

The Rebellion of Korah

In this newsletter, we will be taking an in-depth look at the Rebellion of Korah. There are so many deep lessons to be learned from this story, depending on the perspective from which it is approached. We will be approaching it from our prophet's perspective today.

The Position of Korah

Korah was a prince. He held a high position in the congregation of Israel. He was even privileged to see the divine glory:

“Korah and his fellow conspirators were of the number who went up with Moses into the mount and beheld the divine glory. But a temptation, slight at first, had been harbored until their minds were controlled by Satan. They first whispered their discontent to one another and then to leading men of Israel. At last they really believed themselves actuated by zeal for God.”—*Eternity Past*, pg. 278.

Korah found himself surrounded by a group of discontented princes who echoed his feelings. The temptation grew as it was cherished until it became open and defiant rebellion. Korah's suggestions were embraced, his grievances were met with sympathy, and his motives were praised. Soon, he rose as the leader, even believing he was on the right path. He was self-deceived! What prompted him to act in this manner?

“Jealousy had given rise to envy, and envy to rebellion. Korah's fellow conspirators deceived themselves and one another into thinking that Moses and Aaron had assumed the positions they held, that these leaders had exalted themselves in taking the priesthood and government. They were no more holy than the people, and it should be enough for them to be on a level with their brethren, who were equally favored with God's presence and protection.”—*Eternity Past*, pg. 278.

The same motives that prompted Satan to rebel in heaven also influenced this privileged prince. He then set out to incite the people against Moses. Korah's winning strategy was flattery, and it suited his purposes well:

“Korah and his associates enlisted the support of the congregation. The charge that the murmurings of the people had brought the

wrath of God was declared a mistake. They said that the congregation were not at fault, since they desired nothing more than their rights; but Moses was an overbearing ruler; he had reproved the people as sinners when they were a holy people.”—*Eternity Past*, pg. 278.

Korah worked as Satan had in heaven. Just as Satan claimed that God's law restricted the angels' liberty, Korah told the people that they were already holy and did not deserve to be reproved or told they were in error. He argued that they were only asserting their rights. Moses had wrongfully condemned them for what was, in truth, a righteous course of action. Korah was not undermining Moses, but the testimony of God Himself!

“Korah's hearers thought they saw clearly that their troubles might have been prevented if Moses had pursued a different course. Their exclusion from Canaan was in consequence of the mismanagement of Moses and Aaron. If Korah would be their leader and encourage them by dwelling upon their good deeds instead of reproving their sins, they would have a very prosperous journey; instead of wandering in the wilderness they would proceed directly to the Promised Land.”—*Eternity Past*, pg. 278.

The congregation wanted leaders who would support them and ignore their faults. They sought someone to explain away their wrong actions and offer comforting messages. Korah was eager to take on this leadership role. He had already given evidence that he would speak as the people wished.

“But many were not ready to accept Korah's accusations against Moses. His patient, self-sacrificing labors came up before them, and conscience was disturbed. It was therefore necessary to assign some selfish motive; the old charge was reiterated, that he had led them out to perish in the wilderness that he might seize their possessions.”—*Eternity Past*, pg. 279.

Korah had fallen into Satan's deception. To substantiate his claims, he blackened the motives of the meekest man on earth. This is a warning to us. We should not let accusation, insinuation, or the blackening of another's motives silence our

2 concerns. “By their fruits ye shall know them.” No man can know another’s motive, and by sitting as a judge, Korah had usurped the privileges of Christ.

“...since the Father ‘hath committed all judgment unto the Son’ (John 5:22), whoever presumes to judge the motives of others is again usurping the prerogative of the Son of God. These would-be judges and critics are placing themselves on the side of antichrist, ‘who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.’ 2 Thessalonians 2:4.”—*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, pg. 125.

Korah’s accusations showed his inspiration. However, the princes in Israel were blinded by the flattering thought that they were righteous and Moses was wicked. They should have closed their ears to the voice of Korah:

“Ministers and lay members of the church displease God when they allow individuals to tell them the errors and faults of their brethren. They should not listen to these reports, but should inquire: “Have you strictly followed the injunctions of your Saviour? Have you gone to the offender and told him his faults between you and him alone? And has he refused to hear you? Have you carefully and prayerfully taken two or three others, and labored with him in tenderness, humility, and meekness, your heart throbbing with love for his soul?” If the Captain’s orders, in the rules given for the erring, have been strictly followed, then an advance step is to be taken—tell it to the church, and let action be taken in the case according to the Scriptures. Then it is that heaven will ratify the decision made by the church in cutting off the offending member if he does not repent. If these steps have not been taken, close the ear to complaints, and thus refuse to take up a reproach against your neighbor. If there were no brethren and sisters to do this, evil tongues would soon cease; for they would not find so favorable a field in which to work in biting and devouring one another.”—5 *Testimonies*, pg. 616.

Unfortunately, the leaders listened to Korah’s faultfinding words and rebelled against God’s chosen messenger and guide.

“Thus, 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 Moses’ ambitious designs. He was represented in the blackest character of a tyrant and usurper. The exclusion from Canaan was charged upon him.”—*Eternity Past*, pg. 280.

Notice that the hypocrites painted Moses with their own character. They were the tyrants and usurpers. Usurping the power of God to judge and using it against God’s innocent chosen leader. They even cast the responsibility for their own shortcomings on Moses! How did he respond?

“Moses made no effort at self-vindication. He solemnly appealed to God in the presence of the congregation and implored Him to be his judge.”—*Eternity Past*, pg. 278.

God did indeed step in and judge the children of Israel. When the ground opened up, the people were terrified but not repentant. They were so persistent in their course that they attributed this evidence of divine power to Moses! Ellen White tells us why:

“They had been flattered by Korah until they really believed themselves to be a very good people, wronged and abused by Moses. They had fondly cherished the hope that a new order of things was about to be established in which praise would be substituted for reproof, and ease for anxiety and conflict. The men who had perished had spoken flattering words and professed great interest and love for them, and the people concluded that Moses had by some means been the cause of their destruction.”—*Eternity Past*, pg. 282.

Then she brings home this story with an application to us in our time:

“Do not the same evils still exist that lay at the foundation of Korah’s ruin? Pride and ambition are widespread and open the door to envy and striving for supremacy. The soul is alienated from God and unconsciously drawn into the ranks of Satan. Like Korah and his companions, many are thinking, planning, and working so eagerly for self-exaltation that they are ready to pervert the truth, falsifying and misrepresenting the Lord’s servants. By persistently reiterating falsehood, they at last come to believe it to be truth.”—*Eternity Past*, pg. 283.

Today, the temptation to self-exaltation is greater still. All who desire the praise of man, to be looked upon as wise, and to be called Rabbi, will pervert the truth sooner or later for their own ends. And as they continually repeat their falsehoods, they will eventually believe it themselves. Through repetition, the seed is continually sown in the mind. It eventually bears the fruit of rebellion against God’s restrictions. This is an observed phenomenon called the “Illusory Truth Effect.” Ellen White reveals to us the secret of this deception:

“The Hebrews were not willing to submit to

W
M
3
4
4
3

the directions and restrictions of the Lord. They were unwilling to receive reproof. This was the secret of their murmuring against Moses. All through the history of the church, God's servants have had the same spirit to meet"—*Eternity Past*, pg. 283.

There is a greater hatred against words of reproof in our day than in Moses'. When people take the wrong course and are reproved for it, many manifest the same traits that are seen in the story of Korah. They repeat their murmurings until they become self-deceived and believe them. Now in our time, God's servants will have the same spirit to meet. This spirit grows and does not manifest suddenly. We read:

"Rejection of light darkens the mind and hardens the heart, so that it is easier to take the next step in sin, to reject still clearer light, until at last habits of wrongdoing become fixed. He who faithfully preaches God's word, condemning sin, too often incurs hatred. Soothing their consciences with deception, the jealous and disaffected sow discord in the church and weaken the hands of those who would build it up."—*Eternity Past*, pg. 283.

"Every advance made by those whom God has called to lead His work has been misrepresented by the jealous and faultfinding. Thus it was in the time of Luther, of the Wesleys, and other reformers. Thus it is today."—*Eternity Past*, pg. 284.

Jealousy and faultfinding are often the causes of murmuring and discontent. Everyone thinks they can do a better job, but they forget that God knows the heart. God selects His leaders, and He makes them able. If the grumbling complainers were fit to lead, they would have been chosen by God instead. In the kingdom of Satan, everyone can be a master and a leader, the "ruler of their own lives." Thus, many enlist under the black banner of the Prince of Darkness.

"Apostasies have occurred and the Lord has permitted matters of this nature to develop in the past in order to show how easily His people will be misled when they depend upon the words of men instead of searching the Scriptures for themselves, as did the noble Bereans, to see if these things are so. And the Lord has permitted things of this kind to occur that warnings may be given that such things will take place."—2 *Selected Messages*, pg. 394.

God in His infinite wisdom allows apostasy to take place. If we would learn the lesson He has designed to teach, would we not be better off? But, how often the discontented cease from following

one man to follow another! They do not make the word of God their counselor. **3**

"When man assails his fellow men, and presents in a ridiculous light those whom God has appointed to do work for him, we would not be doing justice to the accusers, or to those who are misled by their accusations should we keep silent, leaving the people to think that their brethren and sisters, in whom they have had confidence, are no longer worthy of their love and fellowship. This work, arising in our very midst, and resembling the work of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, is an offence to God, and should be met. And on every point the accusers [Addressed to certain accusers in Australia who had had special evidence of Ellen White's work.—Compilers.] should be called upon to bring their proof. Every charge should be carefully investigated; it should not be left in any uncertain way, the people should not be left to think that it may be or it may not be. The accusers should do all in their power to lift every sign of reproach that cannot be substantiated."—3 *Selected Messages*, pg. 348.

Concerning Parallels

Suppose someone is going to raise a standard to rally against leaders. Should we not candidly investigate the evidence? Is it hearsay? Is it real? Is it the blanket statements of the jealous and discontent? What evidence is there? If the work is to divide it is not of Christ:

"I warn the Seventh-day Adventist Church to be careful how you receive every new notion and those who claim to have great light. The character of their work seems to be to accuse and to tear down. Let the believers heed the voice of the angel who has said to the church, "Press together." In unity is your strength. Love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous. God hath a church, and Christ hath declared, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The messengers the Lord sends bear the divine credentials."—*Review and Herald*, Sept. 19, 1893.

Let us take some space to evaluate a concerning statement made by a church member:

"The managers of the Michigan conference, and even the NAD and the GC, have acute hearing problems. Refusing to seek a cure, they remain deaf to the real needs of the church they attempt to manage."

Rhetorical language: "acute hearing problems," "refusing to seek a cure," "remain deaf." These metaphors carry negative judgment rather than neutral description. They frame leadership as willfully negligent, not merely mistaken or

4 constrained.

Presumption of intent: “Refusing to seek a cure” implies deliberate choice, not lack of information, structural limits, or competing priorities. This assigns moral fault without evidence. In fact, I have heard evidence that this is not the case at all. The conference made efforts to find a cure, but these efforts were rejected.

Dismissive framing: “they attempt to manage” subtly undermines legitimacy and competence. This is evaluative, not descriptive.

Overgeneralization: All managers of the Michigan Conference, the entire leadership bodies of the NAD and GC. No distinctions are made between individuals, departments, decisions, or time frames. This is a classic example of a sweeping generalization.

Lack of specificity: The “real needs of the church” remains undefined. No examples, data, policies, or decisions are cited.

Unfalsifiability: “Deaf to real needs” is subjective. Any disagreement by leadership could be interpreted as “not listening,” making the claim difficult to test or refute. Thus, complex institutional outcomes are attributed to one flaw: failure to listen. This ignores alternative explanations (such as resources, governance structures, theological constraints, and legal issues).

In short, this statement demonstrates clear bias. It makes broad, sweeping assertions, attributes intent and failure without evidence. It relies on rhetorical force rather than a substantiated argument. That does not mean the underlying concern is necessarily false—only that the statement, as written, relies on rhetorical accusations instead of evidence. The matter has been placed in a ridiculous light by someone who is speaking their feelings. That is textbook Korah Language. What evidence is there that every leader in the church is no longer worthy of our love and fellowship? Such extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence. Ellen White writes:

“Satan can lead deceived souls to great lengths. He can pervert their judgment, their sight, and their hearing. It was so in the case of the Israelites. “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.” The people were disappointed in the matter’s resulting as it did

in favor of Moses and Aaron. The appearance of Korah and his company, all impiously exercising the priests’ office with their censers, struck the people with admiration. They did not see that these men were offering a daring affront to the divine Majesty. When they were destroyed, the people were terrified; but after a short time, all came in a tumultuous manner to Moses and Aaron, and charged them with the blood of those men who had perished by the hand of God.”—*1 Spirit of Prophecy*, pg. 303.

It should come as no surprise that the great deceiver can clothe his rebellious and impious followers in robes of light. While the course of the rebels gained the admiration of man, it called down upon them the wrath of God. Are we admiring people who are offering daring affronts to God? At a recent religious liberty meeting a prominent speaker said:

“The message to the church of Laodicea is to the angel of the church of Laodicea. Which means this is a message directed at the leaders of the Laodicean church. And it’s saying that you are in a lost condition now. Unless you repent, I’m going to spit you out.”

Doesn’t this sound like “The whole congregation is holy except the leadership?” A startling similarity to the message of Korah. The whole church is in need of the Laodicean message, it is not only addressed to the leadership, but to the people of God living in the judgment hour. Says the prophet:

“The message to the Laodicean church is applicable to our condition. How plainly is pictured the position of those who think they have all the truth, who take pride in their knowledge of the Word of God, while its sanctifying power has not been felt in their lives. The fervor of the love of God is wanting in their hearts, but it is this very fervor of love that makes God’s people the light of the world. . . Mark the following words: “Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” Here is represented a people who pride themselves in their possession of spiritual knowledge and advantages. But they have not responded to the unmerited blessings that God has bestowed upon them. They have been full of rebellion, ingratitude, and forgetfulness of God; and still He has dealt with them as a

More Food for the Little Flock —

The Rebellion of Korah

loving, forgiving father deals with an ungrateful, wayward son. They have resisted His grace, abused His privileges, slighted His opportunities, and have been satisfied to sink down in contentment, in lamentable ingratitude, hollow formalism, and hypocritical insincerity. With pharisaic pride they have vaunted themselves till it has been said of them, “Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing”—*Faith and Works, pg. 82-83.*

Notice that the Laodicean church is full of rebellion. Do not be deceived: there is no such thing as righteous rebellion. Rebellion began with Lucifer and it will only end in the lake of fire. Ellen White records the history of Lucifer’s rebellion in these words:

“Concealing his real purposes, he assembled the angelic host. He introduced his subject, which was himself. As one aggrieved he related the preference God had given to Jesus to the neglect of himself. He told them that henceforth all the precious liberty the angels had enjoyed was at an end.”—*Signs of the Times, January 9, 1879, article B.*

From the beginning the great controversy has been about liberty. For the sake of liberty the angels in heaven rebelled against God. For the sake of liberty Korah rebelled against Moses. And now a prominent speaker on religious liberty is separating the church into two groups, those who worship the system and the “true and free Adventists.” The issue has been framed in black and white. Those who obey leadership, or worship in conference churches are presented as being outside “true and free Adventism.” Liberty of Conscience has been exalted as the highest standard. But what if people have no conscience or their conscience is seared? Official Adventism is framed as having a public position that reflects the Antichrist, while “True and free Adventism” submits the Scriptures alone. Is this position supported by Scripture? Does the church you attend determine whether you are true and free? Is it really that simple to determine who is on the Lord’s side? To stand solely on the Scriptures means to obey what they say. What do the Scriptures say?

“Obey them that have the **rule over you**, and

submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.”—*Hebrews 13:17.*

Clearly, this is church governance. I know Rome didn’t look after the souls of it’s subjects! What does the prophet say?

“God would have His people disciplined and brought into harmony of action, that they may see eye to eye and be of the same mind and of the same judgment. In order to bring about this state of things, there is much to be done. The carnal heart must be subdued and transformed. God designs that there shall ever be a living testimony in the church. It will be necessary to reprove and exhort, and some will need to be rebuked sharply, as the case demands. We hear the plea: “Oh, I am so sensitive, I cannot bear the least reflection!” If these persons would state the case correctly, they would say: “I am so self-willed, so self-sufficient, so proud-spirited, that I will not be dictated to; I will not be reproved. I claim the right of individual judgment: I have a right to believe and talk as I please.” The Lord would not have us yield up our individuality. But **what man is a proper judge of how far this matter of individual independence should be carried?**”—*3 Testimonies, pg. 360.*

What words of wisdom! What man is a proper judge of individual independence? This is why we have the Bible. It shows us a clear boundary, but many people don’t like where that line falls. Some, because they want more control over their brethren, and others, because they want more freedom from due restraint. Make no mistake: the Bible does not condone rebellion:

“For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.”—*1 Samuel 15:23.*

Ellen White tells us more about the rebellious company of Korah.

“These rebellious ones had flattered the people in general into believing that they were right and that all their troubles arose from Moses, their ruler, who continually reminded them of their sins. The people thought that if Korah could lead them and encourage them by

dwelling upon their righteous acts instead of reminding them of their failures, they would have a very peaceful, prosperous journey, and he would without doubt lead them, not back and forward in the wilderness, but into the Promised Land. They said that it was Moses who had told them that they could not go into the land, and that the Lord had not thus said.”—3 *Testimonies*, pg. 349.

In striking words, the prophet reveals the cause of the people’s allegiance to these rebels. They did not like to be reminded of their own shortcomings. They wanted to be praised for their righteous actions and not reproofed for their wicked ones. All who partake in the rebellion of Korah will be found to have the same attitude. When their sins are mentioned, instead of admitting they have fault, they will seek to cast the blame upon their leaders or paint others as more wicked than themselves.

“We have evidence in God’s word of the liability of His people to be greatly deceived. There are many instances where what may seem to be a sincere zeal for the honor of God has its origin in leaving the soul unguarded for the enemy to tempt and to impress the mind with a perverted sense of the real state of things. And we may expect just such things in these last days, for Satan is just as busy now as he was in the congregation of Israel. The cruelty and strength of prejudice are not understood. After the congregation had the evidence before their sight of the destruction of these leaders in rebellion, the power of suspicion and distrust which had been let into their souls was not removed. They saw the ground open and the leaders of rebellion go down into the bowels of the earth. This fearful exhibition surely ought to have cured them and led them to the deepest repentance for their abuse of Moses.”—3 *Testimonies*, pg. 353.

Do you know anyone who is encouraging the growth of suspicion and distrust against those in leadership roles? Determine to close your ears to their voice; these traits strengthen as they are used, until we come to be suspicious and distrustful of God. Suspicion will be the loss of many a soul in this age! Not everyone you disagree with is a Jesuit.

“There will be men and women who despise reproof and whose feelings will ever rise up against it. It is not pleasant to be told of our wrongs. In almost every case where reproof is necessary, there will be some who entirely overlook the fact that the Spirit of the Lord has been grieved and His cause reproached. These will pity those who deserved reproof, because personal feelings have been hurt. All this unsanc-

tified sympathy places the sympathizers where they are sharers in the guilt of the one reproofed. In nine cases out of ten if the one reproofed had been left under a sense of his wrongs, he might have been helped to see them and thereby have been reformed. But meddling, unsanctified sympathizers place altogether a wrong construction upon the motives of the reprover and the nature of the reproof given, and by sympathizing with the one reproofed lead him to feel that he has been really abused; and his feelings rise up in rebellion against the one who has only done his duty. Those who faithfully discharge their unpleasant duties under a sense of their accountability to God will receive His blessing. God requires His servants to be always in earnest to do His will. In the apostle’s charge to Timothy he exhorts him to “preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.”—3 *Testimonies*, pg. 359.

Let us not be found weakening the work or meddling in others’ affairs. We are not to sympathize with those who are guilty. If people are being disciplined we need to remember there are two sides to every story. The Bible warns us against trusting someone testifying on his own behalf.

“He that is first in his own cause seemeth just; but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him.”—*Proverbs 18:17*.

While the Hebrews managed to make Moses look bad to their neighbors and brethren, they failed to impress God. God, who searches the heart laid bare the real condition.

“The Hebrews were not willing to submit to the directions and restrictions of the Lord. They simply wanted their own way, to follow the leadings of their own mind, and be controlled by their own judgment. Could they have been left free to do this, **no complaints would have been made of Moses**; but they were restless under restraint.”—3 *Testimonies*, pg. 360.

Now we must ask ourselves, “Does God’s church have the biblical right to make rules, regulations and restraint for the good of the church?” Yes. The Bible tells us:

“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.”—*Hebrews 13:17*.

Are we restless under due restraint? I am not referring to rules that demand we violate our conscience. But if such rules are made, what should our reaction be? Should we rebel or should we say “we ought to obey God rather than man?” Je-

sus has some words for us on this matter. He says:

“The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.”—*Matthew 23:2-3*.

The church leaders in the time of Christ were as corrupt as they could be, but Jesus did not teach rebellion against them. He taught to obey God and submit to others, but only when doing so would not be disobeying God. Jesus even paid the temple tax, which was a loaded move!

“The history of the Israelites presents before us the great danger of deception. Many do not have a sense of the sinfulness of their own natures nor of the grace of forgiveness. They are in nature’s darkness, subject to temptations and to great deception. They are far from God; yet they take great satisfaction in their lives, when their conduct is abhorred of God. This class will ever be at war with the leadings of the Spirit of God, especially with reproof. They do not wish to be disturbed. Occasionally they have selfish fears and good purposes, and sometimes anxious thoughts and convictions; but they have not a depth of experience, because they are not riveted to the eternal Rock. This class never see the necessity of the plain testimony. Sin does not appear so exceedingly sinful to them for the very reason that they are not walking in the light as Christ is in the light.”—*3 Testimonies, pg. 361*.

Modern-day Rebellion

The history of this event was given to us specifically for this time. Paul writes:

“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.”—*1 Corinthians 10:11*.

Clearly, there is a modern equivalent to Korah’s rebellion. But what is it? Is it just rebellion against leadership? What if the Leadership manifests the same distaste of rebuke that Korah had? Praise God, He didn’t leave His people, who are so prone to being deceived, in the dark! We have a prophet, and she gives us the facts:

“The facts relative to Korah and his company, who rebelled against Moses and Aaron, and against Jehovah, are recorded for a warning to God’s people, especially those who live upon the earth near the close of time. Satan has led persons to imitate the example of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, in raising insurrection among the people of God. Those who permit themselves to rise in opposition to the plain testimony, become self-deceived, and have really thought that

those upon whom God laid the burden of His work were exalted above the people of God, and that their counsels and reproofs were uncalled for. They have risen in opposition to the plain testimony which God would have them bear in rebuking the wrongs among God’s people. The testimonies borne against hurtful indulgences, as tea, coffee, snuff, and tobacco, have irritated a certain class, because it would destroy their idols. Many for a while were undecided whether to make an entire sacrifice of all these hurtful things, or reject the plain testimonies borne, and yield to the clamors of appetite. They occupied an unsettled position. There was a conflict between their convictions of truth and their self-indulgences. Their state of indecision made them weak, and with many, appetite prevailed. Their sense of sacred things was perverted by the use of these slow poisons; and they at length fully decided, let the consequence be what it might, they would not deny self. This fearful decision at once raised a wall of separation between them and those who were cleansing themselves, as God has commanded, from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, and were perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord. The straight testimonies borne were in their way, and caused them great uneasiness, and they found relief in warring against them, and striving to make themselves and others believe that they were untrue. They said the people were all right, but it was reproof testimonies which made the trouble. And when the rebellious unfurl their banner, all the disaffected rally around the standard, and all the spiritually defective, the lame, the halt, and the blind, unite their influence to scatter and sow discord.”—*Councils on Diets and Foods, pg. 428*.

This straightforward statement reveals the root of Korah’s rebellion: a desire to silence the voice of reproof. Ellen White directly links this rebellion to opposition against the health message, which warns about the harmful indulgences of tea, coffee, alcohol, and tobacco, as well as, in modern times, chocolate and marijuana. This is the distinguishing feature that sets the Adventist health message apart from the spiritualist health message. Our health message calls for abstaining from indulgences that cloud the mind and harm the body—advice that is notably absent from the spiritualist health message. Spiritualists actually encourage harmful indulgences like green tea and chocolate as aids in spiritual growth.

Rebellion against the clear counsel of the health message is widespread in our church today. I even know a group of Adventists that

8 recommends the use of nicotine as a protection against COVID-19. It would be better to succumb to COVID-19 than to become a slave to appetites and suffer the second death. Those who are enslaved by their appetites find any excuse to justify their actions. These vices erode our freedom far more effectively than any statement the church has made in any age. To be a slave to sin is a horrible fate.

Where is the voice of reproof against these wrongs? Could it be that advocates for “religious freedom” are also enslaved to their appetites? Could it be they are wasting their time fighting against flesh and blood instead of sin? Are they hesitant to use their influence against such issues because it would be unpopular? Are they simply political moralists? Maybe they are also ignorant of the scriptures and the power of God? Why is there silence on these matters? We must call sin by its proper name. Why is it that we can unite against people, but not against sin? Because we are exactly what Christ says we are: poor, blind, miserable, and naked. We are so blind that we can no longer distinguish between the holy and the profane. God has called us to come apart and be separate. The most relevant question in our age is not about Religious Liberty, where we pay tithe, Covid, or whether we attend a conference church. We should be asking ourselves; “Is there a difference between me and the world?”

“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled.” All through this sermon on the mount is a line of advancement for Christian experience. The angels of darkness are to stand back, that the soul purchased by the infinite sacrifice of Christ may attain unto perfection of character. The word is sounded: “Stand back, this soul is not yours, it has been purchased by the precious blood of Christ. Stand back, I and my Father are one, and we have come to draw this soul to righteousness.” If the soul is not drawn to Christ, it is because the will is not on the side of God’s will, but on the side of the enemy. If man will but cooperate with God, God will work in him to will and to do of his good pleasure, and man will work out his own salvation with fear and trembling. The reason you do not realize the help of the Lord to a far greater degree is that you are so self-centered, your will is not on the side of

God’s will. The Lord would have you make it manifest in your manners, in your dress, in your spirit, that you are blessed. He would have you show that the line of demarkation between the world and the followers of Christ is a distinct line, so decided that the difference between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not is always discernible. **If the people of the world do not see that you are different from those around them, they will not be influenced by your profession of religion;** for you will not be a savor of Christ, and you will win no soul to the service of God.”—*Signs of the Times, June 6, 1892.*

Satan is comfortable with Christians being kind, polite, and loving if they do not obey the truth. He is ecstatic with glee if the Christian who obeys the truth manifests the spirit of the world through strife for supremacy, accusation, and faultfinding. In both scenarios, Satan is sure of his victim. But let the disobedient Christian lay hold of God’s strength, and trial and temptation will sweep in like a hurricane. Let the cold Christian forsake his worldly spirit and confess his hardness of heart, and Satan will be ready to press that man’s patience as far as God allows.

Conclusion

We have conducted an in-depth study of the rebellion of Korah. May God bless you as you seek discernment. May He keep you from joining in any movement that is not of God. Watch for those who are quick to condemn others and quicker to justify themselves, those who stifle the voice of conviction and sympathize with transgressors, those who cry peace and safety, those who, through flattery and praise, gain admiration as they denounce others. Pray that we will not repeat an error until it becomes our truth. Pray that we will not be followers of men, but followers of God.

Isa 2:22 “Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?”

More Food for the Little Flock —