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BIBLE STUDY

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**“CHOSEN TO BLOSSOM”**

**Numbers 17:1-13**

***Numbers 17:1 "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,"***

***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."***

***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."***

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

Since Aaron’s authority as priest had been challenged, God took a decisive step to make it clear that he had invested only Aaron’s family with the priesthood. A leader from each tribe was to bring a staff forward. There would be one for each ancestral tribe, twelve staffs from all the leaders of their tribes. This message is, probably, given on the same day. God will settle the question of whether Aaron is called of the LORD to be high priest, or not. Each tribe of Israel was considered a branch, or a rod, of Jacob. This rod of each of the leaders of each tribe, represented that particular tribe. Since there were twelve tribes, there were twelve rods. The rod of Aaron, from the tribe of Levi, would be in addition to these rods. Ephraim and Manasseh were both of the tribe of Joseph, but each were given a tribe of their own. Each tribal leader’s name was then written on his staff, with Aaron’s name on Levi’s staff. Then all the staffs were placed in the tabernacle in front of the testimony. There was no prince for the tribe of Levi, but it was undisputed that Aaron was their leader. Moses would lay these rods up in the tabernacle of testimony. They would be lain in front of the ark, in the presence of the Lord.

***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."***

The wooden staff of God’s chosen priest would supernaturally sprout. The miraculous blooming of this rod would settle the dispute forever of whether Aaron was to lead the people as high priest, or not. This will be a permanent sign from the LORD, that He has chosen Aaron for the job of high priest. This rod is from a stick that has been removed from the branch for quite a long time. By normal standards, it would be dead wood. For it to bloom is miraculous.

***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."***

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

***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."***

Moses did as instructed. When he entered the tabernacle the next day, Aaron’s staff had sprouted, formed buds, blossomed, and produced almonds. The prince of each tribe had a rod with his name on the rod. The rods, including Aaron's rod were put before the LORD in front of the ark of covenant. Aaron did not put the rods there, Moses did. There was nothing peculiar about Aaron's rod. God would prove Aaron's call to be high priest in this. First of all, this is one day later. Not only did the rod bloom but produced full grown almonds. The word almond was translated from means “awake.” The almond is the first of the trees to produce in the spring. This miraculous growth was overnight. The blossoms and the full-grown almonds were actually at different stages of growth. This is a sign from God. Aaron's rod had no special ability to live and produce fruit, any more than did any of the other rods. It was the Spirit of God, that caused Aaron's rod to bloom. Aaron's abilities are not within himself. They are in the office of high priest, and through the anointing power of the LORD upon him. The fact that the rod of the tribe of Levi budded, bloomed, and yielded almonds proved that Moses and Aaron were not wrong in asserting divine appointment to leadership over the nation. And the budding of a rod that bore the name of Aaron gave added denial to the claims of Korah and his Levitical followers that they had as much right to the priesthood as the family of Aaron.

***Hebrews 5:4 “And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.”***

***Exodus 28:1 “And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons.”***

***1 Chronicles 23:13 “The sons of Amram; Aaron and Moses: and Aaron was separated, that he should sanctify the most holy things, he and his sons for ever, to burn incense before the Lord, to minister unto him, and to bless in his name for ever.”***

***Numbers 16:8-11***

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

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

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

***11 For which cause both thou and all thy company are gathered together against the Lord: and what is Aaron, that ye murmur against him?***

***Numbers 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."***

***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."***

***Numbers 17:11 "And Moses did [so]: as the LORD commanded him, so did he."***

Aaron’s rod was to be kept for a memorial before the testimony. God told Moses to put the rod back in the tabernacle as a sign and a warning to the rebels to think twice before they challenged God’s leaders again—lest they die. The princes could not go into the area where the rods were left, because God would have killed them. Moses brought all the rods out for them to see. Each person claimed the rod with his name on it. After all of the princes saw Aaron's rod that bloomed, the Lord had Moses to bring it into the holy of holies. Any time there was any question, again, about Aaron's authority, they could see the rod that bloomed, and know Aaron is the high priest that God anointed for the job. Actually, the rod of Aaron, the manna, and the stones with the ten commandments were kept in the ark itself. The murmurings should stop now. This should close the mouths of the rebellious. Moses did exactly as God had commanded him to do.

***Hebrews 9:4 “Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant;”***

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

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

The last two verses seem to indicate the people still pitied themselves rather than praising God for His power and deliverance. The people suddenly realized their error in questioning Moses and Aaron. They know they were wrong and think that God will kill them for their doubt and questioning. It seems that the people finally got the point. They were so afraid to approach God after this incident that they wailed to Moses: We’re all lost! Anyone who comes near the Lord’s tabernacle will die. Will we all perish? This is as if they are saying, "I have sinned". Perhaps, they deserved to die, but God will let them live. They are defeated and disheartened. Perhaps, their rebellion against God is over. This is understandable, since so many have died recently at the tabernacle. Truly they all will die in the wilderness. The only people who can go into the holy place, or into the holy of holies, are the high priest and the priests. It’s interesting that we get no mention of Moses trying to soothe their fears. He was probably glad to see the fear of God finally grip their hearts. There is a lesson, here, for the ministers and the members of churches. God puts whoever He chooses in as the minister of the church. He has jobs for all of us to do, but they are of His choosing and not our own. We, also, learned to have respect for the office of the priesthood, or those God has placed in authority over us.

**QUESTIONS**

1. When was this message given to Moses?
2. What was Moses to take from the prince of each tribe?
3. How many tribes were there?
4. Aaron's rod represented the tribe of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. Ephraim and Manasseh were from the tribe of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
6. How could they determine who each rod belonged to?
7. There was no \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of the tribe of Levi.
8. Where was Moses to take the rods?
9. What will happen to the rod of the man, that God has chosen to be high priest?

10. What will this cause the people to stop doing?

11. The rod that bloomed would be a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ sign from the LORD, that He had chosen Aaron for high priest.

12. By normal standards, this rod is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

13. Where was Aaron's rod put?

14. Who actually put the rods there?

15. What had happened to Aaron's rod?

16. Had the same thing happened to the others?

17. It was the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of God that caused Aaron's rod to bloom.

18. Where does Aaron's ability come from?

19. Where were the rods examined?

20. Where was Aaron's rod to be kept?

21. What else was kept in the same area?

22. What did the children of Israel say to Moses?

23. Whatsoever cometh anything near unto the tabernacle of the LORD shall \_\_\_\_\_.
24. What are some lessons ministers and members of churches can get from this lesson?