

Deuteronomy 11:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And what he did unto Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, the son of Reuben: how the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their households, and their tents, and all the substance that was in their possession, in the midst of all Israel:

Analysis

The judgment on Dathan and Abiram (Numbers 16) demonstrated God's holiness and the seriousness of rebellion against His appointed leadership. The earth 'opened her mouth and swallowed them up' uses vivid Hebrew imagery—the ground *patach peh* (פֶּתַח פִּי, 'opened mouth'), as if the earth itself executed divine judgment. This spectacular destruction served as warning against presumption and sedition. Significantly, Moses omits Korah (the Levite ringleader) but emphasizes Dathan and Abiram (Reubenites), perhaps because his immediate audience descended from those tribes and needed this specific warning. The phrase 'their households, and their tents' indicates comprehensive judgment extending to families—sobering reminder of sin's corporate consequences.

Historical Context

Korah's rebellion challenged both Moses's leadership and God's ordained priesthood. The earthquake judgment, combined with fire consuming 250 incense-offering rebels, vindicated God's chosen servants. This event occurred relatively early in the wilderness period, serving as a deterrent to future rebellion.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. What does this severe judgment teach about God's view of rebellion against His appointed authority?
2. How should we balance honoring human leadership with ultimate allegiance to God alone?
3. Why does God sometimes judge not just individuals but households, and what does this teach about corporate responsibility?

Interlinear Text

וְאֵשׁ רַעְשָׁה לִדְתַּן וְאֶבְרָם בֶּן אֱלִיאָב בֶּן
H834 And what he did unto Dathan and Abiram the son of Eliab the son
H6213 H1885 H48 H1121 H446 H1121

פִּיהָ אֶת הָאֲרֶץ פָּצְתָה אֵשׁ רַעֲיוֹן
of Reuben H834 opened how the earth H853 her mouth
H7205 H6475 H776 H6310

וַתִּבְלַע וְאֶת בְּתֻלָּתָם וְאֶת אֹהֲלֵיהֶם וְאֶת
and swallowed them up H853 and their households H853 and their tents H853
H1104 H1004 H168

כָּל הַיָּקוּם אֵשׁ רַעֲיוֹן בְּרַגְלֵיהֶם בֶּקֶרְבָּן כָּל
H3605 and all the substance H834 that was in their possession in the midst H3605
H3351 H7272 H7130

יִשְׂרָאֵל:
of all Israel
H3478

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 106:17 (Parallel theme): The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan, and covered the company of Abiram.

Numbers 27:3 (Parallel theme): Our father died in the wilderness, and he was not in the company of them that gathered themselves together against the LORD in the company of Korah; but died in his own sin, and had no sons.

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