



Study Guide Numbers 16-17

1. Read Ezekiel 22:30. What does it mean for us as God-representatives to 'stand in the gap' for people? How does that include enduring mistreatment at times? Discuss.
2. Read Numbers 16:1-14. Who are the rebels and what is their grievance? What distortions do you see in their account? Discuss the dynamics around distortion in our culture (catastrophizing, black-white thinking, emotional reasoning). How can that be avoided in the church?
3. Read Numbers 16:19-24. Why do you suppose God's anger burns against the entire community? Why does God choose to only destroy the three ring-leaders and the 250 chiefs (v. 35)? Why did God change His mind and not destroy the whole assembly (see v. 22).
4. Read Numbers 16:41-50. How should the Israelites have responded to this judgment? How did they respond? How do Moses and Aaron intercede?
5. Read Numbers 17:1-2, 5 & 8. What did God offer as a sign of His chosen priesthood? How do the people respond in verses 12-13?

Conclusion

Wow! Finally, the people show remorse and the fear of God returns to them. Now they are in a position for God to bless them again. Notice that they arrived at this place through the willingness of Moses and Aaron to stand in the gap for them.

Application

As modern-day "priests", (1 Peter 2:5), how can we offer to others what Moses and Aaron did, 'standing in the gap'? What does it look like in your life to be drained, falsely accused and mistreated, and to still love people as Christ does? Discuss

Numbers 16-17

Big Idea: When we stand in the gap it helps people find God.

Priest: An intermediary, to make God accessible to people.

Ezekiel 22:30

"I looked for someone among them who would ...stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it,..."

Hebrews 8:5a- "They [priests] serve as a copy and shadow of heavenly things."

1 Peter 2:5 "You yourselves ... are ... a holy priesthood..."

A. The People Rebel (v. 1-3)

Now Korah the son of Izhar, son of Kohath, son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men. ²And they rose up before Moses, with a number of the people of Israel, 250 chiefs of the congregation, chosen from the assembly, well-known men. ³They assembled themselves together against Moses and against Aaron ...

What's behind this rebellion (v.3b)?

...and said to them, "You have gone too far! For all in the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the Lord?"

B. Moses Offers (v. 4-11)

⁴When Moses heard it, he fell on his face, ⁵and he said to Korah and all his company, "In the morning the Lord will show who is his,..."

1. Humility
2. Fairness
3. Grace

4. Spiritual Advice (v. 8-11)

⁸And Moses said to Korah, "Hear now, you sons of Levi: ⁹is it too small a thing for you that the God of Israel has separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself, to do service in the tabernacle ... ¹¹Therefore it is against the Lord that you and all your company have gathered together. What is Aaron that you grumble against him?"

- a. Mismatched Discontent
- b. Mismatched Anger

1. Humility
2. Fairness
3. Grace
4. Spiritual Advice

5. Approachability (v. 12)

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

C. The People Distort (v. 13-18)

¹³ Is it a small thing that you have brought us up out of a land flowing with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, that you must also make yourself a prince over us?¹⁴ Moreover, you have not brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey, nor given us inheritance of fields and vineyards. Will you put out the eyes of these men? We will not come up." ¹⁵ And Moses was very angry and said to the Lord, "Do not respect their offering. I have not taken one donkey from them, and I have not harmed one of them."

D. God Responds (v. 19-21)

¹⁹ Then Korah assembled all the congregation against them at the entrance of the tent of meeting. And the glory of the Lord appeared to all the congregation.

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

Korah- "against"- ok. No change of heart. Here we go.

God is about to consume all who are assembled.

E. Moses and Aaron Intercede (v. 22-40)

²² And they fell on their faces and said, "O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and will you be angry with all the congregation?" ²³ And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ²⁴ "Say to the congregation, Get away from the dwelling of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram."

"no outsider should draw near to burn incense before the Lord." (v. 40).

1 Timothy 2:5

"For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

F. The Congregation Grumbles (v. 41-50)

⁴¹ But on the next day all the congregation of the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and against Aaron, saying, "You have killed the people of the Lord."

Again they falsely accuse Moses, and God ...to consume them.

Again Moses and Aaron fall on their faces and intercede again.

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And he put on the incense and made atonement for the people.⁴⁸ And he stood between the dead and the living, and the plague was stopped.

G. God Provides a Clear Sign (17:1-13)

The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ² "Speak to the people of Israel, and get from them staffs, one for each fathers' house, from all their chiefs according to their fathers' houses, twelve staffs.

¹² And the people of Israel said to Moses, "Behold, we perish, we are undone, we are all undone. ¹³ Everyone who comes near, who comes near to the tabernacle of the Lord, shall die. Are we all to perish?"

Big Idea: When we stand in the gap it helps people find God.

Standing in the Gap

1. Moses/Aaron

2. Jesus- Isaiah 53:3

"He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; ...but He was pierced for our transgressions..."

3. The Priesthood of the Believer

1 Peter 2:5

"You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

How did Moses and Aaron stand in the gap?

Psalm 91:1 "He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High, will abide in the shadow of the Almighty."