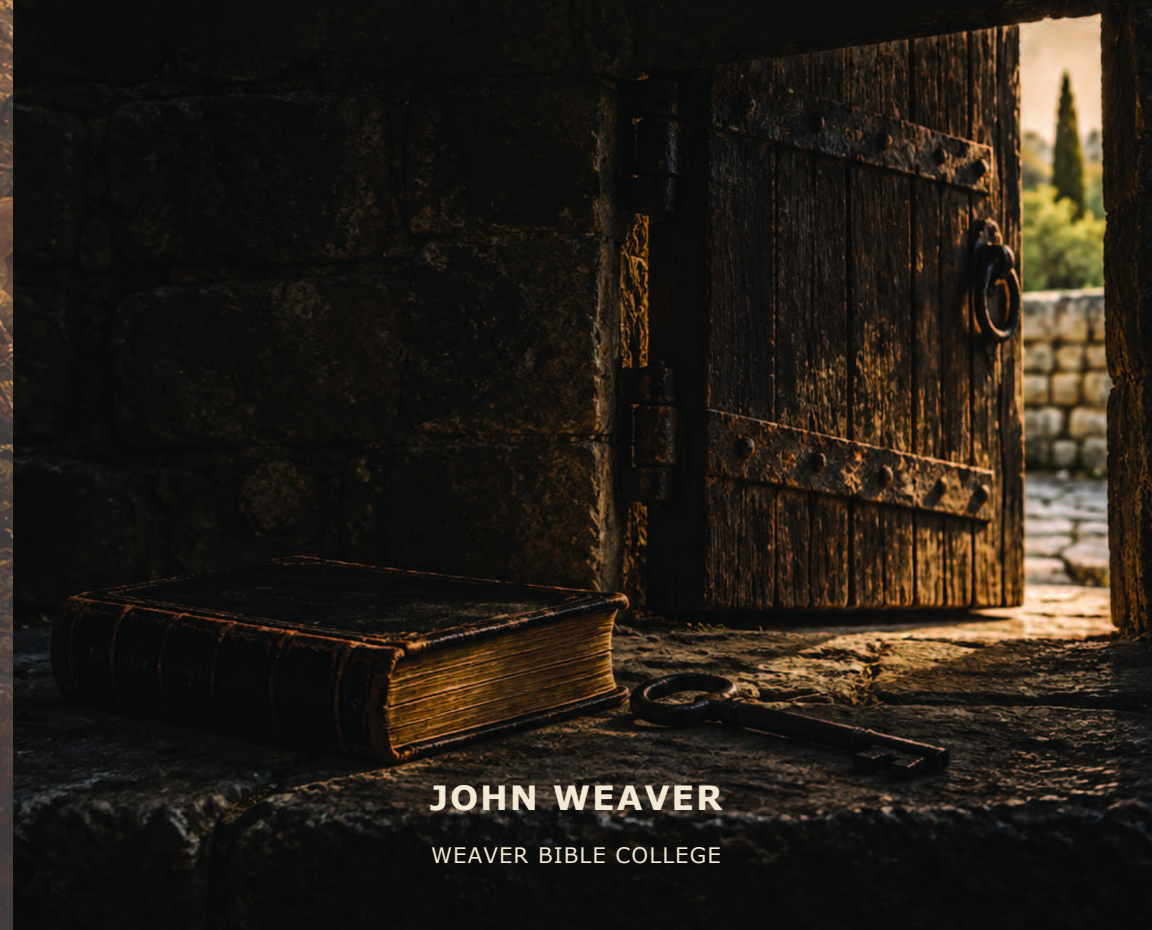
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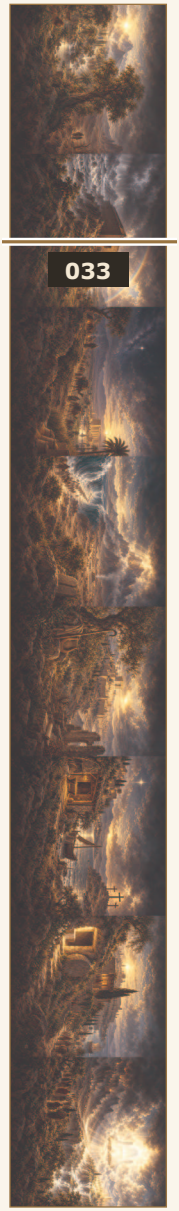
"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

PSALM 119:105



JOHN WEAVER

WEAVER BIBLE COLLEGE



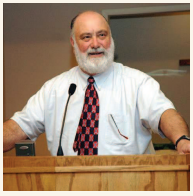
For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.

1 SAMUEL 15:23, EXCERPT

Rebellion begins with the refusal to submit to rightful authority. John Weaver considers its motives, its biblical examples, and its consequences for the individual and the community. These messages ask readers to examine the relationship between outward conduct, inward desires, and obedience to God's Word.

"The essence of rebellion begins in discontent and dissatisfaction with the providence of God in your life, which will lead to sedition and will lead to rebellion."

JOHN WEAVER



John Weaver

John Weaver's sermons form the teaching collection presented by Weaver Bible College. This volume gathers his teaching from that collection.

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CHAPTER 1

The Essence of Rebellion

Part One

SCRIPTURE READING - Numbers 16:1-6 (KJV)

Introduction and Scripture Reading

Open your Bibles to Numbers chapter 16. Let us read the first eleven verses. I encourage you, when you get home, to read all of Numbers chapter 16 and read it in preparation for next Sunday's message as well, because today's message is titled "The Essence of Rebellion." It will be part one today and part two next Lord's Day. Today, I am going to lay a foundation, probably covering only one point. Pay close attention to the first eleven verses of Numbers 16. This is a well-known passage.

"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. And he spake unto Korah, and to all the 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." And 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? For which cause both thou and all this company are gathered together against the Lord?"

"And what is Aaron that you murmur against him?" Numbers 26:9-11 says, "And the sons of Eliab: Nemuel, and Dathan, and Abiram. This is that Dathan and Abiram which were famous in the congregation who strove against Moses and against Aaron and 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." We have in Numbers chapter 16 the rebellion of Dathan and Abiram and Korah and On.

Rebellion as a Serious Sin and Judgment

Rebellion is indeed a very serious sin, and I must point out that it is also a very awful judgment. It is a sin that merits and brings forth the death penalty. It is a death penalty not only against an individual, but also against a family, a society, a church, or a nation.

Samuel told King Saul that he had rebelled against the commandment of the Lord. This is recorded in 1 Samuel chapter 15, verses 22 and 23. God had commanded Saul to take care of all the Amalekites. What did Saul do? He spared Agag the king and the best of everything, contrary to God's command. Samuel then spoke plainly to Saul: “Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.”

He declared further, “For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, He hath also rejected thee from being king.” Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. In the Bible, both witchcraft and idolatry merited and brought forth the death penalty.

We have to remember that rebellion and treason are primarily against God and His law order. When we talk about treason, we understand treason against a civil order, but we do not understand treason against God. Yet rebellion against God remains treason against His law order and therefore carries the seriousness of rebellion against the highest authority.

Any society that allows its foundation to be undermined will soon discover that it will exist no more. We've allowed our foundations to be undermined, and we have ceased to exist concerning what we were when this nation was founded, even what we were 50 years ago. Once you allow the foundations to be attacked and destroyed, then everything crumbles beneath it.

God's Law Order vs. Humanistic Law Orders

God is sovereign, and His law word is supreme. God's law is the foundation of His society and the support of His people. Why does God demand the death penalty for treason? The average man understands the reason for the death penalty when talking about treason against the state, but most never equate treason against God. No law order can survive if it does not defend its foundations. When one attacks God and His law, he is guilty of treason, and therefore the death penalty is demanded. The only alternatives to God's law order are humanistic law orders at war against a biblical faith. Statist

law orders always lead to despotism, totalitarianism, and tyranny. Anarchistic law orders always lead to self-assertion and autonomy.

Judges 17:6—and also, I think, Judges 21—says, "There was no king in Israel in those days. Every man did that which was right in his own eyes." When you reject God's law order, the only alternative is a humanistic law order: either statism, which is totalitarianism and tyranny, or anarchism, which is absolute chaos.

Civil Definitions of Treason and Sedition

Every society, power, authority, and government has laws dealing with rebellion. Often these are broken down into sedition, rebellion, conspiracy, and treason, and they all demand the death penalty. Let me read quickly from the United States Constitution, Article 3, Section 3:

"Treason against the United States shall consist only in levying war against them or adhering to their enemies, giving them aid and comfort. No person shall be convicted of treason unless on the testimony of two witnesses to the same overt act or on confession in open court. The Congress shall have the power to declare the punishment of treason."

Now ask yourself: What constitutes treason in a culture? What constitutes treason in a society? Is treason an act of rebellion against the state, or an act of rebellion against God and His law order? Understand that all idolatry is treason, and rebellion is treason to God. If you say, "Well, treason is to the state," then let me ask you a question.

What if the enemy of the citizen, or the enemy of the Christian, turns out to be the state—turned traitor against its own constitutions? I do not have to point out how multitudes of governments have murdered their own people in order to protect the state. What did Stalin do to over 20 million? What did Mao Zedong, Idi Amin, and Castro do? You have to understand: governments do go rogue.

They could care less about law. A tyrant is going to do anything and everything he can to protect his own power and position, even at the expense of his own people. But when you talk about treason and

understand sedition, all this is important to understand in Numbers chapter 16. Most governments condemn sedition as well as treason. Legally, there is a difference between sedition and treason. Yet I want to show you, civilly, that all rebellion really begins with sedition, and I want you to see it spiritually and scripturally.

Do you realize that, as far back in our country as 1798, men have been tried for sedition against the United States? In fact, there were the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798, which were thankfully repealed. Section 1 dealt with aliens creating trouble and turmoil and said such aliens could be deported at the President's statement and request. I have no problem with that.

If you read on, here is another act in addition to the act entitled, "An Act for the Punishment of Certain Crimes against the United States." Listen to just a few paragraphs here:

"Being enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America and Congress assembled, that if any persons, not just aliens now, but if any persons shall unlawfully combine or conspire together with intent to oppose any measure or measures of the government of the United States, which are, shall be directed by proper authority, to impede the operation of any law of the United States or intimidate or prevent any person holding a place or an office under any government of the United States from undertaking, performing, or executing his trusted duty."

He goes on, and it spells out what can be done to each of us. This was still under the Alien and Sedition Acts. Listen to section two:

"And be it further enacted that if any person shall write, print, utter, or publish or shall cause or procure to be written, printed, uttered, or published, or shall knowingly and willingly assist or aid in writing, printing, uttering, or publishing, any false and scandalous and malicious writings against the Government of the United States, or either the House of the Congress of the United States, or the President of the United States, with intent to defame the said Government, or either House of the said Congress, or said President, or to bring them, or either of them, into contempt or disrepute."

The Alien and Sedition Acts addressed not only aliens who came over here and started problems, but also our own people who

happened to be discontented with what was going on in Washington and with what the politicians were doing.

Theodore Roosevelt on Criticism of Leaders

President Theodore Roosevelt said on May 17, 1918, as reported in the Kansas City Star, "The President is merely the most important among a large number of public servants. He should be supported or opposed exactly to the degree which is warranted by his good conduct or bad conduct, his efficiency or inefficiency in rendering loyal, able, and disinterested service to the nation as a whole. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary that there should be full liberty to tell the truth about his acts. And this means that it is exactly necessary to blame him when he does wrong as to praise him when he does right. Any other attitude in an American citizen is base and servile. To announce that there must be no criticism of the President or that we are to stand by the President, right or wrong, is not only unpatriotic and servile, but is morally treasonable to the American public. Nothing but the truth."

Consider what President Theodore Roosevelt said in light of what is happening today in our politically correct situation.

"Nothing but the truth should be spoken about him or anyone else. But it is even more important to tell the truth, pleasant or unpleasant about him than anyone else." Wow. Wow. You tell the truth about the president today and man, you're going to be visited by the FBI or the Secret Service. But Roosevelt hit it on the head, he said it is morally treasonable to stand by not only the President but any public official when that public official is wrong and wicked.

Legal Distinction Between Sedition and Treason

Now, we're talking about rebellion. I want you to see something. I want you to see that rebellion actually often begins with sedition. I told you that legally there is a difference between sedition and treason. But I want you to understand that sedition will lead to rebellion and rebellion will lead to treason. And I'm not necessarily talking about treason against the United States right now. I'm ultimately going to be talking about treason against God. But I want you to listen to four quick paragraphs. Here is a site, a legal site, that

distinguishes for us the difference between sedition and treason. "In law, sedition is overt conduct such as speech, an organization that is deemed by the legal authority to tend toward insurrection against the established order. Sedition often includes subversion of a constitution or incitement of discontent or resistance to lawful authority. Sedition may include any commotion, though not aimed at direct and open violence against the laws."

Seditious words and writings are seditious libel. A seditionist is one who engages in or promotes the interests of sedition. Typically, sedition is considered a subversive act, and the overt acts that may be prosecutable under sedition laws vary from one legal code to another. While the history of these legal codes has been traced, there is also a record of changes in the definition of the elements constituting sedition at certain points in history. This overview has served to develop a sociological definition of sedition as well within the study of state persecution.

The difference between sedition and treason consists primarily in the subjective ultimate object of the violation to the public peace. Sedition does not consist of levying war against a government, nor of adhering to its enemies, giving enemies aid, or giving enemies comfort. Nor does it consist, in most representative democracies, of peaceful protest against the government, nor of attempting to change the government by democratic means, such as direct democracy or constitutional convention. Sedition is the stirring up of rebellion against the government in power.

Treason is the violation of allegiance to one's sovereign or state, giving aid to enemies, or levying war against one's state. Sedition is encouraging one's fellow citizens to rebel against their state, whereas treason is actually betraying one's country by aiding and abetting another state. Sedition laws somewhat equate to terrorism in public order laws.

There have been a number of sedition trials in the United States: the Matthew Lyon trial in 1798; the Thomas Cooper trial in 1800; the James Callender trial in 1800; the William Dunn Trial in 1918; the Christian Front Sedition Trial in 1940; the Minneapolis Sedition Trial in 1941; the Great Sedition Trial of 1944; the Fort Smith, Arkansas Sedition Trial of 1988; and the Ohio Sedition Trial of 1989.

Even civil governments are concerned with sedition because they are saying that sedition leads to rebellion, and rebellion leads to treason. It is not so much the civil aspect that I want you to see, but the spiritual aspect, and we are going to see this exactly in Numbers chapter 16.

Rebellion Only Against Lawful Authority

Although we are talking about rebellion, whether civilly or spiritually, rebellion can only be against lawful authority. If there is no lawful authority, it is not rebellion; it is merely resistance. I could look at Janet and say, "Janet, go get me a glass of tea," and she could answer, "Wait a minute now, brother. You ask me, and I'll be glad to do it, but don't go commanding me."

I cannot command her. I am not her head, and I am not her husband. If she resisted me, that would not be rebellion on her part; it would be resistance to someone trying to be a tyrant and order her around. I have no authority over her like that. Henry said he doesn't either—but I'm teasing; Henry didn't say that. The point is that rebellion can only be against lawful authority. If there is no lawful authority, there cannot be any rebellion.

Benjamin Franklin said, "Rebellion to tyrants is obedience to God." That was the motto he came up with and attached to his seal. Thomas Jefferson liked it so well that he put it on his seal also: "Rebellion to tyrants is obedience to God."

I also want to point out the reverse. Do you realize that submission to tyrants is rebellion to God? In this country, first and foremost, the Bible is our law word. When the apostles and disciples were commanded by those in authority not to preach any more in the name of Jesus Christ, they said in Acts chapter 5 and verse 29, "Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, 'We ought to obey God rather than man.'" And that is true.

Unconstitutional Laws Are Void

Whether we like it or agree with it is beside the point. In this country, the Constitution is supposed to be a rule of law for the

government. Jefferson said, "Bind them down with the chains of the Constitution."

The Supreme Court case Marbury versus Madison stated, "All laws, rules and practices, which are repugnant to the Constitution are null and void." The 16th American Jurisprudence says, "The general rule is that an unconstitutional statute, though having the form and the name of law, is in reality no law."

An unconstitutional law is void from the time of its enactment, not merely from the date of the decision branding it so. In legal contemplation, it is as inoperative as if it had never been passed. Such a statute imposes no duties, confers no rights, creates no office, bestows no power or authority, affords no protection, and justifies no acts performed under it. A void act cannot be legally consistent with a valid one, and an unconstitutional law cannot supersede any existing valid law. Insofar as a statute runs counter to the fundamental law of the land, it is superseded thereby.

The Supreme Court has also ruled, “No one is bound to obey an unconstitutional law, and no courts are bound to enforce it.” In Norton v. Shelby County, the Court stated, “An unconstitutional act is not a law. It confers no rights. It imposes no duties. It affords no protection. It creates no office. In its legal contemplation, it is as inoperative as though it had never been passed.”

Executive orders, rules, regulations, administrative decisions, laws, statutes, Acts of Congress, or decisions of judges—even decisions of the Supreme Court of the United States—cannot void the rights given to us by God Himself. There can be no law that supersedes God’s law. Therefore, what you and I have to be, according to our law, is a belligerent claimant of rights. If you do not belligerently claim your rights, the court system today views you as giving them up.

John Locke said, “Whenever the legislators endeavor to take away and destroy the property of the people, or to reduce them to slavery under arbitrary power, they, the legislators, put themselves in a state of war with the people who are therefore absolved from any further obedience.” Think of all these laws being passed to deprive us of our life, liberty, and property. The Congress of the United States, the

president, the executive office, and even the judicial office are placing themselves in a state of war against the people.

Sedition Leads to Rebellion

Rebellion can only be against lawful authority. Where there is no lawful authority, it is not rebellion; it is resistance. The lawful power in this country is first and foremost the Bible; secondly, it would be the Constitution—or, I might say, the people themselves, for we the people did ordain this. Resistance to tyranny is a duty and responsibility because resisting evil and wickedness is submission to God and His law.

Sedition Leads to Rebellion in Numbers 16

In Numbers chapter 16, sedition leads to rebellion. Look in Numbers chapter 16 and verse 1. This is an amazing verse: "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." Rebellion always begins with sedition. Someone must sow the seeds of discord, and someone must incite and draw others into the circle of discontent.

After these individuals are named in chapter 16, verse 1, you see the last two words: they took men. The Bible tells us that Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and On took men. The word "took" literally means to catch by the hand, to carry along, to fetch, and to lead.

When you read verse 2, you find, "And they rose up before Moses with certain of the children of Israel, 250 princes of the assembly." Is it possible that 250 men, independently and on their own, would just happen to come to the same conclusion as Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and On? No. They took men. They solicited them. They led them. They brought them to their position.

This conspiracy in Numbers chapter 16 was extremely formidable. The reason it was so formidable was not because regular people were uninvolved, but because princes were involved. This was no ordinary rebellion. It was not the dregs of society rebelling against Moses, Aaron, and the Lord; it was the princes and the rulers. These people held high office. They were dignitaries and undoubtedly rich.

We have an old saying: “Blood is thicker than water.” By that we mean families are going to stick together. Husbands and wives may be fighting like cats and dogs; they may even be fighting with knives. Then the police arrive to break up the fight. What do the husband and wife do? Both turn on the police. When it comes to rebellion, however, that is not necessarily so. Blood is not necessarily thicker than water. What do I mean?

The Leaders' Motivations and Identities

Look back at verse one: “Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi.” Remember, Korah was a son of Kohath, the son of Levi. Therefore, Korah was a Levite. Notice how he is identified: “Now Korah, the son of Izhar.” We are given his father’s name.

Look in your Bibles to Exodus chapter 6, and look at verse 18. Here it is: “And the sons of Kohath.” Now we are finding out who Kohath’s children were: “Amram and Izhar and Hebron and Uzziel. And the years of the life of Kohath were 133 years.” Amram and Izhar were brothers. Korah was the son of Izhar. I do not know if you realize this, but Amram, Izhar’s brother, was the father of Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. Amram married Jochebed (Exodus 6:20).

Korah, then, was a first cousin to Moses and Aaron. Korah probably found himself, or believed himself, to have been slighted and injured in some way, in order that he might lead this rebellion against his own cousins. On is named in verse one, but afterward he is no longer mentioned. So probably he dropped out of the conspiracy. I do not know. Dathan, Abiram, and On were Reubenites, and they were probably involved in this rebellion.

The Reubenites were discontented because their birthright had been taken away from them. In Genesis 49:3–4, Jacob said this about Reuben: “Reuben, thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of my dignity, and the excellency of my power. Unstable as water thou art, thou shalt not excel, because thou wentest up to thy father's bed, then defilest thou it, and he went up into my couch.” So Reuben had sexual intercourse with his father's concubine, and therefore he was disinherited. Reuben was actually the firstborn. He lost the birthright, but he not

only lost the birthright; he also lost the primogeniture of all the tribes of Israel. He was no longer the leader of the twelve tribes. These, then, were Reubenites.

Korah may also have been upset by the fact that his cousin was elevated above the Kohathites. Numbers 3:19 says, “And the sons of Kohath by their families: Amram and Izhar, Hebron and Uzziel.” So there were the four brothers again. Verse 30 says, “And the chief of the house of the father of the families of the Kohathites shall be Elizaphan the son of Uzziel.” Thus, all of a sudden, Korah was not even the head of the house. Another cousin was made head of the house of the Kohathites.

So there was a problem. How did the Reubenites and the Kohathites come together in this rebellion? The Kohathites camped next to the Reubenites. Numbers 2:10 places the sons of Kohath on the south side of the camp, and Numbers 3:29 places the Reubenites on the south side of the camp, too. They were right next to each other.

That made it easy for Korah to take these men by the hand. It was Korah who stirred up all the others. God condemns Korah as the leader of this rebellion, which began with his dissatisfaction, pride, and arrogance. He is singled out as one of the three great errors that we are to avoid.

Korah as the Instigator and Biblical Warnings

Jude 1:11 gives us three errors that we are admonished to avoid. The first is the way of Cain. What is the way of Cain? It is humanism: worshiping God in the way that you think you ought to worship Him, or in any way that you desire. Abel brought the sacrifices that God demanded; Cain did not. He brought the fruit of the ground. Why? He said, “I don’t see why my worship can’t be acceptable. I don’t see why I have to do what God says to do.”

The way of Cain is the way most people follow. They are not interested in worshiping God scripturally, in spirit and in truth. They simply want to do their own thing and get on with it. That is the way of Cain.

The error of Balaam is seeking rewards and placing money above God in His service. In 2 Peter 2:15, the Bible says, "...which have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness." Why was Balaam willing to go to Balak when God told him not to? Because of a reward that was continually increased if he would come and curse Israel.

So beware of the way of Cain and avoid the error of Balaam. Jude then speaks of those who perished in the gainsaying of Korah. The word gainsaying means opposition, contradiction, or rebellion. God is warning us about the way of Cain, the error of Balaam, and the rebellion of Korah.

Korah evidently was the leader and instigator of this plot. He is singled out repeatedly in the Bible as the instigator of the rebellion. For instance, Numbers 16:5-6 addresses Korah and his company.

Now, to whom is Moses speaking? Look in verse 5: "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.'"

If you look in Numbers chapter 26 and verse 9: "And the sons of Eliab: Nemuel, and 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." Look at Numbers 27 and verse 3: "Here the daughters of Zelophehad said, 'Our father died in the wilderness. Our father died in the wilderness and he was not in the company of them that gathered themselves together against the Lord in the company of Korah. But he died in his own sin and had no sons.'"

Applications: Avoiding Sedition and Rebellion

So Korah then is singled out as the leader of this rebellion against God. Here is the point I want to make today: sedition always leads to rebellion. What is sedition? It is when you begin to incite discontent and dissatisfaction among other people. You are going to find, and

we will see next Lord's Day, how the leaders of this rebellion had their moment in the sun. And I do mean moment. It was a short-lived term. But then sure and sudden and solemn destruction hit them instantly.

Sedition always leads to rebellion. The rebellion in Numbers 16 began when Dathan and Abiram and On and Korah took men and said, "Come on, let me tell you about Moses and Aaron. Let me tell you what they're doing." And they began to sow the seeds of dissatisfaction.

We must always refuse to be a leader of such a rebellion. We must not only refuse to be a leader of such rebellion; we must also refuse to be a follower of such rebellion. You know, the Bible says in Exodus 23 and verse 2, "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil." Does it matter if there's a lot of them? "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil." So we have to resist being a leader.

Now I am talking about rebellion. Remember what rebellion is? Rebellion is against lawful authority. I am not talking about resisting evil or tyranny. That is not what I am talking about. I am talking about resisting lawful, biblical, and godly authority.

Here is the second application: We must refuse to receive an accusation against an elder unless there are witnesses to substantiate every word. This is how to cut down discontent and dissatisfaction. Let me show you that in the Bible. Turn to two passages, 1 Timothy, chapter 5, and then Proverbs, chapter 6. Look in 1 Timothy, chapter 5 and verse 19.

I have used this on a number of occasions. First Timothy 5:19 says, "Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses." Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.

What does that mean? It means something like this. If Henry came to Ron and said, "Let me tell you something about Pastor Weaver," Ron should say, "Hold on. Let me get Ed and Hobie here so every word can be substantiated. After we hear what you have to say, then we will go to Brother Weaver and see about it."

How many accusations would be leveled against godly men if that rule were followed? It would stop the gossip, the slander, and the

accusation. If Henry has something against me, what does the Bible command him to do? Come to me. And if I know he has something against me, what does the Bible command me to do? Go to him. That is correct.

I said that to show you this: I am not talking about excusing an ungodly man, or failing to censure or condemn someone who deserves to be censured or condemned. Preachers sin like everybody else, and preachers have to be rebuked like everybody else. There is no problem there. I am talking about sheer gossip and handling things in an unbiblical manner.

Now look at Proverbs 6:16. It is very important to understand that this is something the Lord absolutely hates. Proverbs 6:16 says, "These six things doth the Lord hate. Yea, seven are an abomination to him."

Avoiding Spiritual Sedition

Remember, the word "abomination" means a stench in God's nostrils. God absolutely hates these things; He despises them. What are they? He hates a proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, and a false witness that speaketh lies. Then comes the abomination: "and he that soweth discord among the brethren."

Isn't that amazing? That is exactly what Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and On did. They took men, sowed discord, and got 250 princes on their side. Undoubtedly, because they had a great and high company on their side, they believed they were right and would prevail.

You will see their absolute arrogance next week. When Moses tried to work it out, they would not even listen. In nearly fifty years of preaching, I have found that someone who is truly repentant is always willing to listen, be rebuked, admonished, reproved, and worked with. Someone who is unrepentant does not want to listen or hear and does not want to be worked with.

That was the spirit of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. This brings me to the third application: if we want to avoid spiritual sedition and

spiritual rebellion, we must avoid the pride and arrogance that were in the lives of Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and On.

Look at what they said to Moses and Aaron in Numbers 16:3: "And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron and said to 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 you up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?"

Let me paraphrase it: "Who do you think you are, giving me orders and telling me what to do? All of God's people are holy. We're all saved here. Who do you think you are telling me what to do and what not to do?"

"You're just trying to elevate yourself. You want to be number one. You want to run the show. Well, we can run the show equally."

Moses said to Korah, "Hear, 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 and minister to 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?"

What did he say? "What's wrong with you? Can't you be content? Did you know that God has chosen the whole tribe of Levi? You work around the tabernacle. You're the ones that work with the sacrifices. God has separated you. You have a ministry, and you can't be content with the ministry that God gives you. Seek ye the priesthood also?"

"You want Aaron's job? You want my job? What's wrong with you?" All sedition and all rebellion begins with dissatisfaction with the providence of God in your life. We just can't be satisfied. We can't accept that which God has given us.

There is an interesting thought. Dathan, Abiram, and Korah were ignoring a vital principle when they said to Moses, "No, you're not, that God is among us and we're all holy." It is true that each of us has an equal standing before God. I'm no more saved than Henry is. Henry's no more saved than Ed is, and Ed's no more saved than

Hobie. We have an equal standing before God. We are sinners saved by grace.

But just because we have an equal standing does not mean that we have an equal position. I'm a pastor; you're not. My position is different from yours, even though we have an equal standing. Dr. Bowen is a doctor; I'm not. We have an equal standing, but when it comes to medical knowledge, I'm going to avert to him. He's positionally higher than I am, medically speaking.

The husband and wife have an equal standing before God, but positionally, the husband is the head of the house. Dathan, Abiram, Korah, and all of them did not understand that. They wanted to lift themselves up and assume positions that God had never given them. Remember the truth of Proverbs 16:18: "Pride goeth before destruction."

"And a haughty spirit before a fall." And that is exactly what happened. Pride went before their destruction, and their haughty spirit condemned them to destruction.

There is one passage it would do us well to memorize: Micah 6:8. "He has showed thee, O man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require thee? but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God." Do you realize that walking humbly with our Lord will keep us from the sins of sedition and rebellion? If you are walking humbly with God, you are thankful for anything, because you realize you deserve absolutely nothing. Everything that you are and everything that you have, God gave you. It is true biblical humility that will keep us from the sins of sedition and rebellion, and from the sins of discontent and dissatisfaction.

You say, "Brother Weaver, but I'm sick. I've got medical problems." I understand. But you could not be sick, and you could not have those medical problems. It is just the grace and mercy of God that you are what you are and have what you have. The essence of rebellion begins in discontent and dissatisfaction with the providence of God in your life, which will lead to sedition and will lead to rebellion.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to Thee. We thank You for Your Word, Your truth, Your warnings, and Your

admonitions. We pray that You would protect us from the sins of discontent and dissatisfaction, from arguing with Your providence in our lives, and from sedition and rebellion. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 2

The Essence of Rebellion

Part Two

SCRIPTURE READING - Numbers 16:1-11 (KJV)

Let's open our Bibles today to Numbers chapter 16. I began a message last week which I entitled "The Essence of Rebellion." It was basically the introduction and part one. I'm going to simply review for a little bit today and then finish this message, hopefully. So this is part two on "The Essence of Rebellion." Beginning with Numbers chapter 16, we'll read verses 1 through 11. I would encourage you, when you get home, to read the entire chapter. Notice Numbers chapter 16, 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, two hundred and fifty 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 to morrow the LORD will shew 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 to morrow.

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. And Moses said unto Korah, Hear, 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? 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?

Review: Sedition and Rebellion Defined

And what is Aaron, that ye murmur against him? Last week, I began by demonstrating the connection between sedition and rebellion. And although I quoted some legal terms, I wanted you to see that sedition, of course, was spiritual as well. Here are the two paragraphs that I quoted last week, and I want you to listen very carefully. In law, sedition is overt conduct such as speech and organization that is deemed by the legal authority to tend toward insurrection against the established order. Sedition often includes subversion of a constitution and incitement of discontented resistance to lawful authority.

In law, sedition is overt conduct—such as speech and organization—that legal authority deems to tend toward insurrection against the established order. Let me point out what I emphasized last week, and what you must remember: rebellion can only be against lawful authority. If there is no lawful authority, there is no rebellion; it is resistance. Sedition may include any commotion, though not aimed at direct or open violence against the law.

Seditious words in writing are seditious libel. A seditionist is one who engages in and promotes the interests of sedition. But since sedition is that which is deemed by legal authority to tend toward insurrection against the established order, here is my question: What if the established order is itself the promoter of sedition, leading, of course, to rebellion? They are trying to say that sedition is basically stirring up rebellion against the government in power. So, legally speaking, sedition would be seeking to cause your fellow citizens to rebel against it.

In Proverbs chapter 6, beginning with verse 16, we read about the six things that the LORD doth hate, and the seventh that is an abomination unto the LORD: "These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren."

Sowing discord among the brethren would be equal to sedition, because sedition is trying to work up rebellion against an established order.

I want to emphasize again what I have already told you. Rebellion is only against lawful authority. If there is no lawful authority, it is not rebellion; it is resistance. You remember I told you last week that Benjamin Franklin designed a motto: "Rebellion to Tyrants is Obedience to God." Thomas Jefferson liked that so well that he had the motto placed on his own personal seal. Submission to tyrants is rebellion to God. However, you must turn that also around and say, rebellion to tyrants is submission to God.

Rebellion Is Primarily Against God

Both principles work both ways. In our country and nation, first and foremost, the Bible is our law word, and everything should be considered and interpreted in light of God's Word. When man's law contradicts the law of God, we must take the attitude of the early apostles in Acts chapter 5 and verse 29: "We ought to obey God rather than men." Obviously, then, God's law word is first and foremost in our country.

That is what we are to go by. Moreover, whether one likes it or agrees with it is immaterial: our Constitution is supposed to be a rule of law for the federal government—not for we the people, but for the federal government. That is why Jefferson said, "Bind them down with the chains of the Constitution."

The only point I covered last week was this: sedition always leads to rebellion. Family ties, close-knit friends, and even churches are not immune to sedition or rebellion. In Numbers chapter 16, verse 1, we read, "Now Korah the son of Izhar." Izhar was the brother of Amram, and Amram was the father of Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. Korah, therefore, was a cousin to Moses and Aaron. The sedition and rebellion began in the family. Korah was the originator and instigator of the entire sordid affair.

Notice, secondly, that rebellion is primarily against God, but it is always manifested against men. In verse 3: "And they," that is, Korah, Dathan, Abiram, Eliab, and On, "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."

Rebellion is Primarily Against God, Manifested Against Men

And when Moses heard it, he fell upon his face. And he spake unto Korah and unto all his company, saying, "Even to morrow the LORD will shew 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."

In verse 13, Korah says, "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 the wilderness, except thou make thyself altogether a prince over us?" In verse 12, Moses called Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, to come up. They said, "We will not come up." Then they asked Moses, "Is it a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of the land that floweth with milk and honey?" What land were they brought up out of? Egypt—Egypt where they were starving.

Sedition and subversion always twist the facts and subvert the truth. God promised to bring the children of Israel into the promised land, a land that flowed with milk and honey. Yet they turned everything upside down and said, “Moses, you brought us out of the promised land, out of the land that flowed with milk and honey.” Thus they gathered themselves, the Bible says, against Moses and against Aaron. However, you must understand that their rebellion was against God; they were challenging the choice and the actions of God.

Men may fight against God, but the only way they fight against Him is by fighting against the men He has chosen to lead them or by fighting against His word. Stop and think. Moses and Aaron were accessible; God was not. Therefore, if they were going to strike out against someone, they had to strike out against Moses and Aaron.

Now, let me boil this down and show you what I am talking about. When children rebel against their parents, it is nothing less than a manifestation of rebellion against God. God ordained parents. God is the One who established parental authority. God has given the children their parents. Therefore, when children fight against godly parents, when they fight against biblical parents, they are actually fighting against God Himself. Stop and think: God has ordained parents to be three things to their children. First of all, parents are to be a prophet, to declare to their children the Word of God.

Secondly, they are to be priests, that is, to pray for their children. And thirdly, they are to be kings, to rule over their children and to bring them up in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord. So when children then rebel against God, who do they strike out against? Their parents, because their parents are easily accessible; God is not.

Now, the same is equally true when men rebel against the authority and the teaching of a godly pastor. I understand that not all pastors are godly, neither are all pastors called of God. However, that does not negate the fact that there are some that are indeed God-called and that teach God's Word. Here we are talking about godly pastors. For here is what God says in Hebrews chapter 13, verse 17: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give

account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you."

Look closely at that verse: “Obey them that have the rule over you,” and “submit yourselves.” Here is why: “For they watch for your souls, as they must give an account; that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.” What does that mean? It means I will give an account for every one of you. If I give a bad account, God said that will be unprofitable for you, not for me.

I have been in many churches and seen God-called men run off simply because people did not want to listen to the Word of God. Let me put it plainly: when one is unsubmissive to the Word of God, he is in rebellion to God. If you are not in subjection, you are in rebellion. It is plain and simple, cut and dry. Any rebellion manifested against God's lawfully ordained authority is rebellion against God Himself.

Remember, I am not talking about tyranny, despotism, or usurpation. I am talking only about lawful authority. Where there is no lawful authority, there is no rebellion. We must resist tyranny, totalitarianism, and despotism with all our might, because submitting to them is rebellion against God. But we must submit to God's lawfully ordained authority. Now let us look in Scripture at how rebellion against God's lawful authority is rebellion against God.

Scriptural Proof: Rebellion Against Authority is Against God

I want you to hold Numbers chapter 16 and turn in your Bibles, if you would, first of all, to Nehemiah chapter 9. Nehemiah chapter 9. We will go through several passages, but look at Nehemiah chapter 9, verse 26, talking about the people now, talking about Israel. The Bible says, “Nevertheless they were disobedient, and rebelled against thee, and cast thy law behind their backs, and slew thy prophets which testified against them to turn them to thee, and they wrought great provocations.” Now notice, if you would, when people rebel against God, they cast His law behind their backs.

And what else did they do? They slew God's prophets. They slew God's preachers. They could not kill God, but they killed the

messengers of God. Anytime you strike out against God's lawful authority, you're striking out against God himself. Look in Psalm 5, if you would, and verse 10. Psalm 5. Again, we're talking about individuals who rebel against God's lawfully ordained authority. In Psalm 5 and verse 10, the psalmist says, "Destroy thou them, O God; let them fall by their own counsels; cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions; for they have rebelled against thee."

The rebellion may be manifested among men, but the rebellion is aimed at God. If you would turn to Psalm 107 and look at verse 11. Psalm 107 and verse 11. Here it is very plain. "Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most High." You know, that's interesting. They didn't rebel against God. They condemned His counsel. They despised it. Look in your Bibles, if you would, to Isaiah 1 and verse 2. Isaiah 1 and verse 2. Then we'll go to Isaiah 63. But look in Isaiah chapter 1 and verse 2. Look what God says about the children of Israel particularly. Isaiah 1 in verse 2, God says, "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me." They rebelled against me. If you look in Isaiah 63 and look, if you would please, at verse 10.

Isaiah 63 in verse 10, just showing you, although rebellion may be manifested toward men in actuality, it is against God. And Isaiah 63 in verse 10, "But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them." Wow, God fights against those who rebel against him.

Now, I want you to turn right over to Jeremiah, chapter 28, and I want you to see two false prophets. And I want you to see clearly what Jeremiah charges these false prophets with. It's a very interesting passage. Hananiah is the first one. Jeremiah 28 verses 15 and 16. Jeremiah 28 verses 15 and 16. "Then said the prophet Jeremiah unto Hananiah the prophet, Hear now, Hananiah; The LORD hath not sent thee; but thou makest this people to trust in a lie. Therefore thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will cast thee from off the face of the earth: this year thou shalt die, because thou hast taught rebellion against the LORD."

You know, that's an amazing statement. Do you realize when any pastor is not teaching the Word of God, he is teaching rebellion

against the Lord. Wow. Look in your Bibles at Jeremiah 29 and verse 32, Jeremiah 29, verse 32.

Rebellion in Positions of Authority

Shemaiah received his reward. 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 that I will do for my people, saith the LORD; because he hath taught rebellion against the LORD.” He had taught rebellion against the Lord. So whenever the Word of God is not being preached and proclaimed, preachers are basically teaching rebellion against the Lord. Even Daniel, as he confessed the sins of his people, said in Daniel 9:9, “To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him.” All rebellion is ultimately against God. It may manifest itself against men, but it is ultimately against God.

Now go back to Numbers 16, because there is a third truth: the most common rebellion is the rebellion of those in office and in positions of authority. When we think about rebellion, we normally think about rebellion among the people. But the most common form of rebellion is rebellion by those who are in office or who have power.

The Most Common Rebellion: Those in Office

Numbers 16:2 says, “And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown.” In verse 17, Moses says, “And take every man his censer, and put incense in them, and bring ye before the LORD every man his censer, two hundred and fifty censers; thou also, and Aaron, each of you his censer.” In this passage, two hundred and fifty princes of the congregation of Israel rebelled against Moses and Aaron.

Two hundred and fifty princes of the congregation were discontented with their position and their power. They wanted a greater position and more power. They wanted to be the ones who called the shots and were in charge. That is why they said to Moses and Aaron, “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?" Isn't that amazing?

Look at what Moses said in Numbers chapter 16, verses 9 and 10. Korah was a Levite; the rest of the men were Reubenites. Moses said to Korah, evidently with others present, "Hear now, 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? And he hath brought thee near to him, and all thy brethren the sons of Levi with thee: and seek ye the priesthood also?"

What is he saying? You are not content with what God has given you? You are not content with the position and the power? God has called you to serve around the tabernacle and to serve His people. Are you seeking the priesthood as well?

It was not common people who were rebelling in Numbers chapter 16. They were princes and rulers. If you compare our situation today with Numbers chapter 16, you will see the same exact truth. Our leaders are in rebellion against God, His law, the Constitution, and their oaths to support the Constitution. Historically and biblically, rebellion has usually originated with those in power. Those in power provoked the resistance.

When the ten northern tribes seceded and left, it was because of the tyranny of Rehoboam. You can read about that in 1 Kings chapter 12. When the colonies seceded from England, it was because of the tyranny of George III and Parliament. When the South seceded in 1861, it was because those in power in Congress refused to keep their constitutional oaths and observe the Constitution.

The truth is that most of our politicians today have never even read the Constitution, although they have taken an oath to uphold it. Those few who have read it have successfully ignored it and not allowed it to trouble their consciences. Rebellion is usually found in those in positions of power. Even the so-called President of the United States is in rebellion. Our Vice President is in rebellion. Our Congress is in rebellion. Most of our state houses are in rebellion.

Dissatisfaction with Our Stations in Life

Like Amos, I can say, “I am not a prophet, neither am I a prophet’s son.” But I genuinely believe the next wave of secession and resistance in this country will be caused by the rebellion of those in power, office, and authority. People will finally reach a breaking point and say, “We’re not going to take it anymore.” Mark it down: that is what is going to happen. That is what happened in 1776, in 1861, and in 1 Kings chapter 12. I am simply saying that the most common form of rebellion is found among those in office.

The Declaration of Independence says, “Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.” The Declaration of Independence is a manifestation of the causes of resistance to England and George III; it demonstrates and manifests the tyrannical acts of George III.

Usually, the most common form of rebellion is found in those who are in positions of rulership and authority. Fourthly, rebellion has its source in dissatisfaction with the providence of God regarding our stations in life.

Rebellion's Root: Discontent with God's Providence

What did Moses say to Korah and these men in Numbers chapter 16, verses 9 and 10? “Seemeth it but a small thing to you that God has separated the whole tribe of Levi to be ministers to him? Your service is around the tabernacle. Your service is to Aaron and to his sons. Your service is to the people. Is that a small thing?” And then, “And seek ye the priesthood also?” Can you not be content to be ministers? Now you also want to be priests.

The Reubenites were not Levites, obviously, but they were discontented with their position as well. They were discontented

because their father was the eldest, yet he was disinherited, and they lost the primacy among the tribes. All rebellion has the root of discontent and dissatisfaction. Let me say this again: all rebellion against God has its root in discontent and dissatisfaction.

Consider the thief. Theft displays our covetous discontent with the property that God has allowed us to possess. We think the property of someone else will make us happier, and therefore we violate the eighth commandment, "Thou shalt not steal," in order to be happy. Why are men thieves? They are discontented with what they have. They are dissatisfied with what they have.

Adultery likewise displays our covetous discontentment with our spouses. We tend to think that somehow another man's wife or another woman's husband would make us happier. Therefore, we violate the seventh and the tenth commandments. It is discontent.

Likewise, there are many people who are dissatisfied with their jobs and their positions at work. Instead of faithful labor, patience, and hard work, they begin to lie, cheat, slander, and libel others in order to move up the ladder, violating God's law. What? All because we are discontented and dissatisfied with God's providence in our lives. We cannot wait. We cannot be patient. We cannot trust Him. No, what we want to do is violate His law and live in rebellion. Rebellion always has the root of discontent and dissatisfaction. Most people rebel because they do not like their station in life.

They do not like the work or the ministry God has assigned them. You have heard the old adage, "There's too many chiefs and not enough Indians." Arthur W. Pink made a statement I have never forgotten: "The main reason we do not like the Pope is because we want to be the Pope ourselves." That is the truth. If Popery is unbiblical, and it is, our desire to be the Pope is equally unbiblical. Whenever we are discontented with God's providence in our lives, we end up rebelling against Him and condemning ourselves.

Proverbs 17:11 says, "An evil man seeketh only rebellion: therefore a cruel messenger shall be sent against him." Levi wanted the priesthood. I do not know what all the sons of Reuben wanted, but Levi wanted the priesthood, and the sons of Reuben wanted

something else. And guess what? It was rebellion against God. Yes, a cruel messenger was sent against them. God destroyed them.

Rebellion is Contagious; Flee from It

Fifthly, understand that rebellion is contagious. We must get away from it and from those who are promoting it as quickly as possible. Numbers 16:19 says, “And Korah gathered all the congregation against them unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the congregation.” The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, “Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment.” Then Moses said, “Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins.” What did he say? Get away from them. Do not touch anything they have. Do not desire anything they have. They are about to be consumed; they are going to be destroyed.

God not only demands that we not participate in rebellion; He also commands us to flee from it. God said in Exodus chapter 23 and verse 2, “Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil.”

This rebellion was begun with 250 princes, 250 rulers, leaders, men in authority. What does God say? It does not matter who the leaders of rebellion are. It does not matter their positions or their power. If it is rebellion, God says, have nothing to do with it. Get as far away from it as you could possibly get. Touch nothing of theirs. Desire nothing of theirs.

When you examine a lot of the extremely wealthy men in the world, they are all in rebellion to God. We talk about millionaires; they are billionaires, many times over. I have heard Christians say, “Oh, what I could do with their money.” I do not want their money. I do not want anything they have, because everything they have is in rebellion to God, and God says, get away from it.

Look at Psalm 37, beginning there at verse 1. “Fret not thyself because of evildoers.” We have plenty of evildoers in this world, a lot of them in positions of power, some with an awful lot of money. But God says, “Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.” Why? “For they shall soon

be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. Trust in the LORD." Here is what we had better do: "Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday." Wow! "Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity." What is he saying?

Do not desire them, do not desire what they have, and do not desire to be with them. Rather, trust in the Lord, delight yourself in Him, commit your way to Him, and lean totally and completely upon Him.

Rebellion Always Destroys Families

Before making some applications, consider one last sad truth from Numbers 16, beginning with verse 27: rebellion always destroys families.

Rebellion Destroys Families

"So they gat 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. 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 mind. 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 appertain 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 unto 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."

Think of the homes destroyed in this passage. It happened instantaneously. Think over your lifetime of the families and homes you know that have been destroyed because of rebellion. I can name families one after another, some that I am helping deal with right now.

Many homes have been destroyed by the rebellion of children. Many others have been destroyed by the rebellion of parents. I could give illustration after illustration of children and parents who have died violent deaths while in rebellion against God. Wherever there is rebellion in a family, the family is basically destroyed. It may be the rebellion of the children, the husband, the wife, or both parents—but it is rebellion.

In Numbers chapter 26, we see that, as wicked and rebellious as Korah was, at least his grown children did not perish with him. Moses said, "Get you over here. Separate yourselves from them." Evidently, Korah's children did exactly that. Numbers 26:10–11 says, "And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up together with Korah, when that company died, what time the fire devoured two hundred and fifty men: and they became a sign. Notwithstanding the children of Korah died not." The sons of Korah separated themselves, and they did not die with their father.

By the way, the Korhites, or the Korathites—to call both names in the Bible—were not Levites; they were singers. One of the sons of Korah wrote Psalm 42. Or David wrote Psalm 42 for the sons of Korah to sing. Isn't that amazing? Here was a family that was destroyed, but those who did not go along with the rebellion, and separated themselves, lived.

Let me make it very simple for you: if you desire to destroy your family, all you have to do is rebel. That is it, and you will destroy your family. Rebellion not only destroys families; it merits and brings forth the death penalty. Rebellion will not only destroy families and individuals; it will also destroy cities, states, and nations.

God said in Hosea 13:16, "Samaria shall become desolate." Why? "She hath rebelled against her God: they shall fall by the sword: their infants shall be dashed in pieces, and their women with child shall

be ripped up." Why? Because she hath rebelled against the LORD. Remember, "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry." Both witchcraft and idolatry merit and draw forth the death penalty.

Submission to the Word of God

Applications: Submission to God's Word and Modeling Obedience

The first application is this: Do you realize that the most important aspect of your Christian life is being in submission and subjection to the Word of God? That is the greatest aspect of our Christian life. Our obedience demonstrates our faith; our lack of obedience demonstrates our lack of faith and our rebellion against God.

If God tells me, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," and I do not commit adultery, I am in submission to Him. But if I go out and commit adultery, I am in rebellion against Him. You have to remember this: you cannot commit sin without violating the law of God. First John 3:4 says, "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." You cannot commit sin without violating God's law.

What did our Lord say in John 14:21? "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." Then He said in verse 24, "He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings." Therefore, the greatest interest that you and I should have as Christians is being in submission and subjection to the Word of God twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. If we are not in submission and subjection, we are in rebellion. The wages of rebellion happen to be death, because rebellion is sin.

Here is the second application. The greatest gift that we could possibly pass on to our children, outside of our faith, is a tender and obedient heart. For our children to understand what a tender, obedient heart is, they must see it in the lives of their parents. If you as a father or mother are unsubmissive and refuse to be in subjection to the Word of God, do not be surprised if your children are unsubmissive and refuse to be in subjection to you. Children usually live out what they see in their parents.

I know there are exceptions. But if we want to pass on a tender and obedient heart to our children, they must see it in us. That means we must pray every day that God would make us submissive. Let me give you one last passage. Turn to First Peter, chapter 1. Here is a prayer that you should pray every day—not only every day, but as a constant, continual prayer: daily, hourly, minute by minute. Look what he said in First Peter 1.

Verse 13 says, "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." Now watch: "As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance." What is an obedient child? An obedient child is one who does not fashion himself the way he used to when he was lost, in sin, and in rebellion. He fashions himself according to the will of God and the Word of God. He follows the principles and precepts in the Word of God. So, in verse 14, we are to be as obedient children, not fashioning ourselves according to the former lusts in our ignorance. But here is why we should be obedient: "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy, saith the Lord."

Holiness is equated with obedience, and obedience is equated with a submissive heart. If we want our children to have that, they must see it in us. The essence of rebellion is violating the law of God and refusing to be in submission and subjection to His Word.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to thee this day. We thank you for our Lord and Savior, and we ask, Heavenly Father, that you would be pleased to give us an obedient heart, a submissive heart. Help us, Lord, not to be rebellious and not to fashion our lives according to the former lusts of our ignorance. Thankfully, they were former, and they were lusts; and thankfully, Lord, it was done in ignorance and not by premeditation. But now we ask that you fashion our lives according to your word and your will and your way. Give us an obedient heart, that we might be holy as thou art holy, in all manner of conversation, because it is written, "Be ye holy; for I am holy, saith the Lord." We ask these things in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

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