

Parashat Korakh

- In Rav Sha'ul's final recorded address to the elders of the congregation he established in Ephesus, Sha'ul, Paul, tells them

“ . . . behold, I go bound by the Spirit to Yerushalayim, not knowing what will happen to me there; except that the Ruach HaKodesh testifies in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions wait for me. But these things don't count; nor do I hold my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Yeshua, to fully testify to the Good News of the grace of God.” Acts 20
- As an apostle, a leader over many congregations, Shaul was not unacquainted with trials, whether originating from groups outside of the Messianic body who were hostile to his vision for a renewed Judaism, or stemming from factions within the Messianic community who rebelled against some aspect of Paul's authority. And here Paul found good company in the examples shown through Moses and Samuel, two spiritual leaders given visions of destiny that challenged B'nai Yisrael to look beyond their immediate circumstances toward a higher calling. Among its many lessons, *Parashat Korach* and its *Haftarah* teach us that a leader's integrity and perseverance may not prevent attempts at disunity, but a fragmented community cannot re-group without those qualities in a leader.
- For Moshe, the mutiny of Korach, Datan, and Aviram threatened the viability of a congregation resting on the authority of Hashem and his appointed leaders, Moses and Aaron, for if a political confrontation such as that one were to succeed, the Torah would be shown to be false and the entire Sinai revelation put in doubt. And as the last of the Judges of Israel before the era of Kings, Samuel can plead with Israel to stay loyal to G-d even as they desire an earthly king because he, Samuel, discerned wisely that Israel's holiness would not endure if human politics and human government alone determined the spiritual condition of the nation.
- Though imperfect, Moses, Aaron, and, later, Samuel, were vindicated before the congregation by divine demonstration of the anointing, the *Ruakh*-directed purpose and calling given to the nation, to be a light to all nations. May we in similar fashion seek the anointing for ourselves and our leaders for the purposes to which we have been called.