

Numbers 16:49

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now they that died in the plague were fourteen thousand and seven hundred, beside them that died about the matter of Korah.

Analysis

They that died in the plague were fourteen thousand and seven hundred—The plague (מַגֵּפָה maggeiphah, divine stroke/affliction) following Korah's rebellion killed 14,700 beyond the 250 who offered unauthorized incense and the earth-swallowed rebels (16:32-35). This staggering death toll (approximately 1% of military-age males) demonstrates the lethal nature of divine judgment against those who challenged God's established order.

Beside them that died about the matter of Korah—The phrase **beside them** (מֵלֵבָד milevad, apart from/in addition to) emphasizes cumulative judgment—250 leaders consumed by fire, Korah's household swallowed by earth, plus 14,700 plague victims totaling over 15,000 dead. This catastrophic loss taught Israel that rejecting God-appointed leadership (Moses and Aaron) was rejecting God Himself, a principle Paul applies to church authority (Hebrews 13:17).

Historical Context

The plague occurred at Kadesh-barnea (ca. 1445 BC) when the congregation blamed Moses and Aaron for the deaths of Korah and his followers (16:41). Aaron's intercessory incense offering (16:46-48) halted the plague mid-camp, demonstrating priestly mediation's life-saving power.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does the death toll from challenging God-ordained leadership warn against divisive criticism in churches?
2. What does Aaron's plague-halting intercession (16:46-48) teach about Christ's ongoing mediation for believers?
3. Why did God judge not only the rebels but also those who sympathized with them (16:41)?

Interlinear Text

וְהָיוּ H1961	הָמָת יָם H4191	בַּמִּגַּף הַ H4046	אַרְבָּעָה H702	עָשָׂר H6240	אֶלֶף H505
	Now they that died	in the plague	were fourteen		thousand
וּשְׁבַע H7651	מֵאֹת H3967	מֵלֶכֶד H905	הָמָת יָם H4191	עַל H5921	דְּבַר H1697
and seven	hundred		Now they that died		about the matter
קֹרַח: H7141					
of Korah					

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 25:9 (Parallel theme): And those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand.