

## To the Almighty Rebellion Equals Bitterness

*“For **rebellion** is like the sin of **divination** (witchcraft, KJV; **sorcery**, CJB), and **stubbornness** is like **iniquity** and (like the crime of, CJB) **idolatry**” (1 Sam. 15:23, TLV).*

*“For by **your words** you will be **justified**, and by your words you will be **condemned**” (Matt. 12:37).*

This week's reading illustrates how far the seeds of rebellion had spread in the camp of the Israelites. The problem was more serious than many of us have imagined. In this portion, we see how just one incident of mutiny multiplied itself and resulted in the deaths of nearly 15,000 Israelites – and the forty years of wandering had only just begun! It doesn't take very many much time if one stays in grumbling and complaining to escalate to rebellion and mutiny. Why is that? Rebellion was Satan's sin and in this area him and his demons act like the amplifiers in our auditorium. The small signal generated by a microphone (millivolts and micro-amps) becomes the volts and amps that it takes to drive the speakers you see around us so you can hear what is being said and sung on the stage.

There is a missing link in the English text which becomes evident when we study the Hebrew language of the text when Adonai re-anoints Aaron: *“Speak to Bnei-Yisrael and get a rod from each ancestral house, twelve staffs in all, from each prince according to his ancestral household. Write each man's name on his staff. Write Aaron's name on Levi's staff, for there is to be one staff for the prince of each tribe. Then you are to place them in the Tent of Meeting, before the Testimony, where I meet with you. It will come about that the staff of the man I choose will sprout. I will then rid Myself of the grumbings of Bnei-Yisrael, who are grumbling against you... Adonai said to Moses, “Put Aaron's staff back in front of the Testimony to keep as a sign to the sons of rebellion, so that it may put an end to their grumbings against Me, and so they will not die” (Nu. 17:2-5, 10).* The word translated **rebellion** in 1 Sam. 15:23 and in Nu. 17:10 is the Hebrew word *meri-i* (מרִי), which is Strong's 4805. It comes from Strong's 4784 *marah* (vrn), bitterness, i.e. rebellion, bitter, or rebellious. It is translated in the KJV as bitter and (most) rebel (-lion, -lious). Davka translates 4805 as rebelliousness and 4784 as bitter, embittered, acrid, and acrimonious.

There is a direct connection with what we call rebelliousness and bitterness. In the Hebrew language the connection is obvious, rebelliousness is derived from and is a form of bitterness! In the Body of Messiah, we cannot afford to be bitter. Scripture likens **bitterness and rebellion** as the sin of **witchcraft/divination/sorcery**. The Torah has a lot to say about this particular sin and those who practice it. In Exodus 22:18 it states: *“You must not permit a sorceress to live.”* And in Deut. 18:10-12: *“<sup>10</sup>There must not be found among you anyone who makes his son or daughter pass through the fire, or a fortune-teller, soothsayer, omen reader, or sorcerer, <sup>11</sup>or one who casts spells, or a medium, a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. <sup>12</sup>For whoever does these things is an abomination to Adonai, and because of these abominations Adonai your God is driving them out from before you.”*

I know all of you are saying to yourself *“but we are not witches, and we do not practice those things.”* And you are correct – to my knowledge there is no one in the congregation who practices any of those things. But are you bitter? Are you harboring un-forgiveness in your heart of hearts towards anyone? It is not a surprise that Scripture reminds us: *“See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God; and see to it that no bitter root springs up and causes trouble, and by it many be defiled.” (Hebrew 12:15).* It is also no wonder that we were taught in the Basic Seminar that the top four roots of sin are: (1) Bitterness, (2) Immorality, (3) Temporal Values, and (4) Occult Involvement. Scripture affirms the top three: *“For everything in the world—the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, and the boasting of life—is not from the Father but from the world” (1 John 2:16).*

Noting that grace is the **desire and the power to do what we ought**, i.e., **the power God gives to do His Will**, we truly understand that He really wants His Will done. *Yeshua* told us in the disciple's prayer in Matt. 6:10 *“Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”* Why do we need to pray that His Will be done? Isn't He strong enough to do His own Will? Rest assured, He is. But He is a gentleman, and has given us free moral agency. He will not force His Will upon us. It is up to us to do it, with a happy heart. That is why we need His Grace. It gives us the desire and the power to do His Will (1 Cor. 15:10 and Phil. 2:13). The fundamental concept behind

God's grace is that it is about what He wants and not what we want. It is about seeing life through His perspective and not ours because: *"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts"* (Is. 55:9).

Are you harboring bitterness? If so, you are in danger of being judged as rebellious and a witch (a doer of sorcery). Is being angry with someone worth the chance of such a judgment? What happened to *Korah* and his followers? They died. And so will anyone who harbors bitterness. Ultimately, you will rebel against God because His Way is the Way of Forgiveness and when you do, you entertain premature death. Are you ready to release your offender into the hands of a Living God? I certainly pray that you do. Here is a review of the steps we can take to **turn bitterness** into **forgiveness and live** (from the Basic Seminar).

## **Seven Steps to Turn Bitterness into Forgiveness**

### **1. Repent of Temporal Values**

The very fact that we are bitter means we are placing an inflated and great value on temporal things (what people do to damage us and whatever happens, whether it damages our bodies, our possessions, or our reputation is all temporal).

### **2. Recognize the Attitude of Ungratefulness**

### **3. View the offender as God's agent**

If I am hurt by somebody, or damaged, or offended it is very easy for me to get bitter until I realize that I could in no way have been damaged by anyone unless God allowed him or her to get through. He does this in order to accomplish His purposes in our life. God knows how He can use even the wrath and the deceitfulness of people to bring about the best in our life if only we would let Him.

### **4. Thank God for His ultimate purpose Through the Offenses (1 Thes. 5:18)**

God is not telling us to be thankful; He is saying: *"In all things give thanks."* He didn't say: *"In all things be thankful."* Look at it carefully because what He said was: *"In all things give thanks."*

### **5. Comprehend the magnitude of our debt to God**

People who wrong us incur a debt toward us. But we know that it is as **nothing** compared **to our debt to the Lord** (See Matt. 18).

### **6. Realize that God will punish the offender (See the entire book of Psalms)**

One of the reasons why we have to bring an offender to justice is because that is part of the healing for the one who has been offended. God is going to take care of their punishment: *"Vengeance is mine I will repay says the Lord."* He promises to do it. And since He is going to do that then we can rest assured of the end result.

### **7. Voluntarily invest a treasure in our offender**