

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 (הָפַת פֶּה, '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

רָאשׁ הַדָּתִים | שָׁעַשׁ הַדָּתִים | לְדָתִים | בְּנֵי אֶלְיָאָב | בְּנֵי אֶלְיָאָב | בְּנֵי אֶלְיָאָב |
H834 And what he did H6213 unto Dathan H1885 and Abiram H48 the son H1121 of Eliab H446 the son H1121

רָאשׁ הַדָּתִים | שָׁעַשׁ הַדָּתִים | לְדָתִים | בְּנֵי אֶלְיָאָב |
of Reuben H834 opened H6475 how the earth H776 her mouth H6310

וְאֶת אֶתְלִיָּהִים | וְאֶת בְּתִיָּהִים | וְאֶת בְּתִיָּהִים |
and swallowed them up H1104 and their households H1004 and their tents H168

כָּל כָּל כָּל | בְּרִגְלִיָּהִם | בְּרִגְלִיָּהִם |
and all the substance H3351 that was in their possession H7272 in the midst H3605

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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