

Here in this chapter is related rebellion against Moses and Aaron initially by three men of the congregation against their authority. The rebels in disputing, no doubt by gossip, persuaded others that Moses in particular, but also Aaron were taking too much authority upon themselves. Their argument was that the entire congregation was holy. And this was true in a way, for they were all called of God.-

It is said in V1 that they took men but “men” is not in the original context and thus it may be considered that they “took council”. Thus by this which started as four men, others were affected and the poison they spread affected two hundred and fifty men. But they had a night to ponder (sadly in their case it seems to more deeply entrench themselves in their ill feelings.)

This is the subtlety of such; they have an element of truth on their side but not the whole truth. In support of their argument we may look at Exodus 19:5-6: *Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.*

But this was never meant to distract from the choice by God of Aaron in the priesthood nor of Moses in general as a leader. This choice of the nation is later exemplified in Ezra 9 where the people were found not to have separated themselves from those nations around them. So where there is a falling away from the Truth the people of God must discern between right and wrong. And are saved from the judgement to come.

These situations are allowed and even controlled by God so that the Truth can be kept pure and those whose hearts are not pure believe

the lie as shown in 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12: *And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be condemned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*

The whole of this chapter bears relevance to this.

Moses did not stand and argue with them (he knew that God would answer him as He had spoken to Moses many times before. Even at Moses first encounter at the bush that was aflame but not burnt). At that time he called upon the power and manifestation of God which was available to him, and so he did now. His reaction to the accusation was to fall down; he was so upset.-It went straight to his heart. But it was not the first time that Moses had felt their rejection (chapter 14). In rejecting Moses they were also rejecting God. The Lord Yahweh offered at that time to make a new nation of Moses but Moses saw problems for The Truth itself if that were to happen. (Surely it was to evince such thoughts that God made such arguments and Moses himself became more grounded in his faith and loyalty to God)

So Moses did not stand and argue with them but sought for God Himself to show His choice vs5. He had tried to reason with them concerning the great privilege they had in that they were called upon to do the service of The Tabernacle (v9)

When divisions occur in these latter days the faithful are not openly vindicated but God keeps them safe in The Truth (Christadelphians having fallen away fail to maintain Math 18vs 15-20 saying “once a brother, always a brother”)

Here Israel did not appreciate the wonderful blessing in being the nation which God had blessed but they “murmured”v41. This word is interesting A primitive root; to stop (usually over night); by implication to stay permanently; hence (in a bad sense) to be obstinate (especially in words, to complain): - abide (all night),

continue, dwell, endure, grudge, be left, lie all night, (cause to) lodge (all night, this night), (make to) murmur, remain, tarry.

All the above shows that their hearts were not pure and safe in the simplicity of the Truth. They had escaped from bondage as slaves, but now they saw that slavery existence with rose tinted glasses-“a land flowing with milk and honey.”v13

Moses brought up in the luxury of Pharaoh's house had to flee for his life but it was then in coming back from the wilderness that he realised he had a mission to release the people of God from slavery and to bring them into the Promised Land

Moses response to the rebellion was to rely upon the Lord and for Him the Lord to manifest his will with these people-who should be fit for the service of God.

Num 16:5 And Moses spake unto Korah and unto all his company, saying, Even tomorrow 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.

So Moses sent to them pointing out how little they valued their position of service in the house of The LORD, Yahweh

v9-11 and now they sought the priesthood-they murmured (which means to dwell on something)-so it was as a fixation (they could not get it out of their minds). Their position already gave them a nearness to God in the service that they did above the congregation in general. It was in their heads but not their hearts

So we must value our calling (striving to be worthy) looking to the end even the salvation of our souls believing that God has set the members in the ecclesias as it pleased him see Romans 12v4; 1Corinthians 12 vs18/27

Moses sought the help and support of God telling them that they should come before God to clear the matter. It is then that they show

how demented their minds were in describing Egypt the slavery that they had just escaped, as a land flowing with milk and honey. That was how they were to look upon the Promised Land that they had commenced this journey for –having passed through the Red Sea on dry land (this faithlessness beggars belief but we are warned in case we fail to look on baptism as the same miracle of rescue from dead works {it was Lots wife who looked back and became a pillar of salt})

We see from v10 that it was ambition that caused their going astray- not ambition that their service to God would be unfailing as it should have been, but ambition for reward now in this life in the service of God seeking to be leaders over the people, whereas it is God who sets the members in the body (Eph4)

When Moses called for them to present their case they refused and then at that time their warped minds are revealed-slavery from which they had just been delivered was described as THE PROMISED LAND further they accused Moses of bringing them out of it for his own esteem, aggrandisement and false pretences. It is difficult to respond to such travesty of the facts.

The malignment of Moses could not descend much further than v14. No wonder that Moses was very angry and hurt but he declared his innocence and his reaction was to call upon God for help and support, not get into a slanging match. So the test was set to see whose offering God would respect.

Moses and Aaron must separate themselves from the tents of Korah Dathan and Abiram. God had threatened to consume the whole congregation. Surely this was a further test for Moses faith because God had revealed His purpose in Abraham. Moses must then say to all Israel to distance themselves from the tents of Korah Dathan and Abiram when they made their offering. Moses showed respect for Aaron's position as a priest.

The glory of the Lord had appeared to all the congregation Num 16:27 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.

Moses makes his declaration. Note v 29 and 30, the curse was upon the men only and not the children. Numbers 16:35 *And there came out a fire from the LORD, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense.*

Verse 38: - The censers of these sinners used 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 they made broad plates for they are holy.*

Verse 41 - Moses was then accused of killing the people of the Lord!!

Verse 42 *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.*

Then there was another test for Moses in verse 45 *Get you up from among this congregation, that I may consume them as in a moment. And they fell upon their faces.*

But Moses was alert as ever verse 46: *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 the LORD; the plague is begun. 47 -50: 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. And Aaron returned unto Moses unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and the plague was stayed.

Which leads to these thoughts - Hebrews 12:28,29: *Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire.*

Love to all brothers and sisters

Brother Ken