**The Budding of Aaron’s Staff**

“Old Marley was dead as a door-nail. Mind! I don’t mean to say that I know, of my own knowledge, what there is particularly dead about a door-nail.” Charles Dickens wrote these words to describe the condition of Jacob Marley whom he would send to haunt Ebeneezer Scrooge in *A Christmas Carol*. The expression “dead as a door-nail” can be traced to the 1300’s when a common practice was to bend a nail as it was hammered into a door making it almost impossible to remove and worthless for re-use. In our study of Numbers chapter 17, God takes a dead stick of wood and resurrects it. Only God can defy the laws of nature and perform miracles that are supernatural.

After the rebellion of Korah and his followers and the plague following it, there appeared to be lingering resentment of the priesthood of Aaron and his sons. At the beginning of Numbers chapter 17, God instructs Moses to have each of the tribes of Israel to have their leaders bring a staff with his name inscribed on it. Aaron would also give Moses his staff. God told Moses to place the staffs before the ark of Testimony where God would meet him. God declared that the staff of the man He chose would sprout and He would rid Himself of the constant grumbling of the Israelites. Notice that He did not say He would put an end to their grumbling but that He would rid Himself of it. Their grumbling would continue but this would be His final judgment of the matter of the priesthood.

Moses did as instructed and the following day he discovered that Aaron’s staff had not just sprouted but had budded, blossomed and produced almonds. Since each man had put his name of his staff, there was no mistaking whose staff had sprouted. There could also not have been any doubt about the miracle God had wrought. While Moses could have substituted a fresh branch from an olive tree with leaves on it in place of Aaron’s staff, no olive tree branch could have simultaneously produced leaves, buds, blossoms and almonds. God told Moses to place Aaron’s staff in front of the ark to be kept as a sign of the rebellion.

This chapter is one of several times in the Bible that God took something that was dead and brought it to life. Unlike the dead nail that could not be re-used, God took that which was dead and brought it to life to accomplish His purposes. In Hebrews we read that Abraham was as good as dead yet he became the father of descendants as numerous as the stars (11:12). God made His promise to Abraham that he would have a son when Abraham was 75 years old yet waited another 25 years before He blessed Abraham and Sarah with a child. There could have been no doubt that Isaac’s birth was supernatural.

In the gospel of John we read the account of Lazarus. Jesus was travelling with His disciples and was told that Lazarus was sick. Rather than going to heal him, Jesus lingered and returned to Bethany 4 days after Lazarus had been buried. There could have been no mistake that he was dead so when Jesus called him from the grave, it could have only been supernatural.

Finally, there would have been no doubt that Jesus was dead after His crucifixion. He was examined by the Roman soldiers, then embalmed by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. He was placed in a tomb with a large stone blocking the opening and soldiers guarded the tomb the ensure that Jesus’ body was not stolen so it could be claimed that He had risen from the dead. When Jesus arose and appeared to His disciples it could have only been supernatural.

A final thought about Aaron’s staff. God said that he would cause His chosen man’s staff to bud. It not only budded, but it grew flowers and fruit so God under promised and over delivered (see 1st Cor. 2:9)