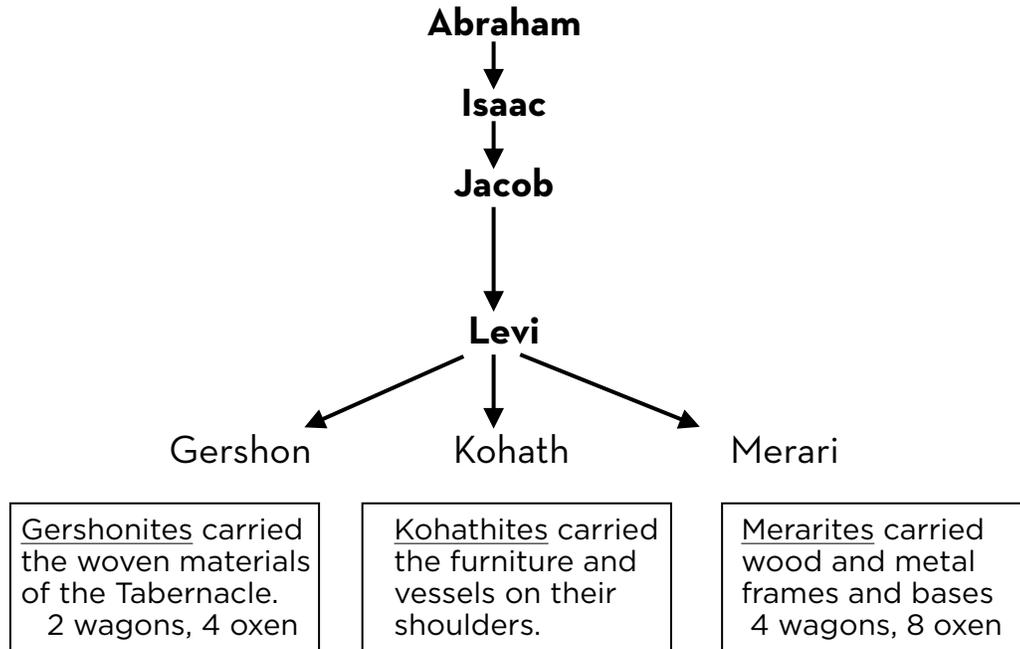


Adult Bible Class  
The Book of Numbers  
Lesson #5, Chapters 7 & 8

Numbers Chapter 7



**Numbers 7:1 (NLT)** On the day Moses set up the Tabernacle, he anointed it and set it apart as holy. He also anointed and set apart all its furnishings and the altar with its utensils. <sup>2</sup> Then the leaders of Israel—the tribal leaders who had registered the troops—came and brought their offerings. <sup>3</sup> Together they brought six large wagons and twelve oxen. There was a wagon for every two leaders and an ox for each leader. They presented these to the Lord in front of the Tabernacle.

<sup>4</sup> Then the Lord said to Moses, <sup>5</sup> “Receive their gifts, and use these oxen and wagons for transporting the Tabernacle. Distribute them among the Levites according to the work they have to do.” <sup>6</sup> So Moses took the wagons and oxen and presented them to the Levites. <sup>7</sup> He gave two wagons and four oxen to the Gershonite division for their work, <sup>8</sup> and he gave four wagons and eight oxen to the Merarite division for their work. All their work was done under the leadership of Ithamar son of Aaron the priest. <sup>9</sup> But he gave none of the wagons or oxen to the Kohathite division, since they were required to carry the sacred objects of the Tabernacle on their shoulders.

The Levites were divided into three groups, named for sons of Levi - the Gershonites, the Merarites, and the Kohathites.

The Gershonites were responsible for carrying the tabernacle curtains. They were given two wagons and four oxen. The Merarites were responsible for carrying the wooden frames, metal bases, cords, pegs, etc. They were given four wagons and eight oxen.

The Kohathites were responsible for carrying the tabernacle furniture including the ark of the covenant, the table of showbread, the lampstand, the incense altar and the brazen altar - along with the vessels that went with these pieces of furniture. They were commanded to carry these on their shoulders.



The artwork at left is incorrect. The ark of the covenant was to be covered with several layers - the top layer being blue cloth, as seen to the right.



**Numbers 7:10** The leaders also presented dedication gifts for the altar at the time it was anointed. They each placed their gifts before the altar. <sup>11</sup> The Lord said to Moses, "Let one leader bring his gift each day for the dedication of the altar."

<sup>12</sup> On the first day Nahshon son of Amminadab, leader of the tribe of Judah, presented his offering.

<sup>13</sup> His offering consisted of a silver platter weighing 3 1/4 pounds and a silver basin weighing 1 3/4 pounds (as measured by the weight of the sanctuary shekel). These were both filled with grain offerings of choice flour moistened with olive oil. <sup>14</sup> He also brought a gold container weighing four ounces, which was filled with incense. <sup>15</sup> He brought a young bull, a ram, and a one-year-old male lamb for a burnt offering, <sup>16</sup> and a male goat for a sin offering. <sup>17</sup> For a peace offering he brought two bulls, five rams, five male goats, and five one-year-old male lambs. This was the offering brought by Nahshon son of Amminadab.

The other tribes of Israel are described bringing their offerings (the same) in the following verses. We will not read all of these verses since the offerings are identical.

This is the third longest chapter in the Bible with all of its offerings from the twelve tribes. These were freewill offerings, and Scripture records what each one gave for the service of the Tabernacle. On this special occasion, the dedication of the Tabernacle where the Lord had taken His place on the mercy seat, the spirit of giving took hold of the people. In this case, they all gave the same. Their offerings honored God.

Giving takes on many forms. Most giving is done privately. However, some giving is meant to be made public. No doubt the princes of Israel who brought the offerings on behalf of their tribes had gotten together (since the amount was the same) and purposed to all bring these offerings. Public offerings have their place and can be directed by the Holy Spirit as well as private, personal offerings.

The chapter ends with:

**Numbers 7:89** Whenever Moses went into the Tabernacle to speak with the Lord, he heard the voice speaking to him from between the two cherubim above the Ark's cover—the place of atonement—that rests on the Ark of the Covenant. The Lord spoke to him from there.

God spoke directly to Moses - Moses heard the voice of God speaking to him when he went into the tabernacle. The mercy seat, which was the lid of the Ark of the Covenant, was where God dwelt. It was God's throne among His people. It was the place of atonement - the Atonement Cover. The blood of the sacrifice on the Day of Atonement was sprinkled on the mercy seat.

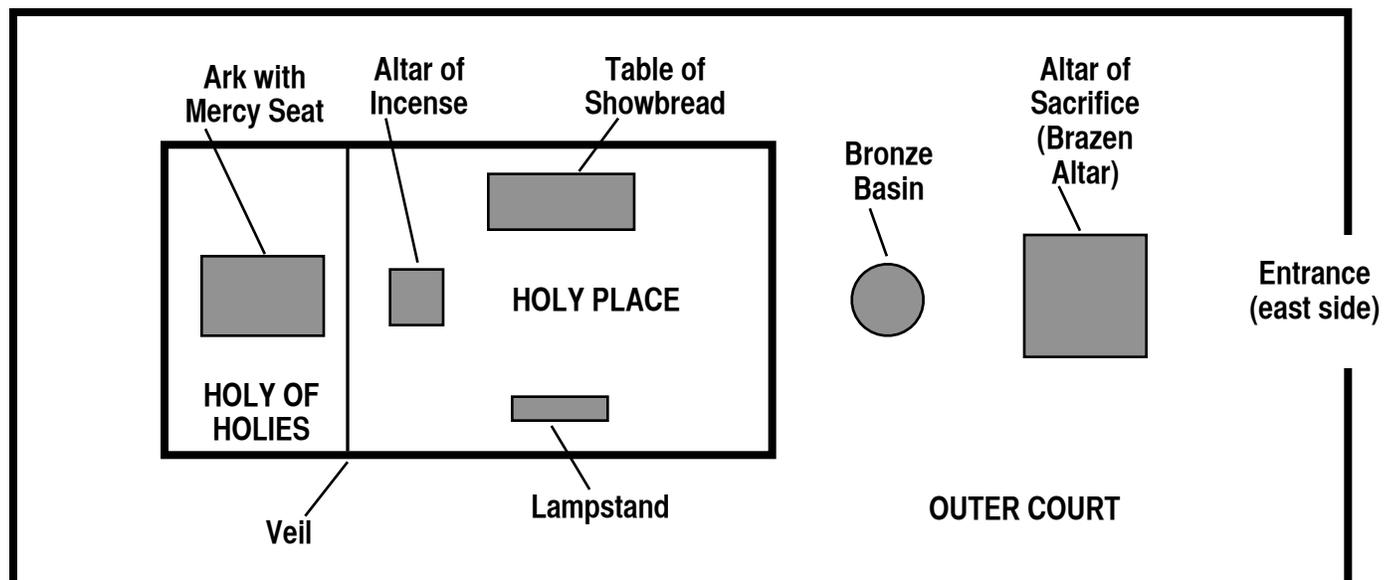
## Numbers Chapter 8

**Numbers 8:1 (NLT)** The Lord said to Moses, <sup>2</sup>“Give Aaron the following instructions: When you set up the seven lamps in the lampstand, place them so their light shines forward in front of the lampstand.” <sup>3</sup>So Aaron did this. He set up the seven lamps so they reflected their light forward, just as the Lord had commanded Moses. <sup>4</sup>The entire lampstand, from its base to its decorative blossoms, was made of beaten gold. It was built according to the exact design the Lord had shown Moses.

A year has passed since the Israelites were freed from Egyptian bondage. The second Passover is near. Remember, the Israelites were delivered from Egypt the day after the first Passover (they killed a lamb and applied its blood to the doorpost of their home, and then the next morning they walked out of Egypt). God told them that this was to be the “beginning of months” to them, or the beginning of their new year.

As this second Passover was approaching, God told Aaron that when he set up the lampstand, he was to place the lamps “*so their light shines forward.*” What would be forward in the Holy Place? Let’s look at a picture of the Tabernacle furniture:

### THE OLD TESTAMENT TABERNACLE



Let’s read about the construction of the lampstand in Exodus:

**Exodus 25:31 (NLT)** "Make a lampstand of pure, hammered gold. Make the entire lampstand and its decorations of one piece—the base, center stem, lamp cups, buds, and petals. <sup>32</sup> Make it with six branches going out from the center stem, three on each side. <sup>33</sup> Each of the six branches will have three lamp cups shaped like almond blossoms... <sup>34</sup> Craft the center stem of the lampstand with four lamp cups shaped like almond blossoms... <sup>35</sup> There will also be an almond bud beneath each pair of branches where the six branches extend from the center stem. <sup>36</sup> The almond buds and branches must all be of one piece with the center stem, and they must be hammered from pure gold. <sup>37</sup> Then make the seven lamps for the lampstand, and set them so they reflect their light forward... <sup>39</sup> You will need 75 pounds of pure gold for the lampstand and its accessories.



The lampstand was made of pure gold. In Scripture, gold speaks to us of deity. The lampstand was made from one piece of gold - hammered into its shape with its tubes and decorations. Our God is one! The gold lampstand, pure olive oil, and the light - are all symbolic of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

The lampstand actually was seven lamps in one piece of furniture since it had a total of seven branches (a main stem and three branches on each side). The decorations were formed on it by the master craftsman from the one piece of gold - decorations that looked like blossoms and buds from the almond tree.

The seven branched candlestick shined forward - but toward what? It was shining toward the gold Table of Showbread with its twelve loaves of bread. These twelve loaves of bread represent the twelve tribes of Israel. The loaves are known in Hebrew as "bread of the face," symbolizing that the twelve tribes were always in the presence of God. The loaves were replaced weekly, showing that the relationship between the tribes and Jehovah God was a living, continuous relationship. The bread shows God as provider of spiritual and physical sustenance.

To New Testament Christians, we see Jesus Christ - the bread of life, the living Word of God. The lampstand in the Tabernacle (the light of God) was illuminating the Word of God.

The lampstand (or candlestick) is symbolic of two things - first and foremost, our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, and, secondly, His church. Jesus is called the *"light of the world"* (John 8:12), and the church is also called a *"light"* (Matthew 5:14).

In Revelation, John saw lampstands in his vision:

**Revelation 1:12** When I turned to see who was speaking to me, I saw seven gold lampstands.

<sup>13</sup> And standing in the middle of the lampstands was someone like the Son of Man... <sup>16</sup> He held seven stars in his right hand, and a sharp two-edged sword came from his mouth. And his face was like the sun in all its brilliance.

<sup>17</sup> When I saw him, I fell at his feet as if I were dead. But he laid his right hand on me and said, "Don't be afraid!..."

<sup>19</sup> "Write down what you have seen..." <sup>20</sup> This is the meaning of the mystery of the seven stars you saw in my right hand and the seven gold lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

In Revelation we can see that Jesus sees His church as a light to this world, lighting the true Word of God in people's hearts and minds. The ministry (seven stars, angels, or messengers) especially is in the hand of Jesus Christ, ready to illuminate the wonderful Word of God so people can believe and receive the gospel. Also remember that Jesus is *"in the middle of the lampstands."* Jesus is in the middle of His churches.

The lampstand in Numbers was to reflect its light forward. The lampstand was the only light available in that dark, windowless sanctuary. Whether it was day or night, it didn't matter - the lampstand was the only light. The church is the only true light available in this dark world. Though the sun may be shining, this world is dark with ignorance of God and sin. The only way this world will ever see the wonderful Word of God is by the light of the church in which Jesus stands in its midst.

The priests were responsible for trimming and dressing the lampstand.

**Exodus 27:20** "And you shall command the children of Israel that they bring you pure oil of pressed olives for the light, to cause the lamp to burn continually. <sup>21</sup> In the tabernacle of meeting, outside the veil which *is* before the Testimony, Aaron and his sons shall tend it from evening until morning before the Lord..."

The lampstand was lit by the fire from the brazen altar (as was the altar of incense). Remember that the fire from the altar was fire that came from God Himself and consumed the sacrifices during the dedication of the Tabernacle and the priests (Lev. 9:22-24). There is one source of light for this world, and it is the fire that comes from God Himself.

Likewise, the church has one source of fire, and that is Pentecost. The fire that we have today is taken from the original fires of Pentecost. There is no new flame of fire, but we are lighted by that original fire of Pentecost that is described in Acts 2. With this flame of fire, we are the lampstand, the church of the living God. Jesus is in our midst, and we are the light to this dark, sin-sick world.

In modern synagogues, a menorah (lampstand) is placed to the side of the cabinet (ark) that houses the Torah scrolls. The modern nation of Israel uses the lampstand, or menorah, as one of their national symbols. This is because the rabbis believe Israel is to be a “light to the nations.” The Old Testament Scriptures came to us from the nation of Israel.



Above left is a modern emblem of the nation of Israel. To the right is a relief from the Arch of Titus found in Rome (Titus was the general in command when Judea was systematically conquered by the Romans, and Jerusalem with its Temple was destroyed). This arch was constructed in 82 A.D. Pictured are the spoils from the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 A.D. The Temple lampstand and the Table of Showbread (shown carried at an angle), both of solid gold, and the silver trumpets which called the Jews to festivals are all pictured here. This stone monument can still be seen today by visitors to Rome, although the structure is deteriorating.

### **The Levites Dedicated**

**Numbers 8:5** Then the Lord said to Moses, <sup>6</sup> “Now set the Levites apart from the rest of the people of Israel and make them ceremonially clean. <sup>7</sup> Do this by sprinkling them with the water of purification, and have them shave their entire body and wash their clothing. Then they will be ceremonially clean. <sup>8</sup> Have them bring a young bull and a grain offering of choice flour moistened with olive oil, along with a second young bull for a sin offering. <sup>9</sup> Then assemble the whole community of Israel, and present the Levites at the entrance of the Tabernacle. <sup>10</sup> When you present the Levites before the Lord, the people of Israel must lay their hands on them. <sup>11</sup> Raising his hands, Aaron must then present the Levites to the Lord as a special offering from the people of Israel, thus dedicating them to the Lord’s service.

We have previously read in Numbers 3 that the Levites were separated unto God and were not numbered with the people but were numbered by themselves so they might be employed in the service of the Tabernacle, helping the priests (remember that all priests are Levites, but not all Levites are priests). God called the Levites to this - they did not call themselves.

First, the Levites had to be cleansed for service. They had to wash their clothes and shave their entire bodies. It's interesting to note that a leper had to do this same thing when he was cleansed. Even in New Testament days we can see this picture:

**2 Corinthians 7:1** Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

These Levites will be carrying the tabernacle as well as the holy furniture and vessels of the tabernacle - and they must be clean and pure.

The Levites had to be sprinkled with the water of purification which was prepared specially for Tabernacle use. We are cleansed from sin by the blood of Jesus Christ by faith through water baptism. The New Testament states:

**Hebrews 10:22** let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

**Acts 22:16** And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

The people of Israel were to lay their hands on the Levites after they were cleansed. The laying on of hands brings a transference. Instead of the firstborn of all Israel, the Levites were given to God for His service.

**Numbers 8:12** "Next the Levites will lay their hands on the heads of the young bulls. Present one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering to the Lord, to purify the Levites and make them right with the Lord. <sup>13</sup> Then have the Levites stand in front of Aaron and his sons, and raise your hands and present them as a special offering to the Lord. <sup>14</sup> In this way, you will set the Levites apart from the rest of the people of Israel, and the Levites will belong to me. <sup>15</sup> After this, they may go into the Tabernacle to do their work, because you have purified them and presented them as a special offering.

Next, sacrifices were offered for the Levites. No one is fit for God's service without a sacrifice for sin, a burnt offering (which typifies giving our will wholly to God), and a grain offering (which typifies giving ourselves, our bodies for His service). We must have our sins taken away by the blood of Jesus and we must give ourselves completely to Him.

<sup>16</sup> "Of all the people of Israel, the Levites are reserved for me. I have claimed them for myself in place of all the firstborn sons of the Israelites; I have taken the Levites as their substitutes. <sup>17</sup> For all the firstborn males among the people of Israel are mine, both of people and of animals. I set them apart for myself on the day I struck down all the firstborn sons of the Egyptians. <sup>18</sup> Yes, I have claimed the Levites in place of all the firstborn sons of Israel. <sup>19</sup> And of all the Israelites, I have assigned the Levites to Aaron and his sons. They will serve in the Tabernacle on behalf of the Israelites and make sacrifices to purify the people so no plague will strike them when they approach the sanctuary."

<sup>20</sup> So Moses, Aaron, and the whole community of Israel dedicated the Levites, carefully following all the Lord's instructions to Moses. <sup>21</sup> The Levites purified themselves from sin and washed their clothes, and Aaron lifted them up and presented them to the Lord as a special offering. He then offered a sacrifice to purify them and make them right with the Lord. <sup>22</sup> After that the Levites went into the Tabernacle to perform their duties, assisting Aaron and his sons. So they carried out all the commands that the Lord gave Moses concerning the Levites.

<sup>23</sup> The Lord also instructed Moses, <sup>24</sup> "This is the rule the Levites must follow: They must begin serving in the Tabernacle at the age of twenty-five, <sup>25</sup> and they must retire at the age of fifty. <sup>26</sup> After retirement they may assist their fellow Levites by serving as guards at the Tabernacle, but they may not officiate in the service. This is how you must assign duties to the Levites."

These Levites now belonged to the Lord. God took them instead of the firstborn of each of the families of the tribes of Israel. With this honor goes responsibility to serve. They had been given to Aaron and his sons (the priests) to help them in the tabernacle.

Likewise, those who minister in these New Testament days are called to ministry by Jesus Christ. They serve the High Priest, Jesus Christ. They do the greatest service of all for the people of the church - they bring people to God's plan of salvation and way of living. Jesus has provided the sacrifice for our sins, but the ministry attends and serves Him, therefore being a blessing to the people.

We read at the end of the passage that the time for the Levite to work is limited. There are twenty-five years of actual service. From age twenty-five to age fifty, the Levite was giving the best years of his life to the service of the tabernacle. After that, the Levite could counsel the younger Levites in their work, and he could keep guard - he was responsible to see that no stranger came in, no unclean person trespassed. The young are fit for work, and the aged are fit for counsel and keeping.