

Who Killed Korah, Dathan and Abiram?

Going Down Alive Into the Pit

For the descendants of Korah the words of Psalm 88 have a much deeper meaning than most would appreciate.

Psa 88:2-8 Let my prayer come before thee: incline thine ear unto my cry; (3) For my soul is full of troubles: and my life draweth nigh unto the grave. (4) I am counted with them that go down into the pit: I am as a man that hath no strength: (5) Free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom thou rememberest no more: and they are cut off from thy hand. (6) Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps. (7) Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves. Selah. (8) Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me; thou hast made me an abomination unto them: I am shut up, and I cannot come forth.

The story of Korah and his associates serves as a striking reminder of the price of rebellion. It must have been a trying experience for the sons of Korah to have to live with an inheritance akin to Cain and Balaam.

Jude 1:11 Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core. [Korah]

Psalm 88 was one of the Psalms written by the sons of Korah and we can only imagine how painful were the words *I am counted with them that go down into the pit*. Although this author never participated in the rebellion of his forefather, he would have been regularly reminded that his family serves as a constant reminder of the wrath of God against the rebellious. So it is fitting then that these words also apply to Christ who took upon Himself our inheritance and was accounted with them who go down into the pit.

Let us examine then the story of Korah that we might understand what it tells us about the judgments of God.

Num 16:1-11 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*: (2) 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: (3) **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?** (4) And when Moses heard *it*, he fell upon his face: (5) 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. (6) This do; Take you censers, Korah, and all his company; (7) 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. (8) And Moses said unto Korah, Hear, I pray you, ye sons of Levi: (9) ***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?*** (10) **And he hath brought thee near *to him*, and all thy brethren the sons of Levi with thee:** and seek ye the priesthood also? (11) For which cause *both* thou and all thy company *are* gathered together against the LORD: and what *is* Aaron, that ye murmur against him?

Factors Leading to the Rebellion

Korah and his fellow conspirators were men who had been favored with special manifestations of God's power and greatness. **They were of the number who went up with Moses into the mount and beheld the divine glory.** RH November 12, 1903

But there in their tents boldly stood Korah, the instigator of the rebellion, and his sympathizers, as if in defiance of God's wrath, as though God had never wrought through His servant Moses. And much less did these rebellious ones act as though **they had been so recently honored of God by being brought with Moses almost directly into His presence, and beholding His unsurpassed glory.** These men saw Moses come down from the mount after he had received the second tables of stone and while his face was so resplendent with the glory of God that the people would not approach him. 3T 354

Korah was not satisfied with his position. He was connected with the service of the tabernacle, yet **he desired to be exalted to the priesthood.** God had established Moses as chief governor, and the priesthood was given to Aaron and his sons. **Korah determined to compel Moses to change the order of things, that he might be raised to the dignity of the priesthood.** To be more sure of accomplishing his purpose, he drew Dathan and Abiram, descendants of Reuben, into his rebellion. 3T 344

In the rebellion of Korah is seen the working out, upon a narrower stage, of the same spirit that led to the rebellion of Satan in heaven. It was pride and ambition that prompted Lucifer to complain of the government of God, and to seek the overthrow of the order which had been established in heaven. PP 403

What was the issue that opened the way for the rebellious career of Korah?

They were unwilling to submit to the terrible sentence that they must all die in the wilderness, and hence they were **ready to seize upon every pretext for believing that it was not God but Moses who was leading them** and who had pronounced their doom. PP 396

The charge that the murmurings of the people had brought upon them the wrath of God was declared to be a mistake. They said that the congregation were not at fault, since they desired nothing more than their rights; but that Moses was an overbearing ruler; that he had reproved the people as sinners, when they were a holy people, and the Lord was among them. PP 397

Korah reviewed the history of their travels through the wilderness, where they had been brought into strait places, and many had perished because of their murmuring and disobedience. His hearers thought **they saw clearly that their troubles might have been prevented if Moses had pursued a different course. They decided that all their disasters were chargeable to him,** and that their exclusion from Canaan was in consequence of the mismanagement of Moses and Aaron; PP 397

Charges Against Moses

To what did Korah attribute the miracles worked through Moses?

But Korah and his companions rejected light until they became so blinded that **the most striking manifestations of His power** were not sufficient to convince them; **they attributed them all to human or satanic agency.** PP 405

Korah and his fellow conspirators were men who had been favored with special manifestations of God's power and greatness. **They were of the number who went up with Moses into the mount and beheld the divine glory.** But since that time a change had come. A temptation, slight at first, had been harbored, and had strengthened as it was encouraged, **until their minds were controlled by Satan,** and they ventured upon their work of disaffection. Professing great interest in the prosperity of the people, they first whispered their discontent to one another, and then to leading men of Israel. Their insinuations were so readily received that they ventured still further, and at last they really believed themselves to be actuated by zeal for God. RH November 12, 1903,

Through jealousy and a refusal to accept the sentence that they all would die in the wilderness because of their sin, Korah and his companions blamed Moses for mismanaging everything and accused him of working through human or satanic power. As we notice, Korah attributed the manifestations of Divine glory on the mountain to Satanic or human origin and not from God. These lies revealed that they were fully controlled by Satan. As Korah was seeking the priesthood, he attacked and sought to undermine

confidence in Aaron as the High Priest. Korah met with great success. The people were very happy to believe that it was not their fault they were in strife but rather it was the fault of Moses and Aaron.

There is nothing which will please the people better than to be praised and flattered when they are in darkness and wrong, and deserve reproof. Korah gained the ears of the people, and next their sympathies, by representing Moses as an overbearing leader. He said that he was too harsh, too exacting, too dictatorial, and that he reproved the people as though they were sinners when they were a holy people, sanctified to the Lord, and the Lord was among them. Korah rehearsed the incidents in their experience in their travels through the wilderness, where they had been brought into strait places, and where many of them had died because of murmuring and disobedience, and with their perverted senses they thought they saw very clearly that all their trouble might have been saved if Moses had pursued a different course. He was too unyielding, too exacting, and they decided that all their disasters in the wilderness were chargeable to him. [346] Korah, the leading spirit, professed great wisdom in discerning the true reason for their trials and afflictions.

In this work of disaffection there was greater harmony and union of views and feelings among these discordant elements than had ever been known to exist before. **Korah's success in gaining the larger part of the congregation of Israel on his side led him to feel confident that he was wise and correct in judgment, and that Moses was indeed usurping authority that threatened the prosperity and salvation of Israel. He claimed that God had opened the matter to him and laid upon him the burden of changing the government of Israel just before it was too late.** He stated that the congregation were not at fault; they were righteous; that this great cry about the murmuring of the congregation bringing upon them the wrath of God was all a mistake; and that the people only wanted to have their rights; they wanted individual independence. 3T 345, 346

The accusations continued as Moses requested Dathan and Abiram to come to him.

Num 16:12-14 And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab: which said, We will not come up: (13) Is it a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of a land that floweth with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, except thou make thyself altogether a prince over us? (14) Moreover thou hast not brought us into a land that floweth with milk and honey, or given us inheritance of fields and vineyards: wilt thou put out the eyes of these men? we will not come up.

Korah, Dathan, and Abiram must assign some reason before the people why Moses had from the first shown so great an interest for the congregation of Israel. **Their selfish minds, which had been debased as Satan's instruments,** suggested that they had at last found out the object of the apparent interest of Moses. He had designed to keep them wandering in the wilderness until they all, or nearly all, should perish and he should come into possession of their property. 3T 346

These men were instruments of Satan and they accused the patient and selfless Moses with completely selfish motives. This deeply wounded his heart who had sacrificed everything for the cause of God.

Num 16:15 And Moses was very wroth, and said unto the LORD, Respect not thou their offering: I have not taken one ass from them, neither have I hurt one of them.

Moses Grieved at Charges

The text says that Moses was wroth but the Hebrew word can also be translated as grieved. Notice Samuel's reaction to Saul using the same Hebrew word.

1 Sam 15:11 It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it **grieved** Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all night.

Notice that Ellen White says that Moses was greatly moved rather than angry thus confirming the interpretation of *grieved* for the word *wroth* in this Scripture.

Moses was greatly moved at these unjust accusations. He appealed to God before the people whether he had ever acted arbitrarily, and implored Him to be his judge. The people in general were disaffected and influenced by the misrepresentations of Korah. 3T 348

Moses was entering into the sufferings of Christ. The actions of Korah, Dathan and Abiram were a cruel work inspired by Satan developed out of his own experience in heaven with the Son of God.

Num 16:16-19 And Moses said unto Korah, Be thou and all thy company before the LORD, thou, and they, and Aaron, to morrow: (17) 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. (18) And they took every man his censer, and put fire in them, and laid incense thereon, and stood in the door of the tabernacle of the congregation with Moses and Aaron. (19) **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.

They accused Moses of pretending to act under divine guidance, as a means of establishing his authority; and they declared that they would no longer submit to be led about like blind men, now toward Canaan, and now toward the wilderness, as best suited his ambitious designs. Thus **he who had been as a tender father, a patient shepherd, was represented in the blackest character of a tyrant and usurper.** The exclusion from Canaan, in punishment of their own sins, was charged upon him. PP 399

Poor Moses, after all he had done for the children of Israel the Scripture says all the congregation were gathered together against himself and Aaron.

A Cross for Moses

Let us note carefully what happens next.

Num 16:20-21 And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, (21) Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment.

This is a very similar statement to what God said in regard to the sin of the Golden Calf.

Exo 32:10 Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation.

What was the Lord's purpose in this?

He proposed to Moses to consume them, and make of him a great nation. Here the Lord proved Moses. He knew that it was a laborious and soul-trying work to lead that rebellious people through to the promised land. **He would test the perseverance, faithfulness and love of Moses, for such an erring and ungrateful people.** 1SP 245

Moses was tested with the promise of great honor. The Lord would place him at the head of a great nation. Had Moses possessed a narrow, selfish spirit, how quickly he would have grasped such an offer. But he would not listen to the promise of preferment. RH Feb 11, 1909

In this test for Moses was the principle of the Cross. Moses chose to allow His flesh to be crucified with Christ. In the crucifixion process we notice this important point:

God permits His Son to be delivered up for our offenses. **He Himself assumes toward the Sin-Bearer the character of a judge, divesting Himself of the endearing qualities of a father.** FLB 104

With careful consideration we can see that where ever the judgments of God take place the Cross is erected. This statement in Numbers 16:21 shows us a very firm judge. Now consider this statement carefully:

The mystery of the cross explains all other mysteries. **In the light that streams from Calvary the attributes of God which had filled us with fear and awe appear beautiful and attractive.** Mercy, tenderness, and parental love are seen to blend with holiness, justice, and power. GC 652

Israel had deeply wounded Moses and at this moment the Spirit of Christ in Moses responded to the test. Through the statement to consume the congregation the Law was entering to cause sin to abound, yet on this point Moses chose to die to self in Christ and grace did much more abound in him and Aaron in the following way.

Num 16:22 And they fell upon their faces, and said, O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation?

How precious is the Spirit of Christ in human hearts! We see Christ interceding in Moses and Aaron to the Father and this is just as the Father desired it for He does not wish any to perish but that all should come to repentance. We know for certain while Israel deserved to be consumed, our Father did not desire this from this statement a little later in the story.

Jesus, the Angel who went before the Hebrews, sought to save them from destruction. Forgiveness was lingering for them. The judgment of God had come very near, and appealed to them to repent. **A special, irresistible interference from heaven had arrested their rebellion. Now, if they would respond to the interposition of God's providence, they might be saved.** RH November 12, 1903

The judgment of God to consume the congregation drew out of Moses and Aaron the spirit of intercession to save the people. The Father said this through the language of the Old Covenant in order to draw from Moses and Aaron the intercession according to the New Covenant that would give Israel more time to repent.

Num 16:23-26 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, (24) Speak unto the congregation, saying, Get you up from about the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. (25) And Moses rose up and went unto Dathan and Abiram; and the elders of Israel followed him. (26) And he spake unto the congregation, saying, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins.

When Moses was entreating Israel to flee from the coming destruction, the divine judgment might even then have been stayed, if Korah and his company had repented and sought forgiveness. **But their stubborn persistence sealed their doom.** The entire congregation were sharers in their guilt, for all had, to a greater or less degree, sympathized with them. Yet God in His great mercy made a distinction between the leaders in rebellion and those whom they had led. PP 401

Korah, Dathan and Abiram Perish

Korah, Dathan and Abiram had made themselves agents of Satan, fully under his control. They refused to repent. The Spirit of Christ tried to save them but they refused to listen. We must step through the next part of this story carefully so we don't miss anything.

Num 16:27-33 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. (28) 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. (29) 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. (30) **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.** (31) **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:** (32) **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.** (33) 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.

Now if we are hearers of the word rather than doers, we shall read this passage looking into our natural face and deceive ourselves.

James 1:22-23 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. (23) For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:

At first glance it appears that the Lord opened the ground and destroyed them. Here is the test of whether we are willing to compare Scripture with Scripture. Jesus who is the same yesterday, today and forever has told us:

Luke 9:56 For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.

Speaking of the story of Balaam we read this principle:

When they transgressed God's commandments, then they separated themselves from Him, and they were left to feel the power of the destroyer. GC 529

The Destroyer Versus the Restorer

Who was it that destroyed Korah, Dathan and Abiram?

In the case of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram we have a lesson of warning lest we follow their example. "Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. **Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.** Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." 3T 353

We are told that these men were destroyed by the destroyer. Who is the destroyer? The word *destroyer* in the 1 Cor 10:10 quoted by Ellen White means a ruiner, that is (specifically) a venomous serpent. And again we notice:

Rev 9:11 Their king is the angel from the bottomless pit; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek, Apollyon—the Destroyer. (NLT)

Satan is the destroyer, but Christ is the restorer. RH, November 26, 1895

Cruelty is satanic. God is love; and all that He created was pure, holy, and lovely, until sin was brought in by the first great rebel. **Satan himself is the enemy who tempts man to sin, and then destroys him if he can;** and when he has made sure of his victim, then he exults in the ruin he has wrought. If permitted, he would sweep the entire race into his net. Were it not for the interposition of divine power, not one son or daughter of Adam would escape." GC 534

Satan, the great adversary, is on the track of every transgressor of God's holy law, and he who is not sensible of his danger, and does not earnestly seek shelter in the eternal refuge, will fall a prey to **the destroyer.** PP 517

The Process of God's Judgments

How is it possible that Satan destroyed these men when this is clearly a judgment of God?

I was shown that **the judgments of God would not come directly out from the Lord upon them, but in this way:** They place themselves beyond His protection. He warns, corrects, reproves, and points out the only path of safety; then if those who have been the objects of His special care will follow their own course independent of the Spirit of God, after repeated warnings, if they choose their own way, then **He does not**

commission His angels to prevent Satan's decided attacks upon them. It is Satan's power that is at work at sea and on land, bringing calamity and distress, and sweeping off multitudes to make sure of his prey. And storm and tempest both by sea and land will be, for Satan has come down in great wrath. He is at work. He knows his time is short and, if he is not restrained, we shall see more terrible manifestations of his power than we have ever dreamed of. 14MR 3

God keeps a reckoning with the nations. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without His notice. Those who work evil toward their fellow men, saying, How doth God know? **will one day be called upon to meet long-deferred vengeance.** In this age a more than common contempt is shown to God. Men have reached a point in insolence and disobedience which shows that their cup of iniquity is almost full. Many have well-nigh passed the boundary of mercy. Soon God will show that He is indeed the living God. **He will say to the angels, "No longer combat Satan in his efforts to destroy.** Let him work out his malignity upon the children of disobedience; for the cup of their iniquity is full. They have advanced from one degree of wickedness to another, adding daily to their lawlessness. I will no longer interfere to prevent the destroyer from doing his work." RH Sept 17 1901

Stretching Forth the Hand

How do God's judgements unfold? How does God take vengeance? He no longer commands His angels to protect those who refuse to repent and walk in His Commandments. Here is another evidence for consideration.

These men of Israel complained, and influenced the people to stand with them in rebellion, and **even after God stretched forth His hand and swallowed up the wrong-doers,** and the people fled to their tents in horror, their rebellion was not cured. Letter 12a, 1893. 1BC 1114.

Notice this same language in this verse:

Exo 3:20 And I will **stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt** with all my wonders which I will do in the midst thereof: and after that he will let you go.

How did God stretch forth His hand in Egypt?

Psa 78:48-49 He gave up their cattle also to the hail, and their flocks to hot thunderbolts. (49) He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, by sending [releasing] evil angels among them.

For a detailed explanation of the plagues in Egypt have a look at the booklet *Calvary in Egypt*. Notice again this stretching forth the hand in the book of Job.

Job 1:11,12 But **put forth** [H7971 stretch forth] **thine hand now,** and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the LORD said unto Satan, **Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand.** So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.

Job 1:16 While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, **The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them;** and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

Hiding the Face of God

We see it was Satan that was enabled to do these deeds under the phrase *put or stretch forth your hand*. We have been told that the *judgments of God do not come directly out from the Lord* but that God finally gives the wicked their choice to serve the master they have chosen. In grief our Father hides his face.

Deut 31:17-18 Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them; so that

they will say in that day, Are not these evils come upon us, because our God is not among us? (18) And I will surely hide my face in that day for all the evils which they shall have wrought, in that they are turned unto other gods.

We see this same principle in the destruction of Jerusalem.

The Jews had forged their own fetters; they had filled for themselves the cup of vengeance. In the utter destruction that befell them as a nation, and in all the woes that followed them in their dispersion, they were but reaping the harvest which their own hands had sown. Says the prophet: "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself;" "for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity." Hosea 13:9; 14:1. Their sufferings are often represented as a punishment visited upon them by the **direct decree of God. It is thus that the great deceiver seeks to conceal his own work.** By stubborn rejection of divine love and mercy, the Jews had caused the protection of God to be withdrawn from them, and Satan was permitted to rule them according to his will. The horrible cruelties enacted in the [36] destruction of Jerusalem are a demonstration of Satan's vindictive power over those who yield to his control. GC 35,36

The *If* Questions

There is a challenge though in understanding these verses:

Num 16:28-30 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. (29) *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. (30) *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.

At first glance these words seem to very clearly teach that it was indeed a direct decree from God that brought about this destruction. The answer lies in the little word *if*.

Num 16:29,30 **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. (30) **But if** the LORD make a new thing...

The people had seen plenty of evidence that the Lord was leading Moses through all that happened in Egypt and the Red Sea and in Mt Sinai. There was abundant evidence that Moses was sent by the Lord. A miracle performed in the context that Moses framed it, is a miracle that responds to doubt. When Jesus was questioned by Satan about His position as the Son of God, He refused to work a miracle in response to the temptation connected to "*if thou be...*":

Matt 4:3-4 And when the tempter came to him, he said, **If** thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. (4) But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

When *if* questions are connected to defending a person's identity or ministry by the working miracles then we know it is a temptation of Satan. Elijah faced a similar temptation to Moses and Jesus in his ministry. He was sent to warn the king of his wrong actions. The king wanted to capture him, giving evidence that he did not believe Elijah.

2 Kings 1:10 And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, **If I** be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty.

On Mt Carmel it was proved clearly that Elijah was a man of God. With so many people against him, Elijah was tempted at times to doubt his calling.

1 Kings 19:9-10 And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah? (10) And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

Satan tempted Elijah to doubt his calling and this is revealed in the word *if*. This little word betrays the temptation of Satan. The miracle called for was mingled with Elijah's struggle with his own identity as a man of God or not. Why would he struggle? He knew he had failed when he ran from Jezebel. He was tempted to seek a miracle to prove his identity. We know that this was not the right spirit for Jesus tells us this.

Luke 9:54-56 And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? (55) But **he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.** (56) For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.

Moses had been deeply wounded by the false accusations of Korah, Dathan and Abiram. He saw nearly the whole congregation turn against him. After all he had done, *they all forsook him and fled*, Mark 14:50. While Moses was suffering in his flesh, Satan called him to come down from this Cross. He was tempted to call for a miracle to sustain his position. Never once did Christ respond to the *if* question. Never once did He appeal for a miracle to prove His own identity. He trusted in what His Father had told Him.

The greatest of the prophets faced the same test while in prison. The same *if* word appears through the disciples of John.

Matt 11:2-3 Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, (3) And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?

The life of John had been one of active labor, and the gloom and inaction of his prison life weighed heavily upon him. As week after week passed, bringing no change, **despondency and doubt crept over him**. His disciples did not forsake him. They were allowed access to the prison, and they brought him tidings of the works of Jesus, and told how the people were flocking to Him. But they questioned why, ***if this* [215] **new teacher was the Messiah, He did nothing to effect John's release.**** How could He permit His faithful herald to be deprived of liberty and perhaps of life?

These questions were not without effect. Doubts which otherwise would never have arisen were suggested to John. Satan rejoiced to hear the words of these disciples, and to see how they bruised the soul of the Lord's messenger. Oh, how often those who think themselves the friends of a good man, and who are eager to show their fidelity to him, prove to be his most dangerous enemies! How often, instead of strengthening his faith, their words depress and dishearten! DA 214, 215

There was no miracle for John like there was for Moses and Elijah. He went to his death trusting fully that Christ indeed was the Messiah. When the disciples of John returned from their interview with Jesus, John received the news he needed.

The disciples bore the message, and it was enough. John recalled the prophecy concerning the Messiah, "The Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." Isaiah 61:1, 2. The works of Christ not only declared Him to be the Messiah, but showed in what manner His kingdom was to be established. To John was opened the same truth that had come to Elijah in the desert, when "a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire:" and after the fire, God spoke to the prophet by "a still small voice." 1 Kings 19:11, 12. So Jesus was to do His

work, not with the clash of arms and the overturning of thrones and kingdoms, but through speaking to the hearts of men by a life of mercy and self-sacrifice. DA 217

When the Lord brought down fire from heaven as a token that Elijah worshipped the true God, he moved ahead of the Lord and personally slaughtered the prophets of Baal with a sword. Instead of waiting for the Lord to give clear direction, he took responsibilities upon himself that were not given to him.

There was no particular word he had heard from the Lord, directing him to take the course he had taken, and there was no purpose to his steps. Distracted by doubts and uncertain whither his way was tending, he pushed this way and that for his life, but God did not forget Elijah. He wrought for His servant, He inquired of him, "What doest thou here Elijah?"

This history carefully and prayerfully studied will be a help to the people of God under difficulties. **Let man be careful not to assume responsibilities that God does not require of him, and interpose himself between the Lord and His tempted and tried ones** so that the purposes of God shall not be carried out in the experiences of these persons. 1888 489

When the Lord told Moses to tell the people to stand back from Korah, Dathan and Abiram, did Moses assume responsibilities that were not given to him when he expressed the *if* questions? We see how Elijah responded to the *if* questions and called down fire from heaven to deal with those men who were set to capture him. We also know that Jesus tells us this was not the Spirit of God that was in this fire. We also know that God had told Elijah that He is not in the fire through what He communicated at Mt Sinai.

As God was withdrawing the protection of His angels from Korah, Dathan and Abiram, Satan tempted Moses with the *if* questions with regard to how he had planned to destroy Korah, Dathan and Abiram. Remember that Satan had taken full control of these men. He pressed these men hard to resist the appealing Spirit of Jesus to repent. Jesus is the restorer and Satan is the destroyer and through the doubts placed in the mind of Moses, Satan was able to cover his work of destruction as a direct judgment of God. It is an extremely clever deception that if possible it will deceive the very elect.

The Problem of Opposing Principles

If we choose to believe that the Son of God Himself opened the earth and destroyed these men, then we must accept that the appeals He was making to these men to repent were backed up by the threat of death. These are opposing principles. You can't be seeking to save one minute and destroy the next. If the call to repent is backed up with the threat to kill then the appeal to repent is backed up by force to compel the conscience.

That the gloomy shadows might be lightened, that the world might be brought back to God, Satan's deceptive power was to be broken. This could not be done by force. The exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God's government; He desires only the service of love; and love cannot be commanded; it cannot be won by force or authority. Only by love is love awakened. To know God is to love Him; His character must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan. DA 22

The character of God cannot be contrasted to the character of Satan if God uses the same methods as Satan. The statement that the Son of man did not come to destroy but to save is revealed as a universal principle in this statement.

O, what divine benevolence! It would have been far easier to crush the world out of existence than to reform it. But Christ declares, "The Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." The Son of God understood the desperate situation, and himself came to our world, that man through him might have eternal life. RH Dec 11, 1888

When we understand that the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world and that the principle of the Cross exists through all of the past 6000 years then we see that the earthly mission of Christ is a revelation of His whole mission to the world throughout all time. This principle is vital to understand in order that we may know that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. Let us remember this universal principle:

Satan is the destroyer, but Christ is the restorer. RH, November 26, 1895

They are opposite principles. They are light and darkness and these two principles cannot mix. When Satan desired to become like the Most High, he desired to merge his identity with that of the Father so that his attributes might clothe the Father and that he himself could hide in the Father's brightness.

From the beginning it has been Satan's studied plan to cause men to forget God, that he might secure them to himself. Hence he has sought to misrepresent the character of God, to lead men to cherish a false conception of Him. **The Creator has been presented to their minds as clothed with the attributes of the prince of evil himself,—as arbitrary, severe, and unforgiving,—**that He might be feared, shunned, and even hated by men. Satan hoped to so confuse the minds of those whom he had deceived that they would put God out of their knowledge. Then he would obliterate the divine image in man and impress his own likeness upon the soul; he would imbue men with his own spirit and make them captives according to his will.

It was by falsifying the character of God and exciting distrust of Him that Satan tempted Eve to transgress. By sin the minds of our first parents were darkened, their natures were degraded, and their conceptions of God were molded by their own narrowness and selfishness. And as men became bolder in sin, the knowledge and the love of God faded from their minds and hearts. 5T 738

The Lord allowed Korah, Dathan and Abiram to be taken first by the destroyer for we remember what inspiration tell us:

In the case of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram we have a lesson of warning lest we follow their example. "Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. **Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.** 3T 353

Fire From the Lord

This gave time for the others to realise they were in great danger and they should run to their Saviour to flee the destroyer. Sadly they did not repent and they were given up fully to Satan.

Num 16:35 And there came out a fire from the LORD, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense.

But the judgments were not ended. Fire flashing from the cloud consumed the two hundred and fifty princes who had offered incense. These men, not being the first in rebellion, were not destroyed with the chief conspirators. They were permitted to see their end, and to have an opportunity for repentance; but their sympathies were with the rebels, and they shared their fate. PP 401

Many will cry "but it says the fire of the Lord," and will choose to ignore the injunction to compare all Scripture and show that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.

Jesus told the disciples that the fire that came from heaven in response to Elijah was not the spirit that He operated by. We know from the story of Job that the "fire of God" came down and burned up the sheep and the servants of Job.

Job 1:16 While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, **The fire of God is fallen from heaven**, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

We know that Satan brought down this physical fire and consumed them. So if physical fire is what is meant in the text then this is how it came, yet as explained in the booklet *Smiting Angels*, this fire may have been the conviction of the Spirit of God that struck terror into the hearts of these men and revealed as a flash of light. The Spirit was revealing their sins and urging them to repent, yet as they could not believe in a merciful God, their sins consumed them. This principle of fire from heaven is mentioned in several passages.

Isa 30:27-28,30 Behold, the name of the LORD cometh from far, burning with his anger, and the burden thereof is heavy: **his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire:** (28) **And his breath, as an overflowing stream**, shall reach to the midst of the neck, to sift the nations with the sieve of vanity: and there shall be a bridle in the jaws of the people, causing them to err.... And the LORD shall cause his glorious voice to be heard, and shall shew the lighting down of his arm, **with the indignation of his anger, and with the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering, and tempest, and hailstones.**

We see fire and hailstones revealed in the cross of Christ. Psalms 18 reveals the crucifixion.

Psa 18:4-6,8,12 The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid. (5) The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me. (6) In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears... (8) **There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it...** (12) At the brightness that was before him his thick clouds passed, **hail stones and coals of fire.**

Deut 33:2 And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: **from his right hand went a fiery law for them.**

Jer 5:14 Wherefore thus saith the LORD God of hosts, Because ye speak this word, behold, **I will make my words in thy mouth fire**, and this people wood, and it shall devour them.

Song 8:6 Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: **the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame.**

Once again if we read the judgments of God in the light of the cross we can see clearly the process. The physical suffering of Jesus on the cross was caused by Satan yet the spiritual suffering Christ experienced was the sense of guilt through the condemnation of the Law. The only fire and hail that existed at the time of the Cross was the fiery Law of God bringing conviction of sin upon the sin-bearer. Yet Satan seeks to cover the spiritual suffering with his physical torture of Christ upon the Cross. Did Satan seek to cover this spiritual conviction of the 250 princes with physical fire or did they die purely from the conviction of sin and guilt through the law of God?

So the fire of God did come down upon these 250 princes and convicted them of their sin through the Word of God. As it says in the book *Wisdom of Solomon* from the Apocrypha:

Wisdom of Solomon 18:15-20 **Thine Almighty word leaped down from heaven out of thy royal throne, as a fierce man of war into the midst of a land of destruction.** And brought thine unfeigned commandment as a sharp sword, and standing up filled all things with death; and it touched the heaven, but it stood upon the earth. Then suddenly visions of horrible dreams troubled them sore, and terrors came upon them unlooked for. And one thrown here, and another there, half dead, shewed the cause of his death. For the dreams that troubled them did foreshew this, lest they should perish, and not know why they were afflicted. Yea, the tasting of death touched the righteous also, and there was a destruction of the multitude in the wilderness: but the wrath endured not long.

When these 250 princes refused to repent and God withdrew His angelic protection, did Satan cover their spiritual conflict with a physical fire and consume them, or was it simply the spiritual conviction of sin? It is natural to assume that when these princes were consumed that they were turned to ashes but as we learn in the story of Nadab and Abihu, the fire that consumed them did not even burn up even their coats.

Lev 10:2-5 And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD. (3) Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the LORD spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace. (4) And Moses called Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Uzziel the uncle of Aaron, and said unto them, Come near, carry your brethren from before the sanctuary out of the camp. (5) So they went near, **and carried them in their coats out of the camp**; as Moses had said.

When the Spirit of God came down, was this like a burst of intense light that we see in the face of Christ and that is revealed at His Second Coming?

Rev 1:16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: **and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.**

2Th 2:8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, **whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:**

Was it this brightness that flashed from the cloud and consumed these princes? Whatever it was, we know from the earthly life of Christ that Christ never physically burned anyone alive. Yet we know He wielded a flaming sword with the words of His mouth.

The coin falls, ringing sharply upon the marble pavement. None presume to question His authority. None dare stop to gather up their ill-gotten gain. Jesus does not smite them with the whip of cords, **but in His hand that simple scourge seems terrible as a flaming sword.** Officers of the temple, speculating priests, brokers and cattle traders, with their sheep and oxen, rush from the place, with the one thought of escaping from the condemnation of His presence. DA 158

From all the evidence before us, we do not need to do violence to the character of God and attribute to Him the attributes of Satan and claim that God physically burned these men alive. The Bible is written in such a way so as to allow us to place God on trial and judge His character. Do you believe it is natural for a parent to burn their stubborn children to death in physical torture and agony? If you wouldn't do this then what makes you think our Father in Heaven would do this? Are we more merciful than He is? God forbid! Any mercy we exhibit comes from Him.

Seeking to Save the Congregation of Israel

After the death of the leaders in the rebellion, the Spirit of Christ was still seeking to save the rest of the congregation.

Jesus, the Angel who went before the Hebrews, sought to save them from destruction. Forgiveness was lingering for them. The judgment of God had come very near, and appealed to them to repent. A special, irresistible interference from heaven had arrested their rebellion. Now, if they would respond to the interposition of God's providence, they might be saved. **But while they fled from the judgments, through fear of destruction, their rebellion was not cured.** They returned to their tents that night terrified, but not repentant. RH November 12, 1903,

Moses did not feel the guilt of sin and did not hasten away at the word of the Lord and leave the congregation to perish, as the Hebrews had fled from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram the day before. Moses lingered; for he could not consent to give up all that vast multitude to perish, although **he knew that they deserved the vengeance of God for their persistent rebellion.** He prostrated himself before

God because the [358] people felt no necessity for humiliation; he mediated for them because they felt no need of interceding in their own behalf.

Moses here typifies Christ. At this critical time Moses manifested the True Shepherd's interest for the flock of His care. He pleaded that the wrath of an offended God might not utterly destroy the people of His choice. And by his intercession he held back the arm of vengeance, that a full end was not made of disobedient, rebellious Israel. He directed Aaron what course to pursue in that terrible crisis when the wrath of God had gone forth and the plague had begun. 3T 357, 358

Lest we forget, how does inspiration define the vengeance of God?

Those who work evil toward their fellow men, saying, How doth God know? **will one day be called upon to meet long-deferred vengeance.** In this age a more than common contempt is shown to God. Men have reached a point in insolence and disobedience which shows that their cup of iniquity is almost full. Many have well-nigh passed the boundary of mercy. Soon God will show that He is indeed the living God. **He will say to the angels, "No longer combat Satan in his efforts to destroy.** Let him work out his malignity upon the children of disobedience; for the cup of their iniquity is full. They have advanced from one degree of wickedness to another, adding daily to their lawlessness. I will no longer interfere to prevent the destroyer from doing his work." RH Sept 17 1901

Moses and Aaron pleaded for the lives of the congregation. It was the Spirit of Christ in these men that prompted them to take this action. The house of our Father is not divided. The Spirit of Christ is not on one side pleading against destroying the Israelites while at the same time Christ, having a sword raised in His hands, is threatening to slay the wicked. These two ideas are inconsistent and cannot find harmony in the person of Christ. A house divided against itself cannot stand. Our Father does not both seek to save and kill at the same time. Can sweet and bitter waters come from the same fountain?

Our Father is not willing that any should perish yet He will allow the darkness to hide His face after repeated warnings and appeals to repent. The rebellion in the hearts of the Israelites continued to foment.

Num 16:41-49 **But on the morrow all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the LORD.** (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. (43) And Moses and Aaron came before the tabernacle of the congregation. (44) And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, (45) Get you up from among this congregation, that I may consume them as in a moment. And they fell upon their faces. (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) 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. (48) And he stood between the dead and the living; and the plague was stayed. (49) Now they that died in the plague were fourteen thousand and seven hundred, beside them that died about the matter of Korah.

Attributing the Work of Moses to the Agency of Satan

Rather than repent, the children of Israel picked up the spirit of Korah and charged Moses and Aaron with killing all these people who died. Now we come to a very interesting statement in the Spirit of Prophecy:

But Korah and his companions rejected light until they became so blinded that the most striking manifestations of His power were not sufficient to convince them; they attributed them all to human or satanic agency. The same thing was done by the people, who the day after the destruction of Korah and his company came to Moses and Aaron, saying, "Ye have killed the people of the Lord." **Notwithstanding they had had the most convincing evidence of God's displeasure at their course, in the destruction of the men who had deceived them, they dared to attribute His judgments to Satan, declaring that through the power of**

the evil one, Moses and Aaron had caused the death of good and holy men. It was this act that sealed their doom. They had committed the sin against the Holy Spirit, a sin by which man's heart is effectually hardened against the influence of divine grace. PP 405

This statement is an excellent test to discern the difference between the hearers of the Word and the doers of it. It is clear from our study that Satan was allowed to take Korah, Dathan and Abiram down into the pit. In regard to the 250 princes it is unclear whether these men died from the conviction of their sin and refusal to repent or a combination of this along with physical fire coming from Satan which parallels the experience of Christ on the Cross. Korah and his companions had told Israel that all of the ministry of Moses was conducted through the power of Satan. This means they believed that Moses was invoking Satanic power to do what he was doing. The shining of his face, the giving of the Law, all of this was attributed to the work of Satan.

When the Lord withdrew His protection from Korah and his companions, Moses had nothing to do with the judgment that fell. He did not invoke the power of Satan to do this work. Satan took advantage of Moses through the *if* questions but Moses did not invoke the power of Satan to kill these men. He knew nothing about it. God brought this judgment upon these men through the manner in which He delivers judgment:

I was shown that **the judgments of God would not come directly out from the Lord upon them, but in this way:** They place themselves beyond His protection. He warns, corrects, reproves, and points out the only path of safety; then if those who have been the objects of His special care will follow their own course independent of the Spirit of God, after repeated warnings, if they choose their own way, then **He does not commission His angels to prevent Satan's decided attacks upon them.** 14MR 3

It is critical to read the passage carefully. What was Korah telling people?

...they attributed them all to human or satanic *agency*. PP 405

Webster's Dictionary states the following about agency when involving another. Note particularly the bold part.

The office of an agent, or factor; **business of an agent entrusted with the concerns of another;** as, the principal pays the charges of agency.

Korah was suggesting that Moses was *entrusting his concerns with Israel to the agency of Satan*. In attributing the work of Moses to Satan, Korah and his companions committed the unpardonable sin.

When Satan brought destruction upon these men he was not the agent of Moses neither was he the agent of God. He was simply acting according to his character and God was acting according to His. The Spirit of God was resisted and therefore withdrawn from those who refused it. This then allowed Satan to come in and clothe the character of God with His own attributes in killing these men. Look carefully at this part of the statement again:

Notwithstanding they had had the most convincing evidence of God's displeasure at their course, in the destruction of the men who had deceived them, they dared to attribute His judgments to Satan, declaring that through the power of the evil one, Moses and Aaron had caused the death of good and holy men. PP 405

When Israel charged Moses with doing these things through Satan they were seeking to prove that it was not a judgment of God. Yet we know that it was a judgment of God through the process that He follows and is revealed in inspiration. The Lord hid His face after repeated warnings. This is how the Lord brings His judgments. Secondly, Israel charged Moses with performing these murders through the agency of Satan against the wishes of God. This was completely false. Moses had nothing to do with arranging their

destruction. While it is possible to isolate part of this passage to suggest that God killed these people and not Satan:

Notwithstanding they had had the most convincing evidence of God's displeasure at their course, in the destruction of the men who had deceived them, they dared to attribute His judgments to Satan... PP 405

The context of the passage and the weight of evidence concerning the character of God in the light of the earthly ministry of Christ shows us how this took place. These men were destroyed by the destroyer after they refused to repent. The Lord stretched out His hand as He did in Egypt and as He did with Job and withdrew His protection. "Let each man be persuaded in his own mind." As for me and my house we will serve the merciful and loving God who abounds in goodness and truth and also will not clear the guilty, but allows every man receive according to his own works.

In the Hand of the Enemy

Sadly, the people refused to listen and many of them also committed the unpardonable sin.

They had committed the sin against the Holy Spirit, a sin by which man's heart is effectually hardened against the influence of divine grace. "Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man," said Christ, "it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him." Matthew 12:32. These words were spoken by our Saviour when the gracious works which He had performed through the power of God were attributed by the Jews to Beelzebub. It is through the agency of the Holy Spirit that God communicates with man; and those who deliberately reject this agency as satanic, have cut off the channel of communication between the soul and Heaven. PP 405

Note carefully the next paragraph in *Patriarchs and Prophets*:

God works by the manifestation of His Spirit to reprove and convict the sinner; and if the Spirit's work is finally rejected, there is no more that God can do for the soul. The last resource of divine mercy has been employed. The transgressor has cut himself off from God, and sin has no remedy to cure itself. **There is no reserved power by which God can work to convict and convert the sinner. "Let him alone" (Hosea 4:17) is the divine command.** Then "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." Hebrews 10:26, 27. PP 405

Our Father tried everything He could to save the people but they refused. Finally the Lord says "Let them alone." This is exactly the process we have been speaking about.

God keeps a reckoning with the nations. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without His notice. **Those who work evil toward their fellow men, saying, How doth God know? will one day be called upon to meet long-deferred vengeance.** In this age a more than common contempt is shown to God. Men have reached a point in insolence and disobedience which shows that their cup of iniquity is almost full. Many have well-nigh passed the boundary of mercy. Soon God will show that He is indeed the living God. **He will say to the angels, "No longer combat Satan in his efforts to destroy.** Let him work out his malignity upon the children of disobedience; for the cup of their iniquity is full. They have advanced from one degree of wickedness to another, adding daily to their lawlessness. I will no longer interfere to prevent the destroyer from doing his work." RH Sept 17 1901

The above quote gives the proper context for this next one as to what is the vengeance of God.

While He does not delight in vengeance, He will execute judgment upon the transgressors of His law. He is forced to do this, to preserve the inhabitants of the earth from utter depravity and ruin. In order to save some He must cut off those who have become hardened in sin. PP 628

A plague began to spread through the camp. The Scriptures tell us exactly what is happening when a plague begins:

Lev 26:25 And I will bring a sword upon you, that shall avenge the quarrel of my covenant: and when ye are gathered together within your cities, I will send [loose] the pestilence among you; and **ye shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy.**

When the Israelites despised and rejected the covenant, the Lord would allow them to be confronted with sword and pestilence. The last part of this verse indicates that the Lord would deliver them into the hand of the enemy.

Satan is exercising his power. He sweeps away the ripening harvest, and famine and distress follow. **He imparts to the air a deadly taint, and thousands perish by the pestilence.** GC 590

A breach had been made in the wall of Israel's defences and Satan was allowed to spread a plague in the camp. Notice how Moses and Aaron respond:

Num 16:45-48 Get you up from among this congregation, that I may consume them as in a moment. And they fell upon their faces. (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) 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. (48) And he stood between the dead and the living; and the plague was stayed.

As we noted before, the Lord speaks to Moses and Aaron in the language of the Old Covenant. He gives the sentence that the people are worthy to die. He does this, not to execute the sentence Himself, but to encourage Moses and Aaron to seek for mercy for the people in the Spirit of Christ. Again the book the *Wisdom of Solomon* gives us an insight into the work of Aaron in dealing with the Destroyer

Wisdom of Solomon 18:21-25 For then the blameless man made haste, and stood forth to defend them; and bringing the shield of his proper ministry, even prayer, and the propitiation of incense, **set himself against the wrath, and so brought the calamity to an end**, declaring that he was thy servant. 22: **So he overcame the destroyer, not with strength of body, nor force of arms, but with a word subdued him that punished, alleging the oaths and covenants made with the fathers.** 23: For when the dead were now fallen down by heaps one upon another, standing between, he stayed the wrath, and parted the way to the living. 24: For in the long garment was the whole world, and in the four rows of the stones [the breastplate] was the glory of the fathers graven, and thy Majesty upon the daidem of his head. 25: **Unto these the destroyer gave place, and was afraid of them:** for it was enough that they only tasted of the wrath.

Aaron overcame the destroyer by pleading the promises of God in the language of the new or everlasting covenant. This made the destroyer afraid and he was compelled to retreat.

Satan will accuse and seek permission to destroy, but it is God that opens the door of refuge. It is God that justifieth him that entereth that door. OFC 283

Sadly, 14700 people refused to enter into that refuge and lost their lives at the hand of the destroyer. The rebellion of Korah and his friends opens for us a window of understanding of the war that began in Heaven and how crafty and cunning Satan is in deceiving and destroying anything that stands between him and his desires being fulfilled.

It is my sincere prayer that you will see the mercy and love that exist in the heart of our Father in this story. He doesn't want anyone to perish and it grieves Him when people through selfishness allow themselves to be ruled by Satan and finally destroyed by him. How hard is it then to run into the arm of our Saviour for safety when it is believed He carries a weapon in His hand to destroy you if you don't respond to His appeals? For all those who have faith and seek the Father with all their heart they will find that God truly is

love proving that His realm is not a kingdom of force, domination and control but rather love, freedom and joy.