

Day 164 - TUESDAY: May 23rd

Numbers 17

Numbers 17:1-13 NKJV

And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: "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. 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. Then you shall place them in the tabernacle of meeting before the Testimony, where I meet with you. 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." 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. And Moses placed the rods before the LORD in the tabernacle of witness. 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. 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. 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." Thus did Moses; just as the LORD had commanded him, so he did. So the children of Israel spoke to Moses, saying, "Surely we die, we perish, we all perish! Whoever even comes near the tabernacle of the LORD must die. Shall we all utterly die?"

Daily Deep Dive:

Here is the UCG reading plan for this chapter: “In the rebellion of Korah, the heresy that just any Israelite could serve in God's priesthood had spread throughout the camp. And even though the instigators of this idea had been removed, the idea itself persisted among the people. Indeed, it was evident from the people's response following God's execution of the rebels—blaming Moses and Aaron—that they did not really understand why God had done this. So He would make it very clear to them that only Aaron and His descendants were to serve as the priests of His physical nation—and that any violation of this rule would merit death, as they had already witnessed.

God asked Moses for each family tribe to get a staff, a rod, and whittle the name of the family's leader onto the stick. Aaron's name was to be on the rod of the family of the Levites. If the name "Levi" had been on the rod of the Levites, all the Levites would have an equal claim to the priesthood. But as we know, that was not the case (remember, even Korah and his family were Levites). Moses was then to lay these 12 rods side by side before God in the tabernacle. God would settle the matter, hopefully once and

for all, by miraculously causing the rod of the one He had chosen to blossom (verse 5). That would put a stop to any and all claims that the priesthood belonged to others. Moses did as God had instructed, and the next day Aaron's rod had buds, blossoms and almonds that had already ripened! Every tribe got their lifeless stick back, while Aaron's blossoming rod was laid up in the Most Holy Place to serve as a sign against any future attempts to usurp the priesthood (Hebrews 9:3–4).

Finally, the congregation seems to get the picture that God is more serious about preserving the sanctity of His holy things than about physical life and death. However, considering the context, it appears that Numbers 17 ends with the Israelites falling into despair over the concern that they could be annihilated due to some random mistake or oversight at the tabernacle (see verses 12–13)—in which case, God basically answers their concern in the next chapter.” [END]

After reading the above UCG reading plan, I don't have any additional deep-dive comments on this chapter.