

Character Study: Aaron

Part 3 – Aaron's Role as High Priest Confirmed

Numbers 16-20

What's happening?

- As Aaron served with Moses, their leadership was often met with resistance. Some people even attacked the priestly role of Aaron and the Levites. The Lord had Moses tell each family (the 12 tribes) to place a staff in the Tabernacle. The Lord would have one family's staff sprout as a sign that they were in fact the Lord's chosen to lead in the priestly duties. (17:1-5)
- Aaron's name was written on the staff of Levi. The next day Moses went into the Tabernacle to find that Aaron's staff had not only sprouted, but had budded, blossomed and produced almonds. The people recognized God's hand in this miracle. (17:6-13)
- When people complained of being thirsty, Moses disobeyed the Lord by striking a rock. This lapse of leadership resulted in Moses and Aaron being prohibited from entering the Promised Land. (20:1-13)
- As Aaron grew close to death, he went up Mount Hor, where he gave his priestly garments to his son Eleazar. Aaron died there at the age of 123 (Num. 33:39), and the Israelites mourned for 30 days. Eleazar took over the role as High Priest. (20:22-29)

What's God doing?

> God silenced those who questioned Moses' leadership and Aaron's authority as high priest. He even had Moses keep Aaron's staff in the Tabernacle as a reminder that the people should not complain against or question the Lord's ways of leadership (see Heb. 9:1-14).

What's to learn?

→ Aaron did not strike the rock, Moses did. Yet God held Aaron partly responsible and refused to let him enter the Promised Land. Why? Since Aaron was Moses' spokesperson, he could have stepped in when Moses was getting angry at the people. Instead, he kept quiet and the rock was struck. Having a place of leadership is a great privilege, but along with any great privilege comes great responsibility.

→ God used Aaron to fill the very important role of high priest. However, Aaron had moments of failure, as we all do. These moments serve as a reminder of our need for the greatest High Priest of all, Christ Jesus.