

**Chain Breaking
Numbers 16**

Chain Breaking

- Can you imagine how difficult it would be for brothers and sisters of serial killers
 - To list on a job application the name, Bundy or Dahmer or Gacy
 - Always hearing *“serial killer”* after their last name
 - That’s why most legally change their name and disappear
- Or worse being a child of a serial killer bearing similarities in appearance – *“You look just like your daddy”*
 - Wondering if you bear not only their looks but maybe some of their character as well
 - *“You act just like your daddy”* would carry a different meaning
 - What is the one primary emotion they experience?

Chain Breaking

- Shame - a painful feeling that's a mix of regret, self-hate, and dishonor
 - A painful feeling of humiliation or distress caused by the consciousness of wrong or foolish behavior
 - Shame separates us and isolates us in ways that are more powerful than most anything else
 - It robs us of our self-image, destroys relationships, and drives us to hide from ourselves and others
 - We can assume the shame of others and make it ours
 - This is what happens to families of serial killers

Chain Breaking

- In most of our lives there are things from the past that can keep you enslaved, hold you back, mess up your today
 - What I want to look at this morning is breaking those chains defining to some extent how you see yourself, how you might view your future
 - How others judge you
 - How failures of the past keep you locked in the past
 - How fear of relationship failures you have been through or been taught might define your future

Chain Breaking

- **Luke 4:18-19 NIV**, “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor – *(in spirit, those hurting and in need)*.
 - He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners – *(and that may be how you feel at times)*
 - and recovery of sight for the blind – *(those who see no way out or recovery from, lost hope)*
 - to set the oppressed free – *(those crushed or broken in spirit)*
 - 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor – *(to be able to see the Lord smile upon you, to hear Him sing over you, to know He has accepted you).”*
 - Freedom for those chained down for whatever reason
 - His desire is to “set the oppressed free”

Chain Breaking

- Good news - Jesus understands you
 - **John 8:19 NIV**, Then they asked him, “Where is your father?”
 - They oppressed Him but Jesus did not let them define Him
 - They hindered Him but Jesus did not let them stop Him
 - They crucified Him but they did not defeat Him
- The Sons of Korah also understands this
 - They bore the shame of an act of treason and rebellion that ending in death for Korah
 - His descendants would also have shared in that shame
 - Scripture tells us what happened to His children and can speak to us today

Korah's Responsibilities

- As a descendent of Kohath, Korah's responsibilities, assigned by God, were to help transport the holy furnishings of the sanctuary
 - The arc of the covenant, the alter, the lampstands, and so forth
- **Numbers 4:4-5, 15 NIV**, 4 "This is the work of the Kohathites at the tent of meeting: the care of the most holy things. 5 When the camp is to move, Aaron and his sons are to go in and take down the shielding curtain and put it over the ark of the covenant law."
 - 15 "After Aaron and his sons have finished covering the holy furnishings and all the holy articles, and when the camp is ready to move, only then are the Kohathites to come and do the carrying. But they must not touch the holy things or they will die. The Kohathites are to carry those things that are in the tent of meeting."

Korah's Responsibilities

- They also helped secure and guard the tabernacle as Israel wandered the wilderness
- Moses called this a position of honor
 - **Numbers 16:9-10a NIV**, “the God of Israel has separated you from the rest of the Israelite community and brought you near himself to do the work at the Lord’s tabernacle and to stand before the community and minister to them?
10 He has brought you and all your fellow Levites near himself”

Korah's sin

- Korah was a Levite, but he wanted more – to hold the position of priest which was appointed by God to Aaron and his sons
- **Numbers 16:1-3 NIV**, “1 Korah son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and certain Reubenites—Dathan and Abiram, sons of Eliab, and On son of Peleth—became insolent 2 and rose up against Moses. With them were 250 Israelite men, well-known community leaders who had been appointed members of the council. 3 They came as a group to oppose Moses and Aaron and said to them, “You have gone too far! The whole community is holy, every one of them, and the Lord is with them. Why then do you set yourselves above the Lord’s assembly?”
 - Insolent in the Bible means - a kind of inward, bubbling pride that refuses to learn anything from anybody

Korah's sin

- He was a cousin of Moses and Aaron, and in his mind, it wasn't fair they got to do the leading and priesting and all we do is the manual labor
- God made it abundantly clear what He thought of Korah's attempted power grab when He completely annihilated them being swallowed up by earth itself and set on fire (*Num. 16:32*)
 - The Bible calls this the Korah incident (*Num. 16:49*)
 - It was memorialized forever (*Num. 16:36-40*)
 - It was significant enough that centuries later in the New Testament Jude mentioned it (*Jude 1:11*)

Korah's sin

- In His mercy God spared some of the descendant of Korah, probably small children too young to participate in the revolt because they are mentioned later in Scripture
 - Their legacy now ran through a foolish man who brought ruin on himself, his family, and those following him
 - They lived in the shadow of Korah's failure and couldn't escape his name
- Can you imagine the impact with the "*sons of Korah*" following their name?
 - This clan could have been filled with bitterness and resentment
 - Could have held a grudge for generations
 - But this is not what we find in Scripture

The Sons of Korah

- Generations from the revolt, just before David takes the throne of Israel, we find the Sons of Korah mentioned again
- **1st Chronicles 9:18-19, 28-29, 31-32 NIV**, These were the gatekeepers belonging to the camp of the Levites. 19 Shallum son of Kore, the son of Ebiasaph, the son of Korah, and his fellow gatekeepers from his family (*the Korahites*) were responsible for guarding the thresholds of the tent just as their ancestors had been responsible for guarding the entrance to the dwelling of the Lord.
 - 28 Some of them were in charge of the articles used in the temple service; they counted them when they were brought in and when they were taken out. 29 Others were assigned to take care of the furnishings and all the other articles of the sanctuary, as well as the special flour and wine, and the olive oil, incense and spices

The Sons of Korah

- **1st Chronicles 9:18-19, 28-29, 31-32 NIV**, 31 A Levite named Mattithiah, the firstborn son of Shallum the Korahite, was entrusted with the responsibility for baking the offering bread. 32 Some of the Kohathites, their fellow Levites, were in charge of preparing for every Sabbath the bread set out on the table.
 - Hundred of years after the revolt, Korah's descendants were doing the very work he had turned up his nose to
 - Transporting vessels, Looking after the furnishings and implements, Guarding the gates of the sanctuary
 - The work did not change, but the attitude of those doing the work did

The Sons of Korah

- 11 of the 150 psalms were attributed to the Sons of Korah
 - **Psalm 84:10 NIV**, Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked.
 - Moses asked Korah, “Don’t you realize what a blessing God has already given you?”
 - Korah did not, but his sons did

The Sons of Korah

- 11 of the 150 psalms were attributed to the Sons of Korah
 - **Psalm 48:9-10 NIV**, 9 Within your temple, O God, we meditate on your unfailing love. 10 Like your name, O God, your praise reaches to the ends of the earth; your right hand is filled with righteousness.
 - Does this sound like broken, oppressed, in bondage, bitter words
 - **Psalm 84:1-2 NIV**, 1 How lovely is your dwelling place, Lord Almighty! 2 My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.
 - To the Sons of Korah, being near God, being in His service, was everything
- Even the Prophet Samuel was a descendant of Korah

How did the Sons of Korah handle their shameful family name?

- Rather than change their identity they changed what their identity meant
 - Through obedience and dedication to God they lived their lives
 - They accepted and were content with who God said they were
 - They refused to follow in their forefather's errors
 - They were open and honest about Korah's sinfulness
 - They identified the traits of Korah's sinfulness determined to overcome them in their lives
 - ❖ They were determined not pass them onto their children
 - They learned the simple truth, "Isn't it amazing what God can do in the life of a person, family, home
 - They learned how questions could exist alongside faith

How did the Sons of Korah handle their shameful family name?

- Chain breaking doesn't start with God fixing all our problems or offering a clean, spotless environment
 - It comes through challenges as God rewires us spiritually, mentally, emotionally
 - **Joshua 5:13-15 NIV**, 13 Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, "Are you for us or for our enemies?"
 - 14 "Neither," he replied, "but as commander of the army of the Lord I have now come." Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence, and asked him, "What message does my Lord have for his servant?"
 - 15 The commander of the Lord's army replied, "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so.

How did the Sons of Korah handle their shameful family name?

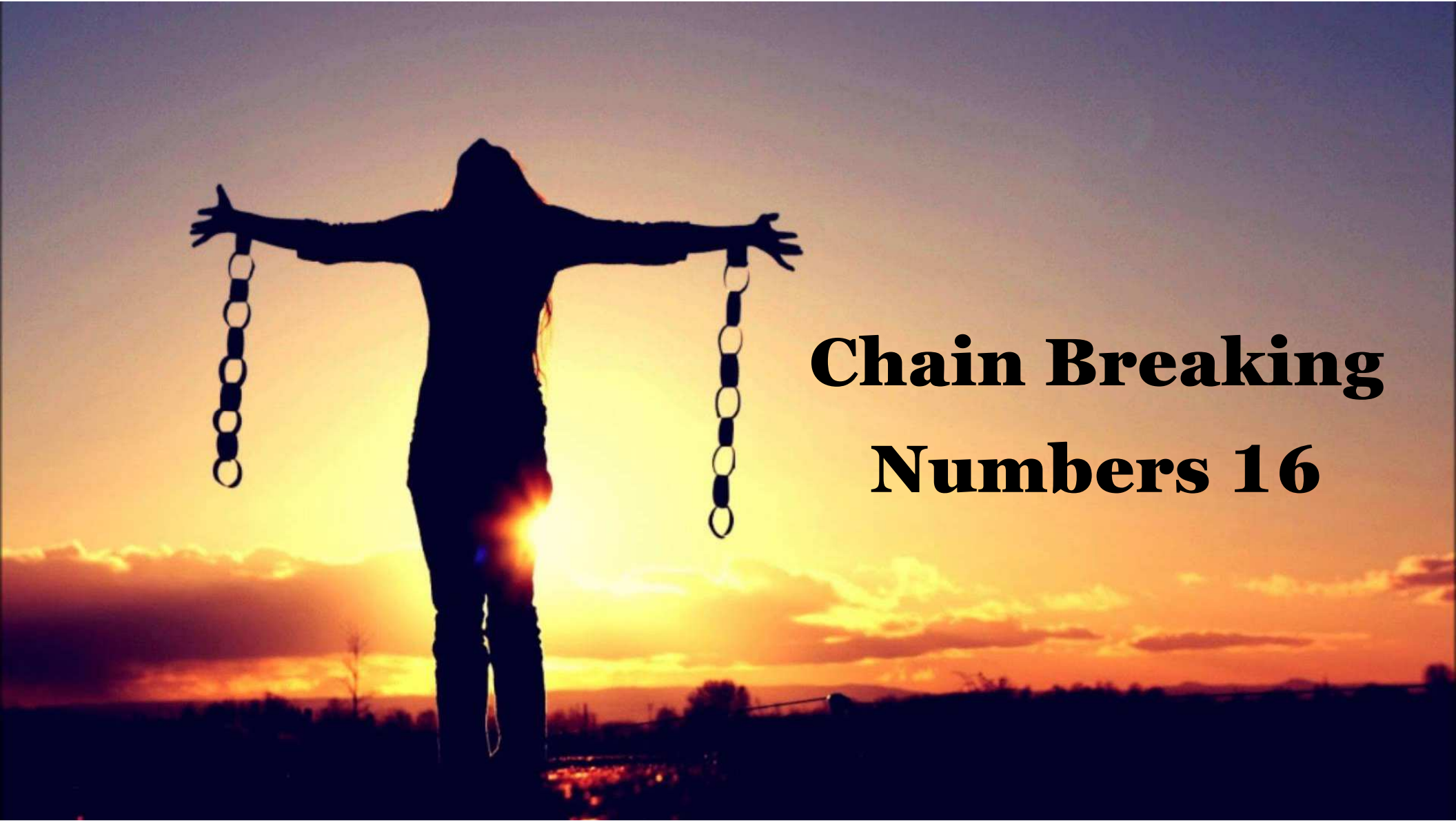
- Chain breaking doesn't start with God fixing all our problems or offering a clean, spotless environment
 - It comes when we align ourselves with God and prepare ourselves to make better choices
 - The challenges don't change, we do
 - **Isaiah 48:10 NIV**, "See, I have refined you, though not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction."
 - It comes when we embrace the opportunities God gives us to learn, grow, share, serve
 - And release our shame to God just as we must do with our sins

Chain Breaking

- The Sons of Korah prove
 - Your family history is irrelevant to your future blessings
 - The actions of those who came before you are irrelevant to your future blessings
 - Your past failures are irrelevant to your future blessings
 - They were more interested in God's name and reputation than their own
 - **Psalm 45:17 ESV**, I will cause your name to be remembered in all generations; therefore nations will praise you forever and ever.

Chain Breaking

- Life is full of opportunities to complain, gripe, fret about what we've been given
 - But it's also full of opportunities to give thanks and sing praise to God
 - **Psalm 47:1-2 NIV**, Clap your hands, all peoples! Shout to God with loud songs of joy! 2 For the Lord, the Most High, is to be feared, a great king over all the earth.



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