

Aaron, the Earthly High Priest of the Lord

(Exodus & Numbers)

by

Joelee Chamberlain

We hear a lot in the Bible about Moses, don't we? And I've talked to you about Moses in some of my other audios, haven't I? But Moses had an older brother. Do you remember his name? Yes, Moses' older brother was named Aaron. So let's talk about Aaron today, okay?

Aaron was born in Egypt during the time that the king of Egypt, Pharaoh, was being very mean to the children of Israel (the people we call the Jews now). Now you remember who Israel was, don't you? Yes, Israel was Jacob's other name. And Jacob's children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and so on were called the children of Israel, that is, the descendants of Israel. But the Bible often calls them just "Israel". And Pharaoh had made the children of Israel (Israel) to be slaves and worked them very hard.

Aaron's mother was named Jochebed, and his father was named Amram. His great-grandfather was Levi, the son of Jacob. Aaron was 3 years older than his brother Moses. But Aaron had a sister who was older than himself. Do you remember her name? Yes, his sister was Miriam. (I told you about Miriam another time, didn't I?)

Now, you know the story about how Aaron's baby brother Moses was adopted by an Egyptian princess, don't you? But for a few years their mother Jochebed took care of little Moses before Moses went to live with the princess. So Aaron got to play with his little brother and got to know him.

We aren't told anything in the Bible about Aaron when he was growing up. But when Aaron was 43 years old, his brother Moses went far away, so Aaron probably didn't see him for a long time. But 40 years later when Aaron was 83 years old, the Lord spoke to Aaron. The Lord said to him, "Go out into the wilderness and meet Moses."

So Aaron went out a long way into the wilderness and met his brother Moses who was then 80 years old. When Aaron saw Moses, he kissed his brother. I'll bet they were very glad to see each other, don't you?!

Then Moses told Aaron, "The Lord spoke to me, too." Moses told Aaron that the Lord had told him that they were to go back together to Egypt and tell Pharaoh to let the children of Israel (their relatives) leave Egypt! And Moses told Aaron that the Lord had given him the power to do some miracles to show both Israel and Pharaoh that he (Moses) was telling them things that the Lord God had said. Now, at the time the Lord had been talking to Moses, Moses had told the Lord that he himself couldn't speak well, so the Lord had said that Aaron would do the talking. So now Moses told Aaron the the Lord would tell Moses what to say, then Moses would tell Aaron, then Aaron would tell their relatives and Pharaoh. Yes, Aaron would do the talking for his brother Moses.

So Moses and Aaron traveled together back to Egypt. And they gathered together all the leaders of Israel. Then Aaron told the leaders what the Lord had told Moses, and after that miracles were done for the people to see so that they'd believe him.

One miracle turned out really funny, so I'm going to tell you about it. The Lord had told them that when Pharaoh asked them to show him a miracle, then Moses was to tell Aaron to throw his rod, his walking stick, down in front of Pharaoh, and it would become a snake! So when they were with Pharaoh, Pharaoh asked to see a miracle, and they did what the Lord had told them to do. Aaron threw his rod down on the ground in front of Pharaoh -- and it turned into a snake.

Well, Pharaoh had some magicians who worked for him, so he called for the magicians, and the magicians threw their rods down on the ground, and their rods turned into snakes, too. But what do you think happened then?! Why, Aaron's rod/snake just swallowed up their rod/snakes! Just imagine! Then Aaron picked up his snake, and it turned back into his rod. But Pharaoh's magicians didn't even have any snakes now, because they'd been eaten up by Aaron's! Isn't that funny?!

Well, the children of Israel believed Moses and Aaron. The people realized that the Lord had heard how hard things were for them, so the people bowed their heads and worshipped the Lord.

Then Moses and Aaron went to the Egyptian king, Pharaoh, and told him, "This is what the Lord God of Israel said. He said, 'Let my people go.'"

But Pharaoh didn't believe what Aaron and Moses said. Pharaoh said, "Who is the Lord that I should obey what He says? I won't let the people go!" And then Pharaoh made the children of Israel work even harder than they had before.

Now the Lord had already told Moses that at first Pharaoh wouldn't let the people leave Egypt. And now Moses talked to the Lord and said, "Lord, why have you sent me? Pharaoh is being more mean to the people. And you haven't delivered them."

But Moses didn't know that the Lord had a plan! You see, Pharaoh and most of the Egyptians worshipped idols and didn't believe in the only real God. So the Lord said, "Now you will see what I will do, and Pharaoh will let them go." And the Lord said to Moses, "I will tell you what to say, and you will tell your brother Aaron, and then Aaron will tell Pharaoh." The Lord said, "At first Pharaoh won't let them go, but I will send judgments on Egypt, and then they will know that I am the Lord."

So the Lord sent 10 plagues onto Egypt. Most times Aaron and Moses warned Pharaoh that the plague was going to happen, but Pharaoh wouldn't pay any attention to them. You remember those plagues, don't you?

In the first plague the Lord told Moses to have Aaron stretch out his rod (the one that had eaten the magicians' snakes!) out over the river. So while Pharaoh was down by the water, Aaron stretched out his rod and hit the river of Egypt, and all the water turned to blood for 7 days. For the second plague, the Lord told Moses to tell Aaron to stretch out his rod over the waters again. So Aaron stretched out his rod over the waters again, and this time lots and lots of frogs came up out of the waters, and there were frogs everywhere, all over everything! There were other plagues, too. Another time it was very, very dark all day and all night for 3 days (but not where the children of Israel lived), Another time the Egyptians got sores. Yet another time their cows got sick (but not the cows of the children of Israel). Many times Moses and Aaron would go to Pharaoh, and Aaron would speak to Pharaoh and warn him about what was going to happen. But each time Pharaoh still wouldn't obey the Lord. Sometimes the Bible says Aaron used his rod, other times it doesn't say.

But finally the last plague came where the firstborn in each house would die unless the father put the blood of a lamb around the doorway of the house. If he did that, then the firstborn of that family was safe. (This was the first Passover. You remember about Passover, don't you? I've told you about it before.) So all they had to do was to obey what they were told to do!

The children of Israel and any of the Egyptians who believed the Lord did obey the Lord, and their firstborn were safe. But Pharaoh and many of the Egyptians would not do that; they didn't pay any attention to what the Lord had said -- and their firstborn died that night. That's very sad, but it was their own fault, wasn't it? Well, then Pharaoh got up and called for Moses and Aaron and told them, "Go!! Take all of Israel with you and all of their cattle with them and leave!! Hurry!!!"

So all of Israel and the Egyptians who had believed the Lord left Egypt. The Lord led them out into the wilderness, and they started on their way to the land that the Lord had promised to them.

After a while they were getting low on food, and the people got mad at Moses and Aaron. The people said, "We should have stayed in Egypt where there was food. Why have you brought us out into this wilderness where we'll all die of hunger?"

But the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron and said, "I will give all of you bread from heaven." Aaron and Moses told the people this. And that is when the Lord first gave them manna, and He gave them manna all the time they were in the wilderness. And the Lord told Moses to have Aaron fill a golden pot with manna and keep it as a reminder that the Lord fed them and took care of them in the wilderness.

As they were traveling, some bad people called Amalekites came and began fighting with Israel. It seems that what the Amalekites did was to attack the people at the

end of the line, the ones who were tired and maybe not so strong. So Moses said to one of the men of Israel called Joshua, "Choose some of our men and go fight with the Amalekites tomorrow." Moses said, "I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand." (This was the rod that the Lord had Moses use for some of his miracles.)

So the next day Joshua got some men together and fought the Amalekites. And Moses, Aaron, and a man named Hur went up on the top of the hill. And when Moses held up his hand with the rod, Israel would be winning, but when Moses put his hand down, the Amalekites would be winning. So of course, Moses would try to keep his hand up all the time, wouldn't he? But his arms got tired. So Aaron and Hur took a big rock and had Moses sit on it. Then Aaron stood on one side of Moses, and Hur stood on the other side of Moses. And they helped Moses hold his hands up. And this went on all day long!! But Israel won the fight against the Amalekites.

Well, they all kept traveling on. The Lord led them with a pillar of cloud in the daytime and a pillar of fire in the nighttime. And after 3 months they got to Mt. Sinai, the same mountain where the Lord had first told Moses that he and Aaron were going to take the children of Israel out of Egypt. And there the Lord spoke from on top of Mt. Sinai and gave them the Ten Commandments. And the Lord told them not to make idols and not to worship anything but the Lord God.

But the people were afraid when the Lord spoke to them. They told Moses for him to talk to the Lord himself and then tell them what the Lord told him. So the Lord had Moses and Aaron and 2 of Aaron's sons and 70 of the leaders of the people go near the mountain and have a sort of worship service there. The Bible says that these men somehow saw God, and then they ate and drank there before God and worshipped Him.

Well, after this the Lord called Moses up onto the mountain to be with Him. It seems that Joshua had gone part way up the mountain with him and waited there for him. And the mountain had dark clouds over it, and thunders and lightnings were there. Moses went up into the cloud, and he left Aaron and Hur in charge of things while he was gone.

Moses was gone for 40 days and nights, and the Lord talked to Moses all of this time, telling him things he should do. And the Lord wrote the Ten Commandments on 2 flat pieces of stone and gave these to Moses.

Well, after Moses had been gone a while, the children of Israel got worried. They went to Aaron and said to him, "Get up and make us gods which will lead us. We don't know what's happened to Moses, the man who brought us out of Egypt."

Now, this was a very bad thing of the people to ask Aaron, wasn't it? And it was also a very silly thing. After all, people can't make a real god, can they?! How silly!!! Why, the Lord God made everything, didn't He?! How can people make a god??!!

But it was also a very bad thing for the people to want. The Lord God Himself was leading them and giving them food and water. The Bible says that even their clothes and shoes didn't wear out all of the time they were in the wilderness! The Lord was taking good care of them, wasn't He? So what should Aaron have done when the people asked him to make them gods? Yes, Aaron should have told them they were being bad and silly; and he should have reminded them how the Lord was taking care of them. And Aaron especially should have reminded them that the Lord had warned them not to make idols, shouldn't he? But he didn't.

So what do you think Aaron did instead? Why, Aaron said to the people, "Break off all of the golden earrings that your family is wearing and bring them to me."

And they broke off their golden earrings and brought them to Aaron. Now, there were 2-3 million people there, so that was a lot of gold, wasn't it? Then Aaron took all of those golden earrings and melted them down and made a statue of a calf from it. Then the people said, "This is our god which brought us up out of Egypt." Can you imagine that??!! How silly! After all, Aaron had just made this statue from their earrings!

When Aaron saw how the people received this statue, this idol, he built an altar in front of the statue and said, "Tomorrow we will have a feast to the Lord."

So the next day they got up early in the morning and offered sacrifices to the golden calf idol. And then they sat down and ate and drank and then got up and began singing and dancing around, and some of them even took off their clothes and were dancing around naked! Remember, they had just left Egypt where the Egyptians worshipped idols, and I guess that is what the Egyptians did, and they had seen this.

Now, do you think that up on the mountain that the Lord knew what Aaron had done and what the children of Israel were doing? Yes, of course! The Lord knows everything, doesn't He? So then the Lord said to Moses, "Go down now. For the people have made themselves a statue of a calf and are worshipping it and offering sacrifices to it and saying that it had brought them out of Egypt!"

So Moses took the 2 tables of stone that the Lord had written on and given him and started going down off the mountain. He met Joshua, and when Joshua heard the noise that the people were making as they shouted and sang, Joshua said to Moses, "It sounds like a noise of war in the camp."

But Moses said, "No, I hear the noise of singing."

And as soon as Moses got near the camp, he saw the calf-idol and he saw the people dancing around it, and Moses got very angry. And what do you think Moses did then? Why, he was so angry that he threw down the 2 tables of stone the Lord had given

him, and they broke!

Then Moses just grabbed that calf-idol and melted it down in the fire. And then Moses ground the gold from the idol to powder and scattered the gold powder on the water and made the people drink the water!! Now, that seems like a strange thing to do, doesn't it? Having them drink the water with the gold from the idol in it, but I got to thinking about it. After a while, what would happen to that gold they had drunk? Yes, when they had a bowel movement, pooped, the gold powder would come out in the poop, wouldn't it?! Imagine going to the bathroom and seeing gold powder in the toilet! But then the people would see that what they had been worshipping was something that, as we would say, could be flushed down the toilet! The thing they had been worshipping was poop! So maybe that would make them realize how foolish it was to worship idols. And also now they didn't have all of those earrings, either!

Anyway, then Moses scolded Aaron and said to him, "What did the people do to you that made you bring such a great sin on them?"

And Aaron said, "Don't be mad at me. You know the people that they do things they shouldn't. They said to me, 'Make us gods to lead us, because we don't know what has happened to Moses.' So I told them that whoever had gold to give it to me, and they did."

So far Aaron told the truth to Moses, didn't he? But now Aaron lied to Moses and said, "So I threw the gold into the fire, and there came out this calf."

Then Moses went to the entrance to the camp and called out, "Whoever is on the Lord's side, come to me." And the descendants of Levi went to Moses. And Moses had them kill some of the people who had been worshipping that idol. And finally the Lord stopped being angry at the children of Israel.

Now, Aaron was very wrong to have done this, wasn't he? But this shows that even good, very important people can forget and do wrong things, doesn't it? So all of us need to be careful and try to do only what is right, don't we? And, of course, we shouldn't follow even very good and important people when they do something bad, should we?

Now, after this the people were sorry for what they had done, and they listened carefully to Moses when he told them what the Lord had said to him. One of the things was that they were to build a Tabernacle, a big tent, to be used in the worship of the Lord. The people were all very happy to do this now. And they happily brought all sorts of things to build the Tabernacle. They brought more gold and they brought silver and bronze and jewels and cloth. They wanted to help build the Tabernacle of the Lord. In fact, they brought so many things that finally Moses had to tell them to stop bringing things! (Another time I told you a lot about the Tabernacle, didn't I?)

After the Tabernacle was all built and set up, the Lord told Moses to have a big ceremony in which Aaron was to be made the high priest and his sons were to be made priests. So they did. Aaron was given special clothes to wear as the Lord God's high priest. And Aaron very carefully followed the directions that the Lord had given to Moses. Aaron offered sacrifices to the Lord on the new altar and Aaron blessed the people. The Lord was happy with how well they had done all of this, and the glory of the Lord (a great brightness) came and was seen by the people. Then what do you think happened? Why the Lord sent fire from heaven and burned the sacrifice that Aaron had put on the altar! This showed that the Lord liked how they had done things.

And after that Aaron and the other priests used this special fire when they offered sacrifices to the Lord on the big altar outside of the Tabernacle and also when they burned incense to the Lord inside of the Tabernacle. Oh, remember that I said earlier that the Lord told Moses to tell Aaron to fill a golden pot with manna? Well, this pot of manna was put inside the ark of the covenant that was inside of the Tabernacle.

But later Aaron did another thing that he shouldn't have done. You see, the Lord had made Moses to be the big leader of Israel. But their sister Miriam and Aaron didn't like Moses' wife. So they said to Moses, "Does the Lord only speak through you? Doesn't the Lord also speak through us?" It sounds as if Aaron and Miriam were maybe jealous of their brother Moses, doesn't it? But the Bible says that Moses wasn't proud about being the main one; it says Moses was very humble.

Well, of course, the Lord heard this and didn't like it. So the Lord came down in the pillar of cloud to the door of the Tabernacle and called for Aaron and Miriam to come out. They did, and the Lord said to them, "Listen to what I'm saying. I speak to prophets in dreams or visions, but I speak to Moses face to face. Why then weren't you afraid to speak against my servant Moses?" Then the cloud went back up.

And what do you think happened then? Why, Aaron looked at their sister Miriam, and she had leprosy, a terrible skin disease! Then Aaron cried to Moses, "Oh, sir, please don't hold our sin against us. We have been foolish and have sinned! Don't let Miriam have this awful skin disease!" Aaron was asking Moses to ask the Lord to make their sister Miriam well again.

So Moses cried out to the Lord and said, "Please, O God, heal her now!" And the Lord healed Miriam.

After that they came to a place near the land of Canaan, and the Lord had Moses send 12 men into Canaan to spy out the land, that is, to see what the land was like. Two of the men were Joshua and Caleb. (I've talked about them before, haven't I?) The 12 men were gone for 40 days. When the 12 men, the spies, got back, they all said it was a good land. Two of the men, Joshua and Caleb, said that they should go right in and that the Lord would give them the land. But 10 of the men said that the cities were big and had

walls and that giants lived there, too.

This scared the children of Israel so that they didn't trust the Lord to keep His promise to give them the land. The people even wanted to go back to Egypt where they had been slaves! Moses and Aaron and the 2 good spies, Joshua and Caleb, tried to argue with the people, but they wouldn't listen. So the Lord said that the people would have to go back into the wilderness and be there for 40 more years. By not trusting the Lord, the 10 bad spies had given a bad report. And the people had listened to the bad report and hadn't trusted the Lord. So by not trusting the Lord they had caused a lot of trouble for themselves and for everyone else, hadn't they? Yes, and now instead of going right into the good land of Canaan, they'd have to wander in the wilderness for 40 more years.

Now, there was a man named Korah who was also descended from Jacob's son Levi, just as Aaron and Moses were. And there were 2 other men named Dathan and Abiram who were descended from Jacob's first son Reuben. And Korah, Dathan, and Abiram got together 250 leaders of Israel and went to Moses and Aaron and said to them, "You take too much on yourselves. The Lord is among all of us, so why do you act as if you were better than the rest of us?"

Oops!! That doesn't sound too smart of Korah and the others, does it?! After all, Who had made Moses and Aaron to be the leaders of the children of Israel? Yes, the Lord had! So when Korah is speaking against Moses and Aaron, Korah is actually speaking against the Lord, isn't he? Well, let's see what happens next, okay?!

When Moses heard what Korah said, he said to Korah and the other men with him, "Tomorrow the Lord will show who is holy, and He will choose who is to come near Him." (Holy means set apart to God.)

Now here I need to explain a couple of things. The Lord had said that only to be the descendants of Aaron were to be His priests, hadn't He? And one of the things that only the priests could do was to burn incense before the Lord. But the other descendants of Levi were also special in that they would be the ones to take care of the Tabernacle and help in the things of the Lord. Korah was a descendant of Levi, but not of Aaron, so he couldn't be a priest, could he? But he thought he should be able to be a priest. Also, Dathan and Abiram were descended from Reuben, Jacob's firstborn son. So it seems to me that these men seem to have figured that they should be able to be the leaders along with Moses and Aaron.

Another thing I need to explain is about censers. A censer is a sort of plate made of metal. It can have a handle to hold it by, or it can hang from narrow chains that are attached to it, and it is held by these little chains. Whichever kind of censer is used, coals are put on the censer, then incense, a kind of solid perfume, is put on the coals. The incense burns and makes a sweet smell. This was done in the worship of the Lord, and the smoke from the incense was sort of a picture of prayers going up to heaven. But now lets

get back to Moses and Aaron.

Then Moses said to Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and the 250 men with them, "Each of you men take a censer. Put fire (coals) in the censer and put incense on them. Do this before the Lord tomorrow. And it shall be that the man Whom the Lord chooses shall be holy (special, set apart to the Lord)."

So the next morning Aaron took his censer. And Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and the 250 other men took censers. They all put fire in their censers and put incense on the fire and stood at the door of the Tabernacle. And Korah had gathered a lot of the children of Israel around him. Now how to you think the Lord is going to like what these other men are doing??!!

Well, suddenly the glory of the Lord, a great shining, appeared! And everyone saw it! Ooohh!! And the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron saying, "Stand away from all of the people that I may kill them all!"

But Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before the Lord and said, "O God, are you going to be angry with everyone because of the sin of just a few men?"

The Lord said to Moses, "Speak to the people and tell them to get away from Korah, Dathan, and Abiram."

Evidently Korah, Dathan, and Abiram had gone back to their own tents after burning the incense. So Moses spoke to the people and told them, "Get away from these wicked men." And they did.

Then Moses said to all of the people, "This is how you will know that the Lord has sent me to do these things, that they are not just from me. If these men die just in a regular way like everyone else, then the Lord hasn't sent me. However, if the Lord does something new and has the earth open up on them and they and their tents and things go down into there, then you will all know that these men have been against the Lord."

So what do you think happened then? Why, as soon as Moses had stopped talking, the Lord had the earth open up under Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and their tents! And they and their tents fell into the hole, and then the earth closed up over them, and so they died!

When the children of Israel saw this, they were scared!! And they ran away from there! But what about the other 250 men who had dared to rebel and burn incense before the Lord, also? Why, fire came down from heaven and burned them up! (All of this showed that Moses was the leader and that only Aaron and his sons were to be priests, didn't it?)

Then the Lord said to Moses, "You tell Eleazar, one of Aaron's sons (who was, of

course, a priest), to go pick up all of the censers that the men used; pick them up out of the fire. These are holy, special to the Lord, in that they have been used to burn incense to the Lord."

The Lord said. "Have these censers pounded out flat, and cover the big bronze altar in the Tabernacle yard with them."

So Aaron's son Eleazer, a priest, did as he was told. And the metal censers were pounded flat and covered the big altar where sacrifices to the Lord were burned. And this was a reminder to all of the children of Israel that no one except Aaron's descendants were ever to offer incense before the Lord. When the Lord says something, He means what He says, and we should be careful to obey Him, shouldn't we? We need to obey our parents, because the Lord says so. But most importantly we need to obey the Lord. He is the Lord God who made us and who made everything in the whole world. But that's not the end of that story, so let's go on!

Now, you'd think that the children of Israel would have learned their lesson by now, wouldn't you? But no! The very next morning after all of this had happened, the people began complaining about Moses and Aaron! They said, "You killed the Lord's people."

And they gathered together against Moses and Aaron. But then they looked toward the Tabernacle, and what do you think they saw? Why the cloud of the Lord covered the Tabernacle, and the glory of the Lord shone very brightly out from it! Then Moses and Aaron went over by the Tabernacle, and the Lord spoke to Moses saying, "Get away from these people so I may kill them!"

Well, Moses and Aaron fell on their faces. But the Lord had sent a plague, a sickness, on the people who had come against Moses and Aaron, and some of them were already starting to die. Moses said to Aaron, "Quick! Go take a censer and put fire from the altar on it and put incense on to it, and go quickly out among the people and make atonement for them, for the plague has begun!" (Remember, the smoke from this special incense was a picture of prayers. So it was as if Aaron, the high priest, was to pray for them.)

So Aaron took the censer with the fire and incense and ran out among the people and made atonement for them. Aaron went to where there were already some dead people, and he stood between the dead people and the ones who were alive. And the Lord honored Aaron's sacrifice of incense and stopped the plague. So Aaron went back to where Moses was at the door of the Tabernacle.

Now, the incense itself wasn't magical. No. It was just a symbol of prayers, and it may also have been something like a sacrifice this time as well. But why did the Lord judge the children of Israel this way? Well, the Lord wanted good things and a good land

for the children of Israel. But they needed to learn to obey Him and to trust Him. Remember, now they were having to wander in the wilderness for 40 years, because they had disobeyed and wanted to go back and be slaves in Egypt, weren't they? They had not trusted the Lord about going into the land of Canaan. When we disobey God, we're not only disrespectful to God, but it isn't good for us nor for the people around us. The Lord's judging these people was a way for Him to stop them from encouraging all the other children of Israel to do wrong and to teach Israel to follow God and get the good things that He had for them.

So the Lord wasn't being mean to the people. The Lord is good and kind and fair, and anything He does is the right thing. But the leaders and people had to learn that they needed to obey Him, didn't they? The Lord loved the children of Israel, but they had to learn to obey Him so that they could have good lives. It was like when children do something bad, and the parents punish them. The parents love their children and are teaching them how to lead good lives, But there is still more to this story of when the children of Israel were speaking against Aaron and Moses. So let's go on!

After making atonement for the people with the incense, Aaron had gone back to where Moses was at the Tabernacle. And the Lord spoke to Moses. He said, "You speak to the children of Israel. Have a prince (a big leader) from each of the 12 tribes of Israel take his rod and write his own name on it. Have Aaron write his name on his rod for the tribe of Levi. Then you are to take all 12 of these rods into the Tabernacle and lay them there." Then the Lord said to Moses, "I will meet you there. And it will happen that the man's rod that I choose will have blossoms on it. I will make the people stop complaining against you."

Now that was a very good idea, wasn't it? Each tribe would have a man's rod (walking stick) in the Tabernacle overnight. In the morning the one whose rod had blossoms, that tribe would be the tribe that would have the priests. So let's see what happened!

Moses told the people this, and a big leader, a prince, from each tribe brought his rod with his name on it to Moses. Aaron's rod was for the tribe of Levi. And Moses put the 12 rods in the Tabernacle.

The next morning Moses went into the tabernacle, and what do you think he found? Well, 11 of the rods were still just plain wooden rods. But Aaron's rod had evidently been made out of wood from an almond tree, and now it not only had blossoms on it, it also had buds and almond nuts growing on it!! This was a miracle, wasn't it?! And it was even more of a miracle, because almond trees don't have buds, flowers, and nuts on them all at the same time! No! They get all buds at one time, these buds later all bloom at the same time, then later still the nuts all come at the same time! But there were all three on Aaron's rod, buds flowers, and nuts -- and just in one night! So this way the Lord was showing several times that Aaron's rod was the chosen rod, wasn't He?! That Aaron and

his family were the only ones to be His priests.

So Moses took all 12 of the rods out of the Tabernacle and showed them to the people. And each of the men took his own rod. But then the Lord said to Moses, "Bring Aaron's rod back into the Tabernacle again. It is to be kept to show anyone who thinks of rebelling. And this will stop my hearing the people complaining, so they won't die for it."

And Moses did as the Lord said. And the Lord then talked to Aaron and again told him that he and his sons would be the Lord's priests and the other descendants of Levi would help at the Tabernacle.

Aaron served for about 40 years as the first high priest of the Lord. And he became an old man, 123 years old! And finally it was time for Aaron to die. So the Lord spoke to Moses and said, "Take Aaron and his son Eleazar and take them up onto this mountain. There you are to take Aaron's special high priest's clothes off of him and put them on his son Eleazar."

Moses did what the Lord said. All the people watched as Moses and Aaron and Eleazar went up onto the mountain. And Moses took the special high priest's clothes off of Aaron and put them on Eleazar. Then Aaron died there on top of the mountain. Then Moses and Eleazar came down off the mountain, and when the people saw Eleazar in the high priest's clothes, they knew Aaron was dead. They also knew that Eleazar was now the new high priest of the Lord.

Aaron was the first high priest of the Lord. Yes, he did some things he shouldn't have done, but he was also a great man and was special. There is no temple of the Lord now, so there isn't a man here on earth who is the Lord's high priest. But did you know that we have a High Priest in heaven? Yes, we do! Who is He, our High Priest in heaven, do you know? Yes, of course, our High Priest in heaven is the Lord Jesus Christ!

But Jesus never did any sins, did He? No, Jesus never did anything that He shouldn't have done. And that is why the Lord Jesus was able to die for our sins, wasn't it? Yes, Jesus is God, God the Son. And God the Father, Who loves us very much, had Jesus (Who also loves us very much) come to earth as a human (though He was still God the Son then, too). And Jesus lived a perfect life, never sinning. And why did Jesus come to earth? Yes, He came because He loves us so much that He was willing to die for our sins. That way, Jesus made an atonement for our sins, and we can someday go to heaven and be with God forever. But how can we someday be able to go to heaven? Yes, by trusting in Jesus to forgive our sins.

Now, did Jesus stay dead? No! Of course not! Three days after He died on the cross for our sins, Jesus was alive again! (That's what we celebrate at Easter, isn't it?) And later He went back up to heaven where He is now with God the Father. And the Lord Jesus is our High Priest before God the Father. But someday the Lord Jesus is coming back to

earth, isn't He? And then He will be King of everything and everyone forever. And everyone who has trusted in the Lord Jesus to forgive their sins will be with Him forever and ever, too.

Yes, Aaron as the Lord's high priest on earth was like a picture of Jesus, our High Priest in heaven.