

## Opposing God's Minister

- I. Ministers are closer to God's lightnings than others. **JAM 3:1.**
- A. They are to preach what the flesh despises and this often generates opposition. **2TI 4:2-3.**
  - B. They are continual hypocrites for preaching a flawless code of righteousness.
    - 1. This fact is not a license for uncharitably attacking or rejecting a minister or making him an offender for a word or something of little account. **ISA 29:20-21.**
    - 2. Nor is it a justification for a minister to avoid preaching against his own "issues" or justifying in himself a dissolute lifestyle rather than repent. **MAT 23:28.**
  - C. They especially offend all. **JAM 3:2.**
  - D. They will incur God's wrath directly for self-muting or dereliction of duty under pressure. **EZE 3:18-20; 1CO 9:16-17.**
  - E. They are not exempt from being made castaways. **1CO 9:27.**
  - F. The greatest of ministers are subject to correction. **GAL 2:11; ACT 23:1-5.**
    - 1. Jesus Christ characterized true faith as recognizing the need to submit to authority as well as exercise it. **MAT 8:8-10.**
    - 2. Christ submitted Himself to the authority of flawed humans. **LUK 2:51.**
      - a. Therefore, the lack of moral or judicial perfection in legitimate authorities does not justify someone's refusal to render any fidelity and submission to such authorities.
      - b. Even the authority of the Scribes and Pharisees was to be honored. **MAT 23:2-3; ACT 23:3-5.**
    - 3. Hence, saints should submit to faithful ministers doing their job and ministers should heed faithful corrections from saints where justified.
    - 4. Two issues are at large in opposing the minister: *when* is it justified (and when not), and *how* should just opposition be undertaken? **PRO 27:6.**
- II. We ought not to be ignorant of Satan's devices (**2CO 2:11**) which are many and varied: moral pollution, doctrinal corruption, exploiting emotional weaknesses and lusts, fomenting strife and division, etc. These all have a common goal: separating you from the truth which links you to God through Jesus Christ. **JOH 14:6; 1JO 5:20.**
- A. One of his devices is to prejudice your mind against the man whom the Holy Ghost has made your overseer. **ACT 20:28.**
    - 1. Sometimes this is done by spreading contrary doctrine, diluting allegiance. **GAL 4:13-18.**
    - 2. Sometimes this is done by inventing false reports about the man of God. **ACT 6:10-13; 14:1-3; ROM 3:8; GAL 1:10; 5:11.**
    - 3. Sometimes this is done by feigned appeals for superior direction. **2SAM 15:1-6.**
    - 4. Sometimes this is done by sniping from the shadows about the minister's foibles. **2CO 10:10.**
  - B. Another device is to use afflictions and challenges to alienate God's people from the minister and his message. **EXO 5:19-21; 6:9.**
  - C. Because a minister represents the Lord, sometimes God's people take out their frustrations with God on the minister.
    - 1. We are warned against murmuring as did Israel. **1CO 10:10-12.**
    - 2. Israel's argument was really with God. **EXO 16:2, 7-8.**
    - 3. Israel sought different leadership when they disapproved of God's leading through Moses and Aaron. This was an act of rebellion. **NUM 14:1-4 c/w NEH 9:17.**

- III. Beware of speaking against the man of God because he does something that you dislike, but God allows. Aaron and Miriam learned this the hard way. **NUM 12:1-16.**
- A. They spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman he had married. **v. 1.**
  - B. Their criticism of Moses was expressed in their claiming that God had not only spoken by Moses, but by them also. **v. 2.**
  - C. They concluded that because they had been used of God, they could therefore speak against Moses.
  - D. The Lord replied to this **SUDDENLY. vs. 4-5.**
  - E. God replied that He had dealt with Moses in a manner superior to the way that He had dealt with other prophets. Therefore, they should have been afraid to hastily speak against Moses. **vs. 6-7.**
  - F. Their speaking against Moses angered the Lord and Miriam ironically became leprous, white as snow. **vs. 9-10.**
  - G. As a result, Aaron's attitude toward Moses underwent a radical change. **vs. 11-12.**
  - H. Even though Moses made intercession for Miriam's healing, God still made her bear her shame for seven days. **vs. 13-15.**
  - I. God's actions towards Miriam were to be a memorial. **DEU 24:9.**
- IV. Heed some things Scripture says about the relationship between church members and the minister which God sends to them.
- A. He is the minister of the Lord Jesus Christ, the highest authority. **MAT 28:18.**
  - B. He is the church's *overseer* (**ACT 20:28**); he is *over you in the Lord*. **1TH 5:12.**
  - C. His biblical rule is to be obeyed and submitted to. **HEB 13:7, 17.**
  - D. His faith is to be followed in view of the end of his conversation. **HEB 13:7; 1PE 5:4-5.**
  - E. He should be held in reputation. **PHIL 2:29.**
  - F. He is to be esteemed very highly in love for his work's sake. **1TH 5:13.**
  - G. He is not to be rebuked like a sibling or underling but intreated as a father. **1TI 5:1.**
  - H. Uncorroborated accusations are not to be received against him. **1TI 5:19.**
  - I. If he rules well, he is worthy of double honour. **1TI 5:17.**
- V. So many of the abrasions and conflicts that invariably arise between the minister and church members could be resolved by simply talking respectfully to the minister about the issues.
- A. You might find your minister to be reasonable, amenable to correction, willing to consider your situation.
  - B. Do not resort to underhanded sniping, passive-aggressive resistance, politicking to rally support for your own cause and other such carnal methods because you are too cowardly to address a matter in a godly way, or because you know that your cause will not bear examination. **PRO 15:12.**
- VI. We are especially to beware of the gainsaying of Core/Korah. **JUDE 1:11; NUM 16.**
- A. gainsay: To deny; to speak against, contradict.
  - B. That which befell Korah and company in **NUM 16** was meant to stand as a sign to the O.T. church and to us. **NUM 26:10; 1CO 10:5-6.**
  - C. This disenchanting uprising followed a case of church discipline. **NUM 15:32-36.**
  - D. The mutineers “rose up” against Moses. **NUM 16:1-2.**
    1. Their real problem was envy, a volatile force. **PSA 106:16-18; PRO 27:4.**
    2. Bitterness and envy are common bedfellows. **JAM 3:14.**
    3. Therefore, we must be on guard against such attitudes. **HEB 12:15.**
  - E. Korah and company were “...famous in the congregation, men of renown” (**NUM 16:2**).

1. World troubles have come from *men of renown*. **GEN 6:4.**
  - a. It is a sad fact that men of wealth, fame or even infamy tend to assume that they ought to be in charge and that the world would thus run better.
  - b. “Of all tyrannies, a tyranny exercised for the good of its victims may be the most oppressive. It may be better to live under robber barons than under omnipotent moral busybodies. The robber baron's cruelty may sometimes sleep, his cupidity may at some point be satiated; but those who torment us for our own good will torment us without end, for they do so with the approval of their own conscience.” (C.S. Lewis)
  - c. Rule is better by *men of integrity* than by *men of renown*, and blessed is that people who are ruled by men renowned for integrity, perhaps even by *men who have renounced* what *men of renown* covet to do. **2CO 4:2.**
2. Church troubles sometimes stem from such people, who suppose that their status or importance are exemptions from good conduct. **PRO 18:23.**
3. The name “On” means “wealth or vigour.” c/w **JAM 2:6.**
4. Levites at least had a nearness to primacy (**NUM 16:8-10**) but not Reubenites (**1CH 5:1**). Rebellion against legitimate authority can unite disparate, even contrary parties. **ACT 4:27.**
5. “Note, The pride, ambition, and emulation, of great men, have always been the occasion of a great deal of mischief both in churches and states. God by his grace make great men humble, and so give peace in our time, O Lord!” (Matthew Henry)
- F. They gathered themselves *together* against God. **NUM 16:3, 11 c/w PRO 16:5.**
- G. Their charge was “...Ye take too much upon you...” (v. 3) as if God had not given Moses and Aaron this authority. Korah and company were actually guilty of their own charge.
  1. They claimed holiness and God's presence for all the congregation. They saw no distinction between themselves and Moses and Aaron.
  2. Korah was a Levite, but not a priest. The priestly office was for Aaron and his sons only. **HEB 5:4.**
  3. The Levites were a gift to Aaron. **NUM 8:19.**
  4. Not all laborers of God's house have the office of ministerial rule. **1CO 12:28.**
  5. Korah was a son of Kohath and the sons of Kohath were appointed to bear the ark of the covenant and the vessels of the sanctuary. **NUM 4:15; 7:9.**
    - a. They were as close to the ark as a Jew could get without being a priest.
    - b. Korah was not satisfied with eminence; he had *to have the preeminence* (**3JO 1:9**), possibly carrying a grudge because Aaron (a Kohathite, **1CH 6:2-3**) was made high priest and/or he (Korah) was not chosen as chief of the Kohathites. **NUM 3:30.**
    - c. Remember that the ark housed the Law of God which spoke of Christ (**JOH 5:39**) and was the place of His presence on earth to Israel.
      - (1) Korah's duty was to bear the ark; that was his burden.
      - (2) The church is *the pillar and ground of the truth* (**1TI 3:15**); it likewise should be bearing up Christ rather than usurping His office.
  6. Korah and company had set light by the office that they had as Levites and coveted more authority not given them: Lucifer's error. **vs. 8-10 c/w ISA 14:14.**
  - H. They accused Moses of being “altogether” (in all respects, in every particular) *a prince over them*: Moses was accused of being a dictator; a tyrant (v. 13), an exaggerated false accusation sometimes brought against a man of God exercising his legitimate authority.
  - I. Moses was also accused of a lack of success; he was basically impotent. v. 14.
    1. Christ was similarly charged. **LUK 23:35.**

2. They blamed the man of God for problems that they were responsible for (**2CO 6:12; PRO 19:3**) and blame-shifting is our natural pastime since Adam.
3. There was a defiant element who would not attend the church court. **vs. 12, 14.**
- J. Their envy, lusts and impatience made them call Egypt *the land of milk and honey*. **v. 13.**
  1. Carnal thinking will make you call your former bondage “liberty” as it *draws you back unto perdition* (destruction, ruin). **HEB 10:38-39 c/w JER 44:16-19.**
  2. It will make you rationalize silly, weak and indefensible arguments to excuse yourself from pressing on “...toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (**PHIL 3:14**) and Satan will accommodate it. **1KI 12:28.**
- K. Moses became angry over their baseless charges and justified himself against their Cain-like offering. **v. 15 c/w ACT 20:26, 33.**
  1. “Respect not thou their offering” is the language of God's rejection of Cain's offering. **GEN 4:4-5.**
  2. Cain and Korah are lumped together in **JUDE 1:11.**
- L. When the showdown came, all the congregation had been affected by the gainsayers and gathered themselves against Moses and Aaron. This was democracy in action; majority rule as before at Kadesh-Barnea. **v. 19 c/w NUM 13:26-14:5.**
- M. Also at that time, the glory of the Lord appeared as He had done at the installment of Aaron and his sons in their office and also at the previous push for rebellion. **v. 19 c/w LEV 9:23; NUM 14:9-10.**
- N. Moses and Aaron interceded for these rebels when God was ready to consume them all. **vs. 20-22.**
- O. God hearkened unto the intercession, but instructed the people to separate themselves from the wicked. **vs. 23-27; 2TH 3:6, 14.**
  1. This appeal was basically, “...Save yourselves from this untoward generation” (**ACT 2:40**).
  2. “If we follow the herd into which the devil has entered, it is at our own peril.” (Matthew Henry)
- P. God made a new thing to show how much this gainsaying had provoked Him. **vs. 28-35 c/w NUM 26:10.**
  1. Great is the wickedness which arouses God to violently use the earth itself to destroy it. Remember Noah's flood and Sodom and Gomorrah.
  2. The 250 men who were not swallowed by the earth were selectively consumed by fire as they stood with Moses and Aaron. **v. 35 c/w vs. 17-18.**
  3. All this proved that Moses had acted per God's authority and not of his own mind.
  4. Our God is still a consuming fire. **HEB 12:28-29.**
- Q. God ordained a memorial of this event to stand as a warning. **vs. 36-40; NUM 26:10.**
  1. Korah was a Levite not *numbered for war* (**NUM 1:3, 49**) and therefore exempted from the general judgment of a wilderness death. **NUM 14:29; 26:64-65.**
  2. He could have made it to Canaan were it not for his ambition!
  3. His remarkable fate should remind us that objects of God's favor or preferment are not exempt from His judgments for sin. **1CO 9:27; JAM 3:2.**
- R. The next day, the whole congregation blamed Moses and Aaron for the deaths of the others. **v. 41.**
  1. It is a special kind of blindness that cannot see the obvious judgment of God and falsely assumes His ministers are the real problem. **JER 5:4; GAL 4:16.**
  2. “In vain have I smitten your children; they received no correction...” (**JER 2:30**).
  3. This is as silly as blaming Noah for the flood (**2PE 2:5**) or blaming Christians for earthquakes, pestilences and fires (Nero) or the Bible for societal chaos.

- S. Again the glory of God appeared to destroy the people, but Moses and Aaron again interceded for them and the plague stopped. **vs. 42-51.**
  - T. Mind that Korah's children (Assir, Elkanah, Abiasaph, **EXO 6:24**) were apparently not swallowed up by the earth like Dathan and Abiram's children. **v. 27 c/w NUM 26:11.**
    - 1. They evidently had followed the example of Levi at Sinai. **DEU 33:9.**
    - 2. Eleven psalms were penned for the sons of Korah. **PSA 42, 44-49, 84, 85, 87, 88.**
    - 3. **PSA 84:10** is rather special, considering the gainsaying of Korah.
    - 4. “These sons of Korah were afterwards, in their posterity, eminently serviceable to the church, being employed by David as singers in the house of the Lord; hence many psalms are said to be for *the sons of Korah*: and perhaps they were made to bear his name so long after, rather than the name of any other of their ancestors, for warning to themselves, and as an instance of the power of God, which brought those choice fruits even out of that bitter root. The children of families that have been stigmatized should endeavour, by their eminent virtues, to roll away the reproach of their fathers.” (Matthew Henry)
- VII. One had better have a clear case of doctrine before opposing a man of God. **ROM 16:17.**
- A. If you doubt something about the pastor, you must give him the benefit of the doubt until you can prove otherwise.
  - B. An accusation against an elder must only be received before two or three witnesses. **1TI 5:19.**
  - C. To resist the man of God without Scriptural grounds is to be guilty of sedition and incur damnation. **GAL 5:19-21; ROM 13:1-2.**