

PARASHAT KORAH

Numbers 16:1–18:32

Parashat Korah tells of the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and On against the leadership of Moses and Aaron. With 250 respected leaders of the community, they accuse Moses and Aaron of acting “holier” than the other Israelites. Hearing their complaint, Moses instructs them to bring offerings to the sanctuary on the next day and tells them that God will demonstrate who is to be trusted as leader of the community. The next morning the leaders of the rebellion and their followers are punished. Some are swallowed when the earth opens; others are killed by fire or plague. The community then accuses Moses and Aaron of bringing death upon the people. God threatens to destroy the entire people, but Moses orders Aaron to place an offering on the altar, which is meant to save the people from harm. Moses then organizes the priesthood to be headed by Aaron and his descendants. They, along with the tribe of Levi, are to be responsible for managing all gifts donated to the sanctuary. Unlike other tribes of Israel, Levites are not given any territory. They are given offerings as payment for their work in the sanctuary.
