

HWMR - CRYSTALLIZATION STUDY OF NUMBERS, Book 4, Week 20

**Authority, Rebellion,
the Vindication of Delegated Authority, and
a Proper Representative of God**

RK Hymns: 984

Scripture Reading: Num. 12:1-15; 16:1—17:13; 20:2-13, 24; 27:12-14; 2 Cor. 10:8; 13:10

Slandering — 12:1-15

- Num 12: 1 - And Miriam and Aaron **spoke against** Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married (for he had married a Cushite woman).
- Num 12: 2 - And they said, Has Jehovah indeed **spoken only** through Moses? Has He not also spoken through us? And Jehovah **heard** it.
- Num 12: 3 - Now the man Moses was very meek, more than anyone else who was on the face of the earth.
- Num 12: 4 - And suddenly Jehovah **spoke** to Moses and to Aaron and to Miriam, You three come out to the Tent of Meeting. So the three of them came out.
- Num 12: 5 - Then Jehovah **came down** in a pillar of cloud and stood at the entrance of the tent, and called Aaron and Miriam. And when they had both come forward,
- Num 12: 6 - He said, Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, Jehovah, will make Myself known to him in a vision; I will speak with him in a dream.
- Num 12: 7 - My servant Moses is not so; He is faithful in all My house.
- Num 12: 8 - With him I **speak** face to face, even openly, and not in riddles; And he **beholds** the form of Jehovah. Why then were you not afraid to **speak against** My servant, against Moses?
- Num 12: 9 - And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against them, and He departed.
- Num 12:10 - And when the cloud had departed from over the tent; there Miriam was, **leprous**, as white as snow. And Aaron turned toward Miriam, and there she was, leprous.
- Num 12:11 - And Aaron said to Moses, Oh, my lord, please do not lay this sin upon us that we have so foolishly committed.
- Num 12:12 - Please do not let her be like one dead, whose flesh is half consumed when he comes out of his mother's womb.
- Num 12:13 - And Moses cried to Jehovah, saying, Please heal her, O God, please.
- Num 12:14 - And Jehovah said to Moses, If her father had just spat in her face, would she not bear her shame seven days? Let her be shut up **outside the camp seven days**, and after that she may be brought in again.
- Num 12:15 - So Miriam was shut up outside the camp seven days, and the people did not set out until Miriam had been brought in again.

Rebellion—a more serious failure — 16:1-17:13**The cause of the rebellion and the reaction of Moses — 16:1-18**

- Num 16: 1 - Now Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, the sons of Reuben, took men
- Num 16: 2 - And rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, **two hundred fifty leaders** of the assembly, who were summoned to the meeting, well-known men.
- Num 16: 3 - And they assembled themselves together **against** Moses and against Aaron, and said to them, You take too much upon yourselves, for all the assembly are holy, every one of them, and Jehovah is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the congregation of Jehovah?
- Num 16: 4 - And when Moses heard this, he fell on his face.
- Num 16: 5 - And he spoke to Korah and to all his company, saying, In the morning Jehovah will make known who is His and who is holy, and will bring him near to Himself; even the one whom He will choose He will bring near to Himself.
- Num 16: 6 - Do this: Take censers for yourselves, Korah and all your company,
- Num 16: 7 - And put fire in them, and put incense on them before Jehovah tomorrow; and the man whom Jehovah **chooses**, he shall be holy. It is you who take too much upon yourselves, O sons of Levi!
- Num 16: 8 - And Moses said to Korah, Hear now, O sons of Levi:
- Num 16: 9 - Is it a small thing for you that the God of Israel has **separated you** from the assembly of Israel to bring you near to Himself to do the **service** of the tabernacle of Jehovah and to **stand** before the assembly to minister to them?

- Num 16:10 - Or that He has brought you near, and all your brothers the sons of Levi with you? And do you seek the priesthood also?
- Num 16:11 - Therefore you and all your company are gathered together against Jehovah; but Aaron, what is he that you **murmur against** him?
- Num 16:12 - Then Moses sent word to call Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab; but they said, We will not come up!
- Num 16:13 - Is it not enough that you have brought us up out of a land flowing with amilk and honey to have us die in the wilderness, but must you also lord it over us?
- Num 16:14 - Indeed, you have not brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey, nor have you given us an inheritance of fields and vineyards. Will you put out the eyes of these men? We will not come up!
- Num 16:15 - Then Moses became very angry and said to Jehovah, Do not regard their offering. I have not taken a single donkey from them, nor have I done harm to any of them.
- Num 16:16 - And Moses said to Korah, You and all your company be present before Jehovah, both you and they along with Aaron, tomorrow.
- Num 16:17 - And let each of you take his censer and put incense on them, and each of you present his censer before Jehovah, two hundred fifty censers; you also and Aaron shall each present his censer.
- Num 16:18 - So each took his censer and put fire in them and laid incense on them, and they stood at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting with Moses and Aaron.

God's judgment — 16:19-50

- Num 16:19 - Thus Korah gathered the whole assembly against them at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of Jehovah appeared to the whole assembly.
- Num 16:20 - Then Jehovah spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying,
- Num 16:21 - Separate yourselves from among this assembly, so that I may consume them in a moment.
- Num 16:22 - But they fell on their faces and said, O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, will one man sin and You be angry with the whole assembly?
- Num 16:23 - Then Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying,
- Num 16:24 - Speak to the assembly, saying, Get away from around the dwellings of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.
- Num 16:25 - Then Moses rose up and went to Dathan and Abiram, and the elders of Israel followed him.
- Num 16:26 - And he spoke to the assembly, saying, Depart now from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing which belongs to them, or you will be swept away with all their sins.
- Num 16:27 - So they got away from around the dwellings of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and Dathan and Abiram came out, and stood at the entrance of their tents, with their wives and their children and their little ones.
- Num 16:28 - And Moses said, By this you shall know that Jehovah has sent me to do all these works, for it is not of myself.
- Num 16:29 - If these people die as all human beings die, or if what befalls all human beings befalls them, then Jehovah has not sent me.
- Num 16:30 - But if Jehovah brings about a new thing, and the **ground opens its mouth** and **swallows them up** with all that belongs to them, and they descend alive into Sheol, then you will understand that these men have despised Jehovah.
- Num 16:31 - And as soon as he finished speaking all these words, the ground that was under them was split open.
- Num 16:32 - So the earth opened its mouth and **swallowed** them up, along with their households and everyone who belonged to Korah and all their possessions.
- Num 16:33 - So they and all that belonged to them **descended alive** into Sheol; and the earth closed over them, and they perished from the midst of the congregation.
- Num 16:34 - And all Israel who were around them fled at their outcry, for they said, The earth may swallow us up too!
- Num 16:35 - And fire came forth from Jehovah and consumed the two hundred fifty men who presented the incense.
- Num 16:36 - Then Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying,
- Num 16:37 - Tell Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest to take the censers up out of the burning and scatter the fire about; for they are holy.
- Num 16:38 - The censers of those who have sinned against their own lives, let them be **made** into beaten plates for a **covering of the altar**, for they presented them before Jehovah and they became holy. So they shall be a **sign** to the children of Israel.
- Num 16:39 - And Eleazar the priest took the bronze censers which those who were burned had offered; and they beat them out as a covering of the altar,
- Num 16:40 - As a reminder to the children of Israel that no stranger who is not of the seed of Aaron may come near to burn incense before Jehovah, so that he does not become like Korah and his company, just as Jehovah had spoken to him through Moses.
- Num 16:41 - **But on the next day** the whole assembly of the children of Israel **murmured** against Moses and against Aaron, saying, You have caused the people of Jehovah to die.

- Num 16:42 - But when the assembly gathered against Moses and against Aaron, they looked toward the Tent of Meeting, and there the cloud was, covering it; and the glory of Jehovah appeared.
- Num 16:43 - And Moses and Aaron came to the front of the Tent of Meeting.
- Num 16:44 - Then Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying,
- Num 16:45 - Get away from the midst of this assembly that I might consume them in a moment. And they fell upon their faces.
- Num 16:46 - And Moses said to Aaron, Take the censer and put afire in it from the altar, and lay incense on it, and carry it quickly to the assembly, and make expiation for them. For wrath has gone forth from Jehovah; the plague has begun.
- Num 16:47 - And Aaron took it as Moses had said and ran into the midst of the assembly. And indeed the plague had begun among the people. So he put on the incense and made expiation for the people.
- Num 16:48 - And he stood between the dead and the living, and the plague was stopped.
- Num 16:49 - Now those who **died by the plague** were **fourteen thousand seven hundred**, besides those who died on account of Korah.
- Num 16:50 - So Aaron returned to Moses at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting when the plague had been stopped.

God's vindication — 17:1-13

- Num 17: 1 - Then Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying,
- Num 17: 2 - Speak to the children of Israel, and take from them **rods**, one for each father's house, twelve rods from all their leaders according to their fathers' houses; you shall write everyone's name upon his rod.
- Num 17: 3 - And you shall write Aaron's name upon the rod of Levi, for there shall be one rod for the head of each of their fathers' houses.
- Num 17: 4 - And you shall place them in the Tent of Meeting before the Testimony, where I meet with you.
- Num 17: 5 - And the rod of the man whom I choose shall bud, and I will put a stop to the murmurings of the children of Israel against Me, which they **murmur** against you.
- Num 17: 6 - So Moses spoke to the children of Israel. And every one of their leaders gave him a rod, one rod for each leader according to their fathers' houses, twelve rods, with the rod of Aaron among their rods.
- Num 17: 7 - And Moses placed the rods before Jehovah in the Tent of the Testimony.
- Num 17: 8 - And on the next day Moses went into the Tent of the Testimony, and there was the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi: it had budded; it even put forth buds and produced blossoms and bore ripe almonds.
- Num 17: 9 - And Moses brought out all the rods from before Jehovah to all the children of Israel, and they looked; and each one took his rod.
- Num 17:10 - Then Jehovah said to Moses, Put back the rod of Aaron before the Testimony to be kept as a sign against the rebels, so that you may put an end to their **murmurings** against Me, and they not die.
- Num 17:11 - And Moses did so; just as Jehovah commanded him, so he did.
- Num 17:12 - And the children of Israel spoke to Moses, saying, Alas, we die out; we perish; all of us perish.
- Num 17:13 - Everyone who comes near, who comes near to the tabernacle of Jehovah, dies. Are we to completely die out?

Contending for water — 20:2-13

- Num 20: 2 - And there was **no water** for the assembly, and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron.
- Num 20: 3 - And the people contended with Moses and spoke, saying, If only we had expired when our brothers expired before Jehovah!
- Num 20: 4 - Why then have you brought the congregation of Jehovah into this wilderness for us and our livestock to die there?
- Num 20: 5 - Why then did you bring us up out of Egypt, to bring us to this wretched place? It is not a place of grain or figs or vines or pomegranates, and there is not even water to drink.
- Num 20: 6 - And Moses and Aaron went from before the congregation to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting and fell upon their faces, and the bglory of Jehovah appeared to them.
- Num 20: 7 - Then Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying,
- Num 20: 8 - Take the rod, and gather the assembly, you and Aaron your brother, and **speak to the rock** before their eyes, so that it **yields its water**. Thus you shall bring forth water for them out of the rock and give the assembly and their livestock something to drink.
- Num 20: 9 - And Moses took the rod from before Jehovah, as He had commanded him.
- Num 20:10 - And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said to them, Listen now, you **rebels**: Shall we bring forth water for you out of this rock?
- Num 20:11 - Then Moses lifted up his hand and **struck the rock with his rod twice**; and abundant water came forth, and the assembly and their livestock drank.

- Num 20:12 - And Jehovah said to Moses and Aaron, Because you did not believe in Me, to sanctify Me in the sight of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.
- Num 20:13 - These are the waters of Meribah, where the children of Israel contended with Jehovah, and He was sanctified among them.
- Num 20:24 - Aaron shall be gathered to his people, for he shall not enter into the land which I have given to the children of Israel, because you rebelled against My word at the waters of Meribah.

The death of Moses, and his successor — 27:12-23

The death of Moses (the result of Moses' failure) — vv. 12-14

- Num 27:12 - And Jehovah said to Moses, Go up to this mountain of the Abarim and see the land which I have given to the children of Israel.
- Num 27:13 - And when you have seen it, you also shall be gathered to your people, just as Aaron your brother was gathered,
- Num 27:14 - Because you **rebelled** against My word in the wilderness of Zin, in the strife of the assembly, and **failed to sanctify Me** at the waters before their eyes. (These are the waters of Meribah-kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin.)
- 2 Cor. 10:8 - For even if I should boast somewhat more abundantly concerning our **authority**, which the Lord has given **for building you up** and not for overthrowing you, I will not be put to shame.
- 2Cor.13:10 - Therefore I write these things while being absent in order that when present I would not have to use severity, according to the **authority** which the Lord has given me **for building up** and not for overthrowing.

GOD CREATING THE UNIVERSE AND RULING OVER IT BY AUTHORITY

Beginning from today we will look at the matter of **authority**. Why do we need to consider the matter of authority? First, we must know that **God's acts** are based upon His **throne**, and His throne is **built on** authority. **All things were created through God's authority**. All natural laws function according to God's authority. God did not create the universe with power, but with authority. He does **not** uphold the natural laws by **power**, but by **authority**. Scientists today have discovered atomic power. Actually, what they have discovered is God's power. Their discovery is merely an unveiling of the laws of nature. According to Hebrews 1:3 God upholds all things by His word, which relates to His authority. **God upholds all things by His authority**, not by His power. God's authority ensures the constancy of the natural laws in this universe. He created the universe with His authority, and He rules the universe with His authority. **God's authority represents God Himself**. Looking at the matter in another way, we can say that **God is the embodiment of authority**. God is also the embodiment of power; He is the embodiment of authority as well as power. It is easy for man to be forgiven when he only offends God's power. It is not easy for him to be forgiven if he offends God's authority. **It is a serious thing for a man to offend God's authority**. Brothers and sisters, we have to see that authority is the **unchanging factor that rules and stabilizes** the universe from the beginning of time to its end. Everything in the universe, from the highest design to the lowest form, is upheld by God's authority. From creation, only one thing involves man all the time—**authority**. (Collected Works of Watchman Nee, The (Set 3) Vol. 59: Miscellaneous Records of the Kuling Training (1), Chapter 13, Section 1)

Day 1

I. God is the **supreme authority**; He has all authority—Rom. 9:21-22:

- A. God's **authority** **represents** God Himself; God's power only **represents** God's works—Acts 17:24.
- B. God's **authority** is actually God Himself; **authority** issues out from God's own being—Rev. 22:1.
- C. All authority—spiritual, positional, and governmental—**derives** from God—2 Cor. 10:8; 13:10; John 19:10-11; Gen. 9:6.
- D. When we **touch** God's authority, we touch God Himself—Isa. 6:1-5:
 1. Meeting God's authority is the same as meeting God—Amos 4:12.
 2. **Offending** God's authority is the same as offending God Himself.
- E. In our relationship with God, nothing is more important than touching authority—Acts 9:5; Matt. 11:25.
- F. **Knowing** authority is an **inward revelation** rather than an outward teaching—Acts 22:6-16.

MEETING AUTHORITY IN THE SYSTEMS ESTABLISHED BY GOD

Every one of us has to **touch authority**. Otherwise, we run into problems. **If a man touches authority, all of his problems will go away.** When we **realize that all systems of authority are established by God**, we have nothing more to say. Some people do not want to submit to their masters, their parents, or their brothers and sisters. Some wives **do not** want to **submit** to their husbands. Some people excuse their **disobedience** by saying that their masters are too poor or that their husbands or brothers are not worthy of their submission. Some children, who have graduated from universities, think that their parents are too old-fashioned. They think they know more than their parents. This becomes an excuse for **not obeying** their parents. Many people have problems with other men. If we look around, we will find that many people are asking these questions. Everyone who has not touched authority has these kinds of problems. Some **wives despise** their husbands; they even fight with their husbands. Some **children disobey** their parents and argue with them. Some **servants ignore** or argue with their masters when they cannot submit to them. Some ignore the law when they face corrupt officers or unjust legislation. But **whether or not our husband, our parents, or our representatives in the government are evil is none of our business. If we have touched authority, we will not criticize them.** The whole issue rests on whether or not we have touched authority. Once we have touched authority, these problems are no longer problems. If a person sees only men, he cannot be of any use to the Lord. **We have to realize that the systems of authority established among human society are established and ordained by God.** Once we touch God and His authority, all problems go away. (Collected Works of Watchman Nee, The (Set 3) Vol. 59: Miscellaneous Records of the Kuling Training (1), Chapter 15, Section 4)

Day 2

- G. Only God is the **direct authority** to man; all other authorities are **indirect authorities**—**delegated** authorities, **deputy** authorities, **appointed** by God—Dan. 4:32, 34-37:
1. Only when we meet God's authority can we **submit** to the delegated authority whom God appoints—Matt. 28:18; Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 5:5.
 2. God requires that we **submit not** only to Him **but** to all delegated authorities—Rom. 13:1-7; 2 Cor. 10:8; 13:10; Heb. 13:17.
 3. **Those who do not submit to God's indirect authority cannot submit to God's direct authority.**
 4. God wants us to **submit** to indirect authority—delegated authorities—so that we may receive spiritual supply.
- H. We all must **meet** authority, be **restricted** by God, and be **led** by His delegated authority—Isa. 37:16; Phil. 2:12; Heb. 13:17.

LEARNING OBEDIENCE IN EVERYTHING

God must secure a group of people who are **absolutely submissive** to civil authorities. According to Romans 13:1-7, they should **render tax** to whom tax is due, **custom** to whom custom is due, **fear** to whom fear is due, and **honor** to whom honor is due. In the **family** there should also be **order and authority**. One should be a submissive wife, obedient child, or obedient servant. We should maintain our standing and submit to authority in every circumstance. This kind of behavior and attitude constitutes the best testimony. Nothing can be more beautiful in the world than seeing submission in every circumstance. **Those who practice this are expressing God's glory and God's authority. We are not submitting to a person when we submit to authority. We are submitting to God.** In order to take care of the sense of the spirit within us, **we submit to deputy authority.** Those who know authority will submit to authority wherever they find it. A brother who listens to only one man is not useful because he is submitting only to man; he has not seen God's authority. Once a man touches God's authority, he can submit to any authority. (Collected Works of Watchman Nee, The (Set 3) Vol. 59: Miscellaneous Records of the Kuling Training (1), Chapter 16, Section 2)

Day 3

II. There are two great principles in the universe—God's authority and Satan's rebellion; the unique controversy between God and Satan concerns authority and rebellion—Acts 26:18; Col. 1:13:

- A. **Rebellion** is the denial of God's authority and the rejection of God's rule:
1. **Satan** was originally an archangel created by God, but due to his pride he uplifted himself, violated God's sovereignty, **rebelled** against God, became God's adversary, and established his own kingdom—Isa. 14:12-14; Ezek. 28:2-19; Matt. 12:26.
 2. When man **sinned**, he **rebelled** against God, **denied** God's authority, and **rejected** God's rule; at Babel men rebelled collectively against God to abolish God's authority from the earth—Gen. 3:1-6; 11:1-9.
- B. Although Satan **rebelled** against God's authority and although man **violates** His authority by **rebellious** against Him, God will not let this rebellion continue; He will establish His kingdom on the earth—Rev. 11:15.

THE ORIGIN OF SATAN

Satan became who he is through **offending God's authority**. Satan is not the one who wrestled with God, but the one who **trespassed against His authority**. He tried to establish his own throne and rebelled against God's authority and throne. This caused him to become Satan. Isaiah 13 and 14 tell us that **Satan wanted to establish his throne above God's throne**. This is how he became Satan. The cause of his fall was **his challenge of God's authority**. He fell and became Satan not only because he committed the many sins spoken of in Ezekiel 28; **the root of Satan's sin** was his **rebellion against God's authority**. Satan did not sin and then rebel against God's authority; rather, he trespassed against God's authority and then fell and sinned. He fell because of his trespass against God's authority. This is the **principle of Satan's operation—transgression against God's authority**. (Collected Works of Watchman Nee, The (Set 3) Vol. 59: Miscellaneous Records of the Kuling Training (1), Chapter 13, Section 1)

- C. The center of dispute in the universe relates to who has authority—4:2-3:
 - 1. We must **contend** with Satan by asserting that authority is with God—Acts 17:24, 30.
 - 2. We need to set ourselves to **submit** to God's authority and **uphold** God's authority—Matt. 11:25.
- D. The **sin of rebellion** is more serious than any other kind of sin—1 Sam. 15:23.

Day 4

III. Chapters 12 and 16 of Numbers speak of **rebellion against God's delegated authority**:

- A. In **speaking against** Moses, Miriam and Aaron were speaking against the **deputy** authority of God—12:1-15:
 - 1. God had **appointed** Moses to be His **deputy** authority, His **representative** authority on earth; the authority that Moses represented was the authority of God—Exo. 3:10-18a; 7:1.
 - 2. According to God's **governmental administration**, Miriam and Aaron should have submitted themselves to Moses, but they rebelled—Num. 12:1-2.
 - 3. Neither Aaron nor Miriam knew authority; instead, they fostered a rebellious heart—vv. 1-2.
 - 4. The words of rebellion ascended upward and were heard by God—v. 2b:
 - a. When Miriam and Aaron **offended** Moses, they **offended** God in Moses; therefore, God became angry.
 - b. Once a person touches delegated authority, he touches God in that delegated authority.
 - c. **To offend the delegated authority is to offend God**—vv. 4-10.
 - 5. Miriam's becoming leprous was God's governmental dealing—v. 10.
- B. The rebellion recorded in chapter 16 was a corporate rebellion:
 - 1. The **rebellion** in this chapter was a widespread, universal rebellion among God's people—v. 19a.
 - 2. Numbers 16:3, 9, and 10 show that the **root of this rebellion** was **ambition**, the **struggle for power** and for a higher position:
 - a. **Ambition** undermines God's plan and damages His people.
 - b. Throughout the centuries many problems among Christians have been caused by ambition—cf. Matt. 20:20-28; 3 John 9-11.
 - 3. Although Moses was **humble** in falling on his face (Num. 16:4), **he did not give up his God-given position as God's deputy authority** (vv. 3-11, 16-18):
 - a. Moses did not fight back; rather, he brought the rebels and the ones against whom they rebelled to God—v. 5.
 - b. As God's deputy, or delegated, authority, Moses referred this case to God as the highest authority, for His speaking, exposing, and judging—vv. 6-35.
 - c. In a struggle for power, the only One who can judge and expose the real situation is God Himself—vv. 30-33.
 - 4. The **murmuring** of the people against Moses and Aaron proves that their rebellious nature had not been subdued—v. 41.

Day 5

IV. Numbers 16 speaks of **man's rebellion against God's deputy authority** and how **man opposed God's deputy authority**; chapter 17 speaks of God's **vindication of His appointed authority**:

- A. God **vindicated** to everyone that **deputy** authority is according to His **appointment**—v. 5.
- B. Since the rebellion of Korah and his company was related to the priesthood (16:3, 8-10), the **budding of Aaron's rod** was a **vindication** indicating that Aaron was the one **accepted** by God as having authority in the God-given ministry of the priesthood (17:2-10).
- C. The **budding rod** of Aaron **typifies** the resurrected Christ—the **budding, blossoming, and fruit-bearing** Christ—who imparts life to others—v. 8:
 - 1. Christ, the greatest **budding rod** in the universe, imparts life to others; He always **flows out life to enliven others**—John 12:24; 1 Pet. 1:3.
 - 2. Today Christ is still budding, and we are the fruit, the almonds, of His budding.
- D. In typology a **rod signifies authority**—cf. 1 Cor. 4:21:
 - 1. In Numbers 17 the **rods represented** the leaders of the twelve tribes (v. 2), and **Aaron's rod represented** the tribe of Levi (v. 3).
 - 2. It was God's intention that the budding of a dead rod would cause the murmurings of the people to cease.
 - 3. **Through** the budding of the rod, God spoke to the Israelites and also to Aaron—v. 8.

- E. The budding rod signifies our **experience of Christ in His resurrection as our authority** in the God-given ministry—Heb. 9:4; Num. 17:1-10:
1. The budding, blossoming, fruit-yielding rod signifies the resurrection life of Christ with its authority—v. 8; John 11:25.
 2. **Resurrection** is the basis of authority—2 Cor. 1:8-9; 10:8; 13:4, 10:
 - a. The budding rod indicates that authority is based on resurrection—Num. 17:8.
 - b. The basis of God's appointment of authority is resurrection—2 Cor. 1:8-9; 10:8; 13:10.
 - c. The basis of God's vindication of His appointed authority is resurrection—Num. 17:5, 8.

It is a great thing to entrust someone with authority. We have to believe that **God has entrusted Himself to His deputy authority**. He will surely honor the authority He has appointed. According to our rebellious nature, we are happy only to submit to God's **direct** authority; we have **no respect** for His appointed **deputy** authority. Many people think that they can submit as long as they can set aside God's deputy authority. Yet ninety percent of all authorities are deputy authorities. If God has no qualm about entrusting Himself to these deputy authorities, we should have no qualm in submitting to them. Since **the Lord is happy to commission men to be His authority**, we should be happy to submit to these **commissioned** authorities. (Collected Works of Watchman Nee, The (Set 3) Vol. 59: Miscellaneous Records of the Kuling Training (1), Chapter 19, Section 4)

Day 6

V. One who has been appointed by God to be a deputy authority must be a proper representative of God—12:3-8; 16:1-5, 28; 2 Cor. 5:20:

- A. In Exodus and in Numbers 12 and 16, Moses represented God in a proper way.
- B. We need to learn a serious **lesson** from the one time that **Moses failed to represent God**—20:2-13:
 1. **In striking the rock twice and in calling the people rebels, Moses did not sanctify God in the sight of the people of Israel**—vv. 10-12:
 - a. To **sanctify God** is to make Him holy, that is, separate from all the false gods; to fail to sanctify God is to make Him common—v. 12.
 - b. In **being angry** with the people and in **wrongly striking the rock twice, Moses failed to sanctify God**—vv. 10-11.
 - c. In being angry when God was not angry, Moses **failed to represent** God rightly **in His holy nature**, and **in striking the rock twice, he did not keep God's word in His economy**—vv. 10-12.
 - d. Moses **offended** both God's holy nature and His divine economy; he **condemned** the people as rebels, but he was the one who rebelled against God's word—vv. 10, 24; 27:12-14.
 2. **In all that we say and do concerning God's people, our attitude must be according to God's holy nature, and our actions must be according to His divine economy.**
- C. The apostle Paul was an ambassador of Christ, representing God—2 Cor. 5:20:
 1. A new covenant **minister** is one who has been authorized with the heavenly authority to **represent** the highest authority—3:6; 5:20.
 2. Paul exercised his apostolic authority **not** for ruling over the believers **but for building them up**—10:8; 13:10; 1:24.
 3. Paul exercised the authority inherent in his apostleship by teaching, by engaging in spiritual warfare, by moving within the measure of God's rule, and by his jealousy for Christ over the believers—1 Cor. 4:17; 2 Cor. 10:3-4, 13; 11:2.
- D. **A person who represents God rightly must submit to authority** (Matt. 8:8-9), **realize that in himself he has no authority** (28:18; 2 Cor. 10:8; 13:10), and **be a person in resurrection, living in the resurrection life of Christ** (1:9; 4:14; Num. 17:1-10).

A DEPUTY AUTHORITY CANNOT AFFORD TO MAKE A MISTAKE

Self-motivated service cannot find acceptance in the eyes of God. In fact, **no one can render any service at all by himself**. A man must **serve** by standing on the ground of **resurrection** before his service can be approved. The Lord does not want us to be misguided to assume that authority comes from someone other than God. **We are not the authority**; we are only here to **represent authority**. The flesh has no place. We must also tell others that **everything wrong comes from us** and **everything right comes from God**. Every time we talk to men or deal with matters, we have to remember that **we cannot trust in ourselves** and that we have to understand God's will. We cannot go out on our own and make suggestions or decisions lightly. Authority does not rest with us; we are merely the **deputy authorities**. If we act according to our own will, we will create big problems. **The church cannot be without authority, and the church cannot tolerate the misuse of authority**. God has only one mind, which is to build up His own authority.

In the church submission to authority is absolute, and **fear and trembling on the part of the deputy authority should also be absolute**. Without submission there is no church. At the same time, a deputy authority must not make suggestions or decisions loosely, and he must not speak carelessly or dictate others' pathways. It is wrong to judge the brothers or to interpret the Bible lightly. Our submission must be absolute, and our representation of authority must also be absolute. There are **two problems** in the church today. One is the **lack of absolute submission**, and the other is the **misrepresentation of authority**. **We must learn not to speak loosely** or make proposals casually. Our spirit has to be open to the Lord all the time, and we have to look to His light. If we do not, we will implicate God in our mistakes. We may even say that we are acting in the Lord's name or on His behalf. Actually, none of our actions are of the Lord. We must **learn to submit** on the one hand, and **learn to represent** God on the other hand. Hence, we must know the cross, and we must know resurrection. Whether or not the church will have a way to go on depends on how we have learned this lesson. (Collected Works of Watchman Nee, The (Set 3) Vol. 47: The Orthodoxy of the Church & Authority and Submission, Chapter 29, Section 3)