

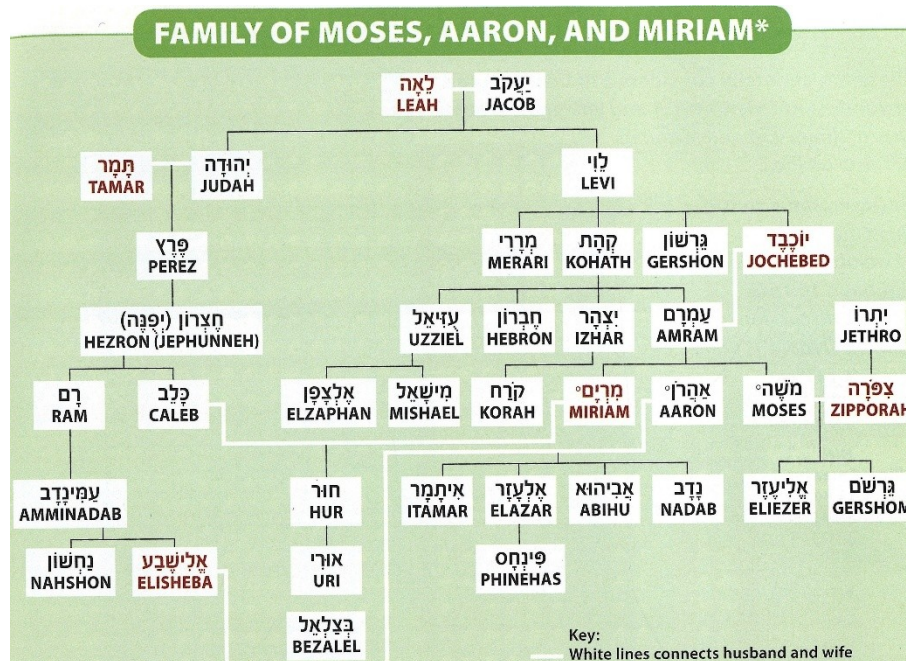
Insights into the Bible [17]

Is it not enough for you? Understanding and Addressing Korah's Revolt (A Story in Two Acts) Numbers 16:1-18-7



Background to Our Story

Levites' Family Tree



Leviticus 10:1-2

¹ Now Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu each took his fire pan, put fire in it, and laid incense on it; and they offered before the Lord alien fire, which He had not enjoined upon them.² And

fire came forth from the Lord and consumed them; thus they died at the instance of the Lord.

Numbers 4:1-4

¹ The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: ² Take a [separate] census of the Kohathites among the Levites, by the clans of their ancestral house, ³ from the age of thirty years up to the age of fifty, all who are subject to service, to perform tasks for the Tent of Meeting. ⁴ This is the responsibility of the Kohathites in the Tent of Meeting: the most sacred objects.

Cast of Characters - Who is Who in the story? (Part 1)

- Korah, son of Izhar, son of Kohath, son of Levi
- Dathan and Abiram, sons of Eliab (son of Pallu, son of Reuben)
- On, son of Peleth (descendant of Reuben)
- 250 Israelites, chieftains of the community, chosen in the assembly, men of repute
- The People
- Moses
- Aaron
- God



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ויקח קרח בן-יצחקר בן-קזת בן-לוי ודתן ואבירם בני אליאב ואון בן-פלל בןי ראובן: ויקלמו לפני משה ואנשים מבני-ישראל חמשים ומאתים נשיאי עדה קראי מועד אנשי-שם: ויקהליו על-משה ועל-אהרן ויאמרו אליהם רב-לכם פי כל-העדה כלם קדושים ובתוכם יהוה ומדוע תתנשאו על-קהל יהוה:

וישמע משה ויפל על-פניו: וידבר אל-קרח ואל-כל-עדתו לאמר בקר וילע יהוה את-אשר-לו ואת-הקדוש והקריב אליו ואת אשר יבחר-בו יקריב אליו: זאת עשו קחולכם מחתות קרח וכל-עדתו: ותנו בהן אש ושימו עליהן. קטרת לפני יהוה מחר והיה האיש אשר-יבחר יהוה הוא הקדוש רב-לכם בני לוי:

ויאמר משה אל-קרח שמעו-נא בני לוי: המעט מכם כיי-הבדיל אל-הי ישראל אתכם מעדת ישראל להקריב אתכם אליו לעבד את-עבדת משהן יהוה ולעמד לפני העדה לשרתם: ויקרב אתה ואת-כל-אחיה בני-לוי אתה ובקשתם גם-כהנה: לכן אתה וכל-עדתך הנעדים על-יהוה ואהרן מה-הוא בני (תלוננו) [תלינו] עליו:

וישלח משה לקרא לדתן ולאבירם בני אליאב ויאמרו לא נעלה: המעט פי העליתנו מארץ זבת חלב ודבש להמיתנו במדבר כיי-תשתרר עלינו גם-השתרר: אף לא אל-ארץ זבת חלב ודבש הביאתנו ותתן-לנו נחלת שדה וכרם העיני האנשים ההם תנקה לא נעלה:

ויחר למשה מאד ויאמר אל-יהוה אל-תפן אל-מנחתם לא תמור אחד מהם נשאתי ולא הרעתי את-אתד מהם:

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־קִרַח אַתָּה וְכָל־עֲדֻתְךָ הָיוּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אַתָּה וְהֵם וְאַהֲרֹן מִיָּחָד: וְקָחוּ אִישׁ מִמֶּחֱתָו וּנְתַתֶּם עֲלֵיהֶם קִטְרֹת וְהִקְרַבְתֶּם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אִישׁ מִמֶּחֱתָו וְהָיָה אִישׁ מִמֶּחֱתָו: וַיִּקְחוּ אִישׁ מִמֶּחֱתָו וַיִּתְּנוּ עֲלֵיהֶם אֵשׁ וַיִּשְׂמוּ עֲלֵיהֶם קִטְרֹת וַיַּעֲמִדוּ פֶתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וּמֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן: וַיִּקְהַל עֲלֵיהֶם קִרַח אֶת־כָּל־הָעֵדָה אֶל־פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וַיֵּרָא כְבוֹד־יְהוָה אֶל־כָּל־הָעֵדָה:

וַיִּדְבֹר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל־אַהֲרֹן לֵאמֹר: הִבְדְּלוּ מִתּוֹךְ הָעֵדָה הַזֹּאת וְאֲכַלְהָ אֹתָם כְּרָגַע: וַיִּפְּלוּ עַל־פְּנֵיהֶם וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵל אֱלֹהֵי הַרוּחֹת לְכָל־בָּשָׂר הָאִישׁ אֶחָד יַחֲטִיא וְעַל כָּל־הָעֵדָה תִּקְרָף:

וַיִּדְבֹר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: דַּבֵּר אֶל־הָעֵדָה לֵאמֹר הֵעֵלוּ מִסִּבֵּיב לְמִשְׁכַּן־קִרַח דָּתָן וְאַבִּירָם: וַיָּקָם מֹשֶׁה וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶל־דָּתָן וְאַבִּירָם וַיִּלְכוּ אַחֲרָיו זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: וַיִּדְבֹר אֶל־הָעֵדָה לֵאמֹר סוּרוּ זֶא מֵעַל אֹהֶלִי הָאֲנָשִׁים הָרָשָׁעִים הָאֵלֶּה וְאֶל־תִּגְעוּ בְּכָל־אִשָּׁר לָהֶם פֶּן־תִּסְּפוּ בְּכָל־חַטֹּאתֵיכֶם: וַיַּעֲלוּ מֵעַל מִשְׁכַּן־קִרַח דָּתָן וְאַבִּירָם מִסִּבֵּיב וְדָתָן וְאַבִּירָם יָצְאוּ נֹצְצִים פֶּתַח אֹהֶל־יְהוָה וּנְשֵׁיהֶם וּבָנֵיהֶם וְטַפָּם: וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה בְּזֹאת תִּדְעוּן כִּי־יְהוָה שְׁלַחְנִי לַעֲשׂוֹת אֵת כָּל־הַמַּעֲשִׂים הָאֵלֶּה כִּי־לֹא מִלְּבִי: אִם־כְּמוֹת כָּל־הָאָדָם יִמְתּוּן אֵלֶּה וּפִקְדַת כָּל־הָאָדָם יִפְקַד עֲלֵיהֶם לֹא יְהוָה שְׁלַחְנִי: וְאִם־בְּרִיאָה יֵבְרָא יְהוָה וּפִצְצָהּ הָאָדָמָה אֶת־פִּיהָ וּבִלְעָה אֹתָם וְאֶת־כָּל־אִשָּׁר לָהֶם וַיִּרְדּוּ חַיִּים שְׂאֵלָה וַיַּדְעֻתָם כִּי נֹאצּוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים הָאֵלֶּה אֶת־יְהוָה: וַיְהִי כַכֵּלָתוֹ לְדַבֵּר אֵת כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וּתְבַקַּע הָאָדָמָה אִשָּׁר תַּחְתֵּיהֶם: וּתִפְתַּח הָאָרֶץ אֶת־פִּיהָ וּתִבְלַע אֹתָם וְאֶת־בָּתֵּיהֶם וְאֵת כָּל־הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר לְקִרַח וְאֵת כָּל־הָרְכוּשׁ: וַיִּרְדּוּ הֵם וְכָל־אִשָּׁר לָהֶם חַיִּים שְׂאֵלָה וּתִכַּס עֲלֵיהֶם הָאָרֶץ וַיִּאָּבְדוּ מִתּוֹךְ הַקֵּהָל: וְכָל־יִשְׂרָאֵל אִשָּׁר סְבִיבֹתֵיהֶם גָּסוּ לִקְלֹם כִּי אָמְרוּ פֶּן־תִּבְלַעֵנוּ הָאָרֶץ:

וְאִשׁ יָצְאָה מֵאֵת יְהוָה וּתֹאכַל אֵת הַחַמְּשִׁים וּמֵאֵתֵים אִישׁ מִקְרִיבֵי הַקִּטְרֹת:

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וַיִּדְבֹר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: אֲמַר אֶל־אַלְעָזָר בֶּן־אַהֲרֹן הַכֹּהֵן וְגֵרָם אֶת־הַמִּחְתָּת מִבֵּין הַשּׂרָפָה וְאֶת־הָאֵשׁ זָרַה־הָלָאָה כִּי קָדְשׁוֹ: אֵת מִחְתּוֹת הַחֲטָאִים הָאֵלֶּה בְּנִפְשָׁתָם וְעָשׂוּ אֹתָם רִקְעֵי פָחִים צָפוּי לְמִזְבֵּחַ כִּי־הִקְרִיבֻם לִפְנֵי־יְהוָה וַיִּקְדְּשׁוּ וַיְהִיו לְאוֹת לִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: וַיִּשָּׂח אֶלְעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן אֵת מִחְתּוֹת הַנִּחֹשֶׁת אֲשֶׁר הִקְרִיבוּ הַשּׂרָפִים וַיִּרְקְעוּם צָפוּי לְמִזְבֵּחַ: זָכָרוֹן לִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְמַעַן אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִקְרַב אִישׁ זָר אֲשֶׁר לֹא מִזֶּרַע אַהֲרֹן הוּא לַהֲקָטִיר קִטְרֹת לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה כִּקְרַח וְכַעֲדָתוֹ כֹּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה בְּיַד־מֹשֶׁה לֵּוִי:

וַיֵּלְנוּ כָּל־עֲדַת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּחְתָּת עַל־מֹשֶׁה וְעַל־אַהֲרֹן לֵאמֹר אַתֶּם הַמֵּתִים אֶת־עַם יְהוָה: וַיְהִי בַּהֲקָהֶל הָעֵדָה עַל־מֹשֶׁה וְעַל־אַהֲרֹן וַיָּפְנוּ אֶל־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וַהֲגָה כֶּסֶהוּ הָעָנָן וַיֵּרָא כְבוֹד יְהוָה: וַיָּבֹא מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן אֶל־פְּנֵי אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד:

וַיִּדְבֹר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: הֲרָמוּ מִתּוֹךְ הָעֵדָה הַזֹּאת וְאֲכַלְהָ אֹתָם כְּרָגַע וַיִּפְּלוּ עַל־פְּנֵיהֶם: וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־אַהֲרֹן קַח אֶת־הַמִּחְתָּה וְתַן־עָלֶיהָ אֵשׁ מֵעַל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְשִׂים קִטְרֹת וְהוֹלֵךְ מִתְּרָה אֶל־הָעֵדָה וְכִפֹּר עֲלֵיהֶם כִּי יֵצֵא תִקְרָף מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה הַחֵל הַגֹּגֶף: וַיִּשָּׂח אַהֲרֹן כֹּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר מֹשֶׁה וַיֵּרָץ אֶל־תּוֹךְ הַקֵּהָל וַהֲגָה הַחֵל הַגֹּגֶף בָּעָם וַיִּתֵּן אֶת־הַקִּטְרֹת וַיִּכְפֹּר עַל־הָעָם: וַיַּעֲמֵד בֵּין־הַמֵּתִים וּבֵין הַחַיִּים וַתַּעֲצֹר הַמַּגֵּפָה: וַיְהִיו הַמֵּתִים בַּמַּגֵּפָה אַרְבַּעַת עָשָׂר אֶלֶף וּשְׁבַע מֵאוֹת מִלִּבְד הַמֵּתִים עַל־דְּבַר־קִרַח: וַיָּשָׁב אַהֲרֹן אֶל־מֹשֶׁה אֶל־פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְהַמַּגֵּפָה נִעְצְרָה:

וַיִּדְבֹר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: דַּבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְקַח מֵאֵתֵם מִטָּה מִטָּה לְבֵית אָב מֵאֵת כָּל־נְשֵׂי־אֲהֵרָם לְבֵית אֲבֹתָם שְׁנַיִם עָשָׂר מִטּוֹת אִישׁ אֶת־שְׁמוֹ תִּכְתֹּב עַל־מִטָּהוּ: וְאֵת שֵׁם אַהֲרֹן תִּכְתֹּב עַל־מִטָּה לְוִי כִּי מִטָּה אֶחָד לְרֹאשׁ בֵּית אֲבוֹתָם: וְהַנִּחְתָּם בְּאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד לִפְנֵי הָעֵדוּת אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי לָכֶם שֹׁמֵה: וְהָיָה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר אָבָחָר יָבֹו מִטָּהוּ יִפְרַח וְהַשְׁכַּתִּי מֵעַלִּי אֶת־תְּלִנּוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הֵם מְלִינִם עֲלֵיכֶם: וַיִּדְבֹר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּתְּנוּ אֵלָיו כָּל־נְשֵׂי־אֲהֵרָם מִטָּה לְנָשִׂיא אֶחָד מִטָּה לְנָשִׂיא אֶחָד לְבֵית אֲבֹתָם שְׁנַיִם עָשָׂר מִטּוֹת וּמִטָּה אַהֲרֹן בְּתוֹךְ מִטּוֹתָם: וַיָּגַח מֹשֶׁה אֶת־הַמִּטָּה לִפְנֵי יְהוָה בְּאֹהֶל הָעֵדוּת: וַיְהִי מִמִּחְתָּת וַיָּבֹא מֹשֶׁה אֶל־אֹהֶל הָעֵדוּת

והנה פרח מטה־אֶהֱרֹן לְבֵית לֹוי וַיֵּצֵא פָּרַח וַיֵּצֵץ צִיִּץ וַיִּגְמַל שְׂקָדִים: וַיֵּצֵא מֹשֶׁה אֶת־כָּל־הַמִּטּוֹת מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה אֶל־כָּל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֵּרְאוּ וַיִּקְחוּ אִישׁ מִטָּהוּ:

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה הִשָּׁב אֶת־מִטָּה אֶהֱרֹן לִפְנֵי הַעֲדוּת לְמִשְׁמֶרֶת לְאוֹת לְבְנֵי־מִרְי וְתָכַל תְּלוּנָתָם מֵעַלִי וְלֹא יָמָתוּ: יַעַשׂ מֹשֶׁה כְּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֹתוֹ כֵּן עָשָׂה:

וַיֹּאמְרוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר הֵן גִּנַּעְנוּ אֲבֹדְנוּ כָּלְנוּ אֲבֹדְנוּ: כָּל הַקָּרֵב | הַקָּרֵב אֶל־מִשְׁפַּחַן יְהוָה יָמוּת הָאֵם תָּמְנוּ לְגֹועַ:

י"ח

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־אֶהֱרֹן אַתָּה וּבְנֵיךָ וּבֵית־אֲבִיךָ אַתָּה תִשָּׂאוּ אֶת־עֹנֶן הַמִּקְדָּשׁ וְאַתָּה וּבְנֵיךָ אַתָּה תִשָּׂאוּ אֶת־עֹנֶן כְּהֹנְתְּכֶם: וְגַם אֶת־אֲחִיךָ מִטָּה לֹוי שְׂבֹט אֲבִיךָ הַקָּרֵב אַתָּה וְיִלְנֹו עֲלֶיךָ וַיִּשְׁרְתוּהוּ וְאַתָּה וּבְנֵיךָ אַתָּה לִפְנֵי אֱהֱל הַעֲדָת: וְשָׁמְרוּ מִשְׁמֶרֶתךָ וּמִשְׁמֶרֶת כָּל־הָאֱהֱל אַף אֶל־כָּלִי הַקֹּדֶשׁ וְאֶל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ לֹא יִקְרְבוּ וְלֹא־יָמָתוּ גַם־הֵם גַּם־אַתֶּם: וְנִלְנֹו עֲלֶיךָ וְשָׁמְרוּ אֶת־מִשְׁמֶרֶת אֱהֱל מוֹעֵד לְכָל עֲבֹדַת הָאֱהֱל וְזָר לֹא־יִקְרַב אֲלֵיכֶם: וְשָׁמְרָם אֶת מִשְׁמֶרֶת הַקֹּדֶשׁ וְאֶת מִשְׁמֶרֶת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה עוֹד קֶצֶף עַל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: וְאֲנִי הִנֵּה לְקֹחַתִּי אֶת־אֲחֵיכֶם הַלְוִיִּם מִתּוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לָכֶם מִתְּנָה נְתִיבִים לִיהוָה לַעֲבֹד אֶת־עֲבֹדַת אֱהֱל מוֹעֵד: וְאַתָּה וּבְנֵיךָ אַתָּה תִשָּׂאוּ אֶת־כָּל־דְּבַר הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְלַמִּבֵּית לַפָּרֹכֶת וְעֲבַדְתֶּם עֲבֹדַת מִתְּנָה אֲתָן אֶת־כְּהֹנְתְּכֶם וְהִזָּר הַקָּרֵב יוֹמָת:

Act 1

Chapter 16

¹ Now Korah, son of Izhar son of Kohath son of Levi, betook himself, along with Dathan and Abiram sons of Eliab, and On son of Peleth — descendants of Reuben —
² to rise up against Moses, together with two hundred and fifty Israelites, chieftains of the community, chosen in the assembly, men of repute. ³ They combined against Moses and Aaron and said to them, "You have gone too far! For all the community are holy, all of them, and the Lord is in their midst. Why then do you raise yourselves above the Lord's congregation?"

? Who are the leaders of the revolt?

Answer 1 _____

Answer 2 _____

Answer 3 _____

Bonus ? From where do each of the factions of the revolt derive their power?

? What do they have in common?

Answer 1 _____

Answer 2 _____

Bonus ? The rebels said to Moses and Aaron, "Why then do you raise yourselves above the Lord's congregation?" What is true about their claim? What isn't?

Bonus ? What is especially dangerous about Korah's revolt?

⁴ When Moses heard this, he fell on his face.

Bonus ? Why was Moses' first reaction to fall on his face?

Answer 1 _____
Answer 2 _____
Answer 3 _____
Answer 4 _____
Answer 5 _____

⁵ Then he spoke to Korah and all his company, saying, "Come morning, the Lord will make known who is His and who is holy, and will grant him access to Himself; He will grant access to the one He has chosen. ⁶ Do this: You, Korah and all your band, take fire pans, ⁷ and tomorrow put fire in them and lay incense on them before the Lord. Then the man whom the Lord chooses, he shall be the holy one. You have gone too far, sons of Levi!"

⁸ Moses said further to Korah, "Hear me, sons of Levi. ⁹ Is it not enough for you that the God of Israel has set you apart from the community of Israel and given you access to Him, to perform the duties of the Lord's Tabernacle and to minister to the community and serve them? ¹⁰ Now that He has advanced you and all your fellow Levites with you, do you seek the priesthood too? ¹¹ Truly, it is against the Lord that you and all your company have banded together. For who is Aaron that you should rail against him?"

Extra Bonus ? Why did Moses choose to wait until the next morning to resolve the challenge?

Answer 1 _____
Answer 2 _____

Bonus ? What is Moses' goal by stating, "The Lord will make known who is His and who is holy"?

Answer 1 _____
Answer 2 _____

Bonus ? Why did Moses instruct the rebels to "take fire pans and put fire in them and lay incense on them before the Lord"?

Answer 1 _____
Answer 2 _____

Extra Bonus ? After Moses's instructions, which are meant to settle the dispute, he addresses Korah personally, "Hear me, sons of Levi. Is it not enough for you that the God of Israel has set you apart from the community of Israel and given you access to Him, to perform the duties of the Lord's Tabernacle and to minister to the community and

serve them?" What is the purpose of Moses' personal address to Korah?

Answer 1 _____

Answer 2 _____

Bonus ? From the context of our text, how do we know that Korah was interested in attaining a position of power and not in establishing a democratic system of government in which power is vested in the people?

? Why does Moses say that it is truly against the Lord that Korah and his company have banded together?

Extra Bonus ? Why does Moses defend Aaron instead of defending himself?

Answer 1 _____

Answer 2 _____

Answer 3 _____

Answer 4 _____

Answer 5 _____

¹² Moses sent for Dathan and Abiram, sons of Eliab; but they said, "We will not come! ¹³ Is it not enough that you brought us from a land flowing with milk and honey to have us die in the wilderness, that you would also lord it over us? ¹⁴ Even if you had brought us to a land flowing with milk and honey, and given us possession of fields and vineyards, should you gouge out those men's eyes? We will not come!" ¹⁵ Moses was much aggrieved and he said to the Lord, "Pay no regard to their oblation. I have not taken the ass of any one of them, nor have I wronged any one of them."

Bonus ? Why does Moses send for Dathan and Abiram separately, as opposed to addressing all the rebels together?

Answer 1 _____

Answer 2 _____

Answer 3 _____

? Why was Moses "much aggrieved" by Dathan and Abiram's reply?

Answer 1 _____

Answer 2 _____

Bonus ? From Moses' words to God, what was Dathan and Abiram's accusation?

¹⁶ And Moses said to Korah, "Tomorrow, you and all your company appear before the Lord, you and they and Aaron. ¹⁷ Each of you take his fire pan and lay incense on it, and each of you bring his fire pan before the Lord, two hundred and fifty fire pans; you and Aaron also [bring] your fire pans." ¹⁸ Each of them took his fire pan, put fire in it, laid incense on it, and took his place at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, as did Moses and Aaron. ¹⁹ Korah gathered the whole community against them at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting.

Bonus ? "Korah gathered the whole community against them at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting." Who did Korah gather at this point?

Then the Presence of the Lord appeared to the whole community, ²⁰ and the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, ²¹ "Stand back from this community that I may annihilate them in an instant!" ²² But they fell on their faces and said, "O God, Source of the breath of all flesh! When one man sins, will You be wrathful with the whole community?"

Bonus ? Why does God want to annihilate the whole community?

? What does Moses' reply to God remind you of?

²³ The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ²⁴ "Speak to the community and say: Withdraw from about the abodes of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram."

²⁵ Moses rose and went to Dathan and Abiram, the elders of Israel following him. ²⁶ He addressed the community, saying, "Move away from the tents of these wicked men and touch nothing that belongs to them, lest you be wiped out for all their sins." ²⁷ So they withdrew from about the abodes of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. Now Dathan and Abiram had come out and they stood at the entrance of their tents, with their wives, their children, and their little ones.

Extra Bonus ? Why do the people withdraw from the abodes of Korah, Dathan and Abiram?

²⁸ And Moses said, "By this you shall know that it was the Lord who sent me to do all these things; that they are not of my own devising: ²⁹ if these men die as all men do, if their lot be the common fate of all mankind, it was not the Lord who sent me. ³⁰ But if the Lord brings about something unheard-of, so that the ground opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into Sheol, you shall know that these men have spurned the Lord." ³¹ Scarcely had he finished speaking all these words when the ground under them burst asunder, ³² and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up with their households, all Korah's people and all their possessions. ³³ They went down alive into Sheol, with all that belonged to them; the earth closed over them and they vanished from the midst of the congregation. ³⁴ All Israel around them fled at their shrieks, for they said, "The earth might swallow us!"

Extra Bonus ? Why does Moses ask God to settle who is in charge?

³⁵ And a fire went forth from the Lord and consumed the two hundred and fifty men offering the incense.

Bonus ? Why did a fire go forth from the Lord and consume the two hundred and fifty men offering the incense?

Answer 1 _____

Answer 2 _____

Chapter 17

¹ The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: ² Order Eleazar son of Aaron the priest to remove the fire pans — for they have become sacred — from among the charred remains; and scatter the coals abroad. ³ [Remove] the fire pans of those who have sinned at the cost of their lives, and let them be made into hammered sheets as plating for the altar — for once they have been used for offering to the Lord, they have become sacred — and let them serve as a warning to the people of Israel. ⁴ Eleazar the priest took the copper fire pans which had been used for offering by those who died in the fire; and they were hammered into plating for the altar, ⁵ as the Lord had ordered him through Moses. It was to be a reminder to the Israelites, so that no outsider — one not of Aaron's offspring — should presume to offer incense before the Lord and suffer the fate of Korah and his band.

Act 2

⁶ Next day the whole Israelite community railed against Moses and Aaron, saying, "You two have brought death upon the Lord's people!" ⁷ But as the community gathered against them, Moses and Aaron turned toward the Tent of Meeting; the cloud had covered it and the Presence of the Lord appeared.

Extra Bonus ? "Next day the whole Israelite community railed against Moses and Aaron, saying, 'You two have brought death upon the Lord's people!'" The leaders of the Korah's revolt were sinners and had died by the "hand of God." Why is the community upset with Moses and Aaron?

Answer 1 _____

Answer 2 _____

Answer 3 _____

Answer 4 _____

⁸ When Moses and Aaron reached the Tent of Meeting, ⁹ the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ¹⁰ "Remove yourselves from this community, that I may annihilate them in an instant." They fell on their faces.

Bonus ? Why does God want (again) to annihilate the entire community?

Answer 1 _____
Answer 2 _____

¹¹ Then Moses said to Aaron, "Take the fire pan, and put on it fire from the altar. Add incense and take it quickly to the community and make expiation for them. For wrath has gone forth from the Lord: the plague has begun!" ¹² Aaron took it, as Moses had ordered, and ran to the midst of the congregation, where the plague had begun among the people. He put on the incense and made expiation for the people; ¹³ he stood between the dead and the living until the plague was checked. ¹⁴ Those who died of the plague came to fourteen thousand and seven hundred, aside from those who died on account of Korah. ¹⁵ Aaron then returned to Moses at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, since the plague was checked.

Extra Bonus ? Why does Moses ask Aaron to make expiation for the people as opposed to imploring God for compassion as he has done many times before?

Answer 1 _____
Answer 2 _____

¹⁶ The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: ¹⁷ Speak to the Israelite people and take from them — from the chieftains of their ancestral houses — one staff for each chieftain of an ancestral house: twelve staffs in all. Inscribe each man's name on his staff, ¹⁸ there being one staff for each head of an ancestral house; also inscribe Aaron's name on the staff of Levi. ¹⁹ Deposit them in the Tent of Meeting before the Pact, where I meet with you. ²⁰ The staff of the man whom I choose shall sprout, and I will rid Myself of the incessant mutterings of the Israelites against you.

²¹ Moses spoke thus to the Israelites. Their chieftains gave him a staff for each chieftain of an ancestral house, twelve staffs in all; among these staffs was that of Aaron. ²² Moses deposited the staffs before the Lord, in the Tent of the Pact. ²³ The next day Moses entered the Tent of the Pact, and there the staff of Aaron of the house of Levi had sprouted: it had brought forth sprouts, produced blossoms, and borne almonds. ²⁴ Moses then brought out all the staffs from before the Lord to all the Israelites; each identified and recovered his staff.

²⁵ The Lord said to Moses, "Put Aaron's staff back before the Pact, to be kept as a lesson to rebels, so that their mutterings against Me may cease, lest they die." ²⁶ This Moses did; just as the Lord had commanded him, so he did.

Bonus ? How is the leaders' staff test different from the rebels' test?

Answer 1 _____
Answer 2 _____

²⁷ But the Israelites said to Moses, "Lo, we perish! We are lost, all of us lost! ²⁸ Everyone who so much as ventures near the Lord's Tabernacle must die. Alas, we are doomed to perish!"

? What is the people's concern now?

Chapter 18

¹ The Lord said to Aaron: You and your sons and the ancestral house under your charge shall bear any guilt connected with the sanctuary; you and your sons alone shall bear any guilt connected with your priesthood. ² You shall also associate with yourself your kinsmen the tribe of Levi, your ancestral tribe, to be attached to you and to minister to you, while you and your sons under your charge are before the Tent of the Pact. ³ They shall discharge their duties to you and to the Tent as a whole, but they must not have any contact with the furnishings of the Shrine or with the altar, lest both they and you die. ⁴ They shall be attached to you and discharge the duties of the Tent of Meeting, all the service of the Tent; but no outsider shall intrude upon you ⁵ as you discharge the duties connected with the Shrine and the altar, that wrath may not again strike the Israelites.

⁶ I hereby take your fellow Levites from among the Israelites; they are assigned to you in dedication to the Lord, to do the work of the Tent of Meeting; ⁷ while you and your sons shall be careful to perform your priestly duties in everything pertaining to the altar and to what is behind the curtain. I make your priesthood a service of dedication; any outsider who encroaches shall be put to death.

? How does God address the people's fear of venturing near the Lord's Tabernacle?

Cast of Characters - Who is Who in the story? (Part 2)

- Korah, son of Izhar son of Kohath son of Levi – He has a position of respect, power and influence but believes he is “built for more.” He is a greedy demagogue and ends up with nothing.
- Dathan and Abiram, sons of Eliab (son of Pallu, son of Reuben) – They are insolent and wicked scoundrels.
- On, son of Peleth (also descendant of Reuben) – He gets off the train before it derails (See Sanhedrin 109b).
- 250 Israelites, chieftains of the community, chosen in the assembly, men of repute – They are well established leaders, respected by the community. It is reasonable to believe that Korah is using them to legitimize his claim. They don't know their limitations and offer incense at their own peril.
- The People – They are wishy-washy. Moses handles them by forcing them to take sides in the dispute. They originally side with Korah, but their survival instinct makes them switch sides before it is too late.

- Moses – He tries to dissuade the rebels, but he is unsuccessful. Despite dealing with difficult and ungrateful people, he still loves them and wants what is best for them.
- Aaron – Despite being challenged by the people, he protects them and stops the plague.
- God – Twice He tries to “solve the problem” by throwing the baby out with the bathwater (annihilating everyone). Moses (like Abraham with Sodom and Gomorrah) dissuades him. In the end, He suggests a less aggressive, better-suited test in order to make His point.