

# Numbers 17 Commentary

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Source: Ryrie Study Bible

THE BOOK OF NUMBERS "Wilderness Wandering"								
WALKING Numbers 1-12			WANDERING Numbers 13-25			WAITING Numbers 26-36		
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Law & Order			Rebellion & Disorder			New Laws for the New Order		
Old Generation			Tragic Transition			New Generation		
Preparation for the Journey: Moving Out			Participation in the Journey: Moving On			Prize at end of the Journey: Moving In		
At Sinai <a href="#">Mt Sinai</a>			To <a href="#">Moab</a> <a href="#">Mt Hor</a>			At <a href="#">Moab</a> <a href="#">Mt Nebo</a>		
En Route to <a href="#">Kadesh</a> (Mt Sinai)			En Route to Nowhere ( <a href="#">Wilderness</a> )			En Route to <a href="#">Canaan</a> (Plains of Moab)		
A Few Weeks to 2 Months			38 years, 3 months, 10 days			A Few Months		
Christ in Numbers = Our "Lifted-up One" (Nu 21:9, cp Jn 3:14-15)								
Author: <a href="#">Moses</a>								

Numbers 17:1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

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■ **Numbers 17 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,**

**Bush** - At what particular time we are not informed, but probably within a short period after the plague above described had ceased. It is reasonable to infer that the miracle here recorded took place while the minds of the people were yet in an excited state, in consequence of the poisonous insinuations of Korah and his associates, who had so recently perished in their presumption. Every divine judgment executed upon transgressors has a merciful intention towards survivors. The design is to inspire a salutary fear, and thus to prevent the commission of similar iniquities. The present chapter affords an instance strikingly in point. The Lord is pleased, as here recorded, to put the appointment of his priests to another proof, and to work another miracle, that he might effectually silence all future murmurings on the score of the authority claimed by Moses and Aaron. The test was unequivocally decisive.

**Technical Note** - Num 17:1 in the English Bible is 17:16 in the Hebrew text (BHS). Beginning with 16:36, the verse numbers through 17:13 in the English Bible differ from the verse numbers in the Hebrew text (BHS), with 16:36 ET = 17:1 HT, 16:37 ET = 17:2 HT, 17:1 ET = 17:16 HT, etc., through 17:13 ET = 17:28 HT. With 18:1 the verse numbers in the ET and HT are again the same. But in the English chap. 17 there are two parts: Aaron's rod budding (1–9), and the rod preserved as a memorial (10–13). Both sections begin with the same formula. (NET NOTE)

**Brian Bell** - In the 11th century, King Henry III of Bavaria grew tired of court life and the pressures of being a monarch. He made application to Prior Richard (Prior=ecclesiastical title) at a local monastery, asking to be accepted as a contemplative and spend the rest of his life in the monastery. "Your Majesty," said Prior Richard, "do you understand that the pledge here is one of obedience? That will be hard because you have been a king." "I understand," said Henry. "The rest of my life I will be obedient to you, as Christ leads you." "Then I will tell you what to do," said Prior Richard. "Go back to your throne and serve faithfully in the place where God has put you." When King Henry died, a statement was written: "The King learned to rule by being obedient." When we tire of our roles and responsibilities, it helps to remember God has planted us in a certain place and told us to be a good accountant, or teacher, or mother, or father. Christ expects us to be faithful where He puts us, and when He returns, we'll rule together with him. Numbers 16 - Korah & others weren't content with the ministry God had given them (sacred duties around tabernacle) & wanted the more important job of the priesthood. "Selfish ambition" is one of the works of the flesh (Gal.5:20) & it brings destruction. {works of flesh is opposite of fruit of spirit}

**Gilbrant** - Aaron's rod that budded. The two previous plagues had defended Aaron from attack and had clearly shown that the rebellion was wrong. But God now performed a gracious miracle by which he would once and for all publicly designate Aaron as high priest. It may have looked to some as if Moses was merely keeping the high priesthood in the family for personal reasons. This miracle would directly show God's choice of Aaron.

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**James Smith - Handfuls of Purpose - THE ROD THAT BUDDED. Numbers 17.**

"O Lord, my God, Thou changest not,  
Nor deed of kindness e'er doth blot;  
I, too, through Thy so tender ruth,  
Have come to know this precious truth.  
Thy heaviest rod upon me laid,  
To bud and blossom Thou hast made;  
And still Thy rod, like growing thing,  
Fragrance and fruit from Thee doth bring."

The rod that budded is a most delightful type of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. IN HIS CALLING. Like this rod He was set apart, and the name of the High Priest put upon Him.
2. IN HIS LIFE. Like this rod He was common in appearance, no beauty to be desired, a root out of a dry ground.
3. IN HIS DEATH. Like Aaron's rod, He was laid up with others. "On either side one, and Jesus in the midst." Lifted up on the Cross, and also for the judgment of God.
4. IN HIS RESURRECTION. Like the rod He budded and blossomed and brought forth fruit.
5. IN HIS ASCENSION. Like the rod He is laid up again before the Lord for a testimony. He is in the presence of God for us.

here are other lessons that might be learned from this most fruitful theme, truths applicable to the Christian life and testimony, for as

He is, so are we. The story of the occasion of these rods may be read in the preceding chapter, in the rebellion of Korah and his company against Moses and Aaron. See here the—

**1. Demand of God.** "Take twelve rods, write thou every man's name upon his rod, and lay them up, where I will meet with you" (vs. 1-3).

1. This is A CALL FOR REPRESENTATIVES. Every rod represented a tribe. Is our Lord not pressing His demand to-day for representatives when the Korahs and the princes of the world are challenging the ministry and power of the Gospel?

2. Each representative had to be ENTIRELY YIELDED UP. Each rod was to be "laid up before the testimony" (v. 4). Put in the holy place, in front of the vail. Those who would have the Divine impersonation stamped upon them must be wholly yielded up to Him. Not every one that saith Lord, Lord, shall enter into the fulness of blessing exhibited in Aaron's rod.

**2. Evidence of being chosen of God.** The chosen of God will always be self-evident. "Behold the rod of Aaron budded, blossomed, and yielded almonds" (v. 8). This thing was done in secret, but it could not remain a secret. Light and life manifest themselves. This evidence was twofold.

**1. LIFE.** This life was the gift of God. The gift of God is eternal life. If we have been made alive unto God, then we may be assured that we are the called of God, as was Aaron. Partakers of the Divine nature.

**2. FRUITFULNESS.** "It yielded almonds." Fruit is the evidence of abundance of life. If we have been born again like the rod of Aaron, whose natural life had died and given place to his new life, it is that we might bring forth fruit unto God. Did not our Lord say "I have chosen you and ordained you to bring forth fruit," and that like the fruit on this rod, "your fruit should remain?" (John 15:16). But you say only one out of the twelve yielded up rods were chosen. Yes. But which was chosen? The one with the High Priest's name on it (v. 3). It does not matter by what name you consecrate yourself, if it is not in the Name of Jesus Christ, the Great High Priest, the evidences of God's choice will not be seen in your life. Put His Name upon your life, and lay it up before Him for His honour and glory, and as surely as Aaron's rod budded will your life bud and blossom and yield fruit.

But note further—

**3. Position of testimony for God. It was to be—**

**1. KEPT IN HIS PRESENCE.** "The Lord said, Bring Aaron's rod again before the testimony to be kept" (v. 10). If its life and fruitfulness are to remain, it must be kept in nearness to Him who is the source of its life and fruitfulness. The application of this is simple, yet sublime. The branch cannot bear fruit of itself, no more can ye, except ye abide in Me (John 15:1-6). The secret of abiding fruitfulness is being kept in nearness to the life-giving One. In His presence is fulness of joy.

**2. AS A WITNESS.** "To be kept for a token against the rebels" (v. 10). It is so with the living Christ now before the throne of God (Acts 17:30, 31). It is so with every spiritually resurrected soul. They are witnesses against the rebels who believe not the word of the Gospel. The believer's life, like the works of Noah, are intended to condemn the world (Heb. 11:7). As this living and fruitful rod was an evidence that God had chosen Aaron, so the life of the Christian is a token to the ungodly world that the Father hath sent His Son to save it (John 17:21). Kept in His presence for the enjoyment of His love, kept there for a witness to the power of His grace. He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him.

**Numbers 17:2 "Speak to the sons of Israel, and get from them a rod for each father's household: twelve rods, from all their leaders according to their fathers' households. You shall write each name on his rod,**

NET Numbers 17:2 "Speak to the Israelites, and receive from them a staff from each tribe, one from every tribal leader, twelve staffs; you must write each man's name on his staff.

NLT Numbers 17:2 "Tell the people of Israel to bring you twelve wooden staffs, one from each leader of Israel's ancestral tribes, and inscribe each leader's name on his staff.

ESV Numbers 17:2 "Speak to the people of Israel, and get from them staffs, one for each fathers' house, from all their chiefs according to their fathers' houses, twelve staffs. Write each man's name on his staff,

NIV Numbers 17:2 "Speak to the Israelites and get twelve staffs from them, one from the leader of each of their ancestral tribes. Write the name of each man on his staff.

KJV Numbers 17:2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and take of every one of them a rod according to the house of their fathers, of all their princes according to the house of their fathers twelve rods: write thou every man's name upon his rod.

YLT Numbers 17:2 'Speak unto the sons of Israel, and take from them each a rod, for a father's house, from all their princes, for the house of their fathers, twelve rods; the name of each thou dost write on his rod,

LXE Numbers 17:2 Speak to the children of Israel, and take rods of them, according to the houses of their families, a rod from all their princes, according to the houses of their families, twelve rods, and write the name of each on his rod.

ASV Numbers 17:2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and take of them rods, one for each fathers' house, of all their princes according to their fathers' houses, twelve rods: write thou every man's name upon his rod.

CSB Numbers 17:2 "Speak to the Israelites and take one staff from them for each ancestral house, 12 staffs from all the leaders of their ancestral houses. Write each man's name on his staff.

NKJ Numbers 17:2 "Speak to the children of Israel, and get from them a rod from each father's house, all their leaders according to their fathers' houses-- twelve rods. Write each man's name on his rod.

NRS Numbers 17:2 Speak to the Israelites, and get twelve staffs from them, one for each ancestral house, from all the leaders of their ancestral houses. Write each man's name on his staff,

NAB Numbers 17:17 "Speak to the Israelites and get one staff from them for each ancestral house, twelve staffs in all, one from each of their tribal princes. Mark each man's name on his staff;

NJB Numbers 17:17 'Tell the Israelites to give you a branch for each of their families, one for each leader of each family: twelve branches. Write the name of each on his branch;

GWN Numbers 17:2 "Speak to the Israelites, and get 12 staffs from them, one from the leader of each of their tribes. Write each man's name on his staff.

- **all their leaders:** Nu 1:5-16 2:3-30 10:14-27
- **twelve rods:** Ge 49:10 Ex 4:2,17 Ps 110:2 125:3 Eze 19:14 21:10,13 Eze 37:16-20 Mic 7:14
- **Numbers 17 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## TWELVE RODS OR STAFFS ONE FOR EACH TRIBAL LEADER

**Brian Bell** entitles this chapter "AARON'S ALMONDS! STOPPING THE COMPLAIN CAMPAIGN! There besetting sin (one of them) was 1 Corinthians 10:10 Nor **grumble**, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. Paul writes '**Do** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#) - see notes on Php 2:13NLT+) all things without grumbling or disputing;(Phil.2:14+) Complaining is thus a sin. Why is it such a big deal? Because...

1. Complaining gives evidence of unbelief in our hearts.
2. It also shows a lack of gratitude toward God.
3. If we were truly "giving thanks always for all things" (Eph.5:20), we would not be complaining. The best way to overcome a complaining spirit is to accept God's will by faith & thank Him for His goodness, even if we don't see anything good happening. (Wiersbe)

**Speak to the sons of Israel, and get from them a rod for each father's household**- Hebrew = "receive from them a rod, a rod from the house of a father." The Hebrew word for **rod** is **matteh** and is used over 200x in the OT most often translated as "**tribe**." (15x in chapter 1 - Nu 1:4, 16 etc) is clearly the "**key word**" in Numbers 17 (15x in 8v). **Matteh** is the same word used for Moses' **staff** which he used to tend sheep in the wilderness (Ex 4:2+), which was later termed "the staff of God," (Ex 4:20+) Moses' symbol of authority. It was this staff which Moses stretched out and God brought about the miracle of the Red Sea (Ex 14:16+, cf other uses of Moses' staff in Ex 7:19+, Ex 10:13+, Ex 9:23+). Sadly **matteh** is also used of the rod with which Moses struck the rock twice which resulted in Yahweh disqualifying him from entering the promised land (Nu 20:8-12+). The rod or staff was often a symbol of authority ("scepter" in Ge 49:2, Ps 110:2 both Messianic prophecies - see note by Bush below) and presumably were signs of authority of each tribal leader. There is no evidence that these were branches from almond trees (they are in the wilderness!) but

were dry, dead sticks ( ). So the rod or staff was a fitting instrument by which God could display His miraculous creative power and clearly demonstrate by the miracle in the rod which rod owner had been chosen to bear His authority and to minister before Him as high priest!

**Bush-** Heb. "Take of them a rod, a rod, for (or according to) every father's house." The duplication is a Hebraism of common occurrence, carrying with it a distributive sense. Gr. "Take of them a rod (or staff), a rod according to the houses of their patriarchal families." Chald. "Receive from them a rod each throughout the houses of (their) fathers." It is evident from what follows that the requisition was, not a **rod** from each individual Israelite, but one from each tribe; and this was to be presented in the name of the leading man or "prince" of each tribe. The order here given seems to imply that it was not the subordinate Levites alone who aspired to the priesthood, for in that case we cannot well see why there should not have been two rods instead of twelve, one for Aaron and one for his opponents. But by all the tribes being required to contribute a rod, it would appear that all would put in a claim to the dignity, according to what is said, Nu16:3, "**Ye take too much upon you, seeing that all the congregation are holy, every one of them.**" The decision, therefore, was to be final for the whole congregation. The original word for "rod" (**matteh**) is for the most part used to denote a staff, stick, walking-stick, or wand, rather than a green rod, branch, or bough. It would seem, from Nu 21:18, that the princes of the tribes carried **staves** (**matteh**) in their hands, **as a kind of baton, that should serve as a badge of authority.** "The rods or staves were doubtless official ensigns of the authority with which the heads of tribes were invested. Hence the Scripture frequently uses the word 'rod' as equivalent to 'sceptre;,' and indeed the more modern use of sceptres is derived from this ancient custom. **These staves were of course dry, and had probably been for years in use; and that such should blossom and bear fruit again, is such a moral impossibility, that the ancient heathen used to swear by their rods or sceptres with a view to that circumstance.** Thus Achilles, in Homer, when enraged against Agamemnon, says:

'But hearken. I shall swear a solemn oath.  
By this sceptre, which shall never bud,  
Nor boughs bring forth, as once; which having left  
Its stock on the high mountains, at what time  
The woodman's axe lopt off its foliage green,  
And stript its bark, shall never grow again;—  
By this I swear,' etc.  
COWPER.

The king Latinus, in Virgil, confirms, by a similar oath, his covenant with Æneas. To preclude mistake or imposition in the present transaction, **the name of each tribe was inscribed on the rod of its chief;** and the question being to try the right to the priesthood, this method of settling the point seems to indicate that other tribes (probably that of Reuben in particular) had thought their claims, as tribes, as good or better than those of Levi."—Pict. Bible.

**Twelve rods, from all their leaders according to their fathers' households-** Since the entire congregation were guilty of complaining about Moses and Aaron's authority (Nu 16:3+), one representative of each tribe would bring a rod to Moss. Hebrew = "from every leader of them according to their fathers' house."

**UBS -** The rod of Levi is not one of the twelve rods, but it comes in addition to the twelve (so Noordtzij, page 157). (It is already clear from Nu 2:33, that there were twelve Israelite tribes, excluding the Levites, since Joseph's descendants were divided into two, the tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim.

**You shall write each name on his rod -** This is an important detail because the owner of the rod was to be the one inscribing his name on the rod. This would be like their "signature" on a check. As he miracle unfolded, only one "check" was worthy to be cashed (so to speak)! It appears that Moses was to do the inscribing for each leader.

**Bush -** "In what manner the writing was executed we have no means of determining with any certainty. It may have been by some kind of incision on the surface, or possibly by some sort of label attached to the several rods. By some means a signature was affixed that should serve to identify the rods to the owners."

**Numbers 17:3 and write Aaron's name on the rod of Levi; for there is one rod for the head of each of their fathers' households.**

NET Numbers 17:3 You must write Aaron's name on the staff of Levi; for one staff is for the head of every tribe.

NLT Numbers 17:3 Inscribe Aaron's name on the staff of the tribe of Levi, for there must be one staff for the

leader of each ancestral tribe.

ESV Numbers 17:3 and write Aaron's name on the staff of Levi. For there shall be one staff for the head of each fathers' house.

NIV Numbers 17:3 On the staff of Levi write Aaron's name, for there must be one staff for the head of each ancestral tribe.

KJV Numbers 17:3 And thou shalt write Aaron's name upon the rod of Levi: for one rod shall be for the head of the house of their fathers.

YLT Numbers 17:3 and Aaron's name thou dost write on the tribe of Levi; for one rod is for the head of their fathers' house:

LXE Numbers 17:3 And write the name of Aaron on the rod of Levi; for it is one rod for each: they shall give them according to the tribe of the house of their families.

ASV Numbers 17:3 And thou shalt write Aaron's name upon the rod of Levi; for there shall be one rod for each head of their fathers' houses.

CSB Numbers 17:3 Write Aaron's name on Levi's staff, because there must be one staff for the head of each ancestral house.

NKJ Numbers 17:3 "And you shall write Aaron's name on the rod of Levi. For there shall be one rod for the head of each father's house.

NRS Numbers 17:3 and write Aaron's name on the staff of Levi. For there shall be one staff for the head of each ancestral house.

NAB Numbers 17:18 and mark Aaron's name on Levi's staff, for the head of Levi's ancestral house shall also have a staff.

NJB Numbers 17:18 and on the branch of Levi write Aaron's name, since the head of the Levite families must have a branch too.

GWN Numbers 17:3 Write Aaron's name on the staff for Levi because there must be one staff for the head of each tribe.

- Nu 3:2,3 18:1,7 Ex 6:16,20
- **Numbers 17 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**And write Aaron's name on the rod of Levi** - As designated high priest Aaron was clearly the highest ranking Levite.

"This preference was given to Aaron, because that, by being invested with the office of high-priest, he was made prince of that tribe, or "head of the house of their fathers." Moreover, if Levi's name had been on the rod, it would have left the controversy undecided as between Aaron and the Levites." (Bush)

**for there is one rod for the head of each of their fathers' households.**

**Numbers 17:4 "You shall then deposit them in the tent of meeting in front of the testimony, where I meet with you.**

NET Numbers 17:4 You must place them in the tent of meeting before the ark of the covenant where I meet with you.

NLT Numbers 17:4 Place these staffs in the Tabernacle in front of the Ark containing the tablets of the Covenant, where I meet with you.

ESV Numbers 17:4 Then you shall deposit them in the tent of meeting before the testimony, where I meet with you.

NIV Numbers 17:4 Place them in the Tent of Meeting in front of the Testimony, where I meet with you.

KJV Numbers 17:4 And thou shalt lay them up in the tabernacle of the congregation before the testimony, where I will meet with you.

YLT Numbers 17:4 and thou hast placed them in the tent of meeting, before the testimony, where I meet with

you.

LXE Numbers 17:4 And thou shalt put them in the tabernacle of witness, before the testimony, where I will be made known to thee.

ASV Numbers 17:4 And thou shalt lay them up in the tent of meeting before the testimony, where I meet with you.

CSB Numbers 17:4 Then place them in the tent of meeting in front of the testimony where I meet with you.

NKJ Numbers 17:4 "Then you shall place them in the tabernacle of meeting before the Testimony, where I meet with you.

NRS Numbers 17:4 Place them in the tent of meeting before the covenant, where I meet with you.

NAB Numbers 17:19 Then lay them down in the meeting tent, in front of the commandments, where I meet you.

NJB Numbers 17:19 You will then put them inside the Tent of Meeting in front of the Testimony, where I make myself known to you.

GWN Numbers 17:4 Put them in the tent of meeting where I meet with you, in front of the words of my promise.

- Ex 25:16-22 29:42,43 30:6,36
- **Numbers 17 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Exodus 25:16+ "You shall put into the ark the testimony which I shall give you.

**Bush** comments - the two tables of stone on which the Law of the ten Commandments was written; called 'the testimony,' because God did in them testify his authority over the Israelites, his regard for them, his presence with them, and his displeasure against them in case they transgressed; while they on the other hand by accepting and depositing this Law in its appointed place, testified their professed subjection and obedience to its requirements.

Exodus 29:42-43+ "It shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the doorway of the tent of meeting before the LORD, **where I will meet with you (PLURAL)**, to **speak to you (SINGULAR)** there. 43 "I will meet there with the sons of Israel, and it shall be consecrated by My glory.

**Bush** comments (note the pronouns above) - The point (PLURAL/SINGULAR) is that as if He spoke to all the congregation when He spoke to Moses, their representative. Yet as if this might appear to indicate something unduly exclusive—a privilege vouchsafed to Moses but denied to them—he gives the assurance in Ex 29:43 in the most universal terms. 'There I will meet with the Children of Israel;' with all of them; they shall all have the benefit of this high distinction. This promise is still farther amplified in what follows; 'And the tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory.' Heb. נִקְדַּשׁ בִּכְבוֹדִי nikdash bikbodi; where the verb has no specific nominative, leaving us to understand the expression in its largest sense, as implying that every thing, people, tabernacle, altar, and priesthood, should be illustriously hallowed by the glory of the divine presence, the visible symbol of which was to be seen in the Shekinah enthroned in the Most Holy Place.

**You shall then deposit them in the tent of meeting in front of the testimony-** Clearly this means the 13 "walking sticks" were to be placed before the Ark **of the Testimony** which contained the tables of the Law (thus the name "Testimony" - see comment above on Ex 25:16). On the top of the Ark was the Mercy Seat on which the [Shekinah glory](#) resided. So in placing the rods before the Ark Moses was laying them in front of Yahweh, the Judge of all the earth, Who would now settle the controversy over who was His designated high priest!

**Ark of the testimony** - Exod. 25:22; Exod. 26:33; Exod. 26:34; Exod. 30:6; Exod. 30:26; Exod. 39:35; Exod. 40:3; Exod. 40:5; Exod. 40:21; Lev. 16:13; Num. 4:5; Num. 7:89; Jos. 4:16

**NET NOTE** on **deposit** - The verb is the Hiphil perfect of נָחַ (nuakh, "to rest"), and so "to set at rest, lay, place, put." The form with the vav (v) consecutive continues the instruction of the previous verse.

**Deposit** (lay, leave, place/put)([05117](#))([nuach/nuah](#) means to rest or pause and as noted from the many ways



it is translated (see list of words below), nuach has many uses in the OT. **Nuach** essentially conveys a basic sense of absence of movement and of being settled in a particular place with overtones of finality. The first use in Ge 2:15 describes how God "put" Adam in the Garden. The next use describes a physical setting down of something (Ge 8:4, cp 2Sa 21:10, Ex 10:14, Josh 3:13).

**Where I meet with you** - Yahweh meeting with Moses. The Hebrew word for **meet** (yaad) means "to appoint a time or place" and is the root of the word **meeting** ([moed](#)) (in tent of meeting). which is more literally "the tent of the appointed time and place."

**THOUGHT** - Do you have an **appointed time and place** to meet with Yahweh, the Almighty One, the Creator of heaven and earth? That is your privilege beloved if you are bought by the blood of Jesus. Are you availing yourself of your high and holy privilege? If your "quiet time" is too quiet see thoughts on Quiet Time.

**FSB** has a most interesting comment - Throughout the books of Exodus and Numbers, it is unclear whether Moses can enter the holy of holies (Ex 25:22; Ex 30:6, 36; Nu 7:89; Nu 17:4). Even if not, his access to the holy place is still an anomaly, since Moses is not a priest himself.

**Bush on meeting** - Hebrew [moed](#), from [yâad](#), to appoint a meeting, and in the Niphal or passive, to be gathered together. This is the form in which it occurs in the present connection, and, as such, is remarkable, as it represents the Lord as being acted upon and drawn into convention by the force of his own self-assumed obligations, or by his fidelity to his covenant engagements, which are thus represented as operating as if by an external influence. This is the reason why the Tabernacle was called the **tent of meeting**, or of congregation, a phrase which is usually understood simply of **men's meeting together, or congregating**; whereas, in fact, the Lord gave the appellation to the Tabernacle on the express ground of His meeting there with His people in the person of their representative Moses. See Note on Ex. 29:42 (see [above](#)). It is to be observed, however, that the import here is that of the Lord's habitual presence—"where I am accustomed to meet with you."...But it is still to be borne in mind that the Lord neither met with the people, nor with Aaron, other than through Moses as a representative medium (**ED**: CAN WE NOT SEE IN MOSES THE SHADOW OF CHRIST OUR MEDIATOR OF A BETTER COVENANT? Heb 8:6+, Heb 9:15+, Heb 12:24+, 1 Ti 2:5).

**Numbers 17:5 "It will come about that the rod of the man whom I choose will sprout. Thus I will lessen from upon Myself the grumbings of the sons of Israel, who are grumbling against you."**

NET Numbers 17:5 And the staff of the man whom I choose will blossom; so I will rid myself of the complaints of the Israelites, which they murmur against you."

NLT Numbers 17:5 Buds will sprout on the staff belonging to the man I choose. Then I will finally put an end to the people's murmuring and complaining against you."

ESV Numbers 17:5 And the staff of the man whom I choose shall sprout. Thus I will make to cease from me the grumbings of the people of Israel, which they grumble against you."

NIV Numbers 17:5 The staff belonging to the man I choose will sprout, and I will rid myself of this constant grumbling against you by the Israelites."

KJV Numbers 17:5 And it shall come to pass, that the man's rod, whom I shall choose, shall blossom: and I will make to cease from me the murmurings of the children of Israel, whereby they murmur against you.

YLT Numbers 17:5 'And it hath come to pass, the man's rod on whom I fix doth flourish, and I have caused to cease from off me the murmurings of the sons of Israel, which they are murmuring against you.'

LXE Numbers 17:5 And it shall be, the man whom I shall choose, his rod shall blossom; and I will remove from me the murmuring of the children of Israel, which they murmur against you.

ASV Numbers 17:5 And it shall come to pass, that the rod of the man whom I shall choose shall bud: and I will make to cease from me the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against you.

CSB Numbers 17:5 The staff of the man I choose will sprout, and I will rid Myself of the Israelites' complaints that they have been making about you."

NKJ Numbers 17:5 "And it shall be that the rod of the man whom I choose will blossom; thus I will rid Myself of the complaints of the children of Israel, which they make against you."

NRS Numbers 17:5 And the staff of the man whom I choose shall sprout; thus I will put a stop to the



complaints of the Israelites that they continually make against you.

NAB Numbers 17:20 There the staff of the man of my choice shall sprout. Thus will I suppress from my presence the Israelites' grumbling against you."

NJB Numbers 17:20 The man whose branch sprouts will be the one I have chosen; this is how I shall put an end to the mutterings of the Israelites about you.'

GWN Numbers 17:5 The staff from the man I choose will begin to grow. In this way I will silence the frequent complaints the Israelites make against you and Aaron."

- **Whom I:** Nu 16:5
- **sprout:** Nu 17:8 Isa 5:24 11:1 27:6 35:1,2 Ho 14:5
- **I will:** Nu 17:10 Isa 13:11 Eze 16:41 23:27
- **grumbling** Nu 16:11
- **Numbers 17 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE SIGN OF SUPERNATURAL SPROUTING

**It will come about that the rod of the man whom I choose will sprout-** Choose is [bahar/bachar](#) and is translated with eklegomai which means to choose out from among a number. Remember that these rods were not green branches but dead wood. The Creator of the universe would create life from one of these dead sticks!

**THOUGHT** - In Adam we were all "dead wood" (Ro 5:12+) destined for the fire of eternal punishment for our sins against a holy God. Through the Word of Life, the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Mk 1:1+), God's Spirit supernaturally "sprouted" new life (Ge 3:3-7+) in each of our dead hearts, thereby demonstrating that we were His chosen nation, His royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9+) who like Aaron, now have the privilege in Christ (the Great High Priest - Heb 4:14+) of ministering before Him forever and ever (Ps 16:11+). Amen

**Bush on the man whom I choose** - Heb. "The man (as to) whom I shall have complacency in him." This is not essentially different from "choose," but it preserves the prepositional usage "in him," which is quite common with the original verb.

I like the comment by **Henry Morris - whom I shall choose**. The man whom God chooses must be uniquely associated with resurrection life, as typified by the one rod out of all the rest which miraculously was restored to life. These rods were nothing but dead sticks of wood as they were placed before the Lord, yet the one "brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds" (Numbers 17:8)--all in just one night! Similarly, Paul told the pagans who worshipped many "gods" that the true God will judge the whole world by that one "man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead" (Acts 17:31).

**Thus I will lessen from upon Myself the grumbings of the sons of Israel, who are grumbling against you-** "so I will rid myself of the complaints of the Israelites" (NET). It is interesting that this is the last time the word **grumbling** appears in Numbers. Sadly we do see them contending with Moses and Aaron in Nu 20:1-12+. **You** is plural indicating Moses and Aaron are recipients of the grumbling.

**Hamilton on will lessen** says the Hebrew **shakak** is "Used only five times in the OT, four times in the Qal: Genesis 8:1; Jeremiah 5:26; Esther 2:1; Esther 7:10; once in the Hiphil, Numbers 17:5. In the last example the meaning is "put an end to": "This is how 'I shall put an end to' the complaints." There follows the story of the sprouting of Aaron's branch. (Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament) **Shakak** is translated in the Lxx with the verb [periaireo](#) which literally means to take away or remove from around (peri-around). The meaning of take off something that surrounds is interesting as it suggests the sons of Israel were in a sense "surrounded" or engulfed by the sin of grumbling. God would use this miraculous sin to take it away.

**Bush on lessen** - The Hebrew is used elsewhere in reference to the ceasing or assuaging of waters, Gen. 8:1, and also of wrath, Est. 2:1. It is here applied to the murmurings of the people, which were like raging waters. It will be observed how strikingly the Lord identifies himself with his people: "I will make to cease from me the murmurings whereby they murmur against you."

**Brian Bell** - The rod of the man whom I choose will blossom - is an **eternal principle!** There is an indissoluble connection between God's choice & our fruitfulness.. I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit. Jn.15:16 May we say like Ephraim, "Your fruit is found in me!" Hos.14:8. Not my fruit, but Your fruit is found in me!. Remember, the fruit is 1st found in the root! As Isaiah said, "...take root downward, And bear fruit upward." 37:31

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## Our Daily Homily F B Meyer

The man whom I shall choose, his rod shall bud. (r.v.)

There was deep significance in this method of indicating the man of God's choice. Too many have taken God's election as referring exclusively to their enjoyment of God's grace and their preservation to his heavenly kingdom. Here we are taught that one of its chief results will be, and must be — buds, blossoms, and fruit. "The rod of Aaron budded and bloomed, blossomed and bare ripe almonds." It would almost seem that spring, summer, and autumn; the promise, maturity, and fruit — were simultaneously present in that marvellous rod. So should it be in those who have been chosen in Christ to be holy.

**The bud of spring.** — There is a perennial freshness in the true saint. He may be old in years, but his leaf is green with vernal tenderness, and there are the budding promises of richer and better things than he has yet attained. The youths faint, and are weary; but he renews his strength. The outward man decayeth, but the inward renews his youth like an eagle's.

**The blossom of early summer.** — There is exquisite beauty in the blossom of orchard and garden. No painter has ever yet learned God's secret of mixing his colors. Such is the beauty of the character of the believer. Men say involuntarily, "How attractive, how beautiful!"

The fruit of autumn. — That we should bear fruit is the end of Christ in our redemption and discipline. We can only do it in fellowship with Himself. He must bear it through us. "From Me is thy fruit found." "I have chosen you, that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit (see word study on [fruit = Karpos](#)) should remain."

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### G Campbell Morgan Life Applications

The man whom I shall choose, his rod shall bud.-Num. 17.5.

Thus a supernatural sign was given to the people in vindication of Aaron's right to the position which he held. The reason for this was clearly stated in the words: "I will make to cease from Me the murmurings of the children of Israel which they murmur against you." Mark well the form of this statement. The murmuring of the people was against Moses and Aaron, but God saw that it was murmuring against Himself. The sign was efficacious; for while the spirit of rebellion manifested itself subsequently in other ways, it may safely be said .that any complaint against the rights of the God-appointed priesthood ceased from this time. The blossoming and fruit bearing of Aaron's rod undoubtedly resulted from the direct and super-natural action of God, but it was in itself a most suggestive sign. It taught both the people and the priests that their prevailing mediation was due, not to anything inherent in themselves, but to the direct action of Jehovah through them. As the rods of the other princes were unable to bud or blossom or bear fruit of themselves, so also was that of Aaron, apart from this Divine action. The proof of authority was this manifestation of Divine appointment in life. The principle still obtains. All our fruit is from God. Its absence proves that we have no authority. Its presence proves that we have, but also that the authority is finally His, and not our own. Fruit-bearing will ever give us a sense of authority and deep humility of spirit.

**Numbers 17:6 Moses therefore spoke to the sons of Israel, and all their leaders gave him a rod apiece, for each leader according to their fathers' households, twelve rods, with the rod of Aaron among their rods.**

NET Numbers 17:6 So Moses spoke to the Israelites, and each of their leaders gave him a staff, one for each leader, according to their tribes— twelve staffs; the staff of Aaron was among their staffs.

NLT Numbers 17:6 So Moses gave the instructions to the people of Israel, and each of the twelve tribal leaders, including Aaron, brought Moses a staff.

ESV Numbers 17:6 Moses spoke to the people of Israel. And all their chiefs gave him staffs, one for each chief, according to their fathers' houses, twelve staffs. And the staff of Aaron was among their staffs.

NIV Numbers 17:6 So Moses spoke to the Israelites, and their leaders gave him twelve staffs, one for the leader of each of their ancestral tribes, and Aaron's staff was among them.

KJV Numbers 17:6 And Moses spake unto the children of Israel, and every one of their princes gave him a rod apiece, for each prince one, according to their fathers' houses, even twelve rods: and the rod of Aaron was among their rods.

YLT Numbers 17:6 And Moses speaketh unto the sons of Israel, and all their princes give unto him one rod for a prince, one rod for a prince, for their fathers' house, twelve rods, and the rod of Aaron is in the midst of their

rods;

LXE Numbers 17:6 And Moses spoke to the children of Israel, and all their chiefs gave him a rod each, for one chief a rod, according to the house of their families, twelve rods; and the rod of Aaron was in the midst of the rods.

ASV Numbers 17:6 And Moses spake unto the children of Israel; and all their princes gave him rods, for each prince one, according to their fathers' houses, even twelve rods: and the rod of Aaron was among their rods.

CSB Numbers 17:6 So Moses spoke to the Israelites, and each of their leaders gave him a staff, one for each of the leaders of their ancestral houses, 12 staffs in all. Aaron's staff was among them.

NKJ Numbers 17:6 So Moses spoke to the children of Israel, and each of their leaders gave him a rod apiece, for each leader according to their fathers' houses, twelve rods; and the rod of Aaron was among their rods.

NRS Numbers 17:6 Moses spoke to the Israelites; and all their leaders gave him staffs, one for each leader, according to their ancestral houses, twelve staffs; and the staff of Aaron was among theirs.

NAB Numbers 17:21 So Moses spoke to the Israelites, and their princes gave him staffs, twelve in all, one from each tribal prince; and Aaron's staff was with them.

NJB Numbers 17:21 Moses spoke to the Israelites, and all their leaders gave him one branch each, twelve branches in all for their families; Aaron's branch was among them.

GWN Numbers 17:6 So Moses spoke to the Israelites. Their leaders gave him 12 staffs, one from the leader of each of their tribes. Aaron's staff was among them.

- a rod apiece, for each prince one: Heb. a rod for one prince, a rod for one prince, Nu 17:2
- **Numbers 17 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## MOSES OBEYS LEADERS COMPLY

**Moses therefore spoke to the sons of Israel, and all their leaders gave him a rod apiece-** Hebrew = a rod for one leader, a rod for one leader." Presumably this would be 12 rods from the 12 tribes plus Aaron's rod representing the tribe of Levi, for a total of 13 rods (but not everyone agrees with this interpretation). Moses does not question God's test and was undoubtedly overjoyed to hear that this miraculous sin would result in Yahweh's taking away their attitude of ingratitude and constant grumbling. Unfortunately while they did not grumble per se, they did contend (different verb [riyb](#)) with Moses and Aaron at the wilderness of Zin (and some of what they say sure sounds like grumbling to me) where Miriam died and there was no water (Nu 20:1-13+).

**for each leader according to their fathers' households, twelve rods, with the rod of Aaron among their rods-** Surprisingly, the leaders comply with Moses' request. Whether he explained the divine test before they gave him their rods is not clear from the text.

### Numbers 17:7 So Moses deposited the rods before the LORD in the tent of the testimony.

UBS Then Moses placed all the walking sticks before the presence of the LORD in the Tent where the covenant text was kept.

NET Numbers 17:7 Then Moses placed the staffs before the LORD in the tent of the testimony.

NLT Numbers 17:7 Moses placed the staffs in the LORD's presence in the Tabernacle of the Covenant.

ESV Numbers 17:7 And Moses deposited the staffs before the LORD in the tent of the testimony.

NIV Numbers 17:7 Moses placed the staffs before the LORD in the Tent of the Testimony.

KJV Numbers 17:7 And Moses laid up the rods before the LORD in the tabernacle of witness.

YLT Numbers 17:7 and Moses placeth the rods before Jehovah, in the tent of the testimony.

LXE Numbers 17:7 And Moses laid up the rods before the Lord in the tabernacle of witness.

ASV Numbers 17:7 And Moses laid up the rods before Jehovah in the tent of the testimony.

CSB Numbers 17:7 Moses placed the staffs before the LORD in the tent of the testimony.

NKJ Numbers 17:7 And Moses placed the rods before the LORD in the tabernacle of witness.

NRS Numbers 17:7 So Moses placed the staffs before the LORD in the tent of the covenant.

NAB Numbers 17:22 Then Moses laid the staffs down before the LORD in the tent of the commandments.

NJB Numbers 17:22 Moses placed them before Yahweh in the Tent of the Testimony.

GWN Numbers 17:7 Moses put the staffs in the LORD's presence in the tent of the words of God's promise.

- Nu 18:2 Ex 38:21 Ac 7:44
- **Numbers 17 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## TWELVE RODS PLACED BEFORE JEHOVAH

**So Moses deposited the rods before the LORD in the tent of the testimony-** This indicates that the rods were deposited in the presence of the [Shekinah glory](#), which would indicate that presumably the rods were placed in the Holy of Holies, but the text is not definitive.

**NET NOTE** - The name of the tent now attests to the centrality of the ark of the covenant. Instead of the “tent of meeting” (מִוֶּעֶד, mo’ed) we now find the “the tent of the testimony” (תְּעֻדָּה, ha’edut).

**Brian Bell on before the LORD** - Spiritual leadership will be recognized by its life & fruitfulness, which come from being in the Holy of Holies, with God!

**Numbers 17:8 Now on the next day Moses went into the tent of the testimony; and behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi had sprouted and put forth buds and produced blossoms, and it bore ripe almonds.**

NET Numbers 17:8 On the next day Moses went into the tent of the testimony— and the staff of Aaron for the house of Levi had sprouted, and brought forth buds, and produced blossoms, and yielded almonds!

NLT Numbers 17:8 When he went into the Tabernacle of the Covenant the next day, he found that Aaron's staff, representing the tribe of Levi, had sprouted, budded, blossomed, and produced ripe almonds!

ESV Numbers 17:8 On the next day Moses went into the tent of the testimony, and behold, the staff of Aaron for the house of Levi had sprouted and put forth buds and produced blossoms, and it bore ripe almonds.

NIV Numbers 17:8 The next day Moses entered the Tent of the Testimony and saw that Aaron's staff, which represented the house of Levi, had not only sprouted but had budded, blossomed and produced almonds.

KJV Numbers 17:8 And it came to pass, that on the morrow Moses went into the tabernacle of witness; and, behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds.

YLT Numbers 17:8 And it cometh to pass, on the morrow, that Moses goeth in unto the tent of the testimony, and lo, the rod of Aaron hath flourished for the house of Levi, and is bringing out flourishing, and doth blossom blossoms, and doth produce almonds;

LXE Numbers 17:8 And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of witness; and, behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi blossomed, and put forth a bud, and bloomed blossoms and produced almonds.

ASV Numbers 17:8 And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses went into the tent of the testimony; and, behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and put forth buds, and produced blossoms, and bare ripe almonds.

CSB Numbers 17:8 The next day Moses entered the tent of the testimony and saw that Aaron's staff, representing the house of Levi, had sprouted, formed buds, blossomed, and produced almonds!

NKJ Numbers 17:8 Now it came to pass on the next day that Moses went into the tabernacle of witness, and behold, the rod of Aaron, of the house of Levi, had sprouted and put forth buds, had produced blossoms and

yielded ripe almonds.

NRS Numbers 17:8 When Moses went into the tent of the covenant on the next day, the staff of Aaron for the house of Levi had sprouted. It put forth buds, produced blossoms, and bore ripe almonds.

NAB Numbers 17:8 The next day, when Moses entered the tent, Aaron's staff, representing the house of Levi, had sprouted and put forth not only shoots, but blossoms as well, and even bore ripe almonds!

NJB Numbers 17:8 On the following day Moses went to the Tent of the Testimony and there, already sprouting, was Aaron's branch, representing the House of Levi; buds had formed, flowers had bloomed and almonds had already ripened.

GWN Numbers 17:8 The next day Moses went into the tent. He found that Aaron's staff for the tribe of Levi had not only begun to grow, but it had also blossomed and produced ripe almonds.

- **Sprouted:** Nu 17:5 Ge 40:10 Ps 110:2 132:17,18 Song 2:3 Isa 4:2 Eze 17:24 Eze 19:12,14 Joh 15:1-6
- **Numbers 17 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Almond Tree Sprouting

## AARON'S ROD PASSES THE TEST MIRACULOUSLY BUDDING AND BEARING

**Now on the next day Moses went into the tent of the testimony-** Note the phrase **the next day**. Why would that be important? This would serve to substantiate that this was indeed miraculous for no rod of dead wood would sprout and bring forth ripe almonds overnight, not unless God the Creator of all life was behind the scenes and controlled the scenes He was behind!

**And behold** This introduces a dramatic revelation. "Here too the deictic (= showing or pointing out directly) particle (**and behold**)" is added to draw attention to the sight in a vivid way." (NET)

**Behold** (02009)(**hinneh**) is an interjection meaning behold, look, now; if. "It is used often and expresses strong feelings, surprise, hope, expectation, certainty, thus giving vividness depending on its surrounding context." (Baker) **Hinneh** generally directs our mind to the text, imploring the reader to give it special attention. In short, the Spirit is trying to arrest our attention! And so **hinneh** is used as an exclamation of vivid immediacy. **Spurgeon** reminds us that "**Behold** is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation." I would add, **behold** is like a divine highlighter, a divine underlining of an especially striking or important text. It says in effect "Listen up, all ye who would be wise in the ways of Jehovah!"

**The rod of Aaron for the house of Levi had sprouted and put forth buds and produced blossoms, and it bore ripe almonds-** Is this not an Ephesians 3:20 verse, "far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think" because the rod did not just sprout leaves but even **bore ripe almonds** (not green almonds)!

**FSB** comment is interesting (albeit somewhat [suppositional](#)) - Since the almond flower symbolized life and renewal (Jer 1:11-12; Eccl 12:5), the almonds here likely symbolize the renewal of life, which is fitting in light of the tragedy of Num 16.

**Brian Bell** - God vindicated his servants(Moses & Aaron) 1st by bringing death to some of their opponents & 2nd by giving life to Aaron's rod. Ultimately the power of God caused the dead rod to produce beauty & fruit. Its the same power of God that causes our dead lives to produce fruit. Which means, without this power, we are just dead sticks!

**NET NOTE** -There is no clear answer why the tribe of Levi had used an almond staff. The almond tree is one of the first to bud in the spring, and its white blossoms are a beautiful sign that winter is over. Its name became a name for "watcher"; Jeremiah plays on this name for God's watching over his people (Jer 1:11-12).

**Bush** - The miracle consisted in the sudden vegetation of the rod, and that in different degrees. It would seem that in some places of the rod tender buds were seen just emerging from the surface; in others the buds were fully developed; in others, again, they had blossomed, and those blossoms, in other parts, had ripened into fruit, the fruit of the almond-tree. On the name and peculiar properties of the almond, see Note on Ex. 25:33+. It is a tree that blossoms and bears fruit earlier than other trees, and hence its appellation, **shākēd**, from shākād, to make haste, to be in a hurry, and thence to awake early, to be vigilant, to watch. That this effect should have been produced in a single night upon Aaron's rod, while all the rest were as dry as before, could not but be

looked upon with amazement, and prove an incontestable evidence of the Lord's designation.

**Bishop Hall** - "It could not but be a great comfort unto Aaron to see his rod thus miraculously flourishing; to see this wonderful testimony of God's favor and election. Sure he could not but think, Who am I, O God, that thou shouldst choose me out of all the tribes of Israel! My weakness hath been more worthy of the rod of correction (**ED**: Cf "Golden Calf Catastrophe!" Ex 32:1-6+), than my rod hath been worthy of these blossoms. How You have magnified me in the sight of all You people! How able are You to uphold my imbecility by the rod of thy support! How able art thou to defend me with the rod of thy power, who hast thus brought fruit out of the rod of my profession!"

**Almond** ([08247](#))(shaped from **shaqad** = to watch or wake) refers to the almond tree or its fruit, the almond. "The **idea of watchfulness** which is basic to the root affords the key to the explanation of the Hebrew name for the almond tree. This tree, which in Israel blooms as early as January and February and is affectionately looked upon as the harbinger of spring, is appropriately enough called **shāqēd "the waker."** (TWOT) Used 4x - Gen. 43:11; Num. 17:8; Eccl. 12:5; Jer. 1:11.

**Guzik** makes a good point - If God demonstrated His choice of Aaron and his descendants as priests for Israel, how can Jesus be our high priest, as Hebrews 2:17 says? Because Jesus is a high priest of the order of Melchizedek, not Aaron (Hebrews 7).

#### Related Resources:

- Wikipedia - [Almond](#)
- 1911 Encyclopedia Britannica [Almond](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Almond](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Almond tree](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Almond](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Almond](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Almond Tree](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Almond](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Almond](#)

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**Daily Treasures from the Word of God** - Nicholas Vendetti - Today's Scripture is motivating. People were murmuring against Moses, Aaron and their leadership. For anyone who is in leadership, this is something that can occur. However, the Lord intervened. Our text demonstrates His approval of Aaron's leadership. Let's look at three things about Aaron's life.

First, Aaron was called by God. The test began with the twelve rods of the tribal leaders. They were to lay them before the tent of testimony. Aaron's rod was included among them. The rod of the person that would sprout and put forth buds would be the leader. That would take a miracle because a rod is a dead piece of wood. Yet, as we shall see later, nothing is impossible for our Lord.

Second, Aaron was chosen by God. Moses did exactly as the Lord commanded. All the rods were put in the tent of the testimony. Our text points out the fact that as Moses entered he saw that Aaron's rod blossomed. Without a doubt, God had chosen Aaron among all the leaders in a supernatural and demonstrable way. Leaders need to have a sense of destiny in order to be steadfast in their service to the Lord and His people.

Finally, Aaron was approved by God. The blossoming of Aaron's rod proved to all the fact that God had appointed Aaron. This is crucial for all leaders in spiritual authority.

There are times of trials and testing in the life of all believers. During these times, it is God's approval and favor that helps the believers to overcome. The certainty of God's presence in our midst is what confirms the believers in their faith. God's approval should never be taken lightly. It is a privilege to feel God's touch on our lives.

In conclusion, Aaron was called by God. Aaron was chosen by God. And Aaron was approved by God.

Let's learn to trust in the Lord. God did something extraordinary to demonstrate His approval of Aaron. The Lord calls all His people to serve Him. Murmurings are harmful to the Body of believers. As His people, we must guard our hearts from murmuring against our leadership. It does not please God; furthermore, it is detrimental to the believing community. May the Lord guard our hearts and mouths from speaking against others in an inappropriate way?

Take a moment to reflect on your attitude toward leadership. Ask the Spirit of God to show you how to submit and pray for your leaders.

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**Numbers 17:9 Moses then brought out all the rods from the presence of the LORD to all the sons of Israel; and they looked, and each man took his rod.**

NET Numbers 17:9 So Moses brought out all the staffs from before the LORD to all the Israelites. They looked at them, and each man took his staff.

NLT Numbers 17:9 When Moses brought all the staffs out from the LORD's presence, he showed them to the people. Each man claimed his own staff.

ESV Numbers 17:9 Then Moses brought out all the staffs from before the LORD to all the people of Israel. And they looked, and each man took his staff.

NIV Numbers 17:9 Then Moses brought out all the staffs from the LORD's presence to all the Israelites. They looked at them, and each man took his own staff.

KJV Numbers 17:9 And Moses brought out all the rods from before the LORD unto all the children of Israel: and they looked, and took every man his rod.

YLT Numbers 17:9 and Moses bringeth out all the rods from before Jehovah, unto all the sons of Israel, and they look, and take each his rod.

LXE Numbers 17:9 And Moses brought forth all the rods from before the Lord to all the sons of Israel; and they looked, and each one took his rod.

ASV Numbers 17:9 And Moses brought out all the rods from before Jehovah unto all the children of Israel: and they looked, and took every man his rod.

CSB Numbers 17:9 Moses then brought out all the staffs from the LORD's presence to all the Israelites. They saw them, and each man took his own staff.

NKJ Numbers 17:9 Then Moses brought out all the rods from before the LORD to all the children of Israel; and they looked, and each man took his rod.

NRS Numbers 17:9 Then Moses brought out all the staffs from before the LORD to all the Israelites; and they looked, and each man took his staff.

NAB Numbers 17:24 Moses thereupon brought out all the staffs from the LORD'S presence to the Israelites. After each prince identified his own staff and took it,

NJB Numbers 17:24 Moses then brought out all the branches from before Yahweh to all the Israelites; they examined them and each one took back his own branch.

#### ■ Numbers 17 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Moses Presents All 12 Rods

### MOSES' "FULL DISCLOSURE" OF THE 12 RODS!

**Moses then brought out all the rods from the presence of the LORD to all the sons of Israel-** All 12 rods are brought for examination. And not just examination by the leaders but by **all the sons of Israel**. Each rod had the leader's name inscribed giving unquestionable proof that only Aaron's rod had sprouted.

**Bush** - It would plainly be all-important that no suspicion of fraud should attach at all to the transaction. We may suppose, therefore, that as the rods were to be deposited "in the tabernacle of the congregation," or in the sacred precincts, they were sealed up in one receptacle, the princes, or others authorized by them, watching it through the night to see that no dishonesty was practiced. Certainly, they were not in Moses's custody; for "on the morrow Moses went to the Tabernacle of witness to examine them." No charge of unfair dealing could be brought against him, and he submits the rods openly to the view of the parties interested, who took them into their hands, and, by close inspection, satisfied themselves of their identity.

**and they looked, and each man took his rod** - Did you catch that? Each man took back his DEAD rod! (In your face!) Imagine their thoughts as they took hold of their lifeless stick. It was clear that Jehovah had not selected them as priest.



**Numbers 17:10 But the LORD said to Moses, "Put back the rod of Aaron before the testimony to be kept as a sign against the rebels, that you may put an end to their grumblings against Me, so that they will not die."**

NET Numbers 17:10 The LORD said to Moses, "Bring Aaron's staff back before the testimony to be preserved for a sign to the rebels, so that you may bring their murmurings to an end before me, that they will not die."

NLT Numbers 17:10 And the LORD said to Moses: "Place Aaron's staff permanently before the Ark of the Covenant to serve as a warning to rebels. This should put an end to their complaints against me and prevent any further deaths."

ESV Numbers 17:10 And the LORD said to Moses, "Put back the staff of Aaron before the testimony, to be kept as a sign for the rebels, that you may make an end of their grumblings against me, lest they die."

NIV Numbers 17:10 The LORD said to Moses, "Put back Aaron's staff in front of the Testimony, to be kept as a sign to the rebellious. This will put an end to their grumbling against me, so that they will not die."

KJV Numbers 17:10 And the LORD said unto Moses, Bring Aaron's rod again before the testimony, to be kept for a token against the rebels; and thou shalt quite take away their murmurings from me, that they die not.

YLT Numbers 17:10 And Jehovah saith unto Moses, 'Put back the rod of Aaron, before the testimony, for a charge, for a sign to the sons of rebellion, and thou dost remove their murmurings from off me, and they do not die;'

LXE Numbers 17:10 And the Lord said to Moses, Lay up the rod of Aaron before the testimonies to be kept as a sign for the children of the disobedient; and let their murmuring cease from me, and they shall not die.

ASV Numbers 17:10 And Jehovah said unto Moses, Put back the rod of Aaron before the testimony, to be kept for a token against the children of rebellion; that thou mayest make an end of their murmurings against me, that they die not.

CSB Numbers 17:10 The LORD told Moses, "Put Aaron's staff back in front of the testimony to be kept as a sign for the rebels, so that you may put an end to their complaints before Me, or else they will die."

NKJ Numbers 17:10 And the LORD said to Moses, "Bring Aaron's rod back before the Testimony, to be kept as a sign against the rebels, that you may put their complaints away from Me, lest they die."

NRS Numbers 17:10 And the LORD said to Moses, "Put back the staff of Aaron before the covenant, to be kept as a warning to rebels, so that you may make an end of their complaints against me, or else they will die."

NAB Numbers 17:10 the LORD said to Moses, "Put back Aaron's staff in front of the commandments, to be kept there as a warning to the rebellious, so that their grumbling may cease before me; if it does not, they will die."

- **Aaron:** Heb 9:4
- **a sign:** Nu 16:38,40 Ex 16:32 Dt 31:19-26
- **rebels:** 1Sa 2:12 1Sa 30:22 Ps 57:4 Isa 1:2 Hos 10:9 Eph 2:2,3 5:6
- **and:** Nu 17:5
- **Numbers 17 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Related Passages:**

Exodus 16:32+ Then Moses said, "This is what the LORD has commanded, 'Let an omerful of it be kept throughout your generations, that they may see the bread that I fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you out of the land of Egypt.'" 33 Moses said to Aaron, "Take a jar and put an omerful of manna in it, and place it before the LORD to be kept throughout your generations."

Exodus 25:21+ "You shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the testimony (THE TWO TABLES OF THE LAW) which I will give to you.

## TEACH FUTURE GENERATIONS

**But the LORD said to Moses, "Put back the rod of Aaron before the testimony-** This says "**before**" but the writer of Hebrews records that "Behind the second veil there was a tabernacle which is called the Holy of Holies, 4 having a golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, **in which was** a golden jar holding the **manna**, and **Aaron's rod which budded**, and the **tables of the covenant**." (Heb 9:3-4+). There is actually no passage in the OT stating that either the manna (cf Ex 16:33 = "place it before the LORD.") or Aaron's rod ("before the testimony") were placed inside the ark. Obviously from the Hebrews 9 passage both were placed inside the Ark at some point in time not described in the OT.

**Bush** - That is, return, restore it, after sufficient examination, to the place where it was deposited before the ark of the testimony. As a specimen of the manna was preserved in the golden pot within the Most Holy Place of the sanctuary, "for a keeping," Ex. 16:33, that subsequent generations might see the bread which their fathers ate in the wilderness, so this **rod** was kept in the same place "for a reservation" and "for a sign," that all that lived afterwards might be aware of the confirmation of the priesthood in Aaron's line.

**to be kept as a sign against the rebels-** Heb. "For a keeping, or reservation." **The rebels** is more literally "the sons of contention." So Aaron's rod was a sign testifying in favor of Aaron's priesthood and against the nation's rebellion. The first sign was Nu 16:38 where the hammered censers were to "be for a sign to the sons of Israel."

**UBS** - The Hebrew term for **sign** is the same as in Nu 16:38 and should be rendered the same here. This is a key concept in chapters 16–17: here was another visible warning and reminder that the LORD's authority and that of his chosen leaders must not be contested.

Now it is interesting that almond rod would remain alive all through the days of the Ark of the Testimony because it was supernaturally sustained. It is also interesting that the sons of Israel would not actually be allowed to see this sign again because they would never be allowed in the Holy of holies to see into the Ark of the Covenant (if that is indeed where it was -- it may have been in front -- the text is difficult to interpret definitively). In that since it would not be an actual visual reminder but would be a truth they would need to remember and pass down to their children in the generations that followed. On the other hand the 12 rods in the hands of the leaders would be a visual reminder that their stick remained dead and only Aaron's brought forth life.

**THOUGHT** - Do you have any "signs" or memorials in your family to help remind your children and grandchildren of the goodness and greatness of God?

**Bush** - Heb. "For a sign to the sons of rebellion." Gr. "A sign for the children of the disobedient." This appellation is given to the Israelites from the fact, that they were so much given to rebellion that they might be said to be born of it as of a parent. This is equivalent to the testimony of Moses, Deut. 9:24, "Ye have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you." The use of "sons" in the sense of subjects of certain qualities is quite common in holy writ, as Ps. 89:22, "Son of wickedness;" Prov. 31:5, "Sons of affliction" (marg.); Deut. 13:13, "Sons of Belial;" and also 1 Sam. 2:12; Eph. 2:2, "Sons of disobedience." Comp. Eph. 5:6, Mat. 11:19, 1 Pet. 1:14.

**Sign** (Lxx = [semeion](#)) ([0226](#)) (['oth](#)) means a signal, a mark a miracle and is used to describe amazing events such as God bringing Israel out of Egypt (Ex 4:8, 9, Nu 14:22, 16:38) or a sign serving to authenticate the message as from God (1Sa 2:34, 10:7, 9) in contrast to the signs from false prophets (Dt 13:1, 2).

**Rebels** (actually 2 words - sons + rebellion) ([04805](#)) ([meri](#) from [marah](#) = to be contentious) [obstinacy](#), stubbornness, rebelliousness. "The term consistently stays within this tight semantic range and most often describes the Israelites' determined refusal to obey the precepts laid down by the Lord in His Law or Torah. This characteristic attitude was a visible manifestation of their hard hearts. Moses had the Book of the Law placed beside the ark of the covenant to remain there as a witness against the Israelites' rebelliousness after he died (Deut. 31:27; Nu 17:10). The Lord rejected Saul as king over Israel because of his rebellion against the command the Lord had earlier given him (1 Sam. 15:23). Continually in Ezekiel, the Lord refers to Israel as the "house of rebelliousness" (= rebellious people; Ezek. 2:5-8; 3:9, 26, 27; 12:2, 3, 9)." (Baker - CWD)

**Gilbrant** - Derived from *mārāh*, "to be contentious," "to be rebellious," this noun is used twenty-three times in the OT, sixteen of which are in Ezekiel (nearly always in the phrase, "rebellious house"). The other seven occurrences of the *merī* are found scattered throughout the rest of the OT, with four references to a rebellious group of people, either the people of Israel or Judah, (Num. 17:10; Deut. 31:27; Neh. 9:17; Isa. 30:9), and two references to individual circumstances (Job 23:2 cites Job himself exclaiming, "even today my complaint is bitter"; Proverbs 17:11 says that "an evil person seeks only rebellion." Finally, in the memorable words of 1 Sam. 15:23, the prophet Samuel reminds Saul, "Rebellion is like the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness like iniquity and idolatry." (Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary)

**Meri** - 21v -rebellion(3), rebellious(16), rebellious man(1), rebellious ones(1), rebels(1). Num. 17:10; Deut. 31:27; 1 Sam. 15:23; Neh. 9:17; Job 23:2; Prov. 17:11; Isa. 30:9; Ezek. 2:5; Ezek. 2:6; Ezek. 2:7; Ezek. 2:8; Ezek. 3:9; Ezek. 3:26; Ezek. 3:27; Ezek. 12:2; Ezek. 12:3; Ezek. 12:9; Ezek. 12:25; Ezek. 17:12; Ezek. 24:3; Ezek. 44:6

**That** - Term of purpose. And what a wonderful (and needed) purpose it is!

**BSB** - The rod of Aaron was placed in the ark as a permanent testimony to the authority of the Levites and the divine appointment of the high priest (Heb. 9:4). A proper view of the relationship between the theological context of Israel and the theological context of the church must pay close attention to the emphasis placed in these chapters on the Aaronic priesthood as the only way to approach God. The N.T. doctrine of the priesthood of Christ entails as radical a departure from the old covenant as the cessation of animal sacrifices (Heb. 3:1; 4:14; 5:1-10; 7:1-28, especially vv. 11-22).

**You may put an end to their grumbings (PLURAL!) against Me** - Heb. tekel, thou shalt end, finish, do utterly away with.

**Grumbings** (08519) (**telunah** from **lun** = to murmur) describe speech used of Israel's murmurings against the Lord (or His representatives) and as such represent an overt act rebellion, disbelief, and disobedience to duly constituted authority. Stated another way grumbings are rebellious expressions of complaint and dissatisfaction especially against Yahweh! They complained about having no food, so the Lord rained manna and quail from the sky (Ex. 16:3-15). The congregation also complained about the report of the spies who visited the Promised Land and expressed fear of the inhabitants. The Lord afflicted them with a plague and sent them back to Sinai for forty years (Num. 14). The Israelites grumbled against the authority of Moses and Aaron (cf. Ex 16:41-17:10). Telunah used 8x in OT - Ex. 16:7; Ex. 16:8; Ex. 16:9; Ex. 16:12; Nu 14:27; Nu 17:5; Nu 17:10

**Telunah** is translated in the **Septuagint** with **goggusmos** which describes an utterance made in a low tone and can be a direct assault or "behind the scenes talk."

**THOUGHT** - Grumbling = quiet, soft, behind-the-back undertone of complaining. It is the kind of criticism, dissatisfaction, faultfinding and gossip that goes on within small groups or cliques. The results of grumbling are far worse than people ever think. This is the primary reason God forbids grumbling in no uncertain terms (Php 2:14+). Grumbling hurts, damages, divides, tears down, downs a person, says "look at me", elevates selfish opinion, opposes God's will, hinders progress, stymies growth, misleads people, is self-centered, pushes people away from Christ and the church

**NET NOTE on put an end** - The verb means "to finish; to complete" and here "to bring to an end." It is the imperfect following the imperative, and so introduces a purpose clause (as a final imperfect). (ED: While the actual word "grumble" is not used the rest of Numbers, Israel did contend with Moses and Aaron in Numbers 20:1-13+).

**Put an end** (03615) (**kalah**) to be complete, at an end, finished, accomplished, or spent. To bring a process to completion. To **consummate**. It can have a positive connotation (Ge 2:1-2), but more often is used in a negative sense.

**Gilbrant** - Occurring over 200 times in the Hebrew Bible, this verb conveys a wide range of meanings. The primary meaning is the notion of "completion" of some process. This nuance is attested in an Arabic cognate meaning "to come to an end." Other cognates include "to use up" (Ugaritic, Phoenician, Targumic) and "to be weak" (Arabic, Mandaean).

The completion of human work projects can be expressed by this verb (Gen. 6:16; 1 Kings 6:9), as can a thorough harvest (leaving nothing to glean), the completion of the agricultural cycle (Lev. 19:9). Human plans can be completed (Ruth 3:18). Other time periods can be denoted by this verb (Job 36:11; Ps. 90:9), and the totality of a temporal period can be expressed by *kālāh* (1 Sam. 3:12).

The completion of a project naturally leads to the cessation of the activity. Thus, the verb is found in the context of "to finish" (Gen. 17:22). The nuance attested in other Northwest Semitic dialects of "to use up" also logically flows from this concept of completion. This meaning is also attested in the Hebrew Bible (Deut. 32:23), with the extended notion of cessation of eyesight (Lev. 26:16; 1 Sam. 2:33; Job 31:16; Jer. 14:6). A number of material objects "fade away" (Prov. 5:11; Job 4:9; Isa. 15:6) and perish (Isa. 1:28; Jer. 16:4; Ezek. 13:14).

In this same line of semantic progression, one can see the extension of the concept to convey the notion "to destroy." Things which are completely used, things which fail, are things which are no longer useful for

their intended purposes. Destruction can be according to plan, a completion of the thought or physical activity process. For example, Yahweh's destruction of Judah is in accord with his plan to revoke the Covenant, purify the remnant and restore the nation (Jer. 14:12). Once Assyria had completed its task assigned to it by Yahweh, of destroying the northern kingdom of Israel, Yahweh would destroy it in accord with their earned fate (Isa. 10:18). (Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary)

Over 200x - accomplish(2), accomplished(1), annihilate(1), annihilated(2), been consumed(2), been spent(1), brings to pass(1), brought(1), came to an end(1), ceased(1), come to an end(5), complete(1), completed(10), completely gone(1), completion(1), consume(6), consumed(16), decided(3), demolish(1), destroy(10), destroyed(4), destroyed them all(1), destroys(1), destruction(1), determined(1), devoured(1), died(1), end(4), ended(3), ending(1), exhausted(2), exterminated(1), fail(10), failed(1), fails(2), faints(1), feed(1), finish(6), finished(67), finishes(1), fulfill(2), languish(1), languishes(1), longed(1), make an end(1), over(1), perish(1), perishing(1), plotted(1), put an end(2), ravage(1), settled(1), spend(3), spent(5), terminate(1), use(1), used(1), vanish(2), vanishes(1), waste away(1), wastes away(1), yearned(1). Gen. 2:1; Gen. 2:2; Gen. 6:16; Gen. 17:22; Gen. 18:33; Gen. 21:15; Gen. 24:15; Gen. 24:19; Gen. 24:22; Gen. 24:45; Gen. 27:30; Gen. 41:30; Gen. 41:53; Gen. 43:2; Gen. 44:12; Gen. 49:33; Exod. 5:13; Exod. 5:14; Exod. 31:18; Exod. 32:10; Exod. 32:12; Exod. 33:3; Exod. 33:5; Exod. 34:33; Exod. 39:32; Exod. 40:33; Lev. 16:20; Lev. 26:16; Lev. 26:44; Num. 4:15; Num. 7:1; Num. 16:21; Num. 16:31; Num. 16:45; Num. 17:10; Num. 25:11; Deut. 7:22; Deut. 20:9; Deut. 26:12; Deut. 28:21; Deut. 31:24; Deut. 32:23; Deut. 32:45; Jos. 8:24; Jos. 10:20; Jos. 19:49; Jos. 19:51; Jos. 24:20; Jdg. 3:18; Jdg. 15:17; Ruth 2:21; Ruth 2:23; Ruth 3:3; Ruth 3:18; 1 Sam. 2:33; 1 Sam. 3:12; 1 Sam. 10:13; 1 Sam. 13:10; 1 Sam. 15:18; 1 Sam. 18:1; 1 Sam. 20:7; 1 Sam. 20:9; 1 Sam. 20:33; 1 Sam. 24:16; 1 Sam. 25:17; 2 Sam. 6:18; 2 Sam. 11:19; 2 Sam. 13:36; 2 Sam. 13:39; 2 Sam. 21:5; 2 Sam. 22:38; 2 Sam. 22:39; 1 Ki. 1:41; 1 Ki. 3:1; 1 Ki. 6:9; 1 Ki. 6:14; 1 Ki. 6:38; 1 Ki. 7:1; 1 Ki. 7:40; 1 Ki. 8:54; 1 Ki. 9:1; 1 Ki. 17:14; 1 Ki. 17:16; 1 Ki. 22:11; 2 Ki. 10:25; 2 Ki. 13:17; 2 Ki. 13:19; 1 Chr. 16:2; 1 Chr. 27:24; 1 Chr. 28:20; 2 Chr. 4:11; 2 Chr. 7:1; 2 Chr. 7:11; 2 Chr. 8:8; 2 Chr. 8:16; 2 Chr. 18:10; 2 Chr. 20:23; 2 Chr. 24:10; 2 Chr. 24:14; 2 Chr. 29:17; 2 Chr. 29:28; 2 Chr. 29:29; 2 Chr. 29:34; 2 Chr. 31:1; 2 Chr. 31:7; 2 Chr. 36:22; Ezr. 1:1; Ezr. 9:1; Ezr. 9:14; Ezr. 10:17; Neh. 4:2; Est. 7:7; Job 4:9; Job 7:6; Job 7:9; Job 9:22; Job 11:20; Job 17:5; Job 19:27; Job 31:16; Job 33:21; Job 36:11; Ps. 18:37; Ps. 31:10; Ps. 37:20; Ps. 39:10; Ps. 59:13; Ps. 69:3; Ps. 71:9; Ps. 71:13; Ps. 72:20; Ps. 73:26; Ps. 74:11; Ps. 78:33; Ps. 84:2; Ps. 90:7; Ps. 90:9; Ps. 102:3; Ps. 119:81; Ps. 119:82; Ps. 119:87; Ps. 119:123; Ps. 143:7; Prov. 5:11; Prov. 16:30; Prov. 22:8; Isa. 1:28; Isa. 10:18; Isa. 10:25; Isa. 15:6; Isa. 16:4; Isa. 21:16; Isa. 24:13; Isa. 27:10; Isa. 29:20; Isa. 31:3; Isa. 32:10; Isa. 49:4; Jer. 5:3; Jer. 8:20; Jer. 9:16; Jer. 10:25; Jer. 14:6; Jer. 14:12; Jer. 16:4; Jer. 20:18; Jer. 26:8; Jer. 43:1; Jer. 44:27; Jer. 49:37; Jer. 51:63; Lam. 2:11; Lam. 2:22; Lam. 3:22; Lam. 4:11; Lam. 4:17; Ezek. 4:6; Ezek. 4:8; Ezek. 5:12; Ezek. 5:13; Ezek. 6:12; Ezek. 7:8; Ezek. 13:13; Ezek. 13:14; Ezek. 13:15; Ezek. 20:8; Ezek. 20:13; Ezek. 20:21; Ezek. 22:31; Ezek. 42:15; Ezek. 43:8; Ezek. 43:23; Ezek. 43:27; Dan. 9:24; Dan. 11:36; Dan. 12:7; Hos. 11:6; Amos 7:2; Zech. 5:4; Mal. 3:6

**So that** (purpose clause - a very gracious undeserved purpose!) **they will not die** - God is showing His great forbearance and mercy in providing the miracle of the budding rod and then establishing it as a memorial to joy their memories if they are tempted to begin grumbling at Moses and/or God!. NLT says "This should put an end to their complaints against me and prevent any further deaths." Grumble was a key word in Nu 14 (Nu 14:2 Nu 14:27 Nu 14:29 Nu 14:36) and occurred twice in each of the next two chapters (Num 16:11 Nu 16:41 Nu 17:5 Nu 17:10) From here on out the word grumbling is not found after Numbers 17.

**Brian Bell** - Everything about the Tabernacle & its Furniture was meant as a teaching tool! We also see that every part of it pointed to Christ!

Tabernacle (And the Word became flesh and dwelt/tabernacled among us); Lampstand (light of the world); Showbread (I am the bread of life); Veil (Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh) Mercy Seat (redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation/covering); Manna (I am the bread of life); Aaron's Rod (Jesus the High Priest); Tablets/Stone (perfectly fulfilled)

**Warren Wiersbe** - The Lord gave Israel three reminders to encourage them to obey His Law and submit to His will: the tassels on their garments, the brass plates on the altar, and Aaron's rod in the holy of holies. To encourage believers today to be obedient children, the Lord has given us His Word (John 17:17), the indwelling Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19–20), the Lord's Supper, reminding us of the death of Christ and His promised return (11:23–34; 1 John 3:1–3), and the interceding Savior in heaven (Heb. 4:14–16; Rom. 8:34). Before we judge God's ancient people, perhaps we'd better examine our own hearts to see if we've submitted to the authority of His Word and of His appointed leaders. (Be Counted)

**Numbers 17:11 Thus Moses did; just as the LORD had commanded him, so he did.**

NET Numbers 17:11 So Moses did as the LORD commanded him— this is what he did.

NLT Numbers 17:11 So Moses did as the LORD commanded him.

ESV Numbers 17:11 Thus did Moses; as the LORD commanded him, so he did.

NIV Numbers 17:11 Moses did just as the LORD commanded him.

KJV Numbers 17:11 And Moses did so: as the LORD commanded him, so did he.

YLT Numbers 17:11 and Moses doth as Jehovah hath commanded him; so he hath done.

LXE Numbers 17:11 And Moses and Aaron did as the Lord commanded Moses, so did they.

ASV Numbers 17:11 Thus did Moses: as Jehovah commanded him, so did he.

CSB Numbers 17:11 So Moses did as the LORD commanded him.

NKJ Numbers 17:11 Thus did Moses; just as the LORD had commanded him, so he did.

NRS Numbers 17:11 Moses did so; just as the LORD commanded him, so he did.

NAB Numbers 17:26 And Moses did as the LORD had commanded him.

NJB Numbers 17:26 Moses did as Yahweh had ordered. That is what he did.

GWN Numbers 17:11 Moses did exactly what the LORD commanded him to do.

- **Numbers 17 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## NO QUESTIONS ONLY OBEDIENCE!

**Thus Moses did; just as the LORD had commanded him, so he did** - Note the repetition of **did...did** emphasizing Moses' complete obedience in stark contrast with the rebellious behavior of his fellow Israelites. Little wonder that Moses is so often referred to as a servant of Jehovah. A servant has ears to hear what the Master commands and a heart that lovingly obeys without hesitating or questioning.

**THOUGHT** - Does the obedience of Moses describe your (our) response when we hear from the Lord in His word and prayer? It should. As we daily surrender to the Holy Spirit, He gives us the desire and power to obey like Moses obeyed. In Ezekiel 36:27 God made the Jews and all who believe in Him a sure word of promise - "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes (THE SPIRIT'S ENABLING POWER), and you will be careful to observe My ordinances (OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO YIELD TO HIS POWER)." It is not "Let go, let God," but "Let God and let's go!"

**John Currid** says "The passage closes with the obedience formula. Moses, in contrast to the Israelites throughout the episodes of chapters 16–17, does precisely and exactly what God had commanded him to do." (EPSC-Nu)

**Numbers 17:12 Then the sons of Israel spoke to Moses, saying, 'Behold, we perish, we are dying, we are all dying!'**

NET Numbers 17:12 The Israelites said to Moses, "We are bound to die! We perish, we all perish!

NLT Numbers 17:12 Then the people of Israel said to Moses, "Look, we are doomed! We are dead! We are ruined!

ESV Numbers 17:12 And the people of Israel said to Moses, "Behold, we perish, we are undone, we are all undone.

NIV Numbers 17:12 The Israelites said to Moses, "We will die! We are lost, we are all lost!

KJV Numbers 17:12 And the children of Israel spake unto Moses, saying, Behold, we die, we perish, we all perish.

YLT Numbers 17:12 And the sons of Israel speak unto Moses, saying, 'Lo, we have expired; we have perished; we have all of us perished;

LXE Numbers 17:12 And the children of Israel spoke to Moses, saying, Behold, we are cut off, we are destroyed, we are consumed.

ASV Numbers 17:12 And the children of Israel spake unto Moses, saying, Behold, we perish, we are undone, we are all undone.

CSB Numbers 17:12 Then the Israelites declared to Moses, "Look, we're perishing! We're lost; we're all lost!

NKJ Numbers 17:12 So the children of Israel spoke to Moses, saying, "Surely we die, we perish, we all perish!

NRS Numbers 17:12 The Israelites said to Moses, "We are perishing; we are lost, all of us are lost!

NAB Numbers 17:27 Then the Israelites cried out to Moses, "We are perishing; we are lost, we are all lost!

NJB Numbers 17:27 The Israelites then said to Moses, 'We are lost! We are dead men! We are all dead men!

GWN Numbers 17:12 The Israelites said to Moses, "Now we're going to die! We're lost! We're all lost!

- **Behold:** Nu 26:11 Ps 90:7 Pr 19:3 Isa 57:16 Heb 12:5
- **Numbers 17 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## ISRAEL CRIES "UNCLE" AND ARE TERRORIZED!

**Cry uncle** means to admit or concede defeat or plead for mercy. It indicates a willingness to give up the fight!

**John Currid** - The Israelites finally get the point: not just any person may approach the tabernacle to serve in it; this duty is reserved for the Levites. These two verses, then, serve as a proper conclusion to the entire section covering chapters 16–17 which deals with the issue of who has been set apart for the work of the tabernacle. (EPSC-Num)

**Then the sons of Israel spoke to Moses, saying** - They were now walking by sight not faith. The evidence of God's choice of Aaron's rod was indisputable.

**Behold, we perish, we are dying** ("we are as good as dead"), **we are all dying** ("we will be destroyed")! - NLT says "Look, we are doomed! We are dead! We are ruined!" The people are declaring "**behold**" drawing attention to their intense sense of doom. This repetition (**perish...dying...dying**) indicates how terrified the people were. It took 3 words to express their terror (see [below](#)). The Greek uses three different verbs meaning something like "We are entirely spent (utterly destroyed) (exanalisko - see [roo analisko](#)), we are ruined ([apollumi](#)), we are wasted, consumed lost to no purpose (paranalisko)." All three verbs are in the perfect tense speaking of past completed action with ongoing effects (speaks of permanence). What are they saying? It seems they finally "get it" that only Aaron can come near the Tabernacle (Nu 12:13) and that anyone who attempts to do so will die!

**NET NOTE on perish...dying...dying** - The use of הָנָה (hen) and the **perfect tense** (ALL THREE HEBREW VERBS) in the nuance of a prophetic perfect **expresses their conviction that they were bound to die—it was certain**

**Currid** adds that "After what has happened, the Israelites are in a state of panic and they are clearly reticent to go near the tabernacle. Their speech is quite dramatic as they employ three persistent perfective verbs: 'perish ... destroyed ... destroyed'. These are what the older grammarians used to call 'prophetic perfects'—that is, they represent future situations as if they were already complete. The action is considered as good as done. The deed is already accomplished in the mind of the speaker." (Ibid)

**Pfeiffer** - A final expression of self-pity from a gainsaying generation closes this chapter and also the report of God's dealings with them. The next words of narration (Nu 20:1) describe the closing days of wilderness wandering and the rise of the new generation. (Wycliffe Bible Commentary)

**Bush** on the "confession" from **the sons of Israel** that they were **dying** - A miracle of mercy seems to have extorted from them the confession which the previous miracles of judgment had failed to do. We take the words as implying not an unjust complaint or the outbreak of a still remaining discontent, but an humble acknowledgment of their just deserts and of the imminent peril from which they had barely escaped. The Chald. paraphrases the words thus: "Behold, the sword hath killed some of us, and behold, the earth hath swallowed some of us, and behold, some of us are dead with the pestilence." The Targ. Jon. thus: "Behold, some of us are consumed with flaming fire, and some of us are swallowed up into the earth; behold, we think as did they, so we all of us shall perish." They virtually confess that, by reason of their rebellion, they were as good as dead, and that they would certainly incur that doom should they hereafter offend.

**Wiersbe** - God vindicated His servants by bringing death to some of their opponents and by giving life to Aaron's rod. By the power of God, the dead rod produced beauty and fruit. Spiritual leadership will be recognized by its life and fruitfulness, which come from being in the Holy of Holies with God. How unpredictable is human nature! One day, the people wanted to serve in the tabernacle; the next day, they were afraid to get near it! They did not sincerely fear God; they feared only His judgment. They needed leadership far more than they realized. (WWBC)

**Dying...dying** (lost, destroyed, ruined) (06) (**abad**) is a verb meaning to perish, to be destroyed, to be ruined, to be lost, to in a state of ruin and destruction pertaining to an object, including the death (Ex 10:7). Abad can mean literally to die, or, in the case of things, reputation, etc., to pass away.

**Perish** (01478)(**gava**) means to expire, to perish, to die. Death in the flood (Ge 6:17, 7:21). Death of the patriarchs (Gen 25:8, 17, 35:29, 49:33). Breathing out (Job 34:14, Ps 104:29). **Baker** says **gava** "is apparently from a root meaning to breathe out." **Bush** says "The term signifies not so precisely to die, as to be brought into that state of painful suffocation which is very likely to end in death." It is used to describe a natural death (Gen. 25:8), death by dehydration (Num. 20:3), execution (Achan, Josh. 22:20) and divine judgment (Num. 17:12f). In an incredible prophetic passage gava is used to predict the future death of **2/3's** of the nation of Israel (Zech 13:8+)



**Numbers 17:13 "Everyone who comes near, who comes near to the tabernacle of the LORD, must die. Are we to perish completely?"**

NET Numbers 17:13 Anyone who even comes close to the tabernacle of the LORD will die! Are we all to die?"

NLT Numbers 17:13 Everyone who even comes close to the Tabernacle of the LORD dies. Are we all doomed to die?"

ESV Numbers 17:13 Everyone who comes near, who comes near to the tabernacle of the LORD, shall die. Are we all to perish?"

NIV Numbers 17:13 Anyone who even comes near the tabernacle of the LORD will die. Are we all going to die?"

KJV Numbers 17:13 Whosoever cometh any thing near unto the tabernacle of the LORD shall die: shall we be consumed with dying?

YLT Numbers 17:13 any who is at all drawing near unto the tabernacle of Jehovah dieth; have we not been consumed -- to expire?"

LXE Numbers 17:13 Every one that touches the tabernacle of the Lord, dies: shall we die utterly?"

ASV Numbers 17:13 Every one that cometh near, that cometh near unto the tabernacle of Jehovah, dieth: shall we perish all of us?

CSB Numbers 17:13 Anyone who comes near the LORD's tabernacle will die. Will we all perish?"

NKJ Numbers 17:13 "Whoever even comes near the tabernacle of the LORD must die. Shall we all utterly die?"

NRS Numbers 17:13 Everyone who approaches the tabernacle of the LORD will die. Are we all to perish?"

NAB Numbers 17:28 Every time anyone approaches the Dwelling of the LORD, he dies! Are we to perish to the last man?"

NJB Numbers 17:28 Anyone who approaches Yahweh's Dwelling with an offering will die. Are we to be doomed to the last man?"

GWN Numbers 17:13 Anyone who comes near the LORD's tent will die! Are we all going to die?"

- Whosoever: Nu 1:51-53 18:4-7
- any thing: Ge 3:3 1Sa 6:19-21 2Sa 6:6-12 1Ch 13:11-13 15:13 Ps 130:3,4 Ac 5:5,11-14 Eph 2:13 Heb 10:19-22
- consumed: Nu 16:26 32:13 De 2:16 Job 34:14,15 Ps 90:7 Isa 28:22
- **Numbers 17 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **FEAR OF FATALITY FOR COMING NEAR**

**Everyone who comes near, who comes near to the tabernacle of the LORD, must die-** Note their repeated emphasis of drawing near. They are emphasizing that everyone drawing deserves death! It is ironic that it took a miracle of life (ripe almond out of a dead rod) to convince them of this truth. The supernatural deaths of the rebels in Numbers 16 did not even have such a great impact on the sons of Israel as this one relatively small miracle of life!

It is fascinating that the multiple supernatural judgments (and multiple deaths) against the rebels in Numbers 16 did not produce as much fear in the sons of Israel as one budding rod did in Numbers 17! As **Wiersbe** phrases it "What the death of nearly 15,000 people could not do, the silent blossoming of a dead stick did accomplish! " (WEOOT)

**Jensen** remarks "They now saw themselves as those who could not compete against God: "Every one that cometh near unto the tabernacle of Jehovah dieth". Quite a contrast to the bold challenge made earlier against God and His servants!"

**Bush on comes near...comes near** The following is the literal rendering of the verse: "Every one that cometh near, every one that cometh near unto the tabernacle of Jehovah shall die; shall we be consumed in expiring, or giving up the ghost?" Our translators have aimed to indicate the repetition, in the commencement of the verse, by inserting the words "any thing," which answers somewhat to the import of the duplicated clause, hinting at the prohibition of any degree of approach. The doubling of words and



phrase has often the effect, in Hebrew, of giving greater emphasis and intensity to the expression.

**FSB** - The people understand the message: Yahweh has chosen the priestly authority, and His choice should not be challenged, lest more people die (Nu 17:10; compare Nu 16:22, 45).

**Are we to perish completely** - KJV = "shall we be consumed with dying?" Notice they end up their plaintive cry just as they began "**We perish...are we to perish completely?**" Some writers think their question is rhetorical and the Tanakh renders it with a strong statement, saying "Alas, we are doomed to perish!"

**UBS** - It seems that the Israelites finally got the message that nobody could enter the Tabernacle who had not been given the LORD's authority to do so. Only Aaron and his descendants could enter the sanctuary and carry out the specific duties of the priesthood.

**Bush** - Will the Lord proceed with us in this course of unsparing justice? Will he show us no mercy till all the people, doomed to die one after another, are cut off? "The name of Aaron was not more plainly written in that rod than the sin of Israel was in the fruit of it; and how much Israel finds their rebellion beaten with this rod, appears in their present relenting and complaint: "Behold, we are dead, we perish."—Bp. Hall.

**NET NOTE** - The verse stresses the completeness of their death: "will we be consumed by dying" (הָאִם תִּמְנוּ לָמוּת, ha'im tamnu ligvoa').

**Wenham** has an interesting comment - Recognizing the necessity of the priesthood, they are now ready to pay for it and offer the tithes and first-fruits set out in the following chapter.

**NET Note** tends to agree writing that Numbers 18 (dealing with priestly functions, etc) "and the next (Nu 19) may have been inserted to explain how the priests are to function because in the preceding chapter Aaron's position was affirmed.

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**Brian Bell** - One day, the people wanted to serve in the tabernacle (ch.16); the next day, they were afraid to get near it! What the death of nearly 15,000 people could not do (ch.16), the silent blossoming of a dead stick did accomplish! Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord! (Zechariah 4:6)

How do we know our personal calling? How can I know the will of God for my life?

Probably not going to be as miraculous as this budding rod!

Yet, God is not a Cosmic Easter Bunny looking down saying, "you're getting warmer!"

Story - Friend of a friend who found his calling to Hawaii, in the shape of a communion Matzo cracker.

Let's start with a simple assumption: Since God has a will for us, He must want us to know it. (Excerpts taken from John MacArthur Jr. "Found: God's Will") God's will is that you be: (5 things)

1. **Saved** - obviously it starts here; you can't be in His will w/o being "in Him"!
2. **Spirit-filled** - do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is, & do not be drunk w/wine...but be filled w/the Spirit/yielded; You can't tell a glove to play the piano, but you can place your hand in it, then the glove is empowered to play.
3. **Sanctified** - holy; pure; control your body. It's the cavalry officer who's life depends on his sword, so he keeps it clean. "It's not great talent, not great ideas that God uses, it is great likeness to Jesus!" A holy man is an awesome weapon in the hand of God.
4. **Submissive** - Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake...For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men 1 Pet 2:13,15.
5. **Suffering** (Phil.1:29 For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him.

Rom.12:1,2 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God

If you are doing all 5 of the basic things, the next principle is, "Do whatever you want!" Get into the main stream of what God is doing & let Him lead you to that perfect will!