

Who were the Sons of Korah?

Going by the headings in most Bibles, the 'sons of Korah' wrote a total of 11 psalms: 42,44-49 and 84-88.

Like so many in the Bible, their story is one that has a terrible episode in it but then into which God brings his redemption.

The original Korah was around at the time of the Exodus. He was a Levite and their role was to assist the priests and provide other ministries not directly related to what a priest would do. These included being musicians, door keepers, craftsmen, administrators and so on.

In the wilderness, long before the Temple was built, the Levites' duties included the taking down and setting up of the tabernacle as the Israelites wandered through the wilderness.

Korah however led a rebellion against Moses and Aaron. The main objection was that really anyone could be a priest and it wasn't just for Moses and Aaron and their descendants. You can read the full story in Numbers 16, but at the end of this episode the leaders of the rebellion (including Korah) and their families were killed as the earth opened up under their feet and swallowed them.

We don't know who survived and how, but clearly some did. Maybe they had not been part of the rebellion or were too young ... but as the narrative unfolds there were clearly 'the sons of Korah' who continued to serve as Levites.

So what does redemption look like?

Well God continued to use Korah's descendants in His service in the generations that followed.

According to the genealogies in 1 Chronicles, the great prophet Samuel was descended from Korah.

The Korahites were assigned the tasks of caretaker and doorkeeper for the tabernacle (1 Chron 9:19-21). Later in 1 Chron 12:1-6, a group of Korahite men who were part of King David's military were commended for being some of his most skilled soldiers.

Then there were the musicians and singers – 'the sons of Korah' – who were part of the worship within the Temple and who also wrote psalms.

Psalm 42 could have been the personal experience of one of them who for whatever reason was no longer able to be part of the temple worship team and as a result felt cut off and abandoned by God.

Another of their psalms was **Psalm 84** which starts '*How lovely is your dwelling-place, Lord Almighty! My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.*'

This is so different from Korah who could not accept his serving role as a Levite. The 'sons of Korah' were totally accepting of what God had called them to do and were wholly given to it.

The famous line '*I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked*' (84v10b) is no through-away line, because that is exactly what they were and glad to be – doorkeepers in the house of the Lord.