

Shavua Tov



A Rood Awakening! Torah Commentary
By Glenn McWilliams

Torah Portion: *Korach*

קרח

“Korah”

Korach son of Yitz'har (a grandson of Kehoth and great-grandson of Levi) began a rebellion along with Dathan and Aviram (sons of Eliav) and On, son of Peleth, descendants of Reuben.

Vayikach **Korach** ben-Yitshar ben-Kehat ben-Levi
veDatan va'Aviram beney Eli'av ve'On ben-Pelet beney Re'uven

Scripture for study:

Bamidbar (Numbers) 16:1 – 18:32

From the very start of our study in the book of Numbers we stated that this particular book of the Torah has great relevance for our time. While a small portion of the children of Israel, largely the Jews, have returned to the land of Israel, the majority still remains in exile waiting for the greater exodus. Between where we live now and where we are destined to be lays the wilderness. Prophetically I believe that the majority of us are still in bondage in Egypt or possibly Babylon. But the time is coming when we will be entering the wilderness. It was the apostle Shaul who first taught that the events of the first wilderness wandering were to be an example for later generations.

1 Corinthians 10:1 Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; ²and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; ³and did all eat the same spiritual meat; ⁴and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Messiah. ⁵But with many of them Elohim was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. ⁶Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.

There are numerous themes within our Torah portion this week that serve to help us survive and succeed in our wilderness crossing. One of the basic principles of the Bible is the law of sowing and reaping.

Job 4:8 Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.

Galatians 6:7 Be not deceived; Elohim is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. ⁸For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

At our home we are in garden mode, and this principle is very evident in each bed of our garden. Where we planted peas, peas are growing. Where we planted beans, beans are coming up. Where we planted onions, onions are sprouting. While on occasion we see some “volunteers”ⁱ from previous years coming up, we must acknowledge that these too are from our having planted them in previous years. If we plant, we shall also harvest; if we fail to plant, there will be no harvest. This is a lesson that may be learned not just from the Scriptures but from nature itself.

Proverbs 6:6 Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: ⁷which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, ⁸provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest. ⁹How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? ¹⁰Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: ¹¹so shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.

While this principle is true in the material world of seed time and harvest, Shaul teaches us that it is also true in spiritual matters as well. When evil circumstances and situations sprout up in our lives, it is easy for us to blame HaSatan or others for the sour grapes and weeds that we sometimes reap. Yeshua likewise taught us concerning seed time and harvest.

Matthew 13:24 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: ²⁵but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. ²⁶But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. ²⁷So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? ²⁸He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? ²⁹But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. ³⁰Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

While it is true that the righteous often suffer because of the actions of HaSatan and the ungodly of the world, it is also true that we often suffer because of what we ourselves have sown in our lives, whether intentionally or unintentionally. Let me share a simple example that will help us to understand what is happening in our Torah portion.

For those who have been blessed with children, we are well aware of the fact that as parents we are not the only influence in the lives of our children. There are times when the family is challenged and suffers because of the impact of external influences upon our children. As a pastor, however, I often marveled at parents who would bring their rebellious child to me for counseling. Often it would be the case that the father and head of the household had laid down some clear boundary or standard for the family. But then when the father was not around the

mother would change the standard or ignore the boundary. The wife and mother was clearly rebelling against her head and covering. Now the seeds of rebellion have been planted in her son. If she as wife and mother does not have to respect the authority placed over her, then, reasons the son, neither does he have to respect the mother's authority over him. What the mother sowed she also reaped.

The apostle Ya'akov likewise teaches that what we suffer is often due to what is in us and not what has been planted by another.

James 1:13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of Elohim: for Elohim cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: ¹⁴but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. ¹⁵Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

Note how Ya'akov employs agricultural imagery in the above verses to describe the process of sowing in sin and reaping the harvest of death. Again we witness the principle of sowing and reaping. We likewise witness this principle in our portion this week as we read of the sprouting of rebellion bringing forth the fruit of death. The question that confronts us in this portion is concerning who sowed the seeds of this rebellion. But before we look at the sprouting, let us return to the scene of the planting of these seeds and see where this deadly fruit of rebellion came from. Keeping in mind the above principal of reaping what you sow, let us look at the rebellion of Korah and his companions. The rebellion of Korah is based in covetousness, jealousy, and pride. Our portion begins with a brief genealogy of the prime characters in this controversy.

Numbers 16:1 Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men...

Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, is a Levite. Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, were of the tribe of Reuben. To understand the complexity of this rebellion one must understand the issues surrounding the genealogy of this cast of characters. Let us begin with the complaint of Korah. Like Moses and Aaron, Korah is a third generation Levite. While Moses and Aaron were sons of Amram, the firstborn of Kohath, the son of Levi, Korah was the firstborn of Itzhar, the second born son of Kohath. Since Moses was as the ruler of the children of Israel and Aaron his brother was appointed the *Cohen Gadol*ⁱⁱ over Israel, Korah thought that it was his right as the firstborn of the second born son of Kohath to be named the prince of the Kohathites. Instead we see that Korah was passed by and his cousin Elizaphan was named as prince of the Kohathites.

Numbers 3:30 And the chief of the house of the father of the families of the Kohathites shall be Elizaphan the son of Uzziel.

This apparent slight of Korah was the motivation for him to rebel against Moses and Aaron, and ultimately against the Holy One of Israel. Lacking political power and clout, Korah sought other disgruntled rebels to join him in his rebellion. Dathan, Abiram, and On seemed to be a

perfect choice. As we have already said, Dathan, Abiram, and On are descendants of Reuben, the firstborn of Jacob. These Reubenites seemed to Korah a logical choice, since as descendants of the firstborn they should have been leaders instead of Moses and Aaron. Viewing these Israelites as fellow brothers who had been wrongfully passed over, Korah felt a common kinship with the injustice of their plight. We may here recall that while Reuben was indeed the firstborn son of Jacob, he lost the privilege of this position by his own wrongdoing.

Genesis 49:3 Reuben, thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power: ⁴unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou it: he went up to my couch.

1 Chronicles 5:1 Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel, (for he was the firstborn; but, forasmuch as he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph the son of Israel: and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright...)

While Korah may have felt a kinship with Dathan, Abiram, and On because they were passed over, we should recognize that this was not what Dathan and Abiram expressed as their grudge against Moses. The sons of Reuben were angry over the fact that they were to wander in the wilderness for forty years instead of entering the land flowing with milk and honey.

Numbers 16:12 And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab: which said, We will not come up: ¹³Is it a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of a land that floweth with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, except thou make thyself altogether a prince over us? ¹⁴Moreover thou hast not brought us into a land that floweth with milk and honey, or given us inheritance of fields and vineyards: wilt thou put out the eyes of these men? we will not come up.

Our portion goes on to tell us that Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and On went on to arouse 250 more men of renown from among the children of Israel to join them in bringing their complaints before Moses and Aaron.

Numbers 16:2 And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown: ³and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and YHWH is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of YHWH?

Clearly the complaint presented was based on the fact that Moses and Aaron, two brothers, had assumed the top two leadership roles. We may add to this the fact that Aaron's sons had been given the priesthood, and the tribe of Levi, Moses' and Aaron's tribe, had been appointed to replace the firstborn.

Numbers 3:12 And I, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of all the firstborn that openeth the matrix among the children of Israel: therefore the Levites shall be Mine.

Numbers 3:45 Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites instead of their cattle; and the Levites shall be Mine: I am YHWH.

In the process of sanctifying the Levites for replacement of the firstborn, both groups were counted. There were 22,000 Levites and 22,273 firstborn, leaving a difference of 273 firstborn. These 273 firstborn had to pay for their own atonement.

Numbers 3:46 And for those that are to be redeemed of the two hundred and threescore and thirteen of the firstborn of the children of Israel, which are more than the Levites; ⁴⁷thou shalt even take five shekels apiece by the poll, after the shekel of the sanctuary shalt thou take them: (the shekel is twenty gerahs:)

Because of the proximity of the number, many of the sages teach that the 250 men who aligned themselves with Korah were from among the 273 firstborn who were upset with losing their priesthood and status to the Levites. So we see that Korah, a Kohathite and Levite, was seeking greater honor. Discontent with the honor bestowed upon him, his father's house, his clan, and his tribe, Korah wanted the position of Aaron the *Cohen Gadol*. Pretending to have a greater concern than himself, Korah stated his complaint to Moses and Aaron.

Numbers 16:3 And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and YHWH is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of YHWH?

While Korah feigned concern for the whole of the children of Israel, Moses saw through his masquerade and responded boldly to Korah's claim.

Numbers 16:9 Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the Elohim of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to Himself to do the service of the tabernacle of YHWH, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them? ¹⁰And He hath brought thee near to Him, and all thy brethren the sons of Levi with thee: and seek ye the priesthood also? ¹¹For which cause both thou and all thy company are gathered together against YHWH: and what is Aaron, that ye murmur against him?

Here we clearly see that the rebellion of Korah was directed specifically at Aaron. Now we may ask the question as to why Aaron should reap such a harvest. The answer to this question is found in the Torah portion Beha'alotecha.ⁱⁱⁱ

Numbers 12:1 And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman. ²And they said, Hath YHWH indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us? And YHWH heard it.

Here we witness Miriam and Aaron rebelling against the leadership and headship of Moses. Note the similarity between the complaint of Aaron and that of Korah. Aaron and Korah both try to enlarge the calling, honor, glory, and anointing of YHWH to include themselves. It is in this singular act of rebellion against his leader and covering that Aaron planted the seeds of rebellion in the children of Israel. Aaron judged Moses and was therefore judged himself. Yeshua taught:

Matthew 7:1 Judge not, that ye be not judged. ²For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. ³And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? ⁴Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? ⁵Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

Luke 6:37 Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.

The apostles Shaul and Ya'akov likewise taught against judging one another.

Romans 14:10 But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Messiah. ¹¹For it is written, As I live, saith YHWH, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to Elohim. ¹²So then every one of us shall give account of himself to Elohim. ¹³Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

James 4:11 Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. ¹²There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?

From the writing of Ya'akov we realize that we may trace the seeds of this rebellion all the way back to the Garden of Eden. It was in the Garden of Eden that Adam the first man first rebelled and became a judge of the Torah rather than a doer of the Torah. While encouraging and even commanding Adam to eat from the tree of life, the Creator clearly prohibited Adam from eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Genesis 2:9 And out of the ground made YHWH ELOHIM to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

Genesis 2:16 And YHWH ELOHIM commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: ¹⁷but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

By listening to another voice and having their eyes opened, Adam and Eve began reasoning for themselves what would be good for them and what would be evil.

Genesis 3:6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. ⁷And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

From this moment forward, Adam and Eve were no longer in the image of Elohim, but distorted that image with their own reason, interpretations, additions, and subtractions from the word of Elohim. In responding to Adam and Eve's rebellion YHWH made a declaration over the woman:

Genesis 3:16 Unto the woman He said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

The idea that Eve would "desire" her husband does not necessarily mean that she would want to be with him. Instead we may understand that just as a slave desires to be free from his master, so too would Eve desire to rule over her husband. Eve was meant to be Adam's helpmate and partner in the Garden of Eden. But since Eve assumed a position of independence and superiority over Adam in dealing with the serpent, she subsequently desired the position of headship over her husband. This striving for power and advantage caused her husband to rule over her instead of partnering with her. As we would later learn from the writings of the apostle Shaul, Adam too would be placed under headship.

1 Corinthians 11:3 But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Messiah; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Messiah is Elohim.

The seeds of rebelling against headship go all the way back to the Garden of Eden. Thus even today we reap the harvest of this rebellious planting. Aaron, Miriam, Korah, Dathan, Abiram, On and the 250 men of renown all judged their appointed leader(s) and rebelled against the yoke of leadership for the purpose of personal gain and principle. This type of thinking always ends in death and disaster for the children of Israel and should have no place in the body of Messiah. Unfortunately it is still present with us today even while we live in exile. The Holy One continues to raise up good and wise teachers and leaders among the body of believers, yet jealousy, selfishness, covetousness, and envy continue to create discord and division among us. The Talmud teaches that the very Temple was destroyed because of baseless hatred of one another as well as our accusing words against one another.

"Why was the first sanctuary destroyed? Because in it were practiced three vices: idolatry, fornication, and murder."^{iv}

"But as to the second sanctuary, in which the people were engaged in Torah and practice of the commandments and acts of loving kindness, on what account was it destroyed? It was

because of gratuitous hatred. That fact serves to teach you: gratuitous hatred weighs in the balance against the three cardinal sins of idolatry, fornication, and murder.”^v

A debate then ensued as to who was better; the ancients who lost the first sanctuary due to idolatry, fornication, and murder, or the moderns who lost the Second Temple due to gratuitous hatred.

Said R. Yohanan, “The little fingernail of the ancients is better than the big belly of the moderns.” Said to him R. Simeon Laqish, “To the contrary! The moderns are better off, for even though they are subjugated to the kingdoms, they nonetheless engage in Torah study.” He said to him, “The sanctuary proves I am right, for it was restored to the ancients but not to the moderns.” They asked R. Eleazar, “Were the ancients greater, or the moderns?” He said to them, “All you have to do is set your eyes upon the sanctuary.”^{vi}

Clearly we may learn from this debate that merely studying Torah will not help us if we are not willing to live Torah. As Shimon ben Gamliel stated,

“It is not study that is the main thing but practice.”^{vii}

Rabbi Yisroel Meir Kagan, also known as the Chofetz Chaim, taught that it was *lashon hara*^{viii} rooted in baseless hatred that caused the destruction of the Temple. The Bible teaches us that one of the many functions of HaSatan is to be the accuser of the brethren.

***Revelation 12:10** And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our Elohim, and the power of His Messiah: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our Elohim day and night.*

This we may contrast with the ministry of Messiah, who intercedes for the brethren.

***Romans 8:34** Who is he that condemneth? It is Messiah that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of Elohim, who also maketh intercession for us.*

***Hebrews 7:25** Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto Elohim by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*

We should carefully consider our words and our actions. The Torah teaches us that a matter is not established as true except by the testimony of two or more witnesses.

***Numbers 35:30** Whoso killeth any person, the murderer shall be put to death by the mouth of witnesses: but one witness shall not testify against any person to cause him to die.*

***Deuteronomy 17:6** At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death.*

Deuteronomy 19:15 One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established.

Matthew 18:16 But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

2 Corinthians 13:1 This is the third time I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.

1 Timothy 5:19 Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.

Hebrews 10:28 He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses.

The Chofetz Chaim understood the reality that HaSatan can gain no advantage over the children of Israel without witnesses. While he may indeed stand day and night accusing the brethren, his words remain ineffectual unless corroborated by two or more witnesses. When we begin to judge one another and speak against one another we become a partner with HaSatan in the ministry of accusation.

"Lashon hara has the drastic effect of turning oneself into Satan's corroborating witness. Speakers of lashon hara feed Satan what he needs to begin prosecuting. In fact Zohar states that the very words which Satan uses in making his accusation are words that one Jew has spoken against another. Speaking lashon hara therefore not only opens the case against a fellow Jew, but literally puts accusatory words into Satan's mouth!"^{ix}

So in our portion we see that Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and On are participating in Satan's ministry of accusation, while Moses and Aaron are on their faces once more practicing the ministry of Messiah, the ministry of intercession.

Numbers 16:4 And when Moses heard it, he fell upon his face.

We have traced the seed of this rebellion all the way back to the serpent in the Garden of Eden. Here we should remember what Yeshua taught us concerning the seed. In the parable of the sower Yeshua gives the meaning of the seed.

Luke 8:11 Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of Elohim.

We recognize that in the Garden of Eden the tree of knowledge of good and evil was a tree of mixed seed, or mixed word. The tree of life is the Word of Elohim. When Adam and Eve stood at the tree of knowledge of good and evil the serpent stirred within them a spirit of discontentment. By making Adam and Eve feel as though they were being oppressed and denied something owed them, the serpent lured them with empty promises to rebel against their headship and covering.

Genesis 3:1 Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which YHWH ELOHIM had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath Elohim said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? ²And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: ³but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, Elohim hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. ⁴And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: ⁵for Elohim doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as elohim, knowing good and evil.

So it is in our portion this week that Korah and the others, moved by a spirit of discontentment, entered the ministry of HaSatan to complain against, judge, and accuse their brethren. By rising up in rebellion Korah and his compatriots sought their own honor, security, position, and will. They sought to become like Moses, who stood in the place of Elohim among the children of Israel.

Likewise in this day and age we see brethren being moved into the ministry of HaSatan by the same spirit of jealousy, covetousness, envy, and discontentment that moved Korah. It is unfortunate that there is still so much division and hostility within the Messianic Movement; thus as a people we have displayed little reason for the Holy One to bless us with seeing the return of Messiah or the rebuilding of the Temple. Instead we align ourselves with HaSatan, accusing and attacking one another for personal advantage. By acting in this rebellious manner we are giving HaSatan all the fuel he needs to prosecute and discredit us. *Lashon hara* is spreading throughout the camp like a plague, sprouting rebellion and bearing death. We would be wise to remember that the measure we use to judge others is the same measure that will be used against us.

Matthew 7:1 Judge not, that ye be not judged. ²For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

The Chofetz Chaim likewise wrote,

"Had the people overlooked the wrong caused them, then Hashem would have forgiven them as well. However, they were absolutely unrelenting toward each other, demanding from one another whatever they could possibly extract according to the law – and heaven judged them accordingly."^x

This is a very similar teaching to that of Yeshua Messiah, who taught:

Matthew 6:14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: ¹⁵but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

The question that confronts us now is how do we overcome this spirit of judgment and rebellion? The first reality that we must come to terms with is the fact that we are all members

of the same body. Secondly we must also come to accept the fact that it is the Holy One that orders this body.

1 Corinthians 12:12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Messiah. ¹³For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. ¹⁴For the body is not one member, but many.

1 Corinthians 12:18 But now hath Elohim set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him.

When we truly accept the truth that we are all many members of the body of Messiah, we will no longer worry and work for our own glory but for the glory of the whole body of Messiah.

1 Corinthians 12:22 Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: ²³and those members of the body, which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. ²⁴For our comely parts have no need: but Elohim hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor to that part which lacked: ²⁵that there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. ²⁶And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it. ²⁷Now ye are the body of Messiah, and members in particular.

As members of the body of Messiah we should be content to be of service to YHWH regardless of where He sees fit to place us.

1 Corinthians 12:28 And Elohim hath set some in the assembly, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

What is essential for us to understand is the reality that when one member of our body is honored, the whole body is honored.

1 Corinthians 12:26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it. ²⁷Now ye are the body of Messiah, and members in particular.

In other words it is not the individual teacher that receives the honor; it is not the individual apostle that receives the honor; it is not the individual prophet or any other individual member of the body that receives the honor; it is Messiah who receives the honor. As members of the body of Messiah we share in whatever honor is given to Messiah. As the body of Messiah our task is to bring honor and glory to YHWH ELOHIM and not to ourselves. To become a member of the body of Messiah requires us first to identify in faith with Messiah's crucifixion. In other words, before we can truly become the body of Messiah, we must do something with ourselves.

Matthew 10:38 *And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.*

Matthew 16:24 *Then said Yeshua unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.*

Romans 6:6 *Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*

Galatians 2:20 *I am crucified with Messiah: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Messiah liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of Elohim, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

Galatians 5:24 *And they that are Messiah's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.*

Galatians 6:14 *But Elohim forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Yeshua Messiah, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.*

Once our "old self" has been crucified with Messiah, we are risen as members of the risen and living body of Messiah. This means the ministry of the Messiah is now our ministry. Here we may remember that Messiah's ministry is one of intercession and not accusation. Therefore if we are going to claim to be a member of the body of Messiah we will do the work and will of the Messiah, which is to seek the honor and glory of the one who sent him.

John 4:34 *Yeshua saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work.*

John 5:19 *Then answered Yeshua and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.*

John 5:30 *I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.*

John 6:38 *For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me.*

John 7:18 *He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh His glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.*

As the body of Messiah our only concerns are his concerns. No longer do we seek to elevate ourselves above our brethren. No longer do we worry about personal justice or entitlements. As the body of Messiah we are only concerned with what our head (Messiah) is telling us to be concerned with. When we truly embrace this identity our rebellious spirit will be put to death and our need to judge, complain, and attack our brothers will cease. We would do well to take to heart Shaul's words to the Philippians:

Philippians 2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Messiah Yeshua: ⁶who, being in the form of Elohim, thought it not robbery to be equal with Elohim: ⁷but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: ⁸and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. ⁹Wherefore Elohim also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: ¹⁰That at the name of Yeshua every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; ¹¹and that every tongue should confess that Yeshua Messiah is Lord, to the glory of Elohim the Father.

I pray that we may all come to terms with this reality quickly so that the plague of rebellion be removed from us.

SHAVUA TOV!

ⁱ A “volunteer” is a plant that comes up on its own from a previous year’s planting.

ⁱⁱ High Priest

ⁱⁱⁱ Numbers 8:1-12:16

^{iv} The Babylonian Talmud, Yoma Sukkah, Vol. 5. Jacob Neusner, Hebricksen Publishers, Pg. 28

^v Ibid. Pg. 29

^{vi} Ibid.

^{vii} The Schottenstein Edition Pirkei Avos, Mesorah Publications, Pg. 36

^{viii} Derogatory speech.

^{ix} Chofetz Chaim A Lesson A Day, Rabbi Shimon Finkelman and Rabbi Yitzchak Berkowitz, Mesorah Publication, Pg. xxiv

^x Chofetz Chaim Pg. 73