### Numbers

## Chapter 17

1Then the Lord spoke to Moses and said:  
  
 2‘Tell the children of IsraEl to have their [tribal] leaders each bring a walking stick with them, one for each of the family lines – 12 walking sticks – and have them write their [own] names on their sticks.  
  
 3‘Also write Aaron’s name on his walking stick [on behalf of the Tribe of] Levi.  
  
 ‘Each tribe should provide these sticks for [the heads] of their family lines. 4Then you must carry them all inside the Tent of Proofs and lay them before the Chest of Proofs, where I [always meet with] you.  
  
 5‘And whoever owns the walking stick that blossoms is the man whom I’ve chosen. This will bring an end to all the children of IsraEl’s grumbling to Me about you.’  
  
6So Moses spoke to the children of IsraEl, and each of their leaders gave him a walking stick, one for each of the heads of their family lines – 12 walking sticks – and Aaron’s walking stick was placed among them.  
  
7Then Moses laid the walking sticks before Jehovah inside the Tent of Proofs.  
  
  
8Well, the next morning, when Moses and Aaron entered the Tent of Proofs, they saw that the walking stick of Aaron (from the Tribe of Levi) had blossomed, putting out buds, flowers, and almonds!  
  
9Then Moses carried all of those walking sticks that had been set in front of Jehovah out before the sons of IsraEl for them to see... And each [of the leaders] took his own stick.  
  
10So the Lord told Moses:  
  
 ‘Now, place Aaron’s walking stick among the Proofs… Keep it there as a sign for these disobedient children.  
  
 ‘And then tell them to stop grumbling to Me, so they don’t die!’  
  
11Well, that’s what Moses and Aaron did; they did just as Jehovah had commanded Moses.  
  
  
12Then [the leaders] of the children of IsraEl spoke to Moses and asked:  
  
 ‘Are we now going to be cut off, destroyed, and consumed?  
  
 13‘Since everyone who touches the Tent of Jehovah is to die; are we now going to be totally destroyed?’  
  
[Editor note: Now follows some laws and procedures. The story continues in Numbers 20:1.]