenty-some, but he graduated from the fourth grade. Uncle Jed asked him what he wanted to do now. He said he was ready to be a brain surgeon. I can borrow brains, but I can't borrow character, and I can't do anything other than what God has called me to do.

Look at 1 Corinthians chapter 7 in light of what I'm saying. Verse 20 says, "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called." God calls us to different vocations. "Art thou called being a servant?" or being a slave? "Care not for it. But if thou mayest be made free, use it rather." In other words, if you can be made free, if you were a slave, fine. If it will further God's honor and glory, have at it.

But verse 22 explains it: "For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant" or slave, "is the Lord's free man. Likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's slave. You are bought with a price; be not ye the slaves of men. Brethren, let every man wherein he is called, therein abide with God."

I realize that some have been able to change vocations. Understand that. However, if God has not called you to change, if God has not opened the door

We have to learn to be content with the station to which God has called us, and we can serve Him where we are until He opens doors and lets us advance.

It was J. Gresham Machen, a wonderful Presbyterian pastor, teacher, professor, and author, whose Greek text I used in my first year of Greek. Listen carefully to what he said: “For Christians to influence the world with the truth of God's Word requires the

recovery of the great Reformation doctrine of vocation. Christians are called to God's service not only in church professions, but also in every secular calling."

"The task of restoring truth to the culture depends largely on our lay people." Machen was repeating a truth enunciated by Martin Luther in the 1500s. Luther said, "The Christian shoemaker does his Christian duty not by putting little crosses on the shoes, but by making good shoes, because God is interested in good craftsmanship." Wherever God has called you, that is where you should serve Him until He opens the door otherwise.

In reality, there is no division between the secular and the sacred. For the child of God, 1 Corinthians 10:31 says, "Whether therefore you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."

Now go back to Numbers chapter 16. I am showing you the second foundational principle of rebellion: discontent with your station in life. We have looked at Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi. But watch this: "And Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men."

Why in the world were the Reubenites joined with the Levites, especially Korah? Reuben was never called to the service of the tabernacle, and they were never called to the priesthood. They fell to a twisted, perverted, unbiblical line of reasoning. I want you to look at it.

You will find it in verse 3: "And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron and said unto them, 'You take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them. Wherefore then lift up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?'" They said, "All of the congregation is holy. Why are you lifting up yourselves?"

Here is their error: they assumed that because everyone had the same standing before God, they likewise had the same positions before God. That is not true. You may have the same standing, but you do not have the same positions.

For instance, consider a husband and wife. Both have the same standing before the Lord. Both are sinners; both may be redeemed and converted by the grace of God. Each is equally a Christian, fully

saved before God, and their standing is firm and final in Jesus Christ. Yet although they have the same standing, they do not have the same positions.

The husband has been constituted the head of the house—not the head of the church, but the head of the house. Jesus Christ is the Head of the church. Ephesians 5 says, “Likewise, you wives, be in subjection to your husbands in everything, even as the church is in subjection to Christ.” Although husbands and wives have the same standing, they do not have the same position. The same truth applies to everyone else.

Just because there is another brother who is a fine, godly, believing man, we may have the same standing, but we do not have the same position. He is an usher, and he does not have this same position that I do. Their error was saying that everybody is holy, and since everybody is holy, we can do whatever we want to do. We can intrude into the priesthood. No, we cannot intrude into the priesthood.

So here is my question: How did the Reubenites get involved with the Levites? In Numbers 2:10, we read, "The south side shall be the standard of the camp of Reuben according to their armies, and the captain of the children of Reuben shall be Elizur the son of Shedeur." The tribe of Reuben camped on the south side of the tabernacle. Numbers 3:29 says, "The families of the sons of Kohath shall pitch on the side of the tabernacle southward." Thus, the Reubenites and the Kohathites were side by side.

Korah evidently was a great politician and orator. Verse 2 says, "And they rose up before Moses with certain of the children of Israel, 250 princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown." Korah had gathered 250 princes. The word "famous" in the Hebrew refers to those who were called or chosen, so these men had been called or chosen to be leaders. "Renowned" means that they were men of reputation, fame, and glory. In other words, these were important men; they had clout, so to speak.

Let me tell you why I believe the Reubenites were joined with the Levites. Not only did they follow Korah's twisted, perverted reasoning, but I believe there was another reason. What I am about

to tell you is my theory, my conjecture. I cannot prove the motive based upon what I am going to tell you, though I can prove what I am going to tell you.

But I could not say with dogmatic certainty that this is the motivation of the Reubenites because the Scripture does not make it plain. Okay, so I'm going to tell you what my position is and you can think it through. And if it's logical, receive it. If it's not logical, explain your position to me and maybe correct mine. But here it is. I want you to turn in your Bibles to the book of Genesis chapter 29. Genesis 29, look, if you would please, in verse 32. Genesis 29, verse 32: Reuben was the firstborn of Jacob. Genesis 29, verse 32: "And Leah conceived and bare a son, and she called his name Reuben, for she said, 'Surely the Lord hath looked upon my affliction; now therefore my husband will love me.'" Note: Reuben is the firstborn. Now look in Genesis 35 and verse 23. Genesis 35, look in verse 23, you'll see it spelled out: "And the sons of Leah: Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, and Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Zebulun."

So we know that Reuben was the firstborn child. Now, in the Hebrew society, the firstborn male received the birthright. Now the birthright included three things particularly. Number one, the firstborn male received a double portion of the inheritance. He received twice as much as any other child. But the reason he received twice as much is very simple. It was him, the oldest child, who's responsible to take care of his elderly parents when they could not take care of themselves. So that extra portion, it was actually for the provision for the parents for him to take care of them. So the eldest son got a double portion. Secondly, as the eldest son, when the father died, he became the patriarch of the family. He became the priest of the family, so to speak.

He would be the leading figure to lead the clan in worship and obedience to God. The third blessing of birthright was the lineage of the Messiah. The Messiah was to come through that birthright blessing. Now watch this. Although Reuben was the firstborn, although he was the eldest, he was passed over. Here is why. Look in Genesis 35 and verse 22. Genesis 35, verse 22: "And it came to pass,

when Israel dwelt in the land, that Reuben went up and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine, and Israel heard it."

Now the sons of Jacob were twelve. Reuben committed incest, in one sense of the word, with his father's concubine, who was his wife, because some of the children came from Bilhah. In Genesis 49, Jacob, right before he died, blessed his sons. He said, "Reuben, thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power. Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel, because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou it: he went up to my couch."

Reuben was unstable as water and did not receive these blessings. The double portion went to Joseph because Jacob claimed his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, as his own; they received the double portion in Canaan land. The line of the Messiah went to Judah, and the priesthood went to the Levites. Although Reuben was the eldest and firstborn, he received none of his birthright blessings.

I tend to think—and once again, I emphasize that I am thinking because I cannot show you this from Scripture—that the Reubenites were willing and eager to join Korah in this rebellion because they saw it as a way to recover some of the birthright blessings. If they could intrude into the priesthood, they would at least have one of the three.

I am simply pointing out that when people are discontent with their station or vocation in life, there is always an element of desiring to intrude into places where they should never intrude. Let me point out something else. When I quoted Machen earlier, he talked about a secular society. As Christians, we say there is no division between the secular and the sacred for the child of God, because everything is sacred. Understand that. Yet in our minds we tend to think that anything not biblical, in one sense, or outside the framework of Christianity is somehow secular in itself. In reality, that is not true. Let me explain what I mean by

Everything is religious. That does not mean that everything is the Christian religion, but everything is religious. Society cannot exist without religion. Outside biblical Christianity, there is a religion of humanism. It is a perversion: a man-centered, God-denying,

Christ-denying, Bible-denying religion. But it is still a religion. It is kind of like the atheist who became so excited in his atheism that he said, “Thank God I don’t believe in God.”

It may be humanistic, satanic, or demonic, but it is still religious; it is simply not the Christian religion. When you stop and think about where we are today, and when I get through showing you this from Numbers chapter 16, I think it will explain exactly where we are and why we are where we are. Let me remind you of a couple of applications so far.

Applications and Conclusion

First of all, rebellion is primarily against God. It is always manifested against man because fallen man cannot strike God. The only thing he can strike is His representative. So it is always against man. The second application is that we have to learn to hold our family and our friends in high esteem and follow the biblical admonitions and commands God gives us. God commands husbands. God commands wives. God commands children.

Whenever we begin to dishonor and disregard one another, we are headed for trouble. The same is true in our relationships with friends. Most of us have a few lifelong friends. Someone said of me, concerning a friendship of many years, “There are three men that I would entrust my life unto, and one of them is John Weaver.” I can assure you that is a very humbling thought. He has been a lifelong friend, and I believe I could trust him with my life as well.

But the Bible says in Proverbs 17 and verse 17, “A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.” Think about this: a friend loveth at all times. A friend will love you even when you are ugly and even when you are wrong. He may correct you; he may rebuke you. That is why the Bible says in Proverbs 27, verse 6, “Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.”

A friend will wound you when you need wounding. I remember, as a younger man, endeavoring to obey Proverbs 27:10: “Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not.” After my father died, several of his friends remained alive for a few years. When one of

them had a need, I went to see him, to take care of that need and help him. “Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not.”

Proverbs 27:17 says, “Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.” We should be sharpening each other, not cutting down and criticizing each other.

The truth concerning contentment in our station and calling in life is found in many passages. First Timothy 6:6 says, “But godliness with contentment is great gain.” Hebrews 13:5 says, “Let your conversation be without covetousness. Be content with such things as ye have, for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”

If we regard highly our family and friends, make sure those relationships are secure, remain content with God's calling and our station in life, and are willing to honor, worship, and serve Him in that station, we will not be candidates for rebellion. These are two foundational pillars, and there are going to be a whole lot more. I think you will see where we are in our society and why we are where we are.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to You this day. We thank You for Your Word and Your truth. Lord, we do not wish to be rebellious or disobedient. We wish to honor Thee and glorify Thee in the calling wherewith Thou hast called us. Help us, Lord, to be faithful to Thee, faithful to each other, to our family, and to our friends. Above all things, help us to honor Thee, to serve the Lord Jesus Christ, and to make good shoes. Thou dost desire good craftsmanship in whatever we do. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 2

Foundations For Rebellion

Part Two

SCRIPTURE READING - Numbers 16:1-7 (KJV)

Introduction and Review

We have been dealing with the foundations for rebellion. In Numbers chapter 16, beginning with verse 1, the Bible says:

"Now Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and 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 certain of the children of Israel, 250 princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown: and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord? And when Moses heard it, he fell upon his face. And he spake unto Korah, and unto all his company, saying, Even tomorrow the Lord will show who are his, and who is holy; and will cause him to come near unto him:

> even him whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him. This do; take you censers, Korah, and all his company; and put fire therein, and put incense in them before the Lord tomorrow: and it shall be that the man whom the Lord doth choose, he shall be holy: ye take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi."
>
> Rebellion is as old as Adam, since Adam and Eve rebelled against the Lord. Our depravity motivates us, and we all possess the propensity to rebellion. In Genesis chapter 3, we looked at Eve's rebellion and analyzed the passage where Eve saw that the tree was good for food, pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise.

Her whole thinking changed. Before, she had not thought that concerning the tree; she had not thought ill concerning God. But now she looked at that tree in a totally different light because she had been seduced by the serpent. When your thinking changes, your attitude changes; and when your thinking and attitude change, so do your desires. Once your desires change, you act. She took the fruit and did eat, and the Bible says that she gave it to her husband as well.

You also have to remember that rebellion can be taught. In Jeremiah chapters 28 and 29, God condemned Hananiah and Shemaiah for teaching rebellion. Here is the whole thought: anytime anything contrary to God and contrary to His Word is being taught, it is rebellion, because you are demonstrating that which is different from what God has ordained and commanded.

Last week we looked at two foundational pillars for rebellion. The first is this: there is always, in rebellion, a complete disregard for family and friends. Based upon Numbers chapter 16 and verse 1, Korah, the son of Izhar—Izhar was the brother of Amram, who was the father of Moses, Aaron, and Miriam—was the cousin of Moses and Aaron. They were undoubtedly raised together, and now one cousin was pitting himself against his other cousins. Elzaphan had also been lifted up above Korah, and that did not please Korah.

The whole point was this: you cannot have rebellion without a breach in a relationship. Whether we are talking about husbands,

wives, or children, there is always a breach in a relationship when rebellion occurs. It begins with dishonoring people and disregarding that relationship.

The second foundational pillar in rebellion was discontent with one's calling in life. Korah had already been chosen to be a Levite, chosen to serve around the tabernacle.

The Third Foundational Pillar: Actual Disobedience

But then there were also Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben. The Reubenites had never had anything to do with the tabernacle or the ministry; it was always the Aaronic priesthood and the Levites. Clearly, then, these were men discontented in their vocation and calling.

The Third Pillar: Actual Disobedience

Let me reemphasize this: just because God expects us to be content in our calling and vocation does not mean that we cannot seek to improve ourselves and be the best we can at whatever God has called us to be. Whether it is an electrician, a plumber, a carpenter, or a preacher, it does not matter. Neither does it mean that we can never change vocations. If God opens the door and, in His providence, allows us another vocation, that too will be fine. But until God does that, we have to be content with our station in life and with what God has called us to do.

Martin Luther the Reformer said that the Christian shoemaker does his Christian duty not by putting little crosses on the shoes, but by making good shoes, because God is interested in good craftsmanship. You can be the absolute best you can in whatever area God has called you, because He tells us that whatever we do in word and deed, we are to do all to the honor and glory of God.

Today I want to begin with the third foundational pillar of rebellion: actual disobedience. In Numbers chapter 16 and verse 12, Moses has already dealt with Korah and the Levites, and now he is going to try to deal with Dathan and Abiram, the Reubenites: “And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab: which said, We will not come up.”

If you have been following me, you should already have deduced this point: dishonor and discontent always lead to disobedience. Moses, out of concern for Dathan and Abiram, sent to them to come up to him. Undoubtedly, he wanted to talk with them, reason with them, and plead with them. He had already dealt with Korah and spoken to the Levites. Now he wanted to speak with these men. Their response was, “We will not come up.”

Moses' Meekness and Biblical Principle of Restoration

Moses was certainly not a tyrant, an unreasonable man, or an arrogant, wicked individual. The Bible tells you very plainly in Numbers chapter 12 and verse 3: “Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.” Moses therefore was not being tyrannical and overbearing or trying to overreach his authority.

What Moses was doing in seeking to deal with Abiram and Dathan was a biblical principle. It was a biblical principle in the Old Testament, and it is a biblical principle in the New Testament. Galatians 6:1-2 says: “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.” This was exactly what Moses was attempting to do in dealing with Dathan and Abiram.

Moses, as the leader of the people and as one who had been called and ordained by God, had both the right and the authority to ask Dathan and Abiram to come up and meet with him. But Numbers chapter 16 and verse 12 shows the disdain, dishonor, disrespect, and direct disobedience they gave to Moses: “And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab: which said, We will not come up.” In their response, they denied his power, despised his authority, would not obey his orders, and refused to come up to the tabernacle. Instead of obedience, they laid charges against Moses, which we will look at shortly.

Rebellion is Ultimately Against God

Matthew Henry described it this way: “The insolence of Dathan and Abiram and their treasonable remonstrance. Moses had heard what Korah had to say and he had answered it. Now he summons Dathan and Abiram to bring in their complaints. But they would not obey his summons, either because they could not for shame say that to his face, which they were resolved to say, and then it is an instance of some remains of modesty in them, or rather because they would not so much as own his authority, and then it is an instance of the highest degree of impudence. They spoke the language of Pharaoh himself, who set Moses at defiance, but they forgot how dearly he paid for it.”

Had not their heads been wretchedly heated and their hearts hardened, they might have considered that, if they regarded not these messengers, Moses could soon in God's name send messengers of death for them. But thus the god of this world blinds the mind of those who believe not. By the same messengers they sent their articles of impeachment against Moses, and their charges ran very high.

All rebellion is against the Lord. In rebellion you may strike out at men, or at those who represent God, but in reality the rebellion is against God. In Numbers chapter 16, verse 11, Moses said: “For which cause both thou and all thy company are gathered together against the Lord: and what is Aaron, that ye murmur against him?”

What is he saying? Your rebellion is primarily against God. What is Aaron? Aaron is nothing; Aaron is the representative of God. What is Moses? Moses is the representative of God. The anger, the disobedience, and the rebellion are against God. When men appear to strike out at other men in rebellion, in reality they are striking out at God.

Recall what God told Samuel in 1 Samuel chapter 8, when the people demanded a king. It grieved Samuel, and he prayed to the Lord all night. God answered: “Samuel, hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should reign over them.” The rejection of Samuel was really a rejection of God. They had rejected

Samuel and his sons and were asking for a king, but God said, in reality, they had rejected Him.

Psalm 51 is a psalm of David, a psalm of confession for his sins. Everyone knows that David committed adultery with Bathsheba and had Uriah the Hittite, her husband, slain with the sword of the children of Ammon. David wrote a number of penitential psalms, and Psalm 51 is one of them. In verse 4, David confesses his sin to God: “Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.”

Consider the first part of this verse again: “Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight.” Did David not sin against Bathsheba? The answer is yes. Did he not sin against Uriah her husband? Very definitely; he had him murdered. Did he not sin against Bathsheba’s family? Yes. Did he not sin against his own family? Yes. Did he not sin against the nation? Yes. How then can he say, “Against thee, and thee only, have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight”? He realized that his primary sin was against God himself.

God demonstrates this truth in 2 Samuel chapter 12. Nathan had already confronted David, and now God speaks to him: “Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight? Thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. Now therefore the sword shall never depart out of thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife.”

In verse 9, God charges David with despising his commandment. In verse 10, he charges him with despising himself. You cannot despise God’s law without despising God himself. Our sins are primarily against God and secondarily against man, because all sin, all disobedience, and all rebellion are against God.

Disobedience as Despising God and His Law

Now, remember, if you would, 1 John 3 and verse 4, there the Word of God said: Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. So when one violates God's

law, he sins not only by despising God's law but by despising God himself. In other words, when we sin, we do exactly that which David did. So it is impossible then to violate the law of God without despising God who gave that law. So let me just show you a few scriptures very quickly that verify everything that I'm telling you. I want you to look in your Bibles first of all to the book of Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy chapter 11 and look at verse 28. Deuteronomy 11 verse 28, watch this. God says: And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known. Now notice that particularly when he said, And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside out of the way, and then he says, to go after other gods, which ye have not known. Now, the interesting thing is this.

Disobedience, then, indicates that you have rejected God and His law, and that you have gone aside after other gods. Now, you're going to say, I don't go aside after other gods. I'm not interested in worshiping Baal, or Moloch, or Asherah. Oh, but wait a minute. I'm going to show you before we get through. You are after another god, and that god is yourself. It's what you want. It's your desires.

That's exactly what David did. David totally disregarded God and his law so that he could fulfill his desires and what he wished for and what he wanted. So, look in your Bibles, if you would, to 1 Samuel, chapter 12 and verse 15. 1 Samuel, chapter 12, verse 15. Again, God says it like this. Watch carefully. 1 Samuel 12 and verse 15: But if ye will not obey the voice of the Lord, but rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then shall the hand of the Lord be against you, as it was against your fathers. Note what he does. He says, But if ye will not obey the voice of the Lord—that is, if you're disobedient—but rebel against the commandment of the Lord. So all disobedience to God and his law is rebellion, and he said the hand of the Lord is going to be against you. So you need to ask yourself this question: if sin and disobedience is not against God, why then does sin and disobedience bring the curse and the wrath of God?

Obviously, it is against God. Look, if you would, to Jeremiah chapter 12, verse 17: “But if they will not obey, I will utterly pluck up

and destroy that nation, saith the Lord." Now, isn't that an interesting concept? It is not just individuals that can rebel. It is not just families, churches, or societies. It is nations. God said, if they will not obey, then I will utterly pluck up and destroy that nation. In other words, rebellion is against God.

Look, if you would, to the book of Daniel, chapter 9 and verse 11. Daniel says: "Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him." Note this: "Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law." How did they transgress God's law? By departing, that they might not obey His voice. In other words, "We're not listening to You, Lord. We will leave Your law. We will leave." In doing so, they dishonored and despised God. It is just that simple.

The reason we disobey is because we have departed from God. Simply speaking, we despised Him and despised His law, and in so doing we bring the curse upon ourselves.

Now I want to show you one verse in the New Testament before I continue. Look, if you would, to the book of Romans, chapter 2 and verse 8: "But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath." Look at that verse. If you do not obey the truth, then you are going to obey unrighteousness, indignation, and wrath. You may either obey the truth, or you may disobey the truth and obey wickedness.

The Self-Enthronement of Rebellion

Now, I want to call your attention to the word contentious. Eritheia is the Greek word. Although it is translated in our Bibles as strife, contention, or contentious, Strong—Augustus Hopkins Strong, a Baptist preacher who wrote Strong's Concordance and a systematic theology book—goes farther in explaining what this word means. He says it also means electioneering or intriguing for office: "Apparently in the New Testament, a courting distinction, a desire to put oneself forward, a partisan and factious spirit which does not disdain low arts." The word is found before New Testament times only in

Aristotle, where it denotes a self-seeking pursuit of political office by unfair means.

A Perversion of Truth and a Malicious Assassination of Character

In sin and rebellion, we dethrone God and enthrone ourselves. That is the low arts. That is the electioneering. That is putting yourself forward and saying, “Lord, I don't want You. I don't want Your Word. I don't want You telling me what to do. I will do exactly what I want to do.”

All sin is a wicked proclamation that we are a god and that we are a law to ourselves. In our sin, we do as Korah, Dathan, and Abiram did in their rebellion: we gather together a company against the Lord and say, just as Dathan and Abiram said to Moses, “We will not come up.” In other words, “We will not obey. I don't care what you say, Moses. We are not listening to you.” That is exactly what happens in our disobedience to God. We are telling Him that we will do our own thing and that we are not listening to Him.

The foundational pillars of rebellion include dishonor toward family or friends, dissatisfaction with the calling, and actual disobedience. The fourth foundational pillar is a perversion of truth and a malicious assassination of character.

The Fourth Pillar: Perversion of Truth and Character Assassination

Beginning with verse 13, this is the charge Dathan and Abiram bring against Moses: “Is it a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of a land that floweth with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, except thou make thyself altogether a prince over us? Moreover, thou hast not brought us into a land that floweth with milk and honey, or given us inheritance of fields and vineyards: wilt thou put out the eyes of these men?” They conclude, “We will not come up.”

The charges against Moses are absolutely malicious, derogatory, and wicked. The attack upon Moses was, in reality, an attack upon God. When they tell you what they think of Moses, they are telling

you what they think of God. Consider the SPLC, the ADL, and all of these institutions that malign godly and faithful individuals. What are they doing? They are striking out against God. Their attacks are against God.

The men are simply in the way; they are the ones who can be seen. So here they are attacking Moses. You must remember this point. A rebellious person does not and cannot think clearly, logically, rationally, or biblically. The reason he cannot think clearly, logically, rationally, and biblically is that all he is interested in is defending himself, justifying himself, and justifying his course of action.

Stop and think about this. Look at all the rebellion that is going on. Look at the Black Lives Matter movement. Look at Antifa. What are they doing? "We deserve this. Look how we have been treated. Look what you folks have done to us." We deserve this. This is right for us. What are they doing? They are justifying rape, robbery, pillage, arson, looting, and killing.

The Perverse Mindset of Rebellion

Our Lord said it like this in Luke 16 and verse 15. He was talking to the Pharisees, and He said to them: "Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." What did He say? "Ye are they that justify yourselves before men."

I do not know if you have heard this black woman justifying all the looting, stealing, and robbery, but she does so very distinctly and clearly: "You owe it to us. And we are doing it. What else do you expect?" I am simply pointing out the fact that this is exactly what happens in rebellion.

Now I want to show you their perverseness. Look back at verse 13. They say to Moses, "Is it a small thing that thou brought us up out of the land that floweth with milk and honey?" Really? I thought Egypt was a land of slavery, bondage, misery, and want. They did have their leeks, onions, garlic, and fish in Egypt, but they certainly did not have milk and honey. What they did here is so absolutely perverse it is unreal: they took the promise of God and the promised

land, described as a land that floweth with milk and honey, and applied it to Egypt.

They did just the opposite. You are talking about having a perverted mind and perverted logic? They most certainly did so. Dathan and Abiram were doing precisely what had already been done and condemned by God. They were despising the promises of God by despising the promised land. If you look back to Numbers chapter 14, verses 30 and 31, God says, "Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I sware to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun. But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised." Now they were despising the promised land and saying that Egypt was the promised land.

Look in Deuteronomy chapter 32, verse 5. Here is what God said concerning this people: "They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of his children: they are a perverse and crooked generation." The Hebrew word for perverse means that which is twisted, crooked, and distorted. When we use the word pervert, we normally think of a sexual deviant, but pervert or perverse has more to do with truth. God calls these people perverse because they were twisted, crooked, and distorted in their thinking.

Let me tell you something else: perversion is a despisement of God. Proverbs 14:2 says, "He that walketh in his uprightness feareth the Lord: but he that is perverse in his ways despiseth him." Perverseness, then, is a denial of, a refuting of, a rejection of, and a repudiation of truth. Not only that, when people reject God's truth, God will even send a perverse spirit into them, causing their minds to go crazier in their logical processes and turning them into illogical processes.

For instance, look in Isaiah 19. Years ago, I preached about five messages from this text on how God destroys nations. In Isaiah 19:13–14, you can see this very clearly, and I hope you can see what is happening in the American government as well as the governments of the world. Look what happens when there is a rejection of truth. Verse 13 says, "The princes of Zoan are become

fools, the princes of Noph are deceived; they have also seduced Egypt,"

Even they that are the stay of the tribes thereof. In other words, they're destroying their own country. Why? The Lord hath mingled a perverse spirit in the midst thereof: and they have caused Egypt to err in every work thereof, as a drunken man staggereth in his vomit. So when you reject God, when you reject His truth, God says you're going to end up like a drunken man wallowing around in your own vomit. You're just destroying yourself. You're destroying your nation. It's just that simple.

The interesting thing is this. Our Lord in the New Testament, in Matthew 17:17 and Luke 9:41, referred to His generation as a faithless and perverse generation. Now what I want to do is this: I want to show you three New Testament passages that use the word perverse, and I think you need to understand perverseness deals with truth. You can pervert the truth.

Paul had called the Ephesian elders, the pastors, to Miletus and spoke to them there. In Acts chapter 20, he said this in verse 30, after saying in verse 29: "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things—that is, untrue things—to draw away disciples after them."

Some of you are going to pervert the truth, and you are going to pervert it just to get disciples, just to get recognition, or just to get a following. Obviously, clearly, this is talking about perverting the word of God and perverting the truth of God.

Philippians 2:15 says: "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world." Nations can be perverse. We have a perverse nation, and most of the countries in the world have a perverse nation because we disobey God; we do not follow his word and his law. Therefore, we should learn to be blameless and harmless, sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation.

In 1 Timothy 6:5, perverseness has to do with truth. He says: "Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the

truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself." Perverse disputings are perverse reasonings of men of corrupt minds who are destitute of the truth; he said, withdraw yourself.

With these verses in mind, go back to Numbers 16, because I want us to analyze the charges they laid against Moses and see the perverseness therein. Numbers 16:13–14 says: "They say to Moses, Is it a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of a land that floweth with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, except thou make thyself altogether a prince over us? Moreover, thou hast not brought us into a land that floweth with milk and honey, or given us inheritance of fields and vineyards: wilt thou put out the eyes of these men?"

"We will not come up." First of all, as I have already pointed out, their thinking was clearly fogged and perverted when they referred to Egypt as a land flowing with milk and honey. Onions, garlic, and fish do not equate with milk and honey. Slavery, drudgery, beatings, and torture do not refer to liberty and freedom or milk and honey. Clearly, then, their thinking is askewed; they are insane, illogical, irrational, and certainly not biblical by any stretch of the imagination.

Secondly, note in this passage that they charge Moses with attempted murder. They said, "Is it a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of the land that floweth with milk and honey, to kill us in this wilderness?" They had forgotten that they had sinned against God so grievously and provoked Him that He said to Moses twice, "Step aside, I'm going to kill every one of them and I'll make of you a great nation greater than they are." Moses fell on his face and interceded, and God spared them twice. They had forgotten how Moses led them through the wilderness and had interceded for them, yet they were charging him with attempted murder: "You brought us out here to murder us?" This is skewed thinking.

Rebellion Blinds and Hardens

Here is the third charge: they charge Moses with a design upon their liberties. They say, "Except thou make thyself altogether a prince over us." In other words, "Moses, you brought us out here to enslave us. You are worse than Pharaoh. You are nothing more than a

tyrant." They did not look at Moses as a protector, a father, a leader, or a servant of God. They said he had brought them out so that he might be a ruthless, cruel tyrant, elevating himself. Yet Moses was not a prince. He was a king, and God made him so. Moses held three offices: he was prophet, priest, and king.

Moses was a prophet because he declared the word of God to these people. He was also a priest. Not only was he a Levite, but Moses anointed the tabernacle, anointed Aaron and his sons, and offered the sacrifices for them until they became priests. Moses was a prophet and a priest. He was also a king. Deuteronomy 33:4–5 says, "Moses commanded us a law, even the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob. And he was king in Jeshurun, when the heads of the people and the tribes of Israel were gathered together."

Moses therefore represented Christ in the sense that he prefigured Christ by possessing all three offices that Christ possesses: prophet, priest, and king.

So they were charging Moses maliciously. Fourthly, they blamed their failure to inherit the land upon Moses when it was their sins that kept them out. They said in verse 14, "Moreover, thou hast not brought us into a land that floweth with milk and honey, or given us inheritance of fields or vineyards."

When they reached the border of the land, the people said, "What we need is to send out spies so that we can find out how we are to go up into the land." Moses agreed, and twelve spies went out for forty days. Every spy except Joshua and Caleb gave an ill report: "We saw the Anakims there. We saw cities walled up to the heavens there. No, we can't go in." Caleb and Joshua said, "We're more than able to conquer. Let's go get it right now." But the people refused to go in. They were right there, and now they were telling Moses, "You didn't bring us here." Yes, Moses brought them there; it was their sin and their rebellion.

The Bible says in Proverbs 19:3, "The foolishness of man perverteth his way: and his heart fretteth against the Lord." Their foolishness perverted their way. They charged Moses with failing to bring them into the land when it was their fault and their sin. Fifthly, they said in verse 14:

"Wilt thou put out the eyes of these men? We will not come up." Now this proves my point: a person in rebellion cannot think clearly, rationally, logically, and certainly not biblically. Their attitude is, "We see what's going on. We know what's going on, and you can't fool us. What are you going to put out the eyes of these men? Are you going to blindfold us? Are you going to make us sightless so that we will have to follow you?" That was their attitude: "We're not going to follow you, Moses. We're not going to do anything."

Rebellion not only blinds the eyes; it blinds the mind. Rebellion causes one not to see clearly, to think clearly, or to understand rationally. The Bible says in Proverbs chapter 18 and verse 17: "He that is first in his own cause seemeth just; but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him." These people thought they were just, but they were wicked and ungodly.

Dathan and Abiram did not have a teachable spirit. Anyone who is in rebellion against God does not have and cannot have a teachable spirit. They refuse to hear. They refuse to heed. They refuse to obey. They said, "Moses, we're not following you. We're not doing one thing that you've asked us to do. Don't ask us anymore. We will not come up."

Unless God works in the heart, you are wasting your breath trying to speak logically, clearly, rationally, and biblically to a rebellious person, because that person will not hear.

Let me make one application. Rebellion causes one not to be able to think clearly, logically, rationally, and biblically. God had brought the children of Israel to Kadesh Barnea, to the boundary. They sent out the spies, and the spies returned with an evil report concerning the land, except for Joshua and Caleb, and disheartened the people. The people refused to go in. God then said, "A year for a day"; they would wander forty years in the wilderness. Look at what happens in Deuteronomy chapter 1, beginning with verse 37.

He said, "Also the Lord was angry with me for your sakes, saying, Thou also shalt not go in thither. But Joshua the son of Nun, which standeth before thee, he shall go in thither: encourage him: for he shall cause Israel to inherit it. Moreover your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day had no

knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it. Now watch this: But as for you, turn you, and take your journey into the wilderness by the way of the Red sea."

So God said, "They have refused to go up. You are going to wander forty years in the wilderness." Then they answered, "We have sinned against the Lord, we will go up and fight, according to all that the Lord our God commanded us." When they had girded on every man his weapons of war, they were ready to go up into the hill. And the Lord said, "Go not up, neither fight; for I am not among you; lest ye be smitten before your enemies."

"So I spake unto you; look at it now; and ye would not hear, but rebelled against the commandment of the Lord, and went presumptuously up into the hill. And the Amorites, which dwelt in that mountain, came out against you, and chased you, as bees do, and destroyed you in Seir, even unto Hormah. And ye returned and wept before the Lord; but the Lord would not hearken to your voice, nor give ear unto you."

They first refused to go in because they believed they could not win. God then declared that they would wander forty years in the wilderness. Afterward they said they had sinned and would fight, but when God commanded them not to go up, they again refused to listen and went presumptuously. Who could charge these people with clear, rational, logical thinking? No one. They would not hear, think, or obey; they wanted to do what they wanted to do.

Unless God opens our eyes and ears in our rebellion, we will not hear, see, listen, or understand.

Conclusion and Application

All these things go together. There is first a breach in a relationship. You cannot be rebellious without destroying a relationship, without discontent, or without disobedience. And when you are rebellious, there is a perverseness of spirit: you twist and distort the truth, become crooked in your thinking, and maliciously attack anyone opposed to you because you are trying to justify yourself and your

actions. We need to make sure that we do not have in our lives a spirit of perverseness or rebellion.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we ask for your grace, mercy, goodness, and kindness. Lord, we pray for those on the prayer list and ask your blessing upon them. But Lord, clear our minds and hearts, and give us a submissive, believing, obedient, humble heart before thee, that we may hear, heed, and obey thy words. In the name of Jesus Christ we ask and pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 3

Foundations For Rebellion

Part Three

Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan, Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, and sons of Reuben, took men, and they rose up before Moses with certain of the congregation, men of renown. And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, "You take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them. Wherefore then lift up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?"

And when Moses heard it, he fell upon his face. And he spake unto Korah, and to all of his company, saying, "Even tomorrow the Lord will show who are his, and who is holy, and will cause him to come near unto him, even him whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him. This do: take you censers, Korah, and all his company, and put fire therein and put incense in them before the Lord tomorrow. And it shall be that the man whom the Lord doth choose, he shall be holy. You take too much upon you, you sons of Levi."

Rebellion may begin in a very small and insignificant way, and yet it may grow quickly into a gigantic quagmire of misery, death, and destruction. We know that Korah was the instigator of this rebellion, first because Jude verse 11 speaks of the error of Balaam and also the gainsaying of Korah. Moreover, in Numbers chapter 16, Korah is identified a number of times. In verse 1, he is placed first: "Now Korah, the son of Izhar." In verse 5, Moses speaks to Korah and to his company. In verse 6, he says, "This do: take you censers, Korah, and all his company." In verse 8, "And Moses said unto Korah." In verse 16, again, "And Moses said unto Korah, be thou and all thy company before the Lord."

In verse 19, “And Korah gathered all the congregation against them unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. The glory of the Lord appeared unto all the congregation.” If you read the entire chapter, you will see that Korah is involved in every detail. Here is an amazing truth: it is evident that those who are the most rebellious, and those who are the leaders in rebellion, are the ones who take the hardest step against God and against God’s ordained and appointed ministers. Korah was behind every step of this rebellion. Therefore, all of the death, discord, and destruction has to be laid at the feet of Korah.

Review of the Four Foundational Pillars of Rebellion

Let us bring to mind what we have considered previously so that we can put two and two together. Having given you the four foundational pillars of rebellion, the first was a disregard for family and friends. You cannot have a rebellion without violating a relationship. It is just that simple. Korah, Moses, and Aaron were cousins—first cousins—because Izhar, the father of Korah, and Amram, the father of Moses and Aaron, were brothers. Anytime you have a rebellion, you are going to have a disregard for family and friends.

The second foundational pillar was discontent with one’s calling, one’s vocation, or one’s station in life. Korah and his company were not content with being Levites or even serving God in some other capacity. The Reubenites, of course, had nothing to do with the tabernacle whatsoever. But in Numbers chapter 16, beginning with

verse 8, we see what Moses was addressing: “And Moses said unto Korah, ‘Here, I pray you, ye sons of Levi, seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself, to do the service of the tabernacle of the Lord, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them?’” God had called them; they had a ministry. They might not appreciate it, but they had a ministry. “And he hath brought thee near to him, and all thy brethren, the sons of Levi, with thee, and seek ye the priesthood also.”

“For which cause both thou and all thy company are gathered together against the Lord, and what is Aaron that ye murmur against him?” When Moses says this, he is speaking of their desire for the priesthood, which had been given to Aaron and his sons. Clearly, their discontent was the root cause of their rebellion. Again, I will say it very plainly: all rebellion is against the Lord. Men may strike out at other men, but in reality it is against the Lord. God is their real target.

That is why he said in verse 9, “Seemeth it but a small thing to you that the God of Israel has separated you from the congregation of Israel?” The Lord’s church is not satisfied with what God has called you to do; you are discontented with your station in life. The reason we are discontented with our vocation is that we do not discern that we may serve God in any area to which He has called us. I do not care if you are a carpenter, an electrician, a plumber, a ditch digger, or a housewife. The Bible says, “Whatever you do in word or deed, do all to the honor and the glory of God.” Yet we tend to think that we are insignificant and that what we do is insignificant. If we could have a higher office, or be better in some other way, then we think we could really worship God and do more for Him. That is not true. We must learn to do what God has called us to do, and to do it for His honor and His glory.

The third foundational pillar of rebellion was actual disobedience. When Moses had dealt with Korah, he sent for Dathan and Abiram, and what was their answer? “We will not come up.” They disrespected Moses, dishonored him, and refused to recognize his authority as God’s appointed and ordained leader. The fourth

foundational pillar of rebellion was a perversion of the truth and a malicious assassination of character.

Those in rebellion cannot think clearly, logically, reasonably, or biblically. Jude 11 speaks about the gainsaying of Korah. If you look up the word gainsaying, you find that it is the Greek word antilogia. Anti, of course, means against. Logia is where we get our English word logic. It is also from the Greek word logos, which refers to the word and also to the Lord Jesus Christ. Antilogia, then, speaks of a contradiction, strife, opposition, and rebellion.

The Nature of Gainsaying as Lying Against the Truth

When we think about logia, which is from logos, we must remember that Jesus Christ is the living Word and the Bible is the written Word. That is why the Bible says in John 1, "In the beginning was the Word (Logos), and the Word (Logos) was with God, and the Word was God." Three times Jesus Christ is called the Logos. Then, in verse 14, "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

Gainsaying is, in reality, a contradiction: a contradiction of logic, reason, and truth. It is strife and rebellion. Our Lord used a similar word in Mark 9:39. A man was speaking in the name of Jesus Christ and doing miracles, but the disciples forbade him because he was not with them. They told Jesus that they had forbidden him from doing miracles or speaking in His name. Our Lord said, "Forbid him not, for there is no man which can do a miracle in my name, which can lightly speak evil of me."

Consider the phrase "speaking evil." The word speak evil is from the Greek word kakologeo. Kakos means that which is evil, while logos is the word. Our Lord said, essentially, that no man who was following Him and doing what He was doing could lightly speak evil against Him. Anyone who is not following Christ and not speaking what Christ is saying is indeed speaking evil.

Now, let me show you something. When the Bible talks about the gainsaying of Korah, it basically means that Korah and his company were lying against God. They were lying against the truth. Hope

you're going to see this as we look further in Numbers chapter 16. But I want you to turn in your Bibles, holding Numbers 16 if you would, to the book of James chapter 3. Hebrews, James. And notice if you would James chapter 3, and let's begin reading there in verse 13. I want you to look because we're talking about being unreasonable, being illogical, being unbiblical in our thinking. He said in James 3 in verse 13, "Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? Let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom." And isn't this amazing? Look at the next verse. "But if you have bitter envying and strife in your heart, which they did, glory not. Here it is: and lie not against the truth. This wisdom that is, that it lies against the truth, descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish."

"For where envying and strife are, notice, there is confusion and every evil work." So speaking against Christ, speaking against the Word of God is lying against God. Now I want you to turn in your Bibles to the book of Isaiah chapter 30. Isaiah 30, and notice if you would please verse 9 and what God says. Isaiah 30 verse 9, then we'll go to Isaiah 59. But look in Isaiah 30 in verse 9. God says concerning Israel, "That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord." So those who will not hear are lying against God. They're denying his authority. They are denying his sovereignty, and God says that they are liars. Then if you will look in Isaiah chapter 59 verse 13, Isaiah 59 and verse 13, look at it. The Bible says, "In transgressing and lying against the Lord, and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood." So he said, "In transgressing and lying against the Lord." When you lie against the Lord, number one, you depart away from our God. Number two, you speak oppression and revolt. Number three, you conceive and utter from the heart words of

falsehood. So notice if you would, here are people who are perverse, they're lying against God, they're lying against the truth, and they're assassinating the character of Moses. Now, today what I wish to do is to emphasize the consequences of rebellion and how it affects not only those who rebel but others as well. So I will not finish this thought today. It'll take me until next week as well. But I want you to see that very first thing: rebellion always brings the

judgment of God. Now it seems as you read through the scripture that Israel was nothing more than in constant rebellion against the Lord. If you read Deuteronomy chapter 9, you will see that Moses delineates this rebellion constantly. But there are two verses that stand out in Deuteronomy, and I want you to see them. So if you will turn to Deuteronomy chapter 9 and look if you would please at verse 7 to begin with. Deuteronomy 9 and verse 7. The Word of God says,

"Remember and forget not how thou provokest the Lord thy God to wrath in the wilderness. From the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt until you came into this place, you have been rebellious against the Lord." Note: when they left Egypt, they began provoking the Lord, and Moses says throughout the entire time in the wilderness they have been rebellious. And then if you'll skip down to verse 24 of Deuteronomy chapter 9, Moses said, "You have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you." From the very first day, he said, you have been rebellious. Now here's the interesting thing: as you read through the Old Testament, you're going to find that all of these provocations, all of these rebellions against the Lord always brought certain judgments. And so at one time there was the plague, another time there were fiery serpents, another time there was

SCRIPTURE READING - Numbers 16:23-35 (KJV)

They were different judgments altogether. However, the judgment of God in Numbers chapter 16 was unique—not just in the fact that it was different, but in the fact that nothing like this had ever happened before to Israel. This was a unique judgment.

“And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, ‘Speak unto the congregation, saying, Get you up from about the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.’ And Moses rose up and went to Dathan and Abiram, and the elders of Israel followed him. And he spake unto the congregation, saying, ‘Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins.’ So they got them up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, on every side. And Dathan and Abiram came out and stood in the door of the tents, and their wives and their sons and their little children.

The Unique Judgment of God in Numbers 16

> "And Moses said, 'Hereby ye shall know that the Lord hath sent me to do all these works, for I have not done them of mine own hand. If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men, then the Lord hath not sent me. But if the Lord make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth and swallow them up, with all that appertained unto them, and they go down quick into the pit, then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the Lord.'
>
> "And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them. And the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up and their houses and all the men that appertained to Korah and all their goods. They and all that appertained to them went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them, and they perished from among the congregation. And all Israel that were round about them fled at the cry of them, for they said, 'Lest the earth swallow us up also.' And there came out a fire from the Lord and consumed the 250 men that offered incense.

The Tabernacle of Rebellion

Matthew Henry gives an interesting insight as he comments on verses 24 and 27:

"We have here the determining of the controversy with Dathan and Abiram who rebelled against Moses, as in the next paragraph the determining of the controversy with Korah and his company who would be rivals with Aaron. It should seem that Dathan and Abiram had set up a spacious tabernacle in the midst of the tents of their families where they kept court, met in council, and hung out their flag of defiance against Moses. It is here called the Tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. There, as in the place of rendezvous, Dathan and Abiram stayed when Korah and his friends went up to the tabernacle of the Lord, waiting the issue of their trial. But here we are told how they had their business done before the trial was over." That is when they said, "We will not come up."

Then he says, “For God will take what method he pleases in his judgments.” In verse 24 we read, “Speak unto the congregation, saying, Get you up from about the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.” In verse 27, “So then they got up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.”

Pause and think about this. If what Matthew Henry said is true, these men set up a tabernacle in competition with, and contrary to, the sovereign God of heaven and earth. They were going to set up their own worship and their own priesthood because they said all the congregation was holy, and that Moses and Aaron had lifted themselves above the congregation.

God therefore judged them in a very unique way. They were trying to do what King Jeroboam did later when he made the two golden calves and said, “These be thy calves, O Israel, who brought thee up,” or, “These be thy gods, O Israel, who brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.” Then he made feasts of his own making and appointed men priests of the lowest of the orders. He appointed priests to him every wish, making his own state religion.

That is what these people were trying here in Numbers chapter 16 as well. Moses warned the people to flee from this tabernacle and away from the tents of these wicked men. Some did flee. Although some fled, some did not flee far enough. Even Korah's sons forsook him and fled at the counsel of Moses.

Moses said, "If these men die a common death of all men, then God has not sent me." But he said, "If a new thing happen, if the earth opens up and swallows them alive and they go down quick into the pit, then you'll know that the Lord has sent me and I have done everything at his command." A common death would be dying of sickness, dying of the plague, dying by sword, or dying of old age. The fact that God immediately did exactly what Moses foretold shows that God was vindicating Moses and Aaron. It also shows the extreme wickedness of these men, because Moses foretold before it happened exactly what was going to happen unto them.

The earth opened up and swallowed these people alive; the 250 princes were consumed with fire. Moses spoke the word and God did the work. It is much like Elijah in 2 Kings chapter 1, when the king

sent messengers to Baal-zebub. Elijah said, "You go back to the king and say, 'Is it not because there's no God in Israel that you send to the god of Baal-zebub?'" which means the god of the filth or god of the flies. He said, "Go back and tell the king he's going to die. He's not going to come up off that bed." When the king found out it was Elijah, he sent a captain with his 50 men to where Elijah was. The captain said, "O thou man of God, the king said, 'Come down.'" Elijah said, "If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume thee and thy 50."

The second captain and his fifty were more adamant. He said, "O thou man of God, the king said, 'Come down quickly.'" Elijah said, "If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume thee and thy fifty," and it did. When he came to the third captain, the third captain knelt and said, "O my Lord, have mercy upon us. Fire came from heaven and consumed the former captains with their fifties. But be thou merciful to us." God told Elijah, "Go with him. Have no fear. It is taken care of." Elijah called for it, but God did the work. Moses called for this, and God did the work.

Adam Clarke wrote, "They and all that appertained to them, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and all that appertained to their respective families, went down into the pit caused by the supernatural earthquake, while the fire from the Lord consumed the 250 men that bare the censers. Thus, there were two distinct punishments, the pit and the fire, for the two divisions of these rebels." It is interesting that there was the pit and then there was the fire. Why was this judgment so severe? These people had provoked God ten times, the Bible tells us, yet God had never done this before. He had judged them previously, but not like this. Why was this judgment so severe? If you look in Numbers chapter 26—Numbers chapter 26.

Numbers 26:7-11 says, "These are the families of the Reubenites, and they that were numbered of them were forty and three thousand and seven hundred and thirty. And of the sons of Pallu, Eliab, and the sons of Eliab, Nemuel, Dathan, and Abiram. This is that Dathan and Abiram which were famous in the congregation, who strove against Moses and against Aaron in the company of Korah, when they strove against the Lord. And the earth opened her mouth and

swallowed them up together with Korah, when that company died, what time the fire devoured 250 men, and they became a sign. Notwithstanding, the children of Korah died not."

The children of Korah obeyed Moses and got away from their father. The Korahites were singers and Levites. You will find some of the Psalms dedicated to the sons of Korah. His sons did not die with him; they left him.

The Judgment as a Sign and Memorial

Verse 10 says, "When the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up together with Korah, when the company died, what time the fire devoured 250 men, and they became a sign." This judgment was a special judgment because it is a sign. The Hebrew word for sign is nes, which properly signifies a sign, a flag, an ensign, or a standard. In other words, it is something clear, plain, and obvious.

You look right down I-75, and on one hand you will find a huge Confederate flag flying; on the other hand, you will find a huge American flag flying. That is a sign. You can see it very clearly. It is there and very prominent. That is exactly what this word means. What happened to them was not only a sign, but also a monument, which I will explain a little later, and a memorial to warn others not to sin this way against God—not to be rebellious.

These men had their censers full of incense, and they were offering them to the Lord. In Numbers 16, beginning with verse 36, God said, “And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, that he take up the censers out of the burning, and scatter thou the fire yonder, for they are hallowed.”

Verse 38 says, “The censers of these sinners against their own souls, let them make them broad plates for a covering of the altar, for they offered them before the Lord, therefore they are hallowed, and they shall be a sign unto the children of Israel.” Eleazar the priest took the brazen censers wherewith they were burnt and had offered, and they were made broad plates for a covering of the altar. They were “to be a memorial unto the children of Israel, that no stranger which is not of the seed of Aaron come near to offer incense before

the Lord, that he be not as Korah and as his company, as the Lord said to him by the hand of Moses."

Notice again the word sign in verse 38: "The censers of these sinners against their own souls, let them be made broad plates for a covering of the altar, for they offered them before the Lord, therefore they are hallowed, and they shall be a sign unto the children of Israel." The word sign is the Hebrew word oth, referring to a sign, a token, a warning, a distinguishing mark, or a proof. Eleazar was to take these censers, beat them out, make broad plates of them, and put them on the altar for everyone to see. The censers were evidently brass, as was the brazen altar, and so they covered that altar.

Verse 40 says they were "to be a memorial unto the children of Israel, that no stranger which is not of the seed of Aaron come near to offer incense before the Lord, in order that he be not as Korah and as his company, as the Lord said to him by the hand of Moses." The word memorial is the Hebrew word zikkaron, used for a reminder, a remembrance, and thus a memorial.

That is what a memorial is. We have Memorial Day. What does that mean? It means we are to call to mind all those who died fighting for freedom. You have a Confederate Memorial Day, and you can have an American Revolution Memorial Day. There are all kinds of memorials, and everything a memorial is designed to do is bring back to mind that which happened.

God says, "This is exactly what I want this to be. I want it to be a sign, something waving like a big flag, so that everybody will remember what happened here. I want these censers beaten into plates and put on the altar. Anyone who comes to offer will see that plate and remember: You do not fight against God's orderly way. You do not elevate yourself if God has not called you."

Psalm 106 reminds us of the rebellion of Korah and his company, Dathan and Abiram: "They envied Moses also in the camp, and Aaron the saint of the Lord. The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan and covered the company of Abiram. And a fire was kindled in their company. The flame burned up the wicked."

God reminds us over and over throughout the Bible about the rebellion of Korah and his company. Let me point out several truths

and applications that we need to know and understand based upon what we have just covered.

First of all, the judgment against Korah and his company was at the same time a vindication of Moses and Aaron. God did indeed call Moses, and God did indeed call Aaron. So many people like Korah, Dathan, and Abiram do not hesitate to attack God's preachers.

Vindication of God's Appointed Ministers

Most professing Christians think absolutely nothing about attacking God's preachers. I know there are preachers who have never been called by God. They are there just for the money, the prestige, or the ease. For instance, I have a good friend who, when he was young, was thinking seriously about entering the ministry. He is a fine Christian man and is a doctor today. He asked his pastor why he became a preacher, and the pastor responded, "It's a good job. It's not a ministry. God didn't necessarily call me to this. It's just a good job."

If you enter this as a job, it can be a very easy job. Most denominations already send you printed sermons which they want you to read or preach. You do not really have to do any work. You just have to be a sweet man who visits everybody and is very likable, and that is it. Some men have entered this as what we would call a profession. I heard one preacher say, after helping perform a marriage ceremony and being told that he had done a good job, "Of course I did. I am a professional."

The point is this: just because there are some men who have never been called of God, and some who never really study the Scripture, never expound the Scripture, never explain the Scripture, never

Applying the Scripture does not mean that God does not have His own men who do exactly that. David said in Psalm 17:8, "Keep me as the apple of thine eye. Hide me under the shadow of thy wings." The apple of the eye is the pupil, the tenderest part of the body. I have been amazed at how my eye protects itself so many times. I have been walking in the woods when a limb came toward me. My eye apparently saw it before I could process it, and my head automatically turned. You protect the pupil of your eye.

In Zechariah 2:8, the Lord says, "For thus saith the Lord of hosts, after the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you, for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of my eye." Since we are in the book of Psalms, look at Psalm 105, beginning in verse 13: "When they went from one nation to another, from one kingdom to another people, he suffered no man to do them wrong." We are not just talking about everyone in general. "Yeah, he reproved kings for their sake, saying, 'Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.'"

It is fine to mock and ridicule false prophets and false gods, because they are nothing. Elijah did. He mocked Baal and the worshipers of Baal, saying, "Cry louder. He is a god. He could be asleep. Could be in the bathroom. Just cry louder." He was mocking them. Certainly, a false prophet or false preacher deserves no respect whatsoever. Read Isaiah and Jeremiah, and you will find that God killed many false prophets because they taught rebellion. We looked at that last week with Hananiah and Shemaiah. God killed them because of that.

Mocking a false prophet or a false god is one thing, but mocking the one true and living God and those whom He has sent is quite another. Look in your Bibles at 2 Corinthians 5, especially in light of what is happening in Numbers 16. This is one reason God gave such a unique judgment to Korah and his company: they were mocking the men He ordained and sent. Begin reading with verse 18.

"And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and given unto us the ministry of reconciliation." In this context, Paul is talking about himself and other preachers. He says, "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us"—the preachers—"the word of reconciliation." Then he says, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us."

Any man who will not hear a preacher of God expounding, explaining, and applying the Word of God will not hear God. That is what he said: "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us." I have had people say to me, "Well, Brother Weaver, that's just got to be your opinion. If I heard God say

it, I'd believe it." Let me tell you something: if it is in the Scripture, and the Scripture is being expounded and explained, God did say it. This is what he is talking about.

"We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled unto God." The little word "stead" is the Greek word huper, and it literally means "in the place of." If I said, "Christ died in our stead," you would understand it to mean that Christ died in our place. We deserved to die, but He took our place. He died instead of us; He died in our stead.

Where is the Lord Jesus Christ today? He is seated at the right hand of God the Father. What has He done, according to Ephesians chapter 4? He gave some apostles, and prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastor-teachers. The Scripture teaches that we are here in Christ's stead; we are here in His place. He is not here on earth. He is at the right hand of God the Father. We are here in His place.

You know the story in the book of Philemon. Philemon was a pastor. He had a slave by the name of Onesimus, who stole from him and ran away to Rome. It happened that the Apostle Paul was in a dungeon in Rome, and Onesimus was arrested and thrown into the same dungeon. While there, God converted Onesimus. Now Paul was sending him back to Philemon, who happened to be a friend of the apostle.

Beginning with verse 12, Paul says concerning Onesimus, “Whom I have sent again, that thou therefore receive him, that is mine own bowels.” In other words, this is my child now; I have birthed him in Christ. Receive him as myself. Then, in verse 13, he says, “Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead”—thy huper—“he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel. But without thy mind would I do nothing, that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly.”

Paul said, “I really wanted to keep Onesimus here, that he might minister to me in your stead. If you were here, I know that you would minister to me. I would like to keep him in your stead, that is, in your place, but I do not want it to be of necessity. So I am sending him back.” Yet Paul was willing to keep him in Philemon’s stead.

Do you realize our Lord made this same truth exceedingly clear in Matthew 10:40? When He sent out His disciples, He said, “He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.” Anyone who receives the Lord Jesus Christ receives the Father who sent Him. Anyone who receives the preaching and teaching of those whom our Lord sends receives the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

Here, then, is the importance of Moses and Aaron being vindicated: they were God’s ordained and appointed ministers. Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and On were not.

The Devastating Loss of Refusing Reproof

The second thing is this: those who will not hear, heed, and obey the Word of God communicated by the men of God—in this instance, Moses and Aaron—will suffer a devastating loss. Numbers chapter 16 presents a very heart-rending situation, showing how adamant in their rebellion these people were. Look at verse 27.

The Devastating Loss of Those Who Refuse to Hear

They got them up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram on every side, and Dathan and Abiram came out and stood in the door of the tents, with their wives, their sons, and their little children. They came out and stood in the door of their tents. In other words, they were defiant, determined, and dedicated to what they thought until the very last moments. They were in rebellion. They would not listen. They would not hear. They came out defiantly and stood in the door of their tents, saying, “We dare you. We dare you.”

Beginning in verse 32, we read: “And the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up and their houses and all the men that appertained to Korah and all their goods. They and all that appertained to them went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them, and they perished from among the congregation.” Then, “And all Israel that were round about them fled at the cry of them, for they said, ‘Lest the earth swallow us up.’” Dathan and Abiram, Korah, and all these people were crying and screaming as the earth opened, swallowed them, and then closed upon them. They were literally buried alive.

The point is that they cried, but their cry was too late. They realized they were doomed, but it was too late. Crying in destruction is too late.

How heart-rending is this truth? Just stop and think about this. Yes, they got what they deserved. Yes, they wanted justice; God gave them justice. That is true. But they refused to listen. They refused the advice. They refused everything. They were so adamant that they were right that they stood defiantly until God opened the earth, and they went screaming into the pit, being buried alive as the earth closed upon them. They refused reproof. They refused instruction.

The Bible says in Proverbs 29 and verse 1, “He that being often reproved and hardeneth his neck shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.”

I can't help but think of the wives that are lost, the husbands that are lost, and the children that are lost. They are so adamant, so determined in their rebellion against God, and so defiant. They will not bend, bow, or submit. And yet, when they are swallowed up in judgment, they will cry, but it will be too late—too late, too late.

It is like in the book of Jeremiah: “The harvest is past, the summer’s ended, and we’re not saved.” That is why the Word of God says, “Behold, today is the day of salvation.” God does not promise us another day, morrow, or night. He does not promise another five minutes or two minutes. God only vindicates Moses and Aaron. He judges these people in such a unique way that they are to be a sign.

Final Exhortation and Prayer

These things are to be a memorial to God's righteous judgment, that when we read of them, think of them, and see this, we say, "Lord, preserve us. Lord, protect us. We do not want to be like Korah and his company." You cannot rebel without facing the judgment of God. In this instance, it was a unique judgment. Judgment is coming, according to Acts 17, verses 30 and 31.

We need to hear and be ready. The only way we can be ready is through the grace and mercy of God and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Father, we ask You today to help us and teach us. Help us to see the heartache, in one sense of the word, yet the justice of God, on

the other hand, in the lives of these people. You have given them as a warning, as a flashing light, that we are not to rebel or grieve You. Open our eyes, our ears, and our hearts; grant us understanding, repentance, and faith. We pray for our lost children, lost husbands and wives, and lost friends and neighbors. Deal in mercy because of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We pray that You draw Your elect to Yourself, whomever they are, wherever they are. Save Your people. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 4

Foundations for Rebellion

Part Four

"Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men, and they rose up against Moses with certain of the children of Israel, 250 princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown. And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, 'You take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them. Wherefore then lift up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?' And when Moses heard it, he fell upon his face. And he spake unto Korah and to all of his company, saying, 'Even tomorrow the Lord will show who are his and who is holy, and will cause him to come near unto him. Even him whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him. This do: take you censers, Korah, and all his company, and put fire therein and put incense in them before the Lord tomorrow. And it shall be that the man whom the Lord doth choose, he shall be holy. You take too much upon you, you sons of Levi.'"

Review of the Four Foundational Pillars of Rebellion

In this brief series on foundations for rebellion, I have covered a number of important biblical points. These points need to be kept in mind, especially when you consider these four foundational principles. Peter wrote in 2 Peter chapter 3, verse 1, “This second epistle I write unto you, brethren, to stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance.” Certainly, we need to stir up our minds to remember these important things, and we need to make sure that we do not let them slip. That is why Hebrews 2, verse 1 says, “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we’ve heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.”

The first foundational pillar was this: all rebellion begins with a breach in a relationship. It is a disregarding, a dishonoring of a relationship.

Korah, who happened to be the son of Izhar, and Moses and Aaron, who happened to be the sons of Amram—Izhar and Amram were brothers. So Korah was a cousin. It was cousin against cousin, basically. Elizaphan, who was also elevated above Korah, was another cousin there. Clearly, you cannot have a rebellion without a severance of a relationship, whether family or friends.

Every rebellion involves a breach in a relationship. The second foundational pillar was discontent with one's calling or vocation in life. According to the Scripture here, Korah was discontented with being a Levite. He wanted the priesthood. That is what Moses said in verses 8 through 10: “Seek ye the priesthood also.” They were upset that Aaron, another cousin, was the priest, and all his sons were priests. Korah was not a priest; he could not be a priest. God had not called him to that.

The sons of Reuben were never involved with anything around the tabernacle, yet they were discontented as well, and joined Korah and his company. Anytime you become discontented with your calling and vocation in life, it is a foundational pillar of rebellion. That does not mean we cannot improve ourselves or change if God opens doors, leads us, and guides us. But whatever gifts God has given us, we must be content with those gifts as well.

The third foundational pillar was actual disobedience, actual evidence of rebellion. When Moses sent to Dathan and Abiram to come up—he had already spoken with Korah—they said, "We will not come up. We're not going to recognize you, your authority, or obey you. We will not come." The fourth foundational pillar of rebellion is always a perversion of the truth and a malicious assassination of character.

They perverted the truth by saying that Moses had brought them out of a land flowing with milk and honey into the wilderness to kill them and to be a prince over them, to be a tyrant over them, to be a cruel and unrelenting ruler over them. They took the title of Canaan land and applied it to Egypt, when Egypt was slavery and drudgery and doing without. Thus they perverted the truth of God, and they also attacked the character of Moses.

The Gainsaying of Korah and Its Meaning

Jude 11 speaks about the gainsaying of Korah. The word "gainsaying" is actually the Greek word antilogia, or logia. It simply means strife, contradiction, and speaking against. In other words, Korah was not only speaking against himself; he was also speaking against the truth, because the word logia comes from the word logos, which is the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in John chapter 1. Logia is also where we get the English word "logic." Anyone in rebellion cannot think clearly or rationally, and certainly cannot think biblically.

This gainsaying was not just against Moses and Aaron. It was not merely against men whom God had instituted as authorities. It was also against the Word of God—the written Word and the living Word, which is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Rebellion always brings forth the judgment of God. There are different judgments throughout the Bible against rebellion. However, when we come to Numbers chapter 16, we find a unique judgment.

The Unique Judgment of God in Numbers 16

It is unique in the sense that God did something that had never ever been done before: He called the earth to open up and swallow them down, and then the earth closed up upon them. The Bible tells us that He did this for a sign and for a memorial. Numbers 16:38 says,

"The censers of these sinners against their own souls, let them make them broad plates for a covering of the altar, for they offered them before the Lord. Therefore they are hallowed, and they shall be a sign unto the children of Israel."

The Hebrew word for "sign" is oth, which literally means a sign, a token, a warning, a distinguishing mark, or a proof. Clearly, then, this is a sign. In verse 40, He says, "to be a memorial unto the children of Israel, that no stranger which is not of the seed of Aaron come near to offer incense before the Lord, that he be not as Korah and as his company, as the Lord said to him by the hand of Moses."

Note that He said, "to be a memorial." The word is zikron, and it means a reminder, a remembrance. It means a memorial. The censers these men had, Aaron was instructed to take and make into brass plates and put around the altar. Anyone who approached that altar had to remember what God had done to Korah and his company. He said, "This is a sign. This is a memorial." In other words, you do not rebel against God. You do not rebel against His worship, His ministry, and His orderly way.

Reasons for the Severity of the Judgment

Last week I was trying to answer why the judgment of God in this chapter was so severe, and I gave you two points. First, I pointed out that the judgment was extremely severe because there was a vindication of Moses and Aaron. They were vindicated in the sense that they were proven to be the ministers of God. Then I pointed out how easy it is today for most Christians to criticize and condemn the preachers of God. I am not talking about false prophets, or people who entered the ministry as a profession or a job. I am talking about real, genuine men of God.

I took time, not only in the Old Testament but also in the New Testament, to show you that the preachers of Jesus Christ are here in His stead. The little Greek word is huper. That is why the Apostle Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5, "We pray you in Christ's stead." If I said, "Jesus Christ died in our stead," you understand that means He died in our place. So when the Apostle Paul said that we are here in Christ's stead, that means we are here in His place, beseeching you in the stead of Jesus Christ. In reality, not to hear the exposition,

explanation, and application of the Word of God is not to hear God; it is not to hear the Lord Jesus Christ.

There was a vindication of Moses and Aaron, whom God had called in this particular passage. Secondly, those who will not hear, heed, and obey the Word of God communicated from God through His ministers will suffer a devastating loss. Remember that Dathan and Abiram were not only wicked men in this sense of the word; they were defiant, determined, and dedicated in their position. Numbers 16:27 says, "So they got up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, on every side. And Dathan and Abiram came out and stood in the door of their tents," and their wives and their sons and their little children.

In other words, they stood in the door: "We're not moving. We're not settling. We're not stepping back. We are here and we are defiant, and we are not going to listen to you, Moses. We're not going to talk to you. We're not coming up."

Then verse 34 says, "And all Israel that were round about them fled at the cry of them, for they said, 'Lest the earth swallow us up also.'" I was impressed with this truth and thought upon it for several days. It is difficult, probably impossible, to imagine the extreme horror these men and women went through. Here were people so defiant, rebellious, and determined.

They were not going to listen, talk, or do anything but stand in their rebellion: "Here we stand." Then God opened the earth, and they and everything they had went down alive, and the earth swallowed them up. The Bible says that Israel fled at their cry. Can you imagine being so defiant and determined, and then, in the last few seconds of your life, realizing how terribly wrong you truly were?

I believe personally that this will be one of the great horrors and terrors on the day of judgment. You remember in Luke chapter 16, where our Lord talked about Lazarus and the rich man. Lazarus was laid daily at the rich man's gate, hoping to receive something, but the dogs came and licked his sores. The Bible says, "Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores." Lazarus died and was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died, and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and said, "Father Abraham, send

Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame."

Abraham said to the rich man, "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented." I believe one of the greatest horrors facing sinners at the day of judgment will be remembering all the counsel, advice, pleadings, sermons, and Bible studies they ever heard but failed to heed. They will remember and say, "Oh, if only, if only." But they did not. People will be exceedingly sorrowful at the day of judgment. That is for sure. So here is the third one, and I am going to begin here: the third reason I believe this judgment is so severe and devastating.

This pictures the doom of all who will not submit to and obey the sovereign God through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who deny, reject, repudiate, and refuse to bow to the Lord Jesus Christ will be judged and doomed.

Our Lord said in Luke chapter 19, verse 27. Here is the parable of the man who went to receive a kingdom, and his citizens sent word, "We will not have this man reign over us." But when he comes back with the kingdom, he said, "But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither and slay them before me." Slay them before me.

There are other great examples of judgment in the Bible. At 2 Peter chapter 2, beginning with verse 4.

Consider what is said in 2 Peter 2:4-9: "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment, and spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly, and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example unto all those that after should live ungodly, and delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked. For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds."

Then the passage says, "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished." When the angels sinned, God did not spare them but cast them down. That was instant judgment. He spared not the old world; the flood swallowed them up. That also was instant judgment. Sodom and Gomorrah were consumed by fire and brimstone. Again, it was instant judgment.

This is what I am trying to show you. In Luke 19, the king said, "Bring hither my enemies before me and destroy them." In Numbers 16, it was instant judgment, and in this passage it is instant judgment. Those antediluvians, the people who lived before the flood, were swallowed up quickly. Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed quickly.

Now consider 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9: "And to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels; In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe, because our testimony among you was believed in that day."

The Lord will return in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. They shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power.

God's Ordained Means of Worship

It will be instant punishment in one sense of the word. It will be instant doom when our Lord comes back. He is not coming as a lamb this time; He is coming as a lion, and He is going to destroy His enemies. Another reason I believe the judgment in Numbers chapter 16 is so severe is that it pictures and portrays the final judgment and destruction of our Lord's enemies.

It should be evident from Numbers chapter 16 that God cannot be worshipped except by the means which He has ordained. All fleshly

methods, ceremonies, and rituals are condemned by God. Man may not come to God in any way that he pleases. Man must come to God in the way that God demands, or he will not come to God. It is just that simple.

But man has set up his own tabernacles. You must remember that Matthew Henry said Dathan and Abiram set up a tabernacle within their compounds, which would have been a tabernacle in competition with the Lord's tabernacle and His worship. What they wanted was to be priests themselves. They wanted to have their own religion, so to speak. All worship that is contrary to God and does not come in the manner that God demands is not only fleshly, wicked, and vile; it is really blasphemy.

If you read Exodus chapter 25, you find the chapter in which God instructs Moses on how to build the tabernacle and gives him its pattern. God begins with the most holy place, then goes to the holy place, and then to the court. When Moses sets up the tabernacle, he begins with the court, proceeds to the holy place, and then to the most holy place. In other words, man cannot approach unto God unless God approaches him first.

Moses could not simply say, “I think I will build a tabernacle. I think I will ordain all these ceremonies and rituals.” He did nothing like that, because God warned Moses, “See that thou make all things according to the pattern which I gave thee in the mount.”

What this passage is teaching us is that men come to God only because God comes to them. I was preaching many years ago in Greenville, South Carolina, and arrived at the church a little early. A lady there was practicing the special she was going to sing that night. She had a beautiful voice, and she was singing, “I found Him. I found Him.” I listened and said, “That’s a beautiful song. The only thing wrong with it is it’s unbiblical.”

She said, “What do you mean?” I said, “Well, you didn’t find Him. He found you.” “Oh,” she said, “in that case,” and she started singing, “He found me.” That’s how she sang the song that night. And that’s true. He did find us. He said, “I came to seek and to save that which was lost.” We weren’t looking for Him; He came looking for us. That is why our Lord said in John 6:44, “No man can come

unto me, except the Father who hath sent me draw him, and I will raise him up at the last day."

Everything must begin with God, or there is no salvation. It is just that simple. You remember Philippians 1:6: "Being confident of this very thing, that he who hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." If God started it, God is going to finish it.

May I remind you also of Philippians 2:12-13? The Apostle Paul told the Philippians, "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, as you have always obeyed, not in my presence only, but much more now in my absence. Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." Does that mean you can earn your own salvation, or work your own salvation out? Absolutely not. Verse 13 follows verse 12: "For it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." You cannot work it out if God does not work it in. God has worked it in you; it is your responsibility to work it out—to figure out how to apply it, obey it, and bring it to pass in your life. You cannot work it out unless God has worked it in. Therefore, you see the truth of

Ephesians 2:8-9: "For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast." That is why our Lord said in John 14, verse 6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Ephesians 2, verse 18: "For through him—that is, through Jesus Christ—we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." So we come to the Father through Jesus Christ in the Spirit.

This is very simple: we must worship God on God's terms. That is why the Scriptures said in John 4, verse 24, "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

That means all fleshly worship is worthless, useless, void, and blasphemous. I will even go further. You can take that which God has ordained and turn it into nothing but mere ceremonies and rituals and fleshly acts, and it is still rejected and still condemned.

Isaiah chapter 1, verse 10, says: "Hear the word of the Lord, you rulers of Sodom. Give ear to the law of our God, you people of Gomorrah." Sodom and Gomorrah had been destroyed long before. But verse 1 identifies the passage: "The vision of Isaiah the son of

Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah." Thus Sodom and Gomorrah happen to be Judah and Jerusalem. He says, "Now the word of the Lord, you rulers of Sodom; give ear to the law of our God, you people of Gomorrah." Then he asks, "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord."

God says, "I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When you come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when you spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when you make many prayers, I will not hear; your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord."

Notice that He is talking to Judah and Jerusalem. God ordained all of the feasts, all those sacrifices, and everything that He mentioned. But they had turned them into ceremonies and rituals while living in sin, disobedience, and rebellion. God said, "I will not have it. I will not have it."

Sin, disobedience, and rebellion make the true worship of God impossible. How can you worship God in spirit and truth if you are contrary to truth and not in God's Spirit, or not even in your spirit? You are merely going through a ritual. You are living a life of disobedience, sinning not only against God but against your own soul.

Go back in your Bible to Numbers chapter 16, and notice what God said to these people through Moses. Beginning with verse 36: "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, that he take up the censers out of the burning, and scatter thou the fire yonder; for they are hallowed. The censers of these sinners against their own souls."

"Let them make them broad plates for a covering of the altar, for they offered them before the Lord. Therefore they are hallowed, and they shall be a sign unto the children of Israel." And Eleazar the priest took the brazen censers, wherewith they that were burnt had offered, and they were made broad plates for a covering of the altar, to be a memorial unto the children of Israel, that no stranger which is not of the seed of Aaron come near to offer incense before the Lord, that he be not as Korah and his company, as the Lord said to him by the hand of Moses. But note, if you would, God said they offered this offering—what?—against their own souls.

So when we go through rituals and ceremonies and our hearts are not in the worship of God, it is indeed against our own souls, and it is rejected and refused by God.

And here is the fifth thing. Fifthly, we see a New Testament truth in an Old Testament example. In this passage, we see the goodness of God, but we also see the severity of God. We see the goodness and mercy of God in that some people escaped this righteous judgment. We see the severity and justice of God in those who did not escape. Let me show you.

Look in Numbers chapter 16, and let us begin reading here at verse 23: "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 'Speak unto the congregation, saying, Get you up from about the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.'" Moses rose up and went unto Dathan and Abiram, and the elders of Israel followed him. And he spake unto the congregation, saying, "Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing

“Of theirs, lest you be consumed in all their sins.” So they got up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram on every side. Dathan and Abiram came out and stood in the door of their tents, with their wives, their sons, and their little children.

Note this: God had mercy upon some, and some had justice. The warning from God was given through Moses, and a number of people heeded it. They departed from those rebels. They got away from them and got out of the way. They believed that God would judge these people, and so they left. Moses had said, “Get away from

these people. Don't touch anything of theirs. Get out of here. God is fixing to judge these people. Leave." Many did.

However, look at verse 33. They—Korah, Dathan, and Abiram—"and all that appertained to them went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them, and they perished from among the congregation." This is very strange to me.

Here it is: "And all Israel that were round about them fled at the cry of them, for they said, 'Lest the earth swallow us up also.'" If you knew, and truly believed, that God was going to judge these people, how close would you want to be to them? If you are close enough to hear their screams and see the earth swallow them up, you are too close. It would be too close for me. I do not want to be anywhere near anything like that. You are talking about being too close for comfort. Yet these people who were too close were spared.

I would have loved to be on the far side, far away. I would not want to hear the screams or see the earth open and swallow them. If I believe God is going to destroy someone or something, I want to be as far away from them as I can get. I do not want to be anywhere close to the Great Reset and those folks. I do not want to be any closer to the New World Order, because God is going to destroy them. It is just that simple.

We see in this passage the goodness and the severity of God. Here is one truth.

We need to know about salvation. In salvation, God gives us grace to disassociate ourselves from sinners. That does not mean that we are not compassionate. That does not mean that we do not witness to them. But to be absolutely honest, I have no desire to be around a bunch of drunkards. I have no desire to be around a bunch of thieves. I have no desire to be around a bunch of whoremongers. I have no desire to be around a bunch of murderers. You follow what I am saying?

Why in the world would you want to stay close to these people? I am just saying, in God's grace and God's salvation, He gives us a sense to stay away from those who are wicked. Matthew Henry said this—listen carefully—speaking of these men: "Instead of falling down and humbling themselves before God and Moses, owning their

crime and begging pardon, instead of fleeing and dispersing themselves to seek for shelter in the crowd, they impudently stood in the door of their tents, as if they would outface God himself and dare God to do his worst. Thus were their hearts hardened to their own destruction, and they were fearless when their case was the most fearful."

You do not know deception. I want you to look in your Bibles very quickly to the book of Romans, chapter 11. This is why I said it is a New Testament truth, but an Old Testament example. In this passage, the Word of God says it very distinctly: "For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off."

After learning that rebellion always brings the judgment of God, there is another truth that we must understand in light of this: our sin always involves others, and often we bring judgment upon other people by our own sins. Now there is a verse in Romans, chapter 14, verse 7, that I

Sin Always Affects Others

There is a very short verse I would really encourage you to memorize: “For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.” No man lives to himself, and no man dies to himself. If you and I could learn this principle and apply it to our lives daily, it would change the way we live. It would make us more holy, more godly, and more obedient.

Your life, whether it is right or wrong, good or bad, always influences and affects others. It is one thing for a man to sin against God, and one thing for a woman to sin against God. But when your sin includes others who have no idea what is even going on, that is wicked. Look again at Numbers chapter 16, verse 27: “So they got up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram on every side. And Dathan and Abiram came out and stood in the door of their tents, and their wives, and their sons, and their little children.”

I can understand the wife being confederate with the husband. The word "sons" there could mean either adult sons or young adults. But now we are talking about little children. Most people never stop and think that their rebellion and sin could destroy their own family and their own children. God said in Exodus chapter 34, verses 3 through 5, after He quoted some of the Ten Commandments: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them. For I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me."

Put this in your heart: your sin always affects others. Your life always affects others. You cannot live in a vacuum. Your obedience always affects others. Your holiness always affects others. You are a beacon either for good or bad. You cannot escape this principle. Consider another example in Joshua chapter 7. I will not take the time to read the entire chapter.

You know the story about Achan. God cursed Jericho, and everything in it was cursed. Nothing was to be taken; everything was to be burned. It was under the curse of God. Achan saw the goodly Babylonish garment, the wedge of gold, and the silver, and took them and hid them in his tent.

Israel went against Ai and was defeated. They returned with their tails tucked between their legs, so to speak. Joshua fell on his face and said, "Oh God, what's happening? Israel turns her backs upon her enemies." God said, "Get up off your face. There's sin in the camp." God singled them out and found them out.

In Joshua chapter 7, verse 19, we read: "And Joshua said unto Achan, 'My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him, and tell me now what thou hast done. Hide it not from me.' And Achan answered Joshua and said, 'Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done. When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty

shekels weight, then I coveted them and took them. And behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.'

"So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent, and behold, it was hid in the tent, and the silver under it. And they took them out of the midst of the tent, and brought them unto Joshua and to all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the Lord. Now Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had. And they brought them unto the valley of Achor. And Joshua said, 'Why hast thou troubled us? The Lord shall trouble thee this day.' And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones. And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So the Lord turned from the fierceness of his anger. Wherefore the name of that place was called the Valley of Achor unto this day."

It is not just that Achan stole. He stole from the Lord. He stole that which was cursed, which brought a curse upon himself.

He hid it in the tent, which would mean that his wife lived with him there, as did the children. Probably they knew. You say, "I don't understand why this penalty was so severe." It was not just the fact that he stole. He stole against God, and he stole that which was cursed. Because of his sin, thirty-six Israelites died. That is how many men the Aiites killed when they went to conquer. Thirty-six men were murdered, basically, because of Achan's sin. His wife, his children, his animals—everything he had—was destroyed.

Our sin always affects others, sometimes completely innocent children. I hear people say, "Well, Brother Weaver, it's my life. I'll live it the way I please. I'll do what I want to do. What I do doesn't bother anybody else." That is all wash. The man who puts his wife and children in the car while driving drunk and runs head-on into a semi-truck has murdered his wife and children. They were not involved in his drunkenness, but they reap the consequence of his sin. Your life affects someone all the time. No one lives to himself. No one dies to himself.

Rebellion Must Be Dealt With

Here is a truth each of us must learn: rebellion must be dealt with, either by judgment or genuine repentance, or else it will continue its path of death and destruction. We have not realized how dangerous rebellion actually is. If it is not checked or stopped, it will continue. A miraculous escape from judgment, in itself, will not stop rebellion. In Numbers 16:34, we read, “And all Israel that were round about them fled at the cry of them, for they said, ‘Lest the earth swallow us up also.’” These people heard the rebels screaming and crying as they were swallowed by the earth. They were so close they could hear it; they were so close they could see it.

SCRIPTURE READING - Numbers 16:41-48 (KJV)

> They knew that God had done this. No one else could open the earth up and close it back up like that. God sent fire from heaven and destroyed the 250 princes.
>
> "And it came to pass—but on the morrow, all the congregation of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, 'You've killed the people of the Lord.' And it came to pass, when the congregation was gathered against Moses and against Aaron, that they looked toward the tabernacle of the congregation, and behold, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the Lord appeared. And Moses and Aaron came before the tabernacle of the congregation, and the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 'Get you up from among this congregation, that I may consume them as in a moment.'"
>
> And they fell upon their faces. And Moses said unto Aaron, "Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly unto the congregation, and make an atonement for them. For there is wrath gone out from before the Lord. The plague is begun." And Aaron took as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the congregation. And behold, the plague was begun among the people, and he put on incense and made an atonement for the people. And he stood between the dead and the living, and the plague was stayed.

Now they that died in the plague were fourteen thousand and seven hundred, beside them that died about the matter of Korah.

They had just seen the earth open up and swallow people and close back up. They had seen fire from heaven consume 250 men. Yet, in less than twenty-four hours, they were saying to Moses, “You murdered the people of God. You did it.”

A miraculous escape from judgment is not sufficient to stop rebellion. They continued to rebel against God, and His righteous judgment slew another 14,700. Numbers chapter 16 is full of information that we should know. First, rebellion cannot be tolerated; if there is no genuine repentance, it must be dealt with. Without genuine repentance, the only thing that will stop it is judgment—ultimately, the death of the rebellious individual or individuals.

Applications and Warnings

Rebellious individuals are usually used by rebellious leaders. The rebellious people are useful idiots until rebellious leaders have accomplished what they wish to accomplish; then they become useless idiots and are eaten by their own. That is why the communists always teach people to be rebellious. Once the people in rebellion have destroyed society, the government, and the nation, the communists come in and take over. What do they do first? They kill the rebellious individuals they used. They know that if rebellion is not dealt with, those people will rebel against them sooner or later. They have been taught rebellion, and they must be stopped.

We need to learn that rebellion is a very serious sin and crime against God. Second, you must let this truth sink deeply into your heart: your lives and your sin always affect others. Innocent people often die because of the sins of others. You do not live in a vacuum or in neutral zones. Everything you do, whether good or bad, always affects someone else. As someone said, one thing we learn from history is that we do not learn from history. We continue to repeat the same sins over and over and reap the same judgment. Before I close, I want to give you one more.

The twice-repeated truth in the book of Proverbs should strike a sound of warning to everyone who hears this message. Before giving you that twice-repeated truth, I want to give you another truth. Listen to what God said in Isaiah 55, verses 8-9: "For my thoughts

are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." Man by nature does not think like God. We must learn to think like God. Here is what the scripture says in Proverbs chapter 14, verse 12: "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." Then in Proverbs 16, verse 25: "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." In other words, to escape the ways of death, we must make sure that our ways are God's ways and our thoughts are God's thoughts.

Rebellion has to be dealt with. If man does not deal with it according to God's Word, God Himself will deal with it. The rebellious shall not escape.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we ask for Your blessing, grace, mercy, goodness, and kindness. Lord, make our hearts tender; make us obedient, submissive, godly, and holy. Give us the desire to please Thee and honor Thee. May we believe Thy Word and heed it, turn from any and all sin, serve Thee, and worship Thee in spirit and in truth. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray. Amen.

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Chapter 2: Foundations For Rebellion - Part 2
JW01724 | YouTube

Chapter 3: Foundations For Rebellion - Part 3
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