

## **“GET RIGHT – STAY RIGHT!”**

### **NUMBERS CHAPTERS 17 – 18**

#### **CHAPTER 17 – “STOP COMPLAINING!”**

In the rebellion of chapter 16 against Moses and Aaron’s leadership we find specific complaints lodged against Aaron in verses 3,10,11; God is rectifying these issues directly and dramatically by causing Aaron’s rod to blossom.

(v1-5) A wooden rod was gathered from each of the twelve tribes of Israel with their names placed on the rod; whereas, God commanded Aaron’s name to be placed upon the rod of Levi. God will silence the complaints and controversy by causing His chosen’s rod to blossom.

(v6-9) Aaron’s rod was the only one that sprouted and blossomed with RIPE ALMONDS, which affirmed God’s choice of Aaron as high priest. (Every believer must bear fruit or else they are a dead stick, John 15:1-6).

(v10-11) God commanded Moses to take Aaron’s rod and use it as sign to the rebels, whereas to silence the complaints. (Reminder: *The Testimony* is the Ark of the Covenant and within the ark were the two stone tablets containing the Ten Commandments (Exodus 25:16,21), considered to be the basis of the covenant between God and His people Israel. Thus the ark was often called the ark of the Testimony. The golden pot of MANNA, which God miraculously preserved as a testimony to future generations (Exodus 16:32-34), was also deposited in the ark. The third item in the ark was AARON’S ROD that budded to prove that Aaron was God’s chosen (Numbers 17:1-11). This is also referred to in Hebrews 9:4.)

(C.I. Scofield writes, “Aaron’s rod that budded: a type of Christ in resurrection, acknowledged by God as high priest.”)

(v12-13) **Fear is a sure cure for complaints and controversy, but how does the New Testament cure our complaints and controversy: (1) Bad attitude or a Believer’s –attitude (Ephesians 4:29-32); (2) Be a DOER, not a DOWNER (Philippians 2:14-15; (3) Put off the flesh and PUT ON CHRIST (Colossians 3:5-17); (4) Beware of the last days judgment (Jude 14-23).**

#### **Chapter 18 – “DUTIES & PROVISIONS”**

(v1-7) Aaron and his family are called to minister in the tabernacle of meeting, this assignment was similarly given in ch. 3:1 – 4:49.

(v8-20) The priests were the spiritual servants of the people; they would be unable to work for their living in the same manner as did the others. Thus their support was to come from the main body of the congregation.

(v21-32) The Levites were to receive their living from the tithes of the Israelites and were to give a tithe of what they received.

➤ **Let’s define and understand TITHING:** The practice of giving a tenth of one’s income or property as an offering to God. The custom of paying a tithe was an ancient practice found among many nations of the ancient world.

The practice of giving a tenth of income or property extends into Hebrew history before the time of the Mosaic Law. The first recorded instance of tithing in the Bible occurs in Genesis 14:17-20. After returning from rescuing Lot and defeating his enemies, Abraham met MELCHIZEDEK, the "king of Salem" and "priest of God Most High." The text states simply that Abraham gave Melchizedek a tithe of all the goods he had obtained in battle. The author of the Book of Hebrews, in recounting this episode, considered the Levitical priests who descended from Abraham and who appeared centuries later as having paid tithes to Melchizedek through Abraham (Hebrews 7:1-10). There is no recorded demand of Abraham for a tenth. Neither is an

explanation given about why Abraham gave a tithe to Melchizedek. Jacob also, long before the law of Moses, promised that he would give to the Lord a tenth of all he received (Genesis 28:22). The law of Moses prescribed tithing in some detail. Leviticus 27:30-32 stated that the tithe of the land would include the seed of the land and the fruit of the tree. In addition the Hebrew people were required to set apart every tenth animal of their herds and flocks to the Lord.

Mosaic legislation on tithing is also found in two other passages. Numbers 18:21-32 stated that the tithes in Israel would be given to the Levites, because the Levites did not receive a land inheritance like the other tribes of Israel. The Levites, in turn, were to offer a heave offering to the Lord. This would constitute a tithe on their part of the goods which they received. The rest of the goods which the Levites received would provide their living as the reward for their work in the tabernacle.

The third passage dealing with the tithe is Deuteronomy 12:5-7,11-12,17-18. This passage instructed Israel to take their tithes to the place the Lord prescribes, or the city of Jerusalem. In Deuteronomy, only a vegetable tithe is mentioned. In 2 Chronicles 31:6, however, the tithe of cattle is mentioned.

In Deuteronomy 26:12-15 the third year is called the year of tithing. This may indicate that the tithes were not collected annually. Apparently in this year only the goods which were given as tithes could be offered and stored locally. The offering of the tithe also took the form of a ritual meal (Deuteronomy 12:7,12). Some suggest that there were three tithes, but this seems unlikely. There is no mention of a tithe in Exodus but only the giving of the FIRSTFRUITS (Ezekiel 44:29-30). Finally, the prophet Malachi indicated that Israel had robbed God in withholding tithes and offerings. Thus the Israelites were exhorted to bring their tithes into the storehouse in order to enjoy the Lord's blessing (Malachi 3:8-12).

In the Old Testament the purpose of the giving of a tenth was to meet the material need of the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless (the orphan), and the widow (Deuteronomy 26:12-13). The tithe was an expression of gratitude to God by His people. Basic to tithing was the acknowledgment of God's ownership of everything in the earth.

In the New Testament the words tithe and tithing appear only eight times (Matthew 23:23; Luke 11:42; 18:12; Hebrews 7:5-6,8-9). All of these passages refer to Old Testament usage and to current Jewish practice. Nowhere does the New Testament expressly command Christians to tithe. However, as believers we are to be generous in sharing our material possessions with the poor and for the support of Christian ministry. Christ Himself is our model in giving. Giving is to be voluntary, willing, cheerful, and given in the light of our accountability to God. Giving should be systematic and by no means limited to a tithe of our incomes. We recognize that all we have is from God. We are called to be faithful stewards of all our possessions (Romans 14:12; 1 Corinthians 9:3-14; 16:1-3; 2 Corinthians 8:1-9:15). (from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary)