

# Numbers 17

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[ 0 : 00 ] Numbers chapter 17 reads for us this way. Then the Lord spoke to Moses saying, 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 father's households.

You shall write each name on his rod and write Aaron's name on the rod of Levi. For there is one rod for the head of each of their father's households. You shall then deposit them in the tent of meeting in front of the testimony where I meet with you.

It will come about that the rod of the man whom I choose will sprout. Thus I will lessen from upon myself the grumblings of the sons of Israel who are grumbling against you. Moses therefore spoke to the sons of Israel and all their leaders gave him a rod apiece.

For each leader according to their father's household, twelve rods with the rod of Aaron among their rods. So Moses deposited the rods before the Lord in the tent of the testimony. Now, on the next day Moses went into the tent of the testimony.

Behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi had sprouted and put forth buds and produced blossoms and it bore ripe almonds. 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.

[ 1 : 14 ] 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 they may put an end to their grumblings against me. So that they will not die.

Thus Moses did, just as the Lord had commanded him, so he did. Then the sons of Israel spoke to Moses saying, Behold, we perish. We are dying. We are all dying.

Everyone who comes near, who comes near to the tabernacle of the Lord must die. Are we to perish completely? Numbers chapter 17. Excuse me.

I want us to see this evening as we are making our way throughout the book of Numbers. And we are now in the 17th chapter. I want us to see an authenticated position.

An authenticated or validated position. What we really see is God reestablishing the order in the camp after Korah's rebellion. There is this great reestablishment which takes place through the book of Numbers as God reestablishes the Arianic priesthood.

[ 2 : 19 ] He reestablishes the role of the descendants of Aaron. He reestablishes the commandments and the sacrifices which he has required the people to do. And he is not doing this for the sake of those who had failed to obey him.

But he is doing it for the generation below them that he is raising up. That he will bring into the promised land. It is not that he is overlooking the older generation. It is that he is not letting the sins of the older generation belittle the truths which he has already taught his people.

So he is reestablishing. We would go back and say it is like they were re-digging the wells that we see in the book of Genesis. They were digging again the wells of truth. And God was showing them his divine order and his divine purpose.

But what we see in Numbers chapter 17 is that God authenticates or validates the position of the Arianic priesthood. Now this is important.

I know that we are looking at the priesthood according to Melchizedek and the book of Hebrews. But that is okay because we are not here to kind of compare the two. God had an established order among his Jewish people.

[ 3 : 24 ] Among his nation. And that nation's order would be that the priest would descend from the lineage of Aaron. It would be Aaron and his descendants who would serve in the position of high priest.

And here he authenticates that and shows his people that this is accurately what he longs for. And the reason he does it is because it is immediately following the rebellion of Korah.

If you remember Korah being a Levite had stepped out of position of being one who served the tabernacle. And wanted to be the one who offered the offerings. And he also brought along with him people who were of other tribes.

And he made this comment. Are not all God's people holy? Is he not among us? And kind of the crux of Korah's rebellion is every one of us are fit to serve as priests.

Now in the New Testament church we have the priesthood of believers. And the reality we have seen in the Old Testament is God had called his nation to be a nation of priests. Yet their sins had removed that position from them.

[ 4 : 29 ] And they were a nation with priests. They were seeking to walk outside of the appointed order of God. And to take on roles and responsibilities which were not rightfully theirs. And here God authenticates his right to choose one particular person.

And the descendants of that person to serve in this position he has appointed. These things are important. Because as Hebrews tells us. These are the elementary teachings about Christ.

Right? Never forget that. What we study in the Old Testament. Are the building blocks and the foundation stones. Which help us to understand more and more about Christ.

And the further we get into the tabernacle. The further we get and the closer we get to the presence of God. The more narrow we begin in our circle of people. Right? The things start to close in.

As you get closer and closer and closer and closer to God. The circumference of the people allowed to get in there gets very very small. Until you enter into the Holy of Holies.

[ 5 : 35 ] Where it's one man. One time a year. Who's allowed to come into the very manifest presence of God. That is important. And the reason it's important. Is because we desperately need that one man.

Who can go into the presence of God on our behalf. If anyone could go in there at any given time. And if anyone had the right to run into the presence of God.

Then we would not need a Savior. We would be able to do it ourselves. But God is showing us in his God appointed order. Through the picture of his people.

Not all people are fit to run into my presence. I'm going to choose but one. And here he authenticates that. He shows us that he is absolutely accurate.

And we need to understand this. First and foremost in this passage. We see that this is a result of the determination of God. It is a determination of God.

[ 6 : 31 ] I love the fact. When we open up scripture. So many times we see God on the offensive. Rather than on the defensive. God is the initiator. Not the responder.

God's interactions with his people. Normally come as a result of his initiations. Not his response. Stand for just a moment. Or sit for just a moment.

And be lost in the awesome splendor of that. We serve a God who initiates his interaction with us. Not just responds to our desire for him.

That is amazing. I think we get lost in that truth in scripture. That it was God who sought out Adam and Eve. It was God who chose Noah.

It was God who called Abraham out of the land of the Ur-Chaldeans. It was God who called Samuel to go anoint David. It was God who initiates all these things.

[ 7 : 30 ] And here we see the determination of God. It says, Then the Lord said to Moses. One thing we notice from this passage. Nobody had asked God to prove that Aaron was supposed to be the man.

Nobody. Yet God takes the initiative. And is going to authenticate the person for the position on his own choosing. That my friend is amazing.

So many people around the world serve a God with a lowercase g. Or serve a religion in which they hope that the God they serve will respond to their actions.

Or will respond to their sacrifices. Or will respond to their efforts. We on the other hand. Serve a God who has pursued us in his initiated determination.

He has come after us. And we love and follow after him. That is a big difference. And we see here that it is God who determines to show the people of that day.

[ 8 : 40 ] This is the one I have chosen. It was God who made the choice. And it was God who came up with the plan. Who would have ever chose to get 12 rods.

And write 12 names on these rods. And put them in the tabernacle. In the tent of meeting. Before the presence of God. And allow them to stay there. There is a kind of a word play here.

The word rod. And the word tribe. In the original wording is the same word. The word rod. For just a staff. And the word tribe. Or from among the tribes of people.

Is the same word. So what are you saying? Is this rod actually represents this tribe? So there was a rod for Benjamin. There was a rod for Levi. There was a rod for Simeon. There was a rod for Dan. There was a rod for all 12 of them here. And we see here. That these rods have a name written upon them. Now some Bible scholars.

[ 9 : 34 ] And I tend to agree with this. Is more than 12 rods. There were probably 13 rods. Because you would have had Aaron's there. With the tribe of Levi. Because when we count the 12 rods.

The 12 tribes. Ephraim and Manasseh take the place of Joseph. And then Levi's normally kept out. Of the land distribution. The distribution of the land in the promised land. That's why there was the breaking apart of the promised land of the 12 tribes.

Because Joseph is not there. And Levi's not there. Because the Levites have no inheritance. For the Lord their God is their inheritance. And Ephraim and Manasseh take their place. So with Aaron's rod being among the 12 rods of the tribes.

There would be these 13 rods. Laid in the presence of God. And each rod containing the name of the leader of that tribe. And this is God's plan.

All we want to do is stand amazed. At the determination of God. Or the decision of God. To authenticate. What he is doing. You know.

[ 10 : 34 ] A true and accurate picture of the holiness. And the grandeur of God. Should. Reassure us that God does not have to prove anything.

Yet he willingly. Validates himself. Over and over and over. He willingly.

Manifests himself. He would still be God. If Jesus Christ didn't fulfill every prophetic word. If God never chose to give the first prophecy. Concerning his. The coming of Jesus Christ.

He would still be God. Yet God. Gave forth all these prophecies. Of the coming of Christ. And every one of them fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Because God's.

Authenticating his person. Over and over and over again. This is the determination of God.

Secondly. We see the designated man.

[ 11 : 30 ] Each rod there laid. In the presence of God. Before the Holy of Holies. Each one laid where God would meet with Moses. He says he took them. And he laid them. Each rod bearing a name.

Each rod. A dried staff of wood. A piece of wood. Each rod. That was usually represented. As kind of. We see it throughout scripture. It is a token of leadership.

It is used as a signet. It is used as a sign of authority. It is used as a sign of prominence. And is used as a representation of the family. Or the clan. Or the tribe. Each one representing an individual.

Laid there with its name written on it. Yet God designates one man. There is but one that is designated. And it says. And when Moses went and got them. On the next day. Because God gave a very clear sign.

The rod that sprouts. Will be the one I chose. And no man would have been able to go in there. The name was written down. It was laid in. They were left alone. And yet we go in.

[ 12 : 28 ] And we see that Moses takes them out. And he brings the rods out. And here is Aaron's rod. Aaron's rod did not just sprout. Do you see what scripture says? It says.

Now on the next day. Moses went into the tent of the testimony. Behold the rod of Aaron. For the house of Levi. Look at this. Had sprouted. Now God said the rod that sprouts. Is the man I chose. But God so authenticated him. The rod had sprouted. Had put forth buds. Had produced blossoms. And it bore ripe almonds.

On a dried stick. If you were to go to our house right now. You'll see a number of logs piled up. Some logs that we need to cut for some individuals. And one log.

That's closer to our house. It's this huge black walnut log. That is laying up there. Belongs to Mr. Wayne. Who comes to church here. And he brought it over there.

[ 13 : 24 ] And as it's laying there. There are little sprouts. Growing out of the top of the bark of that log. Now it's nothing uncommon. But I seriously doubt. That I'll be able to go over there. And get some walnuts off of it.

Later on in the year. And I'd really be astounded. If that thing had sat there overnight. And I walked out. And there were not only sprouts. But there were also blossoms. And then there were also

walnuts. Laying beside it.

Because it takes time for those things. But what God did. Was so designate his man. He put it beyond all shadow of a doubt. Not only was there a little sprout.

There was the sprout. And the blossoms. And the ripe almonds. God brought it. Full force. He designated this man.

He set him apart. And it was God who done it. And no one else. Now this is important. Because God designates. Not a multitude of men. But one man.

[14:22] And we see this theme. Running throughout scripture. There is but one. That we can trust in. There is but one. That we can rely upon. There is but one. That we place our confidence in. What we see here.

Is that God was so determined. To show his people. That he has chosen one man. To be the man that they would look at. That would stand in the gap. Remember that passage.

In number 16. Where it says in verse 48. He stood between the dead and the living. That man was Aaron. Who was standing between the dead and the living. Interceding.

On behalf of the people. For their sins. Between God's wrath. His judgment. And their sin. And God is showing us here. The one he has chosen. Is but one.

Now when Aaron died. Is Eleazar his son. Still one. When Eleazar dies. Is his son. Still one. Over and over. And over again.

[15:17] There is but one. Who enters into the presence of God. And stands in the gap. God is showing us this. To prepare us. For the one. Who alone. Can stand.

And the one. Who alone. Has been chosen. And we see this. That God designates. This man. And he designates him. Very specifically. And very clearly.

Third. We see that there is a deposited reminder. The deposited reminder. Because as Aaron. Is seen here. And Moses comes out. With all the staffs.

And says. And each man took his staff back. And they knew it was his. Because it had his name on it. Right. Each man took his staff. Back. What the Lord said to Moses. Don't give Aaron his staff. Put it.

Back. It says there. But the Lord said to Moses. And this is in verse 10. Put back the rod of Aaron. Before the testimony. To be kept. As a sign. Against the rebels. That you may put an end.

[16:14] To their grumblings. Against me. So that they will not die. Thus Moses did. Just as the Lord had commanded him. So he did. What does God say? Put it back. Put it back. Before the ark.

Of the testimony. Put it back. Many believe. That it was in the ark. Of the covenant itself. Along with the ten commandments. And the jar full of manna. He says to put it back. And it is to be deposited there.

As a reminder. That God has chosen this one man. Now. This is the third sign. Of reminder. Which we have seen. In a very short period of time.

In the book of numbers. And I want you to see. Exactly what we were talking about. Just a moment ago. How each one of these signs. Narrows the focus down. Okay. How it gets smaller.

And smaller. The first sign we see. Is when the people sin. When the man was collecting. Wood on the Sabbath day. He ends up being stoned. Because he was collecting wood. On the Sabbath day. And he was breaking the law.

[17:08] Of the Sabbath. God appoints for them a sign. That each person. Was to put tassels. On the edges of their garments. Now this is a broad circle. Each man was to put tassels. On the edge of his garments.

So that each man would see these tassels. With the blue cord hanging down. And would remember the law. And therefore would be reminded. Not to break the law. This was a sign for all to see.

The second sign we are introduced to. Are those fire pans. Those 250 fire pans. The people tried to offer this incense. Before God. In number 16.

And it says. The fire of the Lord came down. And consumed all 250 individuals. And then Eleazar was commanded. The son of Aaron. To go in and get the fire pans. And to make from it. A hammered sheet of bronze.

And he was to put this hammered sheet of bronze. Around the altar. Now this was to be a sign. For any who approached the altar. Now we are getting narrower right.

[18:06] The tassels hanging down. Were for everybody in the nation. Those who would come before the altar. Now there were only two people. Or two groups of people. Who could see the altar.

Because it was inside the tabernacle.

That would either be a Levite. Who was there to serve. In the tabernacle. Or a priest. Or the high priest. So either Aaron and his sons. Serving as priest. Who could make an offering. Or the Levites. Who were there serving the priest. This sign on the altar. Was to remind the Levites. And to remind all laymen. That just anyone. Could not come up to the altar.

And offer a sacrifice. Had to be a priest. Who offered to sacrifice. And now this third sign. Which we have. Is Aaron's rod. And it is inside. The holy of holies.

It is there. With the ark of the covenant. And it is there. In the most narrow area. To remind all. That only one man.

[19:02] The man to whom that rod belongs to. Has the right. To come into that place. See the closer we get to God. The less access.

Man has to him. This is why. We need. What we find. In the new testament. One who has went. As a forerunner. Into the very presence of God. So that we can come. Boldly before the throne. Through the blood. Of the lamb. That we come in his name.

Not our name. And we see this sign. That was put there. To show them. They have no rights. Now the high priest. Could bring it out. And show them. Sure. But nobody could go in.

And look at it. Because they had no right. And we see these signs. That were there. The fourth and finally. We will be a little bit quick tonight. And that's okay. We see the determination.

[19:58] Of God. We see the designated man. We see the deposited reminder. Now be amazed. At this fourth thing. Look at the dismay. Of the people.

Look at the dismay. Of the people. Verses 12 and 13. Then the sons of Israel. Spoke to Moses saying. Behold we perish.

We are dying. We are all dying. Everyone who comes near. Who comes near. To the tabernacle of the Lord. Must die. Are we to perish. Completely. Now.

If we go to number 16. The very beginning of number 16. The proclamation of the people is. Every one of us have a right. To go into the presence of God.

We all have the right. We can go into his place. We're all holy. We all have a right. To be there. Who are you to tell us. We can't be there. And now we get to the end.

[20:53] Of number 17. They say. Oh wait a minute. We're all going to die. We're perishing. Every one of us is perishing. We came near to his presence. So we're all going to die. Now. It is the dismay of the people. Now.

I tell you. To be amazed at this. Because what we see. Is that though God has shown them. That he has appointed one. The people's focus is still on themselves.

The only thing they care about. And the only thing they are consumed with. Is themselves. Every one of us can go into his presence. Or we're all going to die.

Because we tried to go into his presence. There is no focus. On the one that God has appointed. To stand. In his presence. Rather than being amazed.

And astounded. That God has appointed one man. To stand in the gap. Rather than being overwhelmed. With joy. Because God has provided a way. For them to be forgiving. Rather than being.

[21:50] Just worshipping. Because God has ordained. That one was able. People. They were all dismayed. Because they were found. Unable. Many.

Many people. Have a hard time. Coming to Christ. Because they just can't get over themselves. And that's the reality. Because they feel like.

They can make it to God. On their own. Well if I'm good enough. Or if I do enough. Or if I'm right enough. And the reality is. It has nothing to do.

With us. It has everything to do. With him. The dismay of the people. Was that they thought. They were going to die. And rather than being amazed.

That God had provided. A way for them to be forgiven. They could not get their. Focus. And their attention. Off themselves. Now sure. God has so determined.

[22:48] To prove. Beyond a shadow of a doubt. There is but one. That is fit to come into his presence. We see it throughout scripture. God authenticates. And validates.

The person. And the work. Of Jesus Christ. Over and over. And over again. And by the time. We get to the end. Of the book of revelations. We have to say. Just like the chorus.

That is proclaimed. In heaven. Worthy is the lamb. And we have to loudly. Proclaim. He is worthy. Worthy. He alone.

Can open the seals. He alone. Can stand on the throne. He alone. Can stand in judgment. He alone. Can call our attention. And our focus. Rather than being so consumed.

About where we are. May we as his people. Stand amazed. And glorying. And where he is. The people of God. Here.

[ 23 : 43 ] Had seen the splendor. Of the reality. That God was allowing. One into his presence. On behalf of all of them. Then they would not.

Proclaim. We will all perish. Or rather. They would be able to proclaim. We have. An advocate. We have. That which Job.

Cried out for. One. Who could stand. With a hand upon man. And a hand upon God. And how great it is. To know. The reality thereof.

Because see. God. Authenticates. The position. Here. Of Aaron. And his descendants. But he is authenticating. The position.

For us all. Of eternity. That there is. But one. Who is welcome. To come into his presence. And may we say. We will all perish. We will all perish.

[ 24 : 36 ] Sure. We could say that. But how much better to say. He is there. He is there. He is there. And he is there. On my behalf. And he is there.

On your behalf. And may we not live. In dismay. But may we celebrate. In worship. That God has shown us. He has. Allowed.

One. On behalf. Of all. And by that one. All. Have the opportunity. To find forgiveness. Numbers. Chapter 17. Now I know. We are not going to close. In a song tonight. And I know. I am very early tonight. So before we close. In a word of prayer. I will allow you guys. If you have.

Anything you want to share. We can. And I thank you so much. For your patience with me. My voice is not the best. This side of stuff. Has gotten to me. It does. A couple times a year. And I appreciate your patience.

[ 25 : 32 ] With me today. I probably stressed it. A little bit too much. This is a little bit. I asked. I asked. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 28 : 10 ] Thank you.