

This is a short chapter. It should be remembered that the chapter divisions are not inspired but were added later by Bible translators. However, the subject matter covered in this chapter appears to be straight forward in context, no one would dispute that it is an understandable segmentation. So the exposition should be focused.

There had been a murmuring against the divine appointment. The complaints made against Moses and Aaron were against God Himself because it was His decision to organise the priesthood in the way He had done. That other tribes and families felt left out was a pandering to the natural order contrary to the arrangement God had decreed. It was not a question of giving everyone the same opportunities as everyone else but in organising society in a way that He knew would work. Resistance to this may seem “fairer” to certain but only because they were looking at things from a faulty direction.

It is similar to the idea that women are kept in submission to men being contrary to what is fair! It is not a question of total equality by the standard of the aggregate but rather what God has designed to work, being allowed to work in the way that He has intended, without criticism that is short sighted and disastrous if changes are made to suit some humanistic standard of what is appropriate. Modern Feminism is the ruination of human society, and its solutions are grave mistakes which backfire and ultimately make women worse off. We know this not because we logically deduce it from a study of society but because it is the logical deduction of going against Biblical teaching. If we have implicit faith in the way God has designed everything then we will be happier and more fulfilled in our roles as we accept what God has orchestrated for our benefit and blessing.

It was this failure that was such a let down to the Almighty. The murmuring if left unchecked would end in death. Any murmuring

against the divine if left unchecked will likewise end in death. Accordingly, we should wake up to the seriousness of this dangerous behaviour in order to move away from it. God regarded the murmuring against Moses as against Himself. *“I will make to cease from Me the murmurings of the children of Israel whereby they murmur against you”*.

To counter this insipid thought process, God resolved to demonstrate the certainty of the divine appointment which He had revealed through the agency of Moses. Some were clearly doubting the honesty and integrity of the claims of the Prophet to speak on God’s behalf. A miracle of incontestable provenance was to be exhibited and to silence the opposition, the adversaries, the satans, by this display of divine power!

Every tribe had to abide by the same method to put the matter to the test. They themselves were to provide a rod. They were to inscribe their chosen name upon it, either the name of the tribe or of their own hero or prince. To these twelve was added an almond rod for Levi with Aaron’s name inscribed upon it. He was the chosen manifestation of the priesthood at that time, being the anointed high priest.

It should be noted that Levi seemed to have rallied around their divine appointment of service to God through priestly and other roles. Korah had rebelled against his demoted position at least as he understood it. However, he had opportunity to excel as all do in whatever capacity that the providence of God deals out to them. We must be accepting.

If we rail against it saying it is not fair, then we are fools. It is not fair that we can be forgiven despite deserving death and that we do continue to sin even when we know that we should not because in our weakness and foolishness in that moment we ignore God and go our own way! Fairness would mean that we all have an opportunity to live our lives in proper service to Him, but we know we fail too often and let God down, again and again. Is it

fair that we have mercy extended to us? No, it is not fair, as we rightly deserve death!

These 13 rods were placed in the tabernacle of witness. Over night the miracle was to be wrought. The one chosen by God would be seen as such by the reemergence of new life, resurrection! Only one rod budded blossomed and yielded fruit! The almond rod of Aaron was made of the same wood and have also been cut down and fashioned into a rod as had the other twelve. It was different only in the operation of the spirit upon it **after** it was removed from its sustenance and source of nutrition. It was not prepared for resuscitation before it was cut. No one had planned this by scientific preparation of the material. It was the direct intervention of the spirit after being cut off.

So, it is with Christ. He was the chosen vessel. Nothing inherently within him caused him to be resurrected from the dead, it was God's power, His spirit that provided renewed life. He died because he partook of condemned human nature, however it was a matter of faithful promise that he knew that God would raise him again and that death was not the end.

No rod having been cut off and then shaped into a tool, can be resuscitated to bud and blossom and bear fruit. What was done was contrary to nature and a divine miracle which points to the position of honour granted not to a rod but to what it represented. It was not a substitute but a representative of the chosen priesthood. The name inscribed upon it associated it with God's promise of life. In the same way the one who represents God's chosen is that name which is above every name!

After the miracle everyone was required to step forward and reclaim their own lifeless rod. It should have been a sobering statement that what they had provided was insufficient and untouched by the divine blessing. Only the rod that was blessed by God could manifest life. No other could replicate that! It was not a sorcerer's magic trick but a display of divine power, done

within the confines of His stated purpose for the witness to the nation. *"They looked and took everyman his rod"*.

Not all of the nation participated in this action. Each tribe was expected to witness to their members as to what had occurred. Their testimony was necessary if God was not to repeat each miracle to every person who has ever lived in order for it to be fair! People were expected to believe on their testimony. See John 21v24 and 2 Thessalonians 1 v10. What was true then is also true for other generations, each must examine the account recorded and preserved for their attention. The inspired word which gives witness to these truths has been passed on to others so that they are without excuse!

Such displays dispel the doubt that arises within us all, but only initially only temporarily. When we consider the miracle of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, it is sad that despite the evidence, *"some doubted"* Matthew 28v17. The Holy Spirit also declares that there is *"a more sure Word of Prophecy"* which surpasses even the miracle of the transfiguration, 2 Peter 1v17-19. Human nature rears up and dissolves the faith in what has been done if it is not kept down. The number of miracles that Israel witnessed did nothing of any lasting benefit for the fate of the majority, hence God does not rely on this method much, it is the exception not the rule. It was granted to some to show what God can do, but we are not really convinced by it. God has blessed us all with repeated buds and blossoms and abundance of fruit, but it fails to impress upon our paltry minds the acceptance of the divine! Men rationalise away the hand of God and invent the miracle of time and chance and inevitability to replace Him. They want to be priests to officiate upon their terms in their own way for their own benefit. None are really looking to shoulder the responsibility and burden of service to God in the heat of the day, grappling with issues that others are unaware of or deliberately ignore!

The rod was to be *"kept for a token against the rebels"*. This should have been a permanent reminder of the hope of

resurrection under the blessing of God. Sadly, even this was not to last. When the ark of the covenant was placed in the temple which was subsequently built it did not contain the rod. It was lost to the people during the period of the judges when *“everyman did that which was right in his own eyes”*.

Death was before the people. *“We die we perish we all perish”*. Some do not even believe that but instead believe the serpent’s lie in Eden *“you shalt not surely die”*. Knowing this truth and accepting it is not enough. There is a remedy to the curse of death. Faith in Christ Jesus. Only if we build upon our acceptance that we shall die and pursue God’s course of action to mitigate against it can we hope for a better future!

The princes ended by warping the purpose of the demonstration. *“Whosoever comes any thing near unto the tabernacle of the LORD shall die, shall we be consumed with dying?”* This can be seen to be two-fold in application. For those that lack faith in God’s plan, their association with divine things brings sorrow and death! But to those who do have faith in what God is seeking to accomplish through spirit transformed dust and ashes the consuming of the natural, the flesh the old man should be regarded as a necessary and essential requirement. We should die daily as we put on more of the Lord Jesus Christ until our old selves are fully consumed and only the new man will at last remain!