

**LIFE'S WILDERNESS SHORTAGES AND GOD**  
**Part X: Relying On God To Overcome Unjust Criticism Of Leadership**  
**(Numbers 17:1-13)**

**I. Introduction**

- A. When a believer accepts the call to serve God in some capacity as an overseer, whether he or she acts as a parent over children, a teacher over students, a business overseer over employees, a Church leader over other believers, he or she runs the risk of criticism from subordinates.
- B. Some such criticism can be sparked in part by the the overseer's failings, but criticism wears on the leader when it reaches his attention so that his performance tends to wane to the harm of all involved!
- C. This challenge is addressed in Numbers 17:1-13 with appropriate applications as follows:

**II. Relying On God To Overcome Unjust Criticism Of Leadership, Numbers 17:1-13.**

- A. In Numbers 16, a notable insurrection occurred against the leadership of Moses and Aaron: Korah led a group of 250 leaders in the congregation to usurp their leadership with the criticism they were assuming too lofty a role over the people; God stepped in to open up the earth and swallow Korah and his followers!
- B. Since this opposition and criticism of Moses and Aaron had come to block the work of these two men, but in turn **GOD'S** interests in their ministries (Num. 17:5b,c), **GOD** ordered a *competition* occur on **GOD'S TERMS** to settle to **everyone's satisfaction** just **WHO** was to lead **WHOM**, and thus end the crisis:
  - 1. God wanted the murmuring of the people against Moses and Aaron to cease, for such murmuring was beginning to put pressure on the ability of these men to perform God's will in the leadership roles that He had assigned them, and that hindered God's interests in using Moses and Aaron, Numbers 17:5b,c!
  - 2. Thus, God had the heads of the tribes each take their personal staffs and place them overnight along with Aaron's staff (for the tribe of Levi) in the tabernacle where God dwelt, Numbers 17:1-4, 6-7.
  - 3. Every tribal leader had his name written on his staff so that there would be no question as to **WHOSE** staff had been affected by God's power during the overnight event, Numbers 17:2c-3.
  - 4. Overnight, **ONLY AARON'S** rod budded, blossomed and yielded mature almonds, a process that naturally takes over 8 months to occur, Numbers 17:8! [I used to work in almond orchards where I saw the almond tree sends out blossoms in January that yield mature almonds by September!]
  - 5. This signified that according to the God of the tabernacle, the true Creator, only Aaron's line was to head up matters relative to the priesthood of the nation Israel in opposition to Korah's errant view!
- C. Following this competition, God had Moses place Aaron's budded rod in the ark of the covenant as a testimony **AGAINST** the *rebels* who had sided with Korah; it would be a **PERPETUAL** testimony that **COUNTERED** the movement that sought to bring down Aaron's oversight position, and that kept God from slaying future potential rebels among the people against Moses and Aaron, Numbers 17:10-11!
- D. The congregation **THEN** realized the **gravity** of their rebellion against Aaron's line and leadership, concluding they were as good as dead men before the Lord, Numbers 17:12-13!

***Lesson:*** *If God selects a party to serve Him in an oversight position, any party that opposes his or her oversight when he or she heeds God's will will in that position will counter GOD, for GOD'S WILL by WAY of that overseer's FUNCTION in that OFFICE WILL BE ACCOMPLISHED!*

***Application:*** (1) *If we are an overseer, (a) let us NOT PUSH our authority onto any opponents of our oversight as THEN we fail to lead with the humility GOD wants us to have, cf. 1 Pet. 5:1, 3. Moses correctly fell on his face when opposed in his oversight role by Korah, signifying his dependence upon the Lord to validate his role and that of Aaron's, Num. 16:3-4. (b) We must rather wait on GOD to set up an event that VALIDATES our CALLING in our oversight role, Num. 16:5; 17:4-5, 8-9. (c) Be sure to rely on Scripture for every move we make in our oversight so that any criticism we receive can be contained by GOD as it counters HIS will for us! (2) As subordinates, (a) may we be slow to counter leadership until we KNOW God's will, and (b) then IF that oversight is to be countered, may we go about it BIBLICALLY; Esther exemplifies the correct approach in Esther 5:1-2 with 4:16. (c) May we respect the OFFICE of the overseer though the OVERSEER may need to be REMOVED, 1 Tim. 5:19.*