

Congregation of the Lord (Government)

Deuteronomy 23 and Numbers 16

Some men, having suffered from an accident, a war wound, medical problem or even a vasectomy, have read the words, "He that is wounded in the stones, or hath his privy member cut off, shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD". Then they worried about losing their salvation. Perhaps thinking that 'congregation of the Lord' had a meaning such as 'church' or even 'heaven'.

What is "The Congregation of the Lord?"

Who can be a member of this congregation?

1. In ancient Israel?

2. In early America?

3. In present day America?

First let's read a few Bible verses.

Deuteronomy 23:1-8 King James Version	Deuteronomy 23:1-8 New International Version
1 He that is wounded in the stones, or hath his privy member cut off, shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD. 2 A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to his tenth generation shall he not enter into the congregation of the LORD. 3 An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the LORD for ever: 4 Because they met you not with bread and with water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt; and because they hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor of Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse thee. 5 Nevertheless the LORD thy God would not hearken unto Balaam; but the LORD thy God turned the curse into a blessing unto thee, because the LORD thy God loved thee. 6 Thou shalt not seek their peace nor their prosperity all thy days for ever. 7 Thou shalt not abhor an Edomite; for he is thy brother: thou shalt not abhor an Egyptian; because thou wast a stranger in his land.	1 No one who has been emasculated by crushing or cutting may enter the assembly of the LORD. 2 No one born of a forbidden marriage nor any of his descendants may enter the assembly of the LORD, even down to the tenth generation. 3 No Ammonite or Moabite or any of his descendants may enter the assembly of the LORD, even down to the tenth generation. 4 For they did not come to meet you with bread and water on your way when you came out of Egypt, and they hired Balaam son of Beor from Pethor in Aram Naharaim to pronounce a curse on you. 5 However, the LORD your God would not listen to Balaam but turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the LORD your God loves you. 6 Do not seek a treaty of friendship with them as long as you live. 7 Do not abhor an Edomite, for he is your brother. Do not abhor an Egyptian, because you lived as an alien in his country. 8 The third generation of children born to them may enter the assembly of the LORD.

8 The children that are begotten of them shall enter into the congregation of the LORD in their third generation.	
Numbers 16:1-11 1 Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men: 2 And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown: 3 And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD? 4 And when Moses heard it, he fell upon his face: 5 And he spake unto Korah and unto all his company, saying, Even to morrow the LORD will shew who are his, and who is holy; and will cause him to come near unto him: even him whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him. 6 This do; Take you censers, Korah, and all his company; 7 And put fire therein, and put incense in them before the LORD to morrow: and it shall be that the man whom the LORD doth choose, he shall be holy: ye take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi. 8 And Moses said unto Korah, Hear, I pray you, ye sons of Levi: 9 Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself to do the service of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them? 10 And he hath brought thee near to him, and all thy brethren the sons of Levi with thee: and seek ye the priesthood also? 11 For which cause both thou and all thy company are gathered together against the LORD: and what is Aaron, that ye murmur against him?	Numbers 16:1-11 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 two hundred and fifty 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?" 4 When Moses heard this, he fell facedown. 5 Then he said to Korah and all his followers: "In the morning the LORD will show who belongs to him and who is holy, and he will have that person come near him. The man he chooses he will cause to come near him. 6 You, Korah, and all your followers are to do this: Take censers 7 and tomorrow put fire and incense in them before the LORD. The man the LORD chooses will be the one who is holy. You Levites have gone too far!" 8 Moses also said to Korah, "Now listen, you Levites! 9 Isn't it enough for you that 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, but now you are trying to get the priesthood too. 11 It is against the LORD that you and all your followers have banded together. Who is Aaron that you should grumble against him?"

There are two groups in the verses above:

(1) The Congregation of Israel. - (All the people of Israel.)

(2) The Congregation of the Lord. - (Something else.)

The phrase "congregation of Israel" means "all the people of Israel."

The "congregation of the Lord", is the subject of this study. We must understand the definition of "congregation of the Lord" before we can understand Deuteronomy 23:1 and Leviticus 16 and who can be a member.

In the quote below from Numbers 16:2-3 we included the number of the Hebrew word as listed in the dictionary of Strong's Concordance along with their definitions

King James Version	Strong's Concordance	New International Version
And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes (5387)	"princes." #5387 and is defined as "an exalted one, a king or sheik, captain, chief, governor, prince or ruler."	2 and rose up against Moses. With them were two hundred and fifty Israelite men, well-known community leaders
of the assembly (5712),	#5712 Assembly, company, congregation, multitude So, these "princes" were civil rulers. In your town they might be called Councilmen.	who had been appointed members of the council.
famous in the congregation (4150), men of renown:"	#4150 Appointed meeting. A place of meeting at a set time.	
(3) "And they gathered themselves together against Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you,	Most Bibles call this "The Rebellion of Korah.	3 They came as a group to oppose Moses and Aaron and said to them, "You have gone too far!
seeing all the congregation (5712) are holy, every one of them, wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation (6951) of the Lord?"	#5712 Councilmen - see above. #6951 Assembly, congregation, multitude. A civil/political meaning just as today when we speak of political bodies as a "General Assembly", Congress or Legislative Assembly.	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?"

Now notice the one English word "congregation" is used three times and is translated from three different Hebrew words. #4151, 5712 and 6951.

Notice also that "assembly" and "congregation" came from the same Hebrew word. Assembly (#5712) in verse 2 and congregation (#5712) in verse 3.

What we have here is a political dispute. Most Bibles title Numbers 16 The Rebellion of Korah. A rebellion against Moses, the leader of the government of Israel led by a man named Korah.

Now, with the knowledge that "the congregation of the Lord" is a body of political leadership such as a "general assembly" we can better understand Deuteronomy 23:1-6.

We might also get an idea of the nature of the dispute. Deuteronomy 23 mentions qualifications for membership in the 'congregation'.

It seems as if Korah and his followers were saying, "Moses, just who do you think you are? What makes you think you, or Aaron are better than us? God loves everyone! All of us are equal! How dare you say some of us are not qualified to hold certain offices?"

It appears that Korah wanted to be in the priesthood.

Numbers 16:8-9

8 And Moses said unto Korah, Hear, I pray you, ye sons of Levi:

9 Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself to do the service of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them?

10 And he hath brought thee near to him, and all thy brethren the sons of Levi with thee: and seek ye the priesthood also?

Concerning political office, Moses said:

Deuteronomy 23:1-8 King James Version	MOSES said.	Deuteronomy 23:1-8 New International Version
1 He that is wounded in the stones, or hath his privy member cut off, shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD.	A person with certain physical defects could not hold public office.	1 No one who has been emasculated by crushing or cutting may enter the assembly of the LORD.
2 A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to his tenth generation shall he not enter into the congregation of the LORD.	Moses said that there were forbidden marriages. And the children of these unions could not hold office.	2 No one born of a forbidden marriage nor any of his descendants may enter the assembly of the LORD, even down to the tenth generation.
3 An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the LORD for ever:	Moses said some nationalities could never, ever hold office.	3 No Ammonite or Moabite or any of his descendants may enter the assembly of the LORD, even down to the tenth generation.

Verse 1 eliminated from government people with certain physical defects. Verse 2 eliminated the children of unlawful marriages. And verse 3 eliminates people of certain races. All these restrictions are highly illegal in modern day America. In modern day America there seems to be no such thing as an unlawful marriage. People can even marry others of the same sex.

Ancient Israel	Early America (Before the Civil War and the 14th Amendment.)	Modern America
Only Hebrews could hold office.	Only White Christians could hold office.	Anyone can hold office.
Some physical defects disqualified from office.		Anyone can hold office.
The children of Hebrew/Minority unions could not hold office	The children of White/Minority unions could not hold office.	Anyone can hold office.
	Minorities could not even be citizens.	Any race can hold office.
Some races not welcome in nation	Some races not welcome in nation.	All races and religions are welcome.

That word "bastard" is translated from a Hebrew word having this definition, "A mongrel or person of mixed race." The New International Version uses the words "illegal marriage". (Does the Bible say some marriages are not legal? Many clergymen would answer, "No.")

Moses said that only an Israelite could hold public office in ancient Israel. A man of mixed race was disqualified from holding public office. It was that way in early America. In early America you had to be of the white race to hold public office. It was that way until the passing of the 14th amendment which made minorities citizens and eligible to office.

Moses rules for election to political office compared to rules for membership in the priesthood of Israel.

Politics	Religion
1 He that is wounded in the stones, or hath his privy member cut off, shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD.	The priesthood was even more restricted. A priest had to be physically perfect in all ways. When it came to the priesthood, "hire the handicapped" did not apply.
	Leviticus 21:16-24 (Rules of the priesthood.) 16 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 17 Speak unto Aaron, saying, Whosoever he be of thy seed in their generations that hath any blemish, let him not approach to offer the bread of his God. 18 For whatsoever man he be that hath a blemish, he shall not approach: a blind man, or a lame, or he that hath a flat nose, or any thing superfluous,

	19 Or a man that is brokenfooted, or brokenhanded, 20 Or crookbackt, or a dwarf, or that hath a blemish in his eye, or be scurvy, or scabbed, or hath his stones broken; 21 No man that hath a blemish of the seed of Aaron the priest shall come nigh to offer the offerings of the LORD made by fire: he hath a blemish; he shall not come nigh to offer the bread of his God. 22 He shall eat the bread of his God, both of the most holy, and of the holy. 23 Only he shall not go in unto the vail, nor come nigh unto the altar, because he hath a blemish; that he profane not my sanctuaries: for I the LORD do sanctify them. 24 And Moses told it unto Aaron, and to his sons, and unto all the children of Israel.
2 A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to his tenth generation shall he not enter into the congregation of the LORD.	← Moses excluded people of mixed race from political office. The office of priest was even more restricted, a priest had to be more than just an Israelite. He had to be a descendant of Aaron. Several times capitol punishment is applied to foreigners who would worm their way into the priesthood. For example: Numbers 3:10 And thou shalt appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall wait on their priest's office: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.
3 An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the LORD for ever:	← Moses excluded some nationalities and their descendants from political office
7 Thou shalt not abhor an Edomite; for he is thy brother: thou shalt not abhor an Egyptian; because thou wast a stranger in his land. 8 The children that are begotten of them shall enter into the congregation of the LORD in their third generation.	← Moses excluded those Hebrews newly arrived from other lands from office. But their third generation children were qualified.

In early America atheists and Jews were not allowed in political office. One reason being that oath of office required a belief in Jesus Christ, the New Testament and Christianity. Obviously this is not an oath they could take.

The following is quoted from The U.S. Supreme Court. (1892)

HOLY TRINITY CHURCH v. U.S.

143 U.S. 457

Or, as in sections 5 and 14 of article 7 of the constitution of Mississippi, (1832:) "No person who denies the being of a God, or a future state of rewards and punishments, shall hold any office in the civil department of this state. ... Religion {516} morality, and knowledge being necessary to good government, the preservation of liberty, and the happiness of mankind, schools, and the means of education, shall forever be encouraged in this state." Or by article 22 of the constitution of Delaware, (1776,) which required all officers, besides an oath of allegiance, to make and subscribe the following declaration: "I, A.B., do profess faith in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ His only Son, and in the Holy Ghost, one God, blessed for evermore; and I do acknowledge the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be given by divine inspiration."

No non-Christian, Jew or atheist could take such an oath of office. Therefore, they could not be elected to or hold public office. In early America, they could not even be elected Dog Catcher.

Also, in early America a Chinaman could not be a U. S. citizen. The reason given was that, all Chinese everywhere on earth were the subjects of the Emperor of China. Therefore, even if living in America, they were citizens of China. Blacks could not be Citizens. See Dred Scott v. Sanford 1856.

Time and the 14th Amendment to the Constitution made it possible for all people of all races to become citizens and hold public office. All these others could now become members of America's 'congregation of the Lord.' The question is. Which would Moses want? (1) Mixed congregations or would Moses want (2) each people to have their own congregation? Would Jesus Christ have it (1) Moses way or (2) our present way?

In the 'farm of heaven' do sheep, cattle and horses have separate pastures. Or do they share the same pasture? Are foxes (Ammonites) kept out of the hen house? Are the wolves (Moabites) allowed to shepherd the sheep? Would Moses and Jesus Christ have voted for the 14th Amendment?

Amendment XIV

Section 1. All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the state wherein they reside. No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

Perhaps Korah, if he were living today would say "Just who do you 'white supremacists' think you are? What makes you think you are better than us? God loves everyone! All of us are equal! How dare you say some of us are not qualified to hold office? America, love it or leave it! (False dilemma.)

In Old Testament times nations were families grown large and all living in the same land. For example: the Israel nations were made up of the children of Israel. The Arabs nations are the children of Ishmael.

In America there are several different kinds of businesses. There are family businesses where the owners and employees are all family. There are public corporations such as Ford and General Motors where the employees are made up of people of many different families. The corporations hire without regard to race, religion and creed.

To compare, before the 14th Amendment America was a nation of White people from Europe. (Like a family business.) The 14th Amendment turned America into a corporation such as Ford and General Motors. Not a family business but a business made up from people from many different families.

And listen to this! America, prior to Jesus return, was prophesied to be a nation of mixed people. Isaiah 61:5 And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien [shall be] your plowmen and your vinedressers. (For example, Mexicans travel from farm to farm picking our crops.)

Lamentations 5:2 Our inheritance is turned to strangers, our houses to aliens. (Many cities are now mostly minority.)

Deuteronomy 28:43-44 The stranger that is within thee shall get up above thee very high; and thou shalt come down very low. (Minorities are becoming Mayors, Senators and Congressmen) He (the stranger) shall lend to thee, and thou shalt not lend to him: he shall be the head, and thou shalt be the tail. (What is the race of the person heading up the Federal Reserve Banking System that lends the money making up the national debt of the U.S. Government?

Matthew 13:24-30 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:

25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares (Modern day Ammonites and Moabites) among the wheat, and went his way.

26 But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

27 So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?

28 He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

29 But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

30 Let both grow together until the harvest:

Matthew 25:32-33 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth [his] sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

Isaiah 13:14 And it shall be as the chased roe, and as a sheep that no man taketh up: they shall every man turn to his own people, and flee every one into his own land.

Jeremiah 50:16 Cut off the sower from Babylon, and him that handleth the sickle in the time of harvest: for fear of the oppressing sword they shall turn every one to his people, and they shall flee every one to his own land.

In Deuteronomy 23:7 Moses said, 7 Thou shalt not abhor an Edomite; for he is thy brother: thou shalt not abhor an Egyptian; because thou wast a stranger in his land. 8 The children that are begotten of them shall enter into the congregation of the LORD in their third generation.

If Moses had spoken these words in early America he might have said, Thou shalt not abhor the Irish, Germans, Italians or Germans; for they is thy brothers: 8 The children that are begotten of them shall enter into the congregation of the LORD in their third generation.

Many of our political office holders are first or second generation Americans. A few were not born in America. Many still think and act like those in the 'old' country. Some still speak with a foreign accent. Moses would disqualify them from office. But their children of the third generation would be qualified for public office.

Why did Moses say?

3 An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the LORD for ever:

Moses said;

4 Because they met you not with bread and with water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt; and because they hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor of Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse thee.

Are there "Ammonites and Moabites" in modern day America?