

## **Numbers 15-17**

Good evening, church.

Tonight we are going to continue our study of Numbers.

We will be picking it up in Chapter 15.

What a turbulent book it has been so far.

The people from the moment they left Sinai have complained and grumbled against God and Moses His servant.

Last time we were together we saw even Moses' family had to learn some difficult lessons about God and His chosen leader.

Remember Moses is just a man like you or I.

There is nothing special about this man Moses, except one thing... God has chosen him and set him apart.

Remember God chooses the weak things of this world, the base things, God has chosen the foolish things, the despised things, that no flesh can glory in His presence.

And we have followed this man Moses from Exodus unto now, and he is a man steeped in failure.

I know tradition likes to exalt the Biblical heroes, but as we look at the Word of God truthfully, we see Moses as a man who has fought his calling from the day he was called.

We have seen him try to quite time and time again, and even asked for death to end his ministry.

And in the weeks to come, we will even see Moses come under the discipline of the Lord, and be kept from the Promise Land.

And it is interesting, as we have journeyed through the Bible, from Genesis, we have come across many holy men of God, men of faith, but with every one of them, they have died, and we have moved on to the next person or persons of faith.

You see the Bible never ever exalts men, it tells a story of a God, who uses men to bring glory to Himself, to make Himself known.

And Moses, is one of those men who God has set apart for a special work of revealing Himself to humanity.

And because Moses is just an ordinary man, we have seen continually the people have come against him.

They cannot understand why God would choose such an ordinary man.

And because man thinks so highly of himself, the people continually come against Moses, and many think they can aspire to be that man who will lead.

Understand it is the calling of God that sets a person apart for any spiritual leadership position.

I have never seen someone who has manipulated and connived his way to a place of leadership succeed in that position within the church.

Moses, the man, was called of God, and the people, here, only two years rescued from the worldly influence of Egypt, they are still getting to know their God.

And as we saw last week, they have no resolve to get to know the God who rescued them, they fight against His Word continually.

And it has now cost them entrance into the Promise Land, as last week we saw they believed the word of the 10 spies over the Word of God, and they wanted to go back toward Egypt.

God at this point has decided they will wonder in the wilderness now for 38 more years.

Now these people thought Canaan was a terrible place, yet at the news of them wondering in this unforgiving treacherous wilderness, they try to take Canaan apart from God's power and they fail miserably, as it becomes obvious they will pay for their disbelief.

They will wonder until that generation of rebellious Hebrews is dead and gone.

God will use their children to fulfill His promises to this nation, and as that younger generation watches their parents pay a horrible price for their disobedience.

I imagine the faith of this younger will be embolden as they mature in the wilderness, and develop a healthy fear of God.

Moses will lead the longest funeral procession now, and there is not much said about the 38 years of the wilderness march.

We know the older generation remained obstinate toward the Lord, before the next generation goes to take the Promise Land, Joshua will have them circumcised, because their parents disobeyed this covenant.

Stephan, the first Martyr bore witness of this wondering generation and said in **Acts 7:42-43** Then God turned and gave them up to worship the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the Prophets: 'Did you offer Me slaughtered animals and sacrifices during forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel? 43 You also took up the tabernacle of Moloch, And the star of your god Remphan, Images which you made to worship; And I will carry you away beyond Babylon.'

We see they did not offer sacrifices and turned to the false demonic gods during this time.

Tonight we will see more accounts of rebellion, and this generation will fail to understand or know the God who rescued them.

They show no fear or remorse over past sins, and even repeat some of the erroneous errors we have already seen as Moses, the man, and Aaron the priest will be continually despised and rejected.

But first God interjects a promise to the younger generation here in Chapter 15... and explains to them, they will enter the land, and when they do they are to offer the offerings commanded them.

### **Laws of Grain and Drink Offerings**

15:1 And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you have come into the land you are to inhabit, which I am giving to you,

The older generation will die in the wilderness, yet God makes sure the younger generation understands His promises will come to pass.

He makes it clear throughout the chapter that they will be in the land one day to offer these offerings.

They are offerings we have dealt with in great detail throughout Leviticus, so we will not spend much time on them here.

3 and you make an offering by fire to the Lord, a burnt offering or a sacrifice, to fulfill a vow or as a freewill offering or in your appointed feasts, to make a sweet aroma to the Lord, from the herd or the flock, 4 then he who presents his offering to the Lord shall bring a grain offering of one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with one-fourth of a hin of oil; 5 and one-fourth of a hin of wine as a drink offering you shall prepare with the burnt offering or the sacrifice, for each lamb. 6 Or for a ram you shall prepare as a grain offering two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with one-third of a hin of oil; 7 and as a drink offering you shall

offer one-third of a hin of wine as a sweet aroma to the Lord.

Notice in verse 8 how confident God is this younger generation will be in the land.

He speaks as though it has already happened...

8 And when you prepare a young bull as a burnt offering, or as a sacrifice to fulfill a vow, or as a peace offering to the Lord,

This new generation will learn through the miseries that their parents will drag them through.

Although their parents will turn to idolatry and superstitions, God will do a new work in the children 20 years and under.

And by the time they enter the Land they will be a fierce faith filled army of God.

They will know firsthand the consequences of challenging God's ways, as they have the thousands of tombs behind them as a reminder.

This younger generation will inherit the land, and they will offer the sacrifices commanded of the Lord.

All of which speak to the person of Jesus Christ.

9 then shall be offered with the young bull a grain offering of three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with half a hin of oil; 10 and you shall bring as the drink offering half a hin of wine as an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the Lord.

11 'Thus it shall be done for each young bull, for each ram, or for each lamb or young goat. 12 According to the number that you prepare, so you shall do with everyone according to their number. 13 All who are native-born shall do these things in this manner, in presenting an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the Lord. 14 And if a stranger dwells with you, or whoever is among you throughout your generations, and would present an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the Lord, just as you do, so shall he do. 15 One ordinance shall be for you of the assembly and for the stranger who dwells with you, an ordinance forever throughout your generations; as you are, so

shall the stranger be before the Lord. 16 One law and one custom shall be for you and for the stranger who dwells with you."

After instructing that even the stranger in the land is to be expected to offer the same offerings, verse 17 explains...

17 Again the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 18 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you come into the land to which I bring you, 19 then it will be, when you eat of the bread of the land, that you shall offer up a heave offering to the Lord. 20 You shall offer up a cake of the first of your ground meal as a heave offering; as a heave offering of the threshing floor, so shall you offer it up. 21 Of the first of your ground meal you shall give to the Lord a heave offering throughout your generations.

We see here another regulation for this future generation that will inherit the promise land.

When they arrive and they start enjoying the bounty from the crops, they must offer the first of the dough as a heave offering, it would be for the priests.

Like the tithes, we see they were to bring the firstfruits in as an offering to the Lord.

Here this standard of the firstfruits is brought into the home life.

When the wife at home is baking in the kitchen, she was to set aside a portion for the Lord.

This became a tradition for the Hebrew woman, who would throw a handful of dough into the fire to offer a mini-sacrifice to the Lord, making every kitchen a house of God. Wenham

Understand these ordinances were there so the people of God could acknowledge God as their provider and sustainer.

Jesus commended His enemies in Matthew 23:23 for setting aside God's portion even in their mints, anise, and cumin, but He rebuked their neglect on the weightier matters.

And these principles of firstfruits and tithing were a way to remind the believer where their blessings flowed from.

And for us today our giving to the Lord is a way to say thank you to Him, and acknowledge Him for providing for our families.

Today we use our money to do this, to give glory and honor to God, to thank Him for giving us the ability to work and earn our living by giving a portion of our income to the Lord.

These dough laws show how deep and demanding God's law went into the Hebrew way of life.

The demand and depth of the law leads to the next section dealing with someone unintentionally sinning...

And these laws sum up what we learned in Leviticus 4-5:13.

So we will not labor through the reading tonight....

### **Laws Concerning Unintentional Sin**

22 'If you sin unintentionally, and do not observe all these commandments which the Lord has spoken to Moses — 23 all that the Lord has commanded you by the hand of Moses, from the day the Lord gave commandment and onward throughout your generations — 24 then it will be, if it is unintentionally committed, without the knowledge of the congregation, that the whole congregation shall offer one young bull as a burnt offering, as a sweet aroma to the Lord, with its grain offering and its drink offering, according to the ordinance, and one kid of the goats as a sin offering. 25 So the priest shall make atonement for the whole congregation of the children of Israel, and it shall be forgiven them, for it was unintentional; they shall bring their offering, an offering made by fire to the Lord, and their sin offering before the Lord, for their unintended sin. 26 It shall be forgiven the whole congregation of the children of Israel and the stranger who dwells among them, because all the people did it unintentionally.

27 'And if a person sins unintentionally, then he shall bring a female goat in its first year as a sin offering. 28 So the priest shall make atonement for the person who sins unintentionally, when he sins unintentionally before the Lord, to make atonement for him; and it shall be forgiven him. 29 You shall have one law for him who sins unintentionally, for him who is native-born among the children of Israel and for the stranger who dwells among them.

This section from verse 22-29 dealt with sins that the people were not aware they had committed.

The camp still needed to be Holy, it was the dwelling place of God, and although they might be unintentional they had to come to God the appointed way.

God would forgive them as they recognized their error.

Understand mankind is in a sinful fallen standing before God.

Even if people are ignorant to the gospel, they are still lost.

They still need an offering on their behalf.

The hearing of the gospel does not make them a sinner, every man is a sinner before the gospel reaches them.

It is only by the sacrifice that these animals pointed ahead toward can anyone find reprieve from their fallen state.

**Heb. 10:4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.**

And later on the writer clarifies for us..

**Heb. 10:10 By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.**

And Jesus Christ came to seek and save the lost, and the gospel is the remedy.

But understand blood was shed even for those sins that were not blatant and the sinner is responsible for admitting guilt.

It is through confession of sin we find forgiveness and cleansing.

Next God speaks the person who sins willfully...

### Law Concerning Presumptuous Sin

30 'But the person who does anything presumptuously, whether he is native-born or a stranger, that one brings reproach on the Lord, and he shall be cut off from among his people. 31 Because he has despised the word of the Lord, and has broken His commandment, that person shall be completely cut off; his guilt shall be upon him.'"

This is an arrogant stance against God's Law here.

Knowing what God demands and deliberately coming against His Will.

These are the kind of people that the Apostle Paul described as...

**Rom 3:18 "There is no fear of God before their eyes."**

There is no sacrifice here in God's Law for them, they are to be cut-off and remain with no remedy.

They are to bear their own guilt.

And Moses records next an example of one of these high-handed sins toward God.

### **Penalty for Violating the Sabbath (Ex 31:12-17)**

32 Now while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering sticks on the Sabbath day. 33 And those who found him gathering sticks brought him to Moses and Aaron, and to all the congregation. 34 They put him under guard, because it had not been explained what should be done to him.

35 Then the Lord said to Moses, "The man must surely be put to death; all the congregation shall stone him with stones outside the camp." 36 So, as the Lord commanded Moses, all the congregation brought him outside the camp and stoned him with stones, and he died.

Certainly this man knew God's law regarding the Sabbath.

Ex 20:8-10 "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10

but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates.

Yet this man showed disdain for God's Law, and here case law is made for the punishment.

This is a capital offense and the death penalty will be enforced on any who follow this man's example.

And you know, it is a dangerous state of mind to be in as Christians.

To willfully sin, because you can just ask God for forgiveness afterward.

It might be that Christians, who willfully and deliberately sin against God, are not Christians at all.

**1 John 5:18 We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him.**

People who are careless about sin because as they believe "I will just confess and God will forgive me."

These kind of people fail to understand the awfulness of sin or the high cost of God's Grace. Wiersbe

Our sins were paid for at a great price.

If you are a Christian and careless with sin, it will invite in your life great chastening from the Lord.

Next, we have another command for the children of Israel to have a reminder of who God is and His Holy Law, so they are without excuse

### **Tassels on Garments**

37 Again the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 38 "Speak to the children of Israel: Tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put a blue thread in the tassels of the corners. 39 And you shall have the tassel, that you may look upon it and remember all the commandments of the Lord and do them, and that you may not follow the harlotry to which your own heart and your own eyes are inclined, 40 and that you may remember and do all My commandments, and be holy for your God. 41 I am the Lord your God, who brought

you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am the Lord your God."

They are commanded to make a border of blue on their garments, a heavenly color.

It would be a constant reminder that they were God's people, set apart to Him, for a unique calling.

They would be reminded as they walked here on earth that they had a heavenly purpose.

Many Christians today need this "Border of Blue," you know as that guy cuts you off, and off your mouth goes, your witness shattered.

We need to be reminded often that we are God's Children and we are set apart to live for God's purposes.

Our church shirts are a good "blue border."

The other day I was at the movies with my wife.

When a young man behind me asks, "do you go to Calvary Chapel?"

‘Why yes I do.’ Turns out he was looking for a church to attend.

I had forgotten that I had the shirt on, and honestly right before that, Jess and I were having a healthy energized debate on what line to get into to get our snacks.

Luckily our witness was not blown.

So they were to remember continually their loyalty to God with these blue tassels.

Now, next we will read of encounters from their wilderness journey.

It is not clear when these events take place during their wonderings, but they happen somewhere in their 38-year death walk.

Now remember the young eyes that are watching this generation learn these horrible lessons, and you really get a grasp on why they went in with Joshua so strong.

### **Rebellion Against Moses and Aaron**

16:1 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; 2 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. 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?"

Now Korah was a prominent man with a strong influence.

Remember the Kohathites were the Levites who carried the most sacred items, they were a prominent group.

And they camped on the south side next to Reuben, protecting the Tabernacle from the secular tribes.

Now they being near Reuben, are able to influence some men, leaders from that tribe as well.

Dathan, Abiram, and On. On we will not see again, perhaps he wises up and changes his mind in the end.

But these are men of influence as they are able to gather 250 men of the leaders of Israel.

And the drama starts with the concealing accusation, "Moses you take too much upon yourself."

Korah empowering his supporters, by explaining the whole camp is holy every one of them.

They accuse Moses of exalting himself above the people.

Now, this is a concealed and deceptive statement.

Korah, obviously is desiring more prominence within the nation.

Korah was not satisfied assisting the priesthood, he wanted to be a priest.

Now, the Kohathites had a very special calling, they would be honored more than most in the camp.

Yet it was not enough for Korah.

Now once again, we have to consider, Korah had a closer insight to this man Moses, being a part of the tabernacle work, he would know Moses a little better than the rest of the camp.

He would know Moses, the man, was nothing special at all.

And in his own heart, thought he could do better at leading these people.

Now once again, we have seen this before, and how foolish it is, that Korah thinks his outcome will be any different from even Moses' own sister who was greatly punished in front of the whole camp for her insubordination.

But when you get a man steeped in pride, who is lifted up in his own heart, who Lucifer has empowered, it is almost impossible to reason with such a man.

The disillusionment of self is one of the greatest mountains to scale.

Remember God, with this man Moses, sent him to shepherd sheep for 40 years in Midian to deal with Moses' ego.

“Self-exaltation” has been put into check in Moses by God.

So much so we read last time Moses is the meekest man on the face of the earth.

And you know God does this in His leaders, He takes them through a season of Great Humbling before He can use that man.

There is nothing more dangerous to the work of God, then a young man coming up into leadership untested and having not gone through this great humiliation.

God took me to the wilderness of the deserts of Lake Havasu to frame houses for 6 years, the sun beating the great pride out of me each day.

He knew I needed something a little more intense than the Sunshine of Southern California, so He led me to the closest thing to hell on earth to work on me.

Looking back on those years of preparation, although it was the hardest time of my life, those days building houses, I look back now and see every step of the way God was building me, and preparing me for the ministry.

Korah did not have the preparation and humiliation Moses did, that demanded a dependency on God.

Korah thought too highly of himself, and it will be costly for him and his followers.

And Moses takes a position of humility once again, and falls on his face.

You see Moses knows he is nothing, but the God who called him to lead is being challenged, so he hits the ground once again.

4 So when Moses heard it, he fell on his face; 5 and he spoke to Korah and all his company, saying,

"Tomorrow morning the Lord will show who is His and who is holy, and will cause him to come near to Him.

That one whom He chooses He will cause to come near to Him. 6 Do this: Take censers, Korah and all your

company; 7 put fire in them and put incense in them before the Lord tomorrow, and it shall be that the man whom the Lord chooses is the holy one. You take too much upon yourselves, you sons of Levi!"

Now, we see the usually silent Moses is getting fed up with these people.

Where before he would just let God speak, here the drama climaxes between him and this group, and he rebuttals Korah with "You take too much upon yourself!"

Moses poses a test for these men, and it is fascinating that all of these men, we will find later bring their incense censers before the Lord.

They are so blinded by their love for themselves they think they will fare better than Aaron's own sons Nadab and Abihu.

Don't these men remember what happened to them as they brought their censers before the Lord, they were destroyed.

And they were of the priestly lineage.

And this is what pride and selfishness will do in a person, it deludes any reason.

And Moses fed up with these men, reminds them of their position in the nation...

8 Then Moses said to Korah, "Hear now, you sons of Levi: 9 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; 10 and that He has brought you near to Himself, you and all your brethren, the sons of Levi, with you? And are you seeking the priesthood also? 11 Therefore you and all your company are gathered together against the Lord. And what is Aaron that you complain against him?"

Aaron is the man, who is God's chosen priest.

And once again, they are not opposing Aaron, but they are gathered together against the Lord.

They disregard the choice of God, and demand that they themselves be considered for this prominent job.

Next Moses speaks to the Reubenites...

12 And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, but they said, "We will not come up! 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? 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!"

Look at the arrogance of these men...

They ignore Moses call, and proclaim the pagan nation of Egypt was the land flowing with milk and honey.

They state Moses has failed to bring them into the Promise Land, and totally disregard that it was their disbelief in the beginning that has kept them out.

And Moses is getting fed up with these people, and we now see the meek Moses, the man, getting less and less patient.

We saw his climax of humility with Miriam's rebellion, yet he will go the other direction now, until, finally he will lose his temper in chapter 20.

He goes from mediating for the rebellious people to now asking for judgment.

15 Then Moses was very angry, and said to the Lord, "Do not respect their offering. I have not taken one donkey from them, nor have I hurt one of them."

16 And Moses said to Korah, "Tomorrow, you and all your company be present before the Lord — you and they, as well as Aaron. 17 Let each take his censer and put incense in it, and each of you bring his censer before the Lord, two hundred and fifty censers; both you and Aaron, each with his censer." 18 So every man took his censer, put fire in it, laid incense on it, and stood at the door of the tabernacle of meeting with Moses and Aaron. 19 And Korah gathered all the congregation against them at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. Then the glory of the Lord appeared to all the congregation.

20 And the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 21 "Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment."

22 Then they fell on their faces, and said, "O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and You be angry with all the congregation?"

23 So the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 24 "Speak to the congregation, saying, 'Get away from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.'"

25 Then Moses rose and went to Dathan and Abiram, and the elders of Israel followed him. 26 And he spoke to the congregation, saying, "Depart now from the tents of these wicked men! Touch nothing of theirs, lest you be consumed in all their sins." 27 So they got away from around the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram; and Dathan and Abiram came out and stood at the door of their tents, with their wives, their sons, and their little children.

28 And Moses said: "By this you shall know that the Lord has sent me to do all these works, for I have not

done them of my own will. 29 If these men die naturally like all men, or if they are visited by the common fate of all men, then the Lord has not sent me. 30 But if the Lord creates a new thing, and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into the pit, then you will understand that these men have rejected the Lord."

31 Now it came to pass, as he finished speaking all these words, that the ground split apart under them, 32 and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all the men with Korah, with all their goods. 33 So they and all those with them went down alive into the pit; the earth closed over them, and they perished from among the assembly. 34 Then all Israel who were around them fled at their cry, for they said, "Lest the earth swallow us up also!"

35 And a fire came out from the Lord and consumed the two hundred and fifty men who were offering incense.

Imagine the terror in this moment that the judgment of the Lord arrived.

God in His mercy gave everyone a choice, to move away from the tents of the rebellious or be consumed with them.

And the earth opened up and took these proud and lifted up men to Sheol or the pit.

The terrible cries of those falling in the pit put dread and fear into the rest of the camp.

Then just like Nadab and Abihu were slain before the Lord, so too were those arrogant 250 men standing in self-confidence before the Lord.

And they were consumed by God's Holy Fire.

36 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: 37 "Tell Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, to pick up the censers out of the blaze, for they are holy, and scatter the fire some distance away. 38 The censers of these men who sinned against their own souls, let them be made into hammered plates as a covering for the altar. Because they presented them before the Lord,

therefore they are holy; and they shall be a sign to the children of Israel." 39 So Eleazar the priest took the bronze censers, which those who were burned up had presented, and they were hammered out as a covering on the altar, 40 to be a memorial to the children of Israel that no outsider, who is not a descendant of Aaron, should come near to offer incense before the Lord, that he might not become like Korah and his companions, just as the Lord had said to him through Moses.

And there censers will serve as a constant memorial that Aaron and his sons are the priests chosen of God. The people would have no excuse, perhaps Nadab and Abihu had been a distant story at this point.

And isn't it with man, to let time kind of erase the previous lessons of God.

Now, there would be forever a memorial to what happens when God's established order is challenged.

Now in Jude, speaking about apostate false teachers, that reject authority, Jude writes...

Jude 8 Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries.

And he likens them to the rebellion here in Numbers...

Jude 11 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.

Those who oppose and reject authority within the church, are likened unto Korah.

Remember Paul warned the Ephesians in **Acts 20:28-30**

28 Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. 29 For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.

Paul warned the church there will be those who try to take authority in the church and would promote themselves as leaders.

Many church splits today have come because of the arrogance of a wolf in the Body of Christ, these false leaders.

When people are not content to serve the Lord where He has gifted them, and wants to use them, the spirit of Korah comes against the work of the Lord.

In 1 Corinthians 12 Paul explains that we all have a gift or gifts in the body, we all have a place.

They are diverse gifts given from the same Spirit.

When you find that gift, that He has given you, use it in the place He has called you to.

Not everyone will be the tongue, or the mouth, everyone is not the eye nor the hand.

We all have a place, and if you want to thrive in your work for Christ then be content with that gift.

For many years I thought I was an evangelist.

I wanted to see many people come to Christ through big moves of God.

And I remember trying to operate in the gift of evangelism in previous ministries.

You know I wanted to be able to come up to the pulpit, and just go where the spirit leads, and have my bible, and just speak like Greg Laurie or Billy Graham.

But I always ended up being completely awkward and I would be fumbling all over my words, I could not connect thoughts and ideas.

I would try to do outreaches with me preaching the gospel, and I can honestly say not one person ever came forward in any of my attempts.

I remember just feeling like a failure, but it was through others speaking into my life, that I found I was a Bible teacher.

And you know, I was in youth ministry, and I really thought dynamic presentations and evangelistic messages were the ticket to success with that age group.

But you know, as I accepted who I was in the Body of Christ, a Bible teacher, nothing dynamic about it, but it was my calling.

A calling that required much labor, reading, study and structure, I could not just wing it as a Bible teacher.

As I embraced that calling, and stopped endeavoring to be something I am not, I found out something interesting.

God began to bless the ministry, and you know what, more kids received Christ in that youth group through simple Bible teaching each week than any evangelical outreach or event we had.

Fruit came through obedience to my calling.

Listen wherever God has called you, serve Him faithfully in that calling, with contentment, and God will use you greatly for His Glory.

It is when ambition creeps into your heart, when the spirit of Korah comes upon you, are you endanger of losing your place altogether.

Korah had an honored place among the people of God, and it was not enough, and he found his name removed altogether.

We see next he was a well-liked and respected man and leader...

### **Complaints of the People**

41 On the next day all the congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, saying, "You have killed the people of the Lord." 42 Now it happened, when the congregation had gathered against Moses and Aaron, that they turned toward the tabernacle of meeting; and suddenly the cloud covered it, and the glory of the Lord appeared. 43 Then Moses and Aaron came before the tabernacle of meeting.

44 And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 45 "Get away from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment."

And they fell on their faces.

46 So Moses said to Aaron, "Take a censer and put fire in it from the altar, put incense on it, and take it

quickly to the congregation and make atonement for them; for wrath has gone out from the Lord. The plague has begun." 47 Then Aaron took it as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the assembly; and already the plague had begun among the people. So he put in the incense and made atonement for the people. 48 And he stood between the dead and the living; so the plague was stopped. 49 Now those who died in the plague were fourteen thousand seven hundred, besides those who died in the Korah incident. 50 So Aaron returned to Moses at the door of the tabernacle of meeting, for the plague had stopped.

Korah must have been a very popular man, and well liked, for his doom, instead of bringing dread and repentance brought more rebellion.

The people were so fed up with Moses and his God; they came blaming Moses for the death of Korah and his rebels.

Never once do they own up to their mistakes, and what a miserable generation this was.

They truly are stiff-necked and obstinate.

And here Moses and Aaron put their offenses aside to minister and save the people who are coming against them.

Aaron the true high priest, appointed of God, takes his censor and mediates between man and God.

He stands before the plague of judgment and stops it.

14,700 people were killed by something described as a plague, because they were blinded by their carnal driven minds.

It is baffling to me that these people follow the rebellion even after the 250 were wiped out.

How can they after so many displays of God' mighty power still find themselves coming against God?

Warren Wiersbe says, "The thing we learn from history is that we don't learn from history."

And you know the church is just as guilty of this as Israel.

It does not take long, after a great move of God's Grace, and Revival to take place, that after a great move of the Spirit, men turn to rituals and traditions.

If you follow every great move of God, you will see this move from Grace to Legalism all throughout Church History.

And once man is broken out of the bondage of religion by the Holy Spirit he somehow will return to its demise after so many years.

I love the season we are in here at Calvary Chapel Victorville, things are new, fresh, full of grace, however, we must be on guard as time goes on, because the natural tendency is to move from the power of the Spirit to the works of the flesh.

And that always brings death.

Now, after this rebellion here, God will once again establish the priesthood, just to be clear.

### **The Budding of Aaron's Rod**

17:1 And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: 2 "Speak to the children of Israel, and get from them a rod from each father's house, all their leaders according to their fathers' houses — twelve rods. Write each man's name on his rod. 3 And you shall write Aaron's name on the rod of Levi. For there shall be one rod for the head of each father's house. 4 Then you shall place them in the tabernacle of meeting before the Testimony, where I meet with you. 5 And it shall be that the rod of the man whom I choose will blossom; thus I will rid Myself of the complaints of the children of Israel, which they make against you."

6 So Moses spoke to the children of Israel, and each of their leaders gave him a rod apiece, for each leader according to their fathers' houses, twelve rods; and the rod of Aaron was among their rods. 7 And Moses placed the rods before the Lord in the tabernacle of witness.

8 Now it came to pass on the next day that Moses went into the tabernacle of witness, and behold, the rod of Aaron, of the house of Levi, had sprouted and

put forth buds, had produced blossoms and yielded ripe almonds. 9 Then Moses brought out all the rods from before the Lord to all the children of Israel; and they looked, and each man took his rod.

10 And the Lord said to Moses, "Bring Aaron's rod back before the Testimony, to be kept as a sign against the rebels, that you may put their complaints away from Me, lest they die." 11 Thus did Moses; just as the Lord had commanded him, so he did.

This test was simple test.

All of the tribes brought a staff bearing their name.

The rod that sprouted would belong to the man God chose to be priest.

And the next day only Aaron's rod produced life.

It not only budded but also sprouted and produced fruit.

And God makes it clear here that only Aaron and his sons are to approach God on behalf of the people.

And these people once again overreact.

They are growing more and more burdensome every trial.

12 So the children of Israel spoke to Moses, saying, "Surely we die, we perish, we all perish! 13 Whoever even comes near the tabernacle of the Lord must die. Shall we all utterly die?"

These people still desire position, and we see Jealousy in God's choice.

And they act like children because they cannot approach God's Sanctuary.

But as the write of Hebrews tells us **Heb. 5:4**

**4 And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was.**

They would have been in the Promise Land had they just accepted the will of God, and obeyed the leadership God had put in place.

But they have brought this miserable time of wondering the wilderness upon themselves.

Now this rod that budded was kept as a witness in the ark of testimony according to Heb. 9:4.

If ever the people were confused again, Moses could bring this testimony out to the people declaring Aaron was the chosen priest.

The Lord was gracious to give the people three reminders to encourage them to remember and obey His law and to obey His will.

He gave them the tassels on their clothes, the brass plates on the altar, and Aaron's rod in the holy of holies.

This would hopefully remind them not to make their errors of their past.

Today God gives us His Word to the church as a witness.

**John 17:17 Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.**

We also have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to guide and help us.

1 Cor. 6:19-20 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

And Jesus also left His church with the Lord's Supper for which the purpose is to remember Jesus' death and His promised return.

1 Cor. 11:26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

Today we have these to remind us, to confirm our faith.

May we learn from Israel, and learn to trust and obey God's Word, put our faith in His promises, and submit to the Authority of His Word.

Amen?