

=UNUSUAL BIBLE STORIES=

Lesson 9

The Rebellion of Korah

SCRIPTURE: Numbers 16

AIM: to teach my pupils the importance of following the man of God and of doing their jobs well without coveting the jobs of another

POINT OF CONTACT: The Lord likens the body of Christ to a human body. The human body has many members; each member has its own particular purpose. Each member rejoices when others are honored. Each member helps the others. All members work together for the good of the body, but the head makes all the decisions. Christ is the Head of the body, and different Christians form the body. For example, one Christian is like the eye; another, like the ear; another, like the nose; another, like the tongue; and another, like the foot, etc. This means that no two of us are exactly alike. Each of our jobs and tasks is different. Each of us needs the other, and none of us need be jealous of the other, for each of us is to find his place in the body of Christ as the will of God directs.

Discuss with the class the absurdity of one member of the body being jealous of another, all the body being one member, members of the body not helping each other, or there being a division of the body.

INTRODUCTION: In the story of Korah in Numbers 16, we find a group of people not willing to accept their places in the body of Christ. Moses was the leader of the people. Aaron was the spiritual priest. Korah and his family were of the family of the Kohathites. It was the job of the Kohathites, being of the tribe of Levi, to work in the tabernacle. Their particular job was to carry the tabernacle furniture from place to place. They had to cover it without looking on it, and then with staves they were to carry it. The pieces were carried much like a stretcher is carried: the staves going through rings on the corners, etc. Maybe they were carried by the staves being placed on the shoulders, maybe held by the side with the hands and arms at full length. However, the Kohathites became dissatisfied, and Korah rebelled. They wanted to do Moses' job or Aaron's job, and hence, we have the story of Korah's rebellion.

- I. THEY WERE DISSATISFIED WITH THE TASK THAT GOD HAD GIVEN THEM. Their task had become small to them. Read Numbers 16:8, 9. This is so often the case with the people of God who do not realize the importance of the little task. Theirs was only the job of carrying the tabernacle furniture, but what a job that was! If the work of God is to prosper, every person must realize the importance of his job and must do it with all of his might. Each task should be done as if it were the biggest task of all. Do not be envious of another's task or another's place in the body of Christ, but rather, do the job God has given you to do with the best of your ability, realizing every job for God is a big job.
- II. THEY WERE JEALOUS OF SOMEONE ELSE'S JOB. Notice Numbers 16:10. They wanted the priesthood, but God had given this to the sons of Aaron. How sad it is when one Christian wants the job of another Christian! We should not covet what God has given another to do, but rather, we should do what God has given us to do to the best of our ability.
- III. THEY COMPLAINED AGAINST THE AUTHORITY OF THE LEADER. See Numbers 16:3. This is inevitable. How many times it has happened in the work of the Lord! They decided that Moses was taking too much authority and had become a dictator. Bear in mind, God had given him all the authority he had, but the people were not willing to follow. For any organization to prosper, there must be a leader. A nation needs a president or a king. A state needs a governor. A city needs a mayor. A church needs a pastor. The authority is of God, and we are to respect that authority. One of the great tragedies of our day is the lack of strong leadership. God's people are to follow the man of God.
- IV. THEY BECAME CRITICAL OF MOSES AND AARON. How tragic this is! Many years ago your pastor decided always to give the preacher the benefit of the doubt. This is not to say the preacher is always right, but it is to say that if he is a man of God, he will be right most of the time, and the safest

plan is to follow him. This does not mean he is to own the property and get all the money. It means that in matters of spiritual activity, he is to be trusted and followed.

(Teacher, talk to your class about being critical. Explain to them that this is an awful sin. Explain to them that being critical of the man of God does not necessarily hurt the man of God; at least it did not in this case. The critical people are the ones who are hurt. It is much better to be the criticized than the critic; it is better to be the hated than the hater. It is better to be the talked about than the one who does the talking. How wicked a sin is criticism!)

- V. THE WORLD LOOKS BETTER TO THE CRITIC. Notice what they said about Egypt in Numbers 16:13. You will recall that they had come from Egypt, and Egypt was the land of cucumbers, onions, leeks and garlic. They were going to the Promised Land which flowed with milk and honey. You will notice here Egypt looked like a land of milk and honey to them. This is always the case with the world. The farther one gets from the world, the better it looks; and the more critical one becomes, the better the world looks. The less one does his duty, the better it looks. The more jealous one becomes, the better it looks. The world had begun to look different to them. They wanted to go back to Egypt. They had forgotten the rigor of the bondage, the slavery, the starvation, etc. They wanted to go back. The truth is that becoming critical of the man of God indicates worldliness, so naturally, the entire world looked better to them.
- VI. THESE WERE WELL-KNOWN PEOPLE OF THE CHURCH. Read Numbers 16:2. There is a great danger in being successful. Probably more people have stumbled over success than over failure. These men had had some success. They were well-known. They were not able to take their success. Now they wanted more power, power that was not theirs. They wanted to do Moses' job of leading and Aaron's job of the priesthood. With promotion, authority, and yes, even growth in grace, there comes a tremendous danger. There was a man in a certain church of our pastor who was a wonderful Christian and a great soul winner until one day he was chosen to become a deacon. Soon he became a troublemaker. Though he did not cause the pastor a great deal of trouble, he was a constant source of complaint and gossip. The truth was, he was a wonderful man until he became successful and somewhat of a leader. Then he lost his spirituality. This so often happens.
- VII. THEY WERE DISLOYAL. Here is one of the greatest sins of all—the sin of disloyalty. Children should be taught early in life to be loyal to church, loyal to pastor, loyal to God, loyal to parents, loyal to country, etc. Especially should one be loyal to his spiritual leaders.
- VIII. GOD'S PEOPLE WERE COMMANDED TO STAY AWAY FROM THE GOSSIPS. Notice the clear instruction, "Depart," in Number 16:26. Bear in mind, it takes both an ear and a tongue to complete gossip. If there is no one to hear, no one can talk. Every Christian should give himself to diligence about refusing to listen to talk about spiritual leaders. One reason is that it is a dangerous thing. Though God knows His leaders aren't perfect, He wants His leaders to be respected, and He often punishes people who fail to respect them.
- IX. IT IS ALWAYS THE CRITIC WHO HAS IT BAD. Read of their calamity in Numbers 16:31-33, 49. Notice that Moses and Aaron were not hurt. The critics were hurt. This is always the case. As stated before, criticism hurts the critic far more than it does the criticized. The reason that your pastor does not want you to criticize him or other church leaders is not for his sake but for yours because he wants you to be good, strong Christians growing in the grace and admonition of the Lord. Criticism is often the first step toward a backslidden life. Let each of us be careful.