

## Characteristics of the Spirit of Korah

Numbers 16:1-56... that still affect the church today



### Who is Korah

- Korah was the son of Izhar and a first cousin of Moses and Aaron (Ex. 6:21). He was equal in rank with Aaron within the tribe of Levi.
- A Levite Gatekeeper “porter” (I Chronicles 9:17-19)
- His descendants were ministers of things in the temple (I Chronicles 9:31), and an important branch of singers (2 Chronicles 20:19)
- He was Influential well known religious leader among his tribe.
- Korah’s position as leader in this rebellion was evidently the result of his personal character, which was that of a bold, haughty and ambitious man.
- He was associated in the Bible along with the sins of Cain and Balaam

**Jude 1:8-12** Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries. Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" But these speak evil of whatever they do not know; and whatever they know naturally, like brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves. Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah. These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves. They are clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots;

### What they did:

Korah (along with Abiram and Dathan) conspired with some two hundred and fifty tribal leaders to challenge the authority of Moses and the priestly leadership of Aaron.



### Complaints/Doctrines of Korah

1. **Moses and Aaron have set themselves above the rest of Israel – they teach against authority and submission.**

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

**Numbers 16:13** "Is it a small thing that you have brought us up out of a land flowing with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, that you should keep acting like a prince over us?"

2. **All the congregation is holy (priesthood of the believers). Moses and Aaron have kept the priesthood to themselves (excluding them the office of the priesthood, and their being confined—those among them who were Levites—to the inferior service of the tabernacle).**
3. **Moses has failed to bring Israel to the Promised Land – Korah's associates had their own idea as to how long they should take to get to the Promised Land. And they had waited long enough!**

**Numbers 16:14** "Moreover you have not brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey, nor given us inheritance of fields and vineyards. Will you put out the eyes of these men? We will not come up!"

### Observations of those who operate in the spirit of Korah:

1. They are well liked, persuasive, have charisma and an anointing on their life (Similar to Absalom).
2. An irony is that many times what they say is accurate and sounds normal in the natural, but their underlying motives are wrong.
3. Most times they are spiritual in what they say but are often hyper-spiritual or have a religious spirit. This “spirituality” is a cover to cause people to not question their motives, doctrine or methods.
4. They want others to submit to them but they are not willing to submit themselves to authority (i.e., husbands who expect wives to submit but are not submitted themselves are hypocrites and abusive of scriptural teachings on submission).
5. They do not like change – they want to restore the old order of things.
6. They dislike organization charts. Some people claim they will only submit to the pastor, but not to delegated authority. If you can't submit to delegated authority, you can't submit to God.

**Luke 7:7-10** "Therefore I did not even think myself worthy to come to You. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. "For I also am a man placed under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." When Jesus heard these things, He marveled at him, and turned around and said to the crowd that followed Him, "I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!" And those who were sent, returning to the house, found the servant well who had been sick."

7. They lack understanding of the workings of God.

**Psalms 106:7** "Our fathers in Egypt did not understand Your wonders; They did not remember the multitude of Your mercies, But rebelled by the sea—the Red Sea."

8. They are discontent with their position.

**Numbers 16:8-9** Then Moses said to Korah, "Hear now, you sons of Levi: "Is it a small thing to you that the God of Israel has separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to Himself, to do the work of the tabernacle of the Lord, and to stand before the congregation to serve them; "

9. They are jealous: Korah apparently was jealous that Aaron held the position of high priest.

10. Although he has a lot of people in his corner, Moses reminds Korah and company they are really speaking against God.

**Numbers 16:11** "Therefore you and all your company are gathered together against the Lord."

11. They are critical of but not accountable to an assembly. They will often not show up at the regular assembly, inconsistent in attendance.

**Numbers 16:14** ... We will not come up!"

12. They have a tendency to draw back or quit when they don't get their way, or in control, are challenged, or given preeminence.



## Methods of Korah

1. They will try to get others to rise up against someone in leadership.

**Numbers 16:1-3** "Now Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men; and they rose up before Moses with some of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty leaders of the congregation, representatives of the congregation, men of renown. They gathered together against Moses and Aaron."

2. They will campaign for their own ideas and recruit others to help them. Before approaching leadership they will create a groundswell of opinion in their favor, so that if their method, doctrine, etc., is not chosen the leadership will appear to be the fools. They try to create an atmosphere of intimidation, putting a leader in a corner, making it difficult to say no.

3. They are critical of leaders' weaknesses or lack of "success" in church. This came before Moses was told by his father-in-law, Jethro (who was trying to help him), that he was doing too much (Exodus 17-18). Moses then made changes in leadership structure and positioned himself to become a better leader.

4. They place themselves and their counsel above leadership and the assembly. They will often meet in unsponsored home groups or dinner parties, fellowships, using this as a platform for their agenda, knowing there will be no accountability in this setting.

## Examples of Korah in the local church

### **Elders Board**

This church had 500 members, property and was in the midst of raising funds. The elder board felt like the pastor should sell part of the property and settle for a more affordable vision. When the pastor did not go along with their proposal, many of them resigned the board and left the church, causing a huge split which brought their numbers down to a handful. Many of this board were prominent people from professional backgrounds, businesses, police officer, etc. One elder went to another church and was part of a board causing great problems for the pastor there. One lost his children; one's wife had a breakdown. One left and did not become a part of any leadership in a church, and settled for non-charismatic churches.

### **Elder at church:**

He came from another church and brought many people with him. He was highly intelligent, spiritual, a leader in the business field, and was easily accepted as an elder. When the church resisted his efforts to become a "User Friendly" church, so that it would possibly attract more numbers (be successful as *he* envisioned), he resigned as elder, left the church and took the people who came with him. He *appeared* to want the church to succeed, but he came with an agenda.

## Characteristics of rebellion:

- Seeking the overthrow of a leader.
- Disrupting the leader's ability to effectively lead.
- Grumbling against a leader or his methods.
- Causing dissension or division among the flock.
- A spirit of defiance.
- A backlog of un-confessed offenses in the body.
- Spiritual blessing and activity of the Holy Spirit seems to be missing.
- Pride - in the form of actively seeking a place of leadership in the "spotlight".
- Suggesting that a leader is not needed or is unworthy to lead.
- Enticing others to follow rebellious suggestion.
- Counseling contrary doctrines opposed to the Word.
- Unwillingness to repent, individually or collectively.
- Refusing to be counseled when in error.
- Confusion - disorientation in the congregation.

## Consequences:

- Unless there is deep repentance, they become troublesome and worthless to the body of Christ the rest of their life.
- Incur the wrath of God
- Affect the majority for evil

## Conclusion:

- The spirit of Korah will bring destruction to individuals, families, businesses, and churches.
- Be careful of how you let people affect you. Korah inspired even the leaders who should have been the "watchmen."
  - Ask yourself If you are easily swayed by influential people
- Seek God for a gift of discerning of spirits.
- Beware of the spirit of murmuring and complaining. It could stop you from entering your promised land.
- Stop blaming your former church, pastor, or leaders for your problem.
- Mark those who cause division:

**Romans 16:17** "Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them."

## Excuses people make for Korah:

- He/She has good in them.
- They want to help the church be a success. They mean well.
- They are spiritual.
- They are intelligent, professional people, successful in business.
- They are family oriented – leaders of their families.
- They are so gifted.

## Test the spirits:

- What is their hidden motive?
- What is their track record?
- What is their fruit?
- Do they complain and murmur?
- Do they campaign for their ideas?
- Do they struggle when their ideas are not implemented?
- Do they fail to support ideas that are not theirs?
- Do they have difficulty with submission?
- Are they hyper-spiritual?
- Do they speak down or despairingly to those in authority?
- Do they make one in authority above them look bad?
- Do they seek authority without being under authority?

