



A Worship Study Guide for Individuals, Groups and Families: For the week of March 4, 2018

Note to Discussion Leaders: Have members read the Bible passage in the group meeting. This is a "worship discussion" guide, and our reflections and applications are grounded in Scripture. Read through this guide before meeting with the group. You do not need to work through the whole guide. Decide which points would be most helpful for the time of meeting together, and use them as a starting point for your time together.

Numbers 17:1-13 "Bud & Blossom"

¹ The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ² "Speak to the people of Israel, and get from them staffs, one for each fathers' house, from all their chiefs according to their fathers' houses, twelve staffs. Write each man's name on his staff, ³ and write Aaron's name on the staff of Levi. For there shall be one staff for the head of each fathers' house. ⁴ Then you shall deposit them in the tent of meeting before the testimony, where I meet with you. ⁵ And the staff of the man whom I choose shall sprout. Thus I will make to cease from me the grumbings of the people of Israel, which they grumble against you." ⁶ Moses spoke to the people of Israel. And all their chiefs gave him staffs, one for each chief, according to their fathers' houses, twelve staffs. And the staff of Aaron was among their staffs. ⁷ And Moses deposited the staffs before the LORD in the tent of the testimony.

⁸ On the next day Moses went into the tent of the testimony, and behold, the staff of Aaron for the house of Levi had sprouted and put forth buds and produced blossoms, and it bore ripe almonds. ⁹ Then Moses brought out all the staffs from before the LORD to all the people of Israel. And they looked, and each man took his staff. ¹⁰ And the LORD said to Moses, "Put back the staff of Aaron before the testimony, to be kept as a sign for the rebels, that you may make an end of their grumbings against me, lest they die." ¹¹ Thus did Moses; as the LORD commanded him, so he did.

¹² And the people of Israel said to Moses, "Behold, we perish, we are undone, we are all undone. ¹³ Everyone who comes near, who comes near to the tabernacle of the LORD, shall die. Are we all to perish?"

1. Why is God so concerned about grumbling?
2. Aaron's priestly authority had been challenged in Numbers 16. Now the LORD would make it clear to all the people whom He had chosen for the priestly ministry. What did the LORD instruct Moses do (1-4)?
3. What do staffs signify to the people of Israel? The staffs were simply sticks, dead wood, onto which the Israelites wrote the name of each tribal representative and placed into the tent of meeting. What sign was Moses instructed to look for? What would it signify? What effect would it have (5)?
4. Where precisely did Moses place the staffs (4,7)? What was significant about this place? Read [Exodus 25:22](#).
5. What did Moses discover the next day when he went into the tent (8)?
6. The LORD designated Aaron's staff as a perpetual "sign for the rebels" (10). What did it signify to them? What does it signify to us? Read [Isaiah 11:1-2](#), [Matthew 12:38-40](#), [1 Corinthians 15:4, 20-23](#) to further consider how Old Testament signs like this point us to Jesus.
7. What became of Aaron's staff in future generations? Read [Hebrews 9:1-5](#).
8. What was their response upon seeing the staff of Aaron (12-13)? Why did they react this way?
9. God's intention is not that His people would simply be convicted of sin, but that they would turn back to Him and live. Read This week's *Gospel Reading* from [John 15:1-9](#) to begin a time of reflection and prayer as a group. God takes dead sticks and make them alive & fruitful. How has the Holy Spirit led you to turn and see Jesus this week? Pray together for God's grace to repent, and turn to Christ for peace and power to follow Him.

Sermon Notes

This week, Steve Shelby preached on [Numbers 17:1-13](#).

- God says twice in this passage that He wants to (mercifully) put an end to the grumbling of the people of God, so that they won't die (5,10).
- Why is God so concerned about grumbling?
- "Hell begins with a grumbling mood, always complaining, always blaming others...but you are still distinct from it. You may even criticize it in yourself and wish you could stop it. But there may come a day when you can no longer. Then there will be no you left to criticize the mood or even to enjoy it, but just the grumble itself, going on forever like a machine. It is not a question of God "sending us" to hell. In each of us there is something growing, which will BE hell unless it is nipped in the bud." (C.S. Lewis)
- So God uses the miracle of the living, flowering and fruitful rod of Aaron to demonstrate this.
- Things of note:
 - How else might God have demonstrated his choice of Aaron?
 - Why an almond tree? ([Exodus 25:31-40](#))
- What are we to gather from this?
 - Without the work of Jesus I am a dead stick.
 - How does God take dead sticks and make them fruitful?
 - The purpose of God is not just to end our grumbling, but to end our grumbling by helping us to see His blessing.
 - The people's response, and God's response
 - "So the LORD said to Aaron, you and your sons..." ([Numbers 18:1](#))

Questions about this week's study guide? Contact Kevin Greene, kevin@wepc.org
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