

Bitterness Equals Rebellion

On July 6, 2019, I preached a message entitled *To the Almighty Rebellion Equals Bitterness*. Friday morning I received an e-mail from the UMJC sent by Dr. Jeffrey Seif entitled *Mutiny on Moses*. I had already written my message for today, but it became evident that I needed to make Spirit-Inspired changes, and hopefully I did.

A synopsis of the rebellion follows. As the forty years of wandering began, we see that it doesn't take very long to observe that grumbling and complaining can and will 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 were three sets of people who had set out to challenge the leadership of Moshe and Aaron according to Numbers 16:1-3. First, we have Korach, the leader of the rebellion. Being a Levite, he was a close relative of Moshe and Aaron. So it was a close family member that led the mutiny. Next, there were people from the tribe of Reuben. Is there significance in this? Reuben was the firstborn of the sons of Jacob and as such, he was normally entitled to the inheritance and family leadership. But, according to Genesis 49, he was bypassed in favor of Joseph and Judah. Further, the problem with these dissatisfied and rebellious people is magnified when we remember that Korah was from the Kohatites. According to the camp arrangements, they encamped and journeyed very close to the Reubenites. Both were located next to each other on the south side of the Mishkan. The third set of people is the 250 who stood with Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. We are told that the 250 people were: *"...men of renown who had been appointed to the council"* (Numbers 16:2)

This is a similar description for that of the spies. Both were some sort of leaders. Furthermore, they all had a name for themselves. The Hebrew text says literally, *"men of a name."* This means that many knew of them, they were popular in Israel. Finally, being men, they fell into the category of men whom Bible commentators defined as *worthy men*. From this description, it seems that some of these 250 were of the Sanhedrin-chosen rulers of Israel whose purpose, according to Numbers 11:16, was to assist Moshe in ruling Israel. These then, are the leaders of this latest mutiny among the children of Israel.

These challengers complained to Moshe and Aaron in verse 16:3 that they took too much power upon themselves. Here were two brothers, one was the spiritual leader, and the other was the prophet or lawgiver—the two highest positions in the nation. Our challengers accused them of: *"You've gone too far! All the community is holy—all of them—and Adonai is with them! Then why do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of Adonai?"* Korah and his conspirators posed a challenge regarding the authority of Moshe and Aaron and may have felt and thought that they had a monopoly in the national leadership. Dathan and Abiram had two problems with Moshe. They felt that he "dominated" them, making himself the ruler over them. They stated the second problem like this: *"We will not come! ¹³ Isn't it enough that you brought us from a land flowing with milk and honey, only to kill us in the wilderness? And now you would lord it over us? ¹⁴ What's more, you haven't brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey, nor given us an inheritance of fields and vineyards. Would you now gouge out the eyes of those men? We won't come!"* (Numbers 16:13-14)

Notice the change in wording in all of Israel's rebellions. In this *Parasha*, the complainers take their obstinacy even further by referring to Egypt in the same way the Lord referred to the Promised Land. It is a complete reversal. It represents the new depth into which the mutiny had sunk.

From the 2019 message: the word translated rebellion in 1 Sam. 15:23 and in Nu. 17:10 is the Hebrew word *meri-i* (מְרִי), which is Strong's 4805. It comes from Strong's 4784 *marah* (מָרָה), bitterness, i.e., rebellion, bitter, or rebellious. It is translated in the KJV as bitter and (most) rebellious). DavkaWriter 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, because rebelliousness is derived from and 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 (1 Sam. 15:23). The *Torah* has a lot to say about this particular sin and those who practice it: *“You must not permit a sorceress to live” (Exodus 22:18); “¹⁰There 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, ¹¹or one who casts spells, or a medium, a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. ¹²For whoever does these things is an abomination to Adonai, and because of these abominations Adonai your God is driving them out from before you.” (Deut. 18:10-12).*

Are you bitter? If so, you harbor unforgiveness in your heart of hearts towards someone 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 have been taught that the top three sin roots are: (1) Bitterness, (2) Immorality, and (3) Temporal Values. Scripturally: *“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).*

Note that grace is the *desire and the power to do what we ought (the power God gives to do His Will. Adonai* wants His Will to be done: *“Your Will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (Matt. 6:10).* Why do we need to pray that His Will be done? Isn't He strong enough to do His own Will? Yes but He 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 all about what He wants and not what we want. It is seeing life through His perspective and not ours: *“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 bitter? If so, you are in danger of being judged as rebellious and a sorcerer (a witch). Is being angry with someone worth the chance of this judgment? What happened to *Korah* and his followers? They died. Anyone who harbors bitterness will also die. Ultimately you will rebel against God because His Way is the Way of Forgiveness. Are you ready to release your offender into the hands of a Living God? How to get rid of bitterness?

- 1) **Repent of Temporal Values:** the very fact that we are bitter, you see, no matter what people do to damage us, no matter what – damage our bodies, damage our possessions, damage 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 them unless God allowed them to get through to accomplish His purposes in my life. God knows how He can use even the wrath and the cheating of people to bring about the best in your life if we would only let Him.
- 4) **Thank God for His ultimate purpose Through the Offenses** (1 Thess. 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.”
- 5) **Comprehend the magnitude of our debt to God:** people who wrong us they have a debt to us. But you know that compared to our debt to the Lord, it is little.
- 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 in the one who has been offended. God is going to take care of their punishment, “Vengeance is mine I will repay saith the Lord.” He promises to do it. And since He is going to do that then...
- 7) **Voluntarily invest a treasure in our offender**

Shabbat Shalom!