

The fact that the rod of the tribe of Levi was singled out for such special treatment proved that Moses and Aaron were not wrong in assetting divine appointment to leadership over the nation, against the claims of Dathan and Abiram who belonged to the tribe of Reuben (xvi.1). The budding of a rod which bore the name of Aaron gave added denial to the claims of Korah and his Levitical followers that they had as much right to the priesthood as the family of Aaron (xvi.8-11), claims which already had been met by the death of Korah and his followers (xvi.35). As permanent evidence of the divine decision, God commanded that Aaron's rod be preserved in the tabernacle (16; cf. Heb.ix.4) .

b. Reaffirmation of the privileges and responsibilities of Aaron and the Levites (xvii.12-xviii.32)

Instead of quieting the minds of the people, the miracle seems to have left them confused and uneasy. It was hard for them to forget the death of the 250 men who offered incense, and they began to think of the tabernacle of God as a place of terror and perplexity (12-13). In order to set their fears at rest, God proceeded next to give a comprehensive statement of the divine arrangements for the ministry of the tabernacle, that there be no wrath any more upon the children of Israel (xviii.5). Priesthood is to be restricted to the family of Aaron (1-7). The other Levites are to serve the tabernacle under his direction, but never to do the actual task of the priesthood. Their position is one of great honour, but subordinate to the family of Aaron.

Verses 8-19 describe the offerings (8-11), firstfruits (12-13), devoted things (14), and firstlings (15-18), which are to become the property of the priests. A covenant of salt (19); i.e., an indissoluble covenant; cf. Je.xxxiii.18-22. Salt was used with every sacrifice (Lv.ii.13; Mk.ix.49-50). Aaron is not, like the priests of other nations, to become a wealthy handholder (20), nor are the Levites to receive a section of Canaan, like the other tribes (23-24). The Levites are to be supported by the tithes of the nation (21,24). Anyone who does not belong