

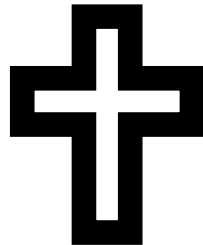
Twelve Lessons

on

The Pastor and His Problems

by

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ΧΑΡΙΣ

AN EXAMPLE OF A CHURCH SPLIT – LESSON 1

Korah: Numbers 16

Notes taken from "Church Split" by Dr. Roy Branson, Jr.

Lesson Goals:

1. To examine the people who are behind church splits.
2. To visualize the tactics they use to split the church.
3. To use Korah's rebellion as a Biblical example of a church split and apply it to present day problems.

Definitions of Important Terms and/or Phrases:

1. Enmity – Deep-rooted hatred or irreconcilable hostility. God established perpetual enmity, not only between the serpent and the woman, but also between the human and the serpent race (Gen 3:15). Friendship with the world (i.e., the corrupt part of it) is declared to be "enmity with God" (James 4:4). (The New Unger's Bible Dictionary)
2. Congregation – A gathering or assembly of persons for worship and religious instruction; a religious community, such as the people of Israel or the Christian church. (Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary)
3. Judgment – Discernment or separation between good and evil. God judges among people and their actions according to the standards of His LAW. Judgment can refer either to this process of discernment or to the punishment meted out to those who fall under His wrath and condemnation (John 5:24). (Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary).

I. THE ELEMENTS OF A "CHURCH SPLIT"

A. There was a Leader of the Split – The Problem Person – Numbers 16

1. He was well known, popular, articulate, and capable. Who are the leaders of contention?
 - a. 72% are popular, friendly people with leadership ability!
 - b. 84% are faithful in church attendance!
 - c. 71% are regular tithers!
 - d. Surprised? Remember who their Father is the Devil. The Devil does not come to church with horns, a pitchfork and breathing sulphur fumes. The Bible says they are angels of light.
 - e. People look at such a person and say, "He/She would not do such a thing unless it was right!"
THAT IS THEIR GREAT WEAPON!
2. Two Kinds of Split Leaders
 - a. The First is One who wants to be a Ruler
 - b. The Second is One who does not have selfish motives but is used by others to Split the church.

B. There was a basic conflict.

1. Who would be ruler over the Congregation. There are two divisions among these.
 - a. First group – Certain members rebelling against the pastor
 - b. Second group – Two groups or more in the church may war against each other.
2. Two things can happen.
 - a. Each side will try to make an ally of the pastor when one is finally called.
 - b. Both sides will ally themselves against a common enemy, the preacher. Case in point – Luke 23:12 – *“And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before there were at enmity between themselves.”* Another Case – The allying of Judas and the Jews to sell Jesus. A Traitor and Traditionalists join hands.

C. Allies were gathered – Korah *“took men...two hundred and fifty princes...famous in the congregation, men of renown.”*

D. Secret meetings were held.

1. Though not specifically told – Undeniably there had to be. Moses was surprised, showing no evidence of prior knowledge of their intentions.
2. Second, such a powerful following could not have been gathered and such a well planned attack launched without many prior meetings to recruit, persuade, and plan.

E. Charges were made – Moses was accused of being a dictator, lording over the congregation.

F. The issues were set forth.

1. The issue was the pastor's authority and program.
2. Their specific complaint involved finances, contending that he had led them from financial security to poverty.

G. A split resulted.

H. The congregation was reduced in size.

1. About 15,000 died from God's judgment.
2. There was a set back of God's program for Israel for forty years.
3. In fact, not until the entire adult congregation died, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb, did the "church in the wilderness" recover and carry on God's program.

I. In this case – The split involved a victimized, innocent pastor.

J. In another case – II Chron. 10 – Rehoboam needlessly alienated a people who were ready to follow him.

II. THE EXAMINATION OF A "CHURCH SPLIT"

A. Their Statements – Always Identical

1. "I consider myself a leader of the loyal opposition" – Where is the Scriptural basis for such a statement? There is none. God does not appoint "loyal opposition." His only admonition is "Obey." The church is not a political congress with a two-party system. The church is not a democracy but a theocracy.
Note: The motive of all political parties who do not control is TO GAIN CONTROL!
2. "I believe God gave me the ministry of keeping preachers straight."

B. Secret meetings almost always precede Church splits.

1. They are usually called Prayer Meetings or Fellowships. The pastor is not invited.
2. Their Statement – "*We just got together to pray about things that concern us.*"
3. What's wrong with that? It seems innocent, but it is not.
 - a. Aaron and Miriam had their little "prayer meeting" before confronting Moses.
 - b. Korah had a number of "prayer meetings" with 250 of the princes of Israel. God did not care much for their prayers. See Numbers 16.

C. Those who lead rebellions against the Pastor always try to make it appear that they are "Doing what God has laid upon our hearts."

1. Their Statement – "The welfare of the Church", is their concern.
"They have really prayed about it."
2. Isn't it amazing what God gets blamed for.

D. They rarely use the Scriptures. When they do, they use them incorrectly.

1. When the Pastor preaches on dress codes, his enemies will accuse him of being "judgmental", and fling at him "Judge not, that ye be not judged". When he points out that particular scripture, Matt. 7:1, refers to hypocritical judgment – that is, judging others with a stricter standard than that with which we judge ourselves and that judgment of others is often required in Scripture, indeed, in verses 15-17 of that same chapter, they ignore him or fling at him another incorrectly used verse.
2. Too often they argue from "Church Constitutions" or "Baptist Distinctives" or secular, business, or personal considerations rather than from the only Authority, the Bible.

E. Personal power and prestige is the real motive of most church trouble – "Who is going to run the show?"

That is the real issue. Many want to be "boss" but don't want the heavy burdens of responsibility.

F. To prove his own lack of blame, he accuses the pastor of error.

G. Trouble makers never change.