

*Rule the World*  
*or Be Consumed By It*  
*a lesson on Parashah Korach*  
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One of the facts of leadership is that when things are going well, everyone loves whoever is in charge. When things are difficult, the one in charge gets the blame whether he has anything to do with it or not. There always seems to be people who have a better way. Unfortunately for Korach, the 250 other leaders who joined themselves with him, and their families, they found out the hard way that when you come against the man God has appointed over you, you come against more than just the man himself.

In case you didn't catch it, here is the story. Let's start with Moshe. Moshe was the one who God rescued from death as a baby. It was Moshe who God talked to from the burning bush. It was Moshe who went to Pharaoh and became God's instrument through which the 10 plagues were inflicted upon Egypt. Moshe led Israel out of Egypt and through the Sea of Reeds. It was Moshe that God gave the Law to at Mt. Sinai. It was Moshe who pleaded with God on several occasions to not completely destroy Israel.

Now out of seeming nowhere, at least as far as Scripture is concerned, Korach and 250 other leaders of Israel come against Moshe and have the gall, after all that has happened, to accuse him of claiming authority over Israel without proof. Instead, they believed they should share the authority over Israel. They even appear to believe God is behind them in their rebellion. They decided how they thought things ought to be, then used spiritual words and language to make themselves sound more credible. These guys had to have been smoking some fermented cactus to be that delusional, and these were respected, influential leaders of Israel. Such is the deceptive powers of Ha Satan.

Truth was, Moshe was God's representative to the people. God had developed through the wisdom of Yitro a hierarchy of leadership from Moshe down to the people. This was God's design. To come against Moshe was equivalent to coming against God. This is what Korach did. We are told to be in the world and not of the world. Some tell us we ought to become one with the world. Well, when the earth literally opened up and swallowed Korach and those with them, they very quickly became one with the world. I'm sure all those involved would tell us that echad with the earth is not as glamorous as some may think. I'm sure the worms didn't mind the extra protein though. All this was because Korach went his own way, deceived others into joining him in his ideas, and he acted out of his own logic and selfish ambition, thereby ignoring God and His design.

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, and your ways are not my ways," says YHVH. "As high as the sky is above the earth are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." **(Yasha'yahu/Isaiah 55:8-9)**

"There can be a way which seems right to a person, but at its end are the ways of death."  
**(Mishlei/Proverbs 14:12)**

They didn't like the way things were going. Campaign promises of the Promised Land had not been met, the economy was dry, they were preparing for war in a foreign country, problems

plagued the health care system, and Korach and his fellow lobbyists thought they had a better way. We need to get this burning bush guy out of leadership and run this nation ourselves, they thought. Such was the voice of rebellion through the mouth of Korach. How much different is this from those who say that they don't need Moshe's Laws. They have their own laws, customs, traditions, and holidays. Never mind that many of them have pagan roots, as long as it's done for God, or some kind of Biblical spirituality can be attached to it it will be honoring to God and God will be behind it. In fact, anyone who doesn't adhere to these new ways are no longer of God. Here is the problem. Assuming that the various ways man can conjure up are good, logical, practical, and actually work, they are still wrong if not prescribed by God.

“Unless YHVH builds the house, its builders work in vain. Unless YHVH guards the city, the guard keeps watch in vain.” **(Tehellim/Psalms 127:1)**

In Torah, we have lots of what I have come to call phrespits. Phrespits are cool. Phrespits are our friends. So what are phrespits you ask? They are physical representations of spiritual truth. It is an acronym, which those of us in the military are oh so fond of. As we read about the real people of God, Israel, exiting the real Egypt, crossing the Sea of Reeds, living in the wilderness, building the tabernacle, and preparing for the Promised Land. All these events are actual historical events of real people. However, these events have spiritual equivalents which carry over into today. These spiritual equivalents don't negate the physical or replace them, but they expand their scope in order to make them relevant to us today. Because of this, those of us who are gentiles are able to enjoy the benefits of being engrafted into spiritual Israel which physical Israel represents. There are many who are part of physical Israel who are not part of spiritual Israel through lack of faith in Messiah Yeshua.

This historical story is a phrespit with definite implications for today. If we follow God and walk in his ways, He has promised from the beginning to put the world under our feet. It is His desire that we as humans rule the world.

“So God created humankind in his own image; in the image of God he created him: male and female he created them. God blessed them: God said to them, “Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea, the birds in the air and every living creature that crawls on the earth.” **(Beresheet/Genesis 1:27-28)**

The world continues on with or without humanity to control it. We do not rule the world on our own. God puts it under our feet if we live by His will in fear of Him. If we fail to rule the world, it will rule us and we will be consumed by it.

“...the eye is not satisfied with seeing, the ear not filled up with hearing.”  
**(Kohelet/Ecclesiastes 1:8)**

If we go the way of the world, rather than the way of God, we will begin to walk the road of having enough, doing enough, and knowing enough. As I stated a few weeks ago, on that road there is never enough. In this way, we become consumed by the world and like quicksand we eventually go the way of Korach.

"But the person who is righteous will live his life by trust." What is revealed is God's anger from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people who in their wickedness keep suppressing the truth; because what is known about God is plain to them, since God has made it plain to them. For ever since the creation of the universe his invisible qualities - both his eternal power and his divine nature - have been clearly seen, because they can be understood from what he has made. Therefore, they have no excuse; because, although they know who God is, they do not glorify him as God or thank him. On the contrary, they have become futile in their thinking; and their undiscerning hearts have become darkened. Claiming to be wise, they have become fools! In fact, they have exchanged the glory of the immortal God for mere images, like a mortal human being, or like birds, animals or reptiles! This is why God has given them up to the vileness of their hearts' lusts, to the shameful misuse of each other's bodies. They have exchanged the truth of God for falsehood, by worshipping and serving created things, rather than the Creator - praised be he for ever. Amen." **(Romans 1:17-25)**

Korach rejected God's design of authority for Israel and rebelled against God. In return, God gave him over to the world to literally be consumed by it. If we reject the ways of God for the ways of man, God may also give us over to the way of the world which will spiritually and possibly physically consume us leading to death. When people commit suicide, in one way or another their spirit has already been consumed by the world. They are simply allowing their body to catch up with their spirit. However, Yeshua has come to renew our spirit and give us abundant life.

At the point of the Korach rebellion, Israel was in a state of being tested and taught by God in preparation for the Promised Land. In order to go into the land and subdue the giants living there, Israel had to know that God was in control. They had to have a faith stronger than the walls of Jericho, in the God who made the land they were possessing and bringing them to. Through that faith, God would show Himself both to Israel and the rest of the world. We are called to be a light to the world. The light we shine is God's light, not our own. God's light can only shine through us if we are trusting in Him, and living according to His ways. Yeshua's talmidim did some amazing things, but only because they followed Him, the Living Torah.

Later in the parashah, we see the people afraid to even approach the tabernacle in any way out of fear of being struck dead by God. This is not the kind of fear God is looking for. They swing from rebellion to avoidance. It is God's desire that His people draw close to Him. He wants an intimate relationship with each one of us. However, we need to come to God on His terms, not ours. To avoid God is just as much sin as rebellion against Him. For some of us, out of fear of failure, we do nothing. This is like the servant who was given one talent and hid it out of fear of the master if he lost it. God has entrusted us with His Law. If we follow it in obedience to Him, God will bless us for it, and we will grow in faith as His loyal servant. When we fail, if we repent and seek God's forgiveness, He will provide restoration and atonement. Human infallibility is accounted for and restoration is provided through Torah. Yeshua, the Living Torah provided the final sacrifice to accomplish what the sacrificial system of the written Torah could not, but redemption for our failures is still through Torah. Failure and rebellion are two different things. Rebellion leads to death, but failure can lead to growth. Doing nothing is actually a form of rebellion, and will lead to death. Faith without works is dead.

In order to bring His people into the Promised Land, God needed to have people whose faith would enable them to march around a city for seven days, then blow trumpets and shout to knock the walls down. He needed people with faith strong enough to go against an army of thousands with three hundred and trust God for the victory. He needed people with faith powerful enough to literally make the sun stand still. He needed people who were loyal enough to kill what He said to kill, destroy what He said to destroy, and spare only what He said could be spared. He needs people with the same kind of faith and obedience to build His Kingdom today.

Korach and his followers made some wrong decisions which had some fatal consequences. They may have believed that what they were doing was logical, was what was best for the people, and even of God. However, it went against the design God had already established and proven to be true. The rest of the assembly had to make some choices of their own. Whose side were they going to be on, Moshe or Korach? They had to choose that day, and very quickly who they were going to serve, much in the same way Y'hoshua will later challenge Israel at the end of his book. Tehellim/Psalms 1 cautions us not to sit in the counsel of the ungodly or stand in the way of scoffers. Rather the righteous love Torah and meditate on it day and night. The way of God and the way of Torah is not easy, and takes a process of learning, falling, seeking forgiveness, learning some more, being tested, and slowly being fashioned into the instrument God needs to build His Kingdom. We must always remember that the same God who leads us into dark valleys also leads us to green meadows. The lessons and trials are difficult, but there are victories and blessings for the faithful, and regardless of that, subduing the earth under your feet is always better than becoming lunch for the ground you walk on.