

# Part 5 Numbers 13.1-15.41 Korah j r q

## " Smooth, bald, ice-hence 'cold',"

**INTRODUCTION** The Levite Korah and his company though priests-grew "cold" and conspired against Moses. Their unreal religion drew on the wrath of the LORD and brought great sorrow and death in its wake. Yet his family -the Korahites- produced the most zealous song leaders of Israel after the settlement and through the period of monarchy.

### CHAPTER 16

#### **READING No.1** *Coldness conspires against Christ*

Korah son of Ithar, son of Kohath, son of Levi and Reubenites Dathan and Abiram sons of Eliab and On son of Peleth took hold like fire or persuaded and they rose up against the face (and word) of Moses and two hundred [*The Hebrew word 'Hundred' transliterates 'Math' and is the root of the Greek 'Mathematics' from which our word derives-another evidence of the Hebrew language as the first language of mankind*] and fifty leaders of the congregation from the sons of Israel, called by the Assembly, men of renown. They conspired together against Moses and Aaron and said to them, "Does greatness belong to you, for the congregation whole and entire is holy and the LORD is in their midst and why have you made yourselves leaders over the assembly of the LORD?" And Moses listened to this and fell down on his face and he spoke to Korah and his mob saying, "Tomorrow the LORD will make known who belongs to Him and who is holy and whom He will have come near to Him, even the person of His choice to come near Him. Korah and all his appointed company shall take censers and give fire and put incense on them before the LORD tomorrow and the man whom the LORD chooses shall be the holy one and you sons of Levi are big(in your own eyes)" And Moses said to the company, "Hear now, you sons of Levi, Isn't it more than (He did for others)that the God of Israel has separated you from congregation of Israel to come near to Him, to serve the service of the tabernacle of the LORD, to minister before His face and to lead the congregation's worship? He caused you and your brethren to come near to Him but now you are seeking the priestly office. For this you and all your brethren have come together against the LORD; and who is Aaron that you should show yourself stubborn against him? And Moses sent to call for Dathan and Abiram sons of Eliezer, but they said, "We will not go up!"

Is it of little significance that you brought us up from a land of milk and honey to meet our death in the desert and now you have twisted till you are tying us up by oppressing us? *This cohort of conspirators renames Egypt a land of "milk and honey" and calls Moses himself a "twister. Their spirit is altogether unworthy of worship. The prophetic TORAH of this reading calls to mind the treatment accorded to Messiah who was dubbed a "blasphemer" by the high priest of His time*

#### **READING No.2 14-19** *The Holy Spirit chases coldness from the breast*

You have "definitely" not brought us to a land of milk and honey Will you pierce or dig out the eyes of these great men? We will not come up! *The conspirators defend the viewpoint of the spies who saw the obstacles-they commend sight before faith.* And Moses was becoming very angry and he said to the LORD, "Do not countenance their meal offering-I have not lifted one donkey from them nor done them one evil. Then Moses said to them, "You and all your company are in the routine of things to come before the LORD -you and your company and Aaron tomorrow. Each man is to take his censer and give incense upon it and come near in the LORD'S presence-250 censers in all-you and your company and Aaron -each man with a censer. Each man took his censer and gave fire upon it and put incense on it and stood to minister at the door of the tent of meeting with Moses and Aaron. When Korah mustered all the assembly against them at the door of the tent of meeting the glory of the LORD appeared to the **whole** assembly. *The fire and incense were there but there was no prayer and no zeal for God besides so the ministry of these men was at an end. The conclusion of the Korah episode was imminent. God Himself "appeared" and was about to show His gross displeasure with Korah. The prophetic TORAH*

*in this reading points to Messiah through whom prayer is made and from whom the Holy Spirit came in the New Testament times*

### **READING No.3 16.20-17.8**

#### **(SPEECH No.137) *The judgement of the LORD comes upon coldness***

And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron saying, "Separate yourselves from this assembly and I will end them instantly [*Hebrew [gr "in a wink"]*] But they fell on their faces and said, "O God, God of the spirits of all flesh. One man has been sinning and will you be wroth with all the assembly? And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, " Speak to the assembly, saying, get up from around the dwellings of Korah Dathan and Abiram. And Moses arose and went to Dathan and Abiram and the elders of Israel went after him. And he ordered the assembly, saying, "Please remove [*Hebrew רש "prune"]*] from the tents of these evil men and touch nothing of theirs lest you add to all their sins. And they went up from nearby the dwellings of Korah Dathan and Abiram from all around and Dathan and Abiram and their wives children and little ones came out to the door of their tents. And Moses said, "This is how you will know personally that the LORD sent me to do all these things and that it was not just in my mind or heart. If these men die in the manner of all mankind and are visited with what visits all men the LORD has not sent me. But if the LORD creates a new thing and the earth opens its mouth and buries and all that belongs to them and they go down to Sheol then you will know that these men have *continually* been contemptuous of the LORD. And it happened as he completed all these words the ground opened which was underneath them. And **the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them** and all that belonged to them and their houses and all the men belonging to Korah and their wealth. *Clearly they were into self aggrandisement.* They went down and all that was theirs alive to Sheol and the earth and **the earth kept covering them** [*Hebrew Piel of hsk "to hide or cover"]* and they perished from the midst of the Assembly. And all the Israelites who were around were frightened to judge by their voices for they said, "Soon the earth will swallow us". **And fire came out from the LORD** and swallowed the 250 men who were coming near with incense. *A terrible prophetic TORAH of the judgement of the LORD upon the cold and callous disobedient rebellious ones is by fire described in the NT as the lake of fire*

### **CHAPTER 17**

*Nota Bene: the 17th chapter in Hebrew follows v35 of Chapter 16 not as in the English - which derives from Hugo De Sancto Caro 1250 A.D. The BFBS text places chapter 17 after v.50 emphasising the distinct topic of Aaron's rod which budded as a miraculous sign of the choice of that house for the priesthood.*

#### **(138) *Dullness at the altar of prayer promotes coldness***

**And the LORD spoke to Moses saying,** "Speak to Eleazar son of Aaron the priest and he shall lift the censers from between the flames scattering the fire beyond (the camp)-for the censers are holy [*Lives that carry fragrance that pleases the LORD and practice the presence of God exercising a ministry of prayer are holy*]-the censers of those men who sinned in the intimacy of their souls and make them (the censers) and make them thin plates of metal-overlay for the altar for they were brought near the LORD and are holy and they shall be a sign to the children of Israel. So Eleazar the priest took up the "bronze" censers which had been brought nigh by those who had been burned up and beat them into thin plates to cover the altar. It was a reminder that no man who was a stranger and not of the seed of Aaron should not come near to burn incense before the LORD and not be like Korah and like his company when the LORD spoke by the hand of Moses to him. *The "altar" was the centre of priestly activity and it had a layer of "copper-bronze" over its golden beauty-so that it did not appear so lovely again to those who approached. The rebellion of the priests was accompanied by a lasting observable sign of the LORD'S displeasure.* All the congregation of the children of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron from the very next day saying, "You have killed people who belong to the LORD" And it happened when the congregation assembled against Moses and Aaron turned their faces toward the tent of meeting behold a cloud covered it and **they saw the glory of the LORD.** Then Moses and Aaron went to the front of

the tent of meeting. *This episode of rebellion was answered by a novel unforgettable "burial" including the provision of a grave and a grave covering. These priests were buried by God. **Then the glory of the altar was diminished but the glory of God remained as ever and was seen by the people.** God's church in the desert and its instruments might look less bright but God remains glorious! This **prophetic TORAH** demonstrates how coldness in human testimony takes the shine of the golden altar of prayer-but how by the divine provision the bronze of suffering seen in the death of Messiah is first seen by those who approach in prayer yet is the gold of Christ's divinity and glory there too for those who wait on the LORD.*

#### **READING No.4 17. 9-16 (English Bible 44-50)**

##### **(139)A TORAH of Messiah *The Balm of a relationship with Christ heals all coldness***

The LORD spoke to Moses saying, "Go up from the midst of this assembly and I will finish them instantly-and they (Moses & Aaron) fell on their faces. And Moses said to Aaron, "Take your censer and set it alight from the altar and put incense on it hastily"[*The term "hastily hrhm also means "dowry"-that is, a gift that speaks of the value of a relationship of Father and child. This act spoke of the value of the relationship with God*] and make atonement for them for wrath is arising from the presence of the LORD, the infliction of disease has begun. And Aaron obeyed what Moses said and rushed or ran into the midst of the assembly and behold the plague had begun among the people and he gave the incense and made atonement for the people. *The "incense" which demonstrated the "Apothecary's art" we can understand as a **prophetic TORAH** pointing to **the work of the Great Physician is the ultimate in setting aside "divine wrath"**. Atonement according to Keil has been understood as "covering over" or "as withdrawing from view" but neither meaning is sustainable. The contexts of Genesis 32.20 and Proverbs 16.14 yield the significance of "softening" or "pacifying" wrath. The NT (Hebrews 2.17 & 9.5) has been rendered "Propitiate" and "expiate"(Greek "Hilasterion") and the former stronger expression conveys the idea of **pacification of wrath** whereas the latter conveys the notion of **covering the transgression**. Ultimately we need to be sure of the pleasure of God not just the covering of a sinful act. He(Aaron) stood between the dead and the living and the plague was hindered or held back [*The Hebrew rx[ means "over-ruled" or "restrained from work"*]And the death of 14,700 people occurred besides those who died in the affair of Korah. And Aaron returned to Moses at the door of the tent of meeting for the plague was restraining itself or shut up like a prisoner. It was as inoffensive as the waves of Galilee after the words "Peace be still" were uttered by Messiah.*

#### **READING No.5 17.16-24 (17.1-9)**

##### **(140) *When Christ's rule flourishes coldness diminishes***

And the LORD spoke to Moses saying, "Speak to the children of Israel and take staffs that belong to the house of each Father from all the leaders over the house of their fathers-twelve in all and each man shall write his name on his staff. Cut the name of Aaron on the staff of Levi for there shall be one staff for the head of each household. Cause them to be given (to the heads as from God) in the tent of meeting before the testimony in that place where I will meet you [*Hebrew d[y]literally "espouse and appoint"*] And it shall be that the staff the man whom I choose will burst forth in buds and flowers and I will be appeased [*Hebrew JkC literally "stoop to set snares"*] for all the "feeble" complaints [*The Hebrew for "complaint" has no masculine plural-only "feminine" -highlighting the slender basis for a murmuring lifestyle*] of the sons of Israel which criticisms they have mounted against you. Thus Moses spoke to the children of Israel and gave all the leaders a staff-each leader received one staff for the house of his fathers-twelve staffs-and the staff of Aaron was in the middle of the staffs. And Moses laid the staffs to rest in the presence of the LORD in the tent of meeting. And next day Moses came to the tent of Meeting and behold the staff of Aaron that belonged to the house of Levi budded.[*Hebrew j rp meaning "to flourish"*] Then Moses brought all the staffs from the presence of the LORD to all the children of Israel and they looked while each man took his staff.

*The TORAH of this reading is that God's appointed priest flourished in leadership. This gives rise to profound thought-for the Cohens and Levis to this day are everywhere "flourishing" in Jewish communities and on a different level the ministry of Messiah-whose name is **Jesus or Yahweh** saves as God's chosen priest is flourishing throughout the earth.*

READING No.6 17.25-28(English Bible 17 10-13)

**(141) *The fruitful living ministry of Messiah counters coldness***

And the LORD said to Moses, "Return the staff of Aaron to the Testimony before the LORD to be watched as a sign for the rebellious children of Israel. This will end their grumbling against me and they will not die. And Moses did as the LORD commanded-exactly so. And the children of Israel said to Moses, "We will expire, we are doomed, completely doomed. Each who comes near the tabernacle of the LORD will die. Are we all bound to expire? *This reading must be taken with the last one. It shows that when they saw the staffs they drew the lesson that each tribal staff was dead -only that of Levi was alive. They jumped to conclude that the 11 tribes would die by act of God. It is from this seminal time that the ministry of Aaron was adopted to shelter the secular tribes from the divine wrath. In this lies a further **prophetic TORAH** of the Messiah whose ministry brings life out of death and gives life to all who will believe*

**CHAPTER 18 *Esteeming the work within the veil counters coldness***

And the LORD spoke to Aaron, "You and your sons and the house of your father shall bear the iniquity of the holy place and you and your sons shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood. Also bring your brothers of the branch of Levi, of the tribe of your father and they shall help and serve alongside you and your sons before the tent of testimony. They are to watch the duties of watch-care under your watch-care of the Tent of Meeting but they shall definitely not come nigh for the service of the sanctuary or the altar lest they die-both they and you shall die. They are to join with you and do the vigils of the Tent of Meeting in all its service but a stranger shall not come near with you. You are in charge of sanctuary and altar responsibilities so that there shall not be any repeat of wrath on the children of Israel. I myself have taken your fellow Levites from among the children of Israel as a present-they are given or dedicated to the LORD for the service of the Tent of Meeting. But you and your sons alone may vigilantly watch the priestly service concerning all affairs of **the altar and belonging to the curtain that belongs to the house and** your service of serving I give as a gift to the priests and the stranger who comes near shall die. *This final touch brings me to observe that the "curtain[Hebrew *Jrp* means "that which separates" and "to crush" or "break" so that when the last curtain that hung in time of Messiah was "torn" or broken the "separation" ceased and through the "crushed" lamb of God a relationship with God became immediately possible for all who would believe. This **prophetic TORAH** foresees the Messianic "crushing" and the "torn veil" as a gift of God to the priesthood of the New Testament. He or she who will avoid the "cold" lack of zeal of callous Korah must needs pick up enthusiasm for the act that rent the veil in two and love as very life the master who died that we might go beyond.*

**(142) 8-19 *Seeking the lost avoids coldness***

**And the LORD said to Aaron,** "Behold I am giving to you responsibility for the "heave" offerings belonging to all the holy things of the sons of Israel.-I am giving them to you and your sons for their perpetual portion. This share will be yours from the **holy of holies (offering)** spared from fire. From all the grain or sin or guilt offerings by which they return to me the **holy of holies** (offerings) belong to you and your sons. Eat it on account of it being **holy of holies**. Every male shall eat it. It is holy to you. *There are a number of **prophetic TORAH** connections here. The "heave offerings" depict the lifting up of the sacrificial Christ-the Most Holy One. The "returning of sinners to God" in reconciliation depicts of necessity that one offering for sin. The command to eat is a call to enjoy what God has provided-a way back to relationship through Messiah.* And this wave offering which is set aside from all the gifts of the sons of Israel is given to you and your sons and daughters with you-a perpetual portion .Everyone who is ceremonially clean shall eat of it. *We may love our food so to speak but the affection for the One who was lifted up to die for our souls redemption is the principle motivation of a zeal that will not burn out or grow cold.* All the best new oil and all the best new wine and all the first fruits of grain which they give to the LORD I give you. All the first fruits of the land which they bring to the LORD shall be yours. All who are ceremonially clean of your house shall eat them. All that is "devoted" to be slain as the LORD'S shall be yours. All the first offspring which is brought near as an offering to the

LORD -whether of man or animal-shall definitely be yours but you must redeem all firstborn males of man and animals that fall short of the law-you must redeem them *The double emphasis on "redemption of the sinful" expresses the heart of God who is not cold but ever willing to bear the cost of bringing back the lost.* Redeem it when the son of a month at the arranged price of five shekels according to the holy shekel valued at twenty gerah. Definitely do not redeem the firstborn of an ass sheep or goat for they are holy the LORD. Sprinkle their blood on the altar and burn their fat as an incense of fire-a smell of rest. to the LORD. *This strange expression echoes back to Noah and his first act on the new earth after the wrath of God had passed in the deluge. God smelled the sweetness then of a fresh obedience and a new start evidenced by the firstborn who had probably been born in the ark. He is ever and again moved by the sacrifice of the best. This also is **prophetic TORAH** of His precious Son who was the best offering ever made upon the earth-the only one to perfectly please God and purchase our ransom.* Their flesh is yours just as the breast of the wave offering and right thigh are yours. *The "breast" speaks of the heart of the uplifted Christ and the right thigh of the touch of God on Jacob. Both speak about **unchallenged zeal**-that of our Saviour and the father of the race of Israel at Peniel. All the **wave offerings** are holy which the children of Israel lift up to the LORD.I have given them to you-to your sons and daughters with you perpetually for a share. It is a perpetual covenant of salt belonging to the presence of the LORD and to you and your seed with you. *The mention of a covenant that will always have tang and resonance and never grow cold or stale from God's point of view accords with the idea of "sharing". The priests share in the sort of zeal that characterises the heart of the LORD. There is no mystery in salt-it simply carries for all time the notion of a "savour that remains". **When in the picture by DaVinci Judas is portrayed as tossing the cellar of salt we have an artist's depiction of the covenant of salt broken-of lack of love and of callousness of heart and love grown cold.****

### (143)

The LORD said to Aaron, "You will have no inheritance in the land. There will be nothing for you. I am your lot and your inheritance in the midst of the children of Israel. *This is a **prophetic TORAH** of Christian zeal which looks not to the possession of land or wealth but revels only in the Master whose life was given for ours.*

### **READING No.7 21-29 The "vicarious" defeats coldness**

Behold I am giving the sons of Levi all the tithes of Israel as their inheritance in exchange [*Hebrew pl/j*] for the work of service of the Tent of Meeting. The children of Israel shall not any longer go near the Tent of Meeting and bear sin and die. The service or work of Levi is the service of the Tent of Meeting. They shall bear their own (serious) iniquity. *All disobedient acts of approach to God would incur penalty only for Levi. This is a prophetic **TORAH** of the **vicarious** suffering such as Messiah undertook.* This is a perpetual statute through coming generations and they shall not receive any inheritance among the children of Israel. *This is linked with the prophetic Torah for Messiah "had no place to lay His head"* For the work of the children of Israel (raising up tithes for the LORD) I give the Levites reward. *This verse shows the reciprocity between the work of the vicarious servants and the gifts of the people.* For that reason I said to them, 'they shall not have inheritance among the children of Israel.'

### **(Speech No.144) 25-29 Preparedness to take up the cross avoids coldness**

And the word of the LORD came to Moses saying, "Speak to the Levites and say, "when you take the tithe I give you from the children of Israel -from it, that is, your inheritance, you are to lift up to the LORD a tithe of that tithe. Your offering will be reckoned or considered as grain from threshing or juice from the press. *The Levites present on their own behalf in terms of grain and wine-which is prophetic **TORAH** of the body and blood of Christ-the sacrifices which pleased the Father.* In this way you will also raise up an offering to the LORD from all the tithes you receive from the children of Israel and give from (this) tithe of the LORD to Aaron the priest. *This also is prophetic TORAH as it associates Aaron with the LORD in a unique manner allowed as it points to the deity of Christ the Priest of God* From all the tithes you raise you will raise all your tithes to the LORD of the best and holiest.

### **SUMMARY 30-32 Giving the best defeats coldness**

And say to the Levites, "When you present the best part from the tithes it will be reckoned to you as from the threshing floor and from the press." You and your households shall eat it where you are for it is instead of wages for your work in the Tent of Meeting. In raising up the best part of it you will not be guilty in these things. You will not defile the holy offerings of the children of Israel and you will not die. *The ultimate lesson in this is that God deserves the best. To give to the LORD and give to His work is the surest way to avoid coldness or being a "man of ice" like Korah.*

## The End of Part 5 "Cold"