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Levites' role, firstborn replacement, temple service, worship connection, genealogies of Aaron, Mount Sinai, strange fire, Nadav and Avihu, priesthood authority, Levites' service, tabernacle duties, redemption significance, sanctification, new creation, worship benefits

SPEAKERS

Baruch Korman, Intro Voice

Intro Voice 00:03

Shalom and welcome to via hafte yesrael, a Hebrew phrase, which means you shall love Israel. We hope you'll stay with us for the next 30 minutes, as our teacher, Dr Baruch, shares his expository teaching from the Bible. Dr Baruch is the senior lecturer at the Zera Avraham Institute based in Israel. Although all courses are taught in Hebrew at the institute, Dr Baruch is pleased to share this weekly address in English. To find out more about our work in Israel, please visit us on the web@loveisrael.org That's one word, loveisrael.org Now here's Baruch with today's lesson

Baruch Korman 00:42

In the passage of scripture that we're going to be looking at in this time of study, there's an emphasis on the Levites. Now the Levites took a unique position. We know that there is a concept of the firstborn, and we learn in the scripture that God has called the Levites, this tribe, in order that they would replace the other first born from all the tribes, that they would serve as the firstborn. And we see something. We see that the firstborn is the son of preference. But nevertheless, we see that this call that the Levites received is a call to service. Now I think before we go any further, we should have an understanding of the term Levi now that is in Hebrew. It's Levy, and it comes from a Hebrew word, which means to escort, to come alongside, to participate. And specifically the Levites, as the new firstborn, were to assist, to come alongside of the CO name of the priests, in order that they might participate in the temple service. And before that, of course, the tabernacle service, what we learn is called the oh hell moed, that tent of meeting. So it's all in regard to worship, whether we speak of the tabernacle or the temple, it's always about worship, and there's a connection between worship and experiencing God's presence, that God would dwell among his people, that His power, His provision, would be among us In order that we could utilize both his provision and his presence in order to serve Him and for us, that we might as well come alongside the living God for the purpose of serving Him in His purposes, in his plans, or, in other words, his Will. So look with me to the book of Numbers, chapter three. And this evening, God willing, we're going to complete the first 17 verses of this chapter. Let's begin verse one Numbers chapter three and verse one. And these are the generations or the heritage. Now it's a word to do, and it speaks and comes from a word which means those who have been born, those who have been produced, meaning that they have been born into this world. So we're

speaking about it's not the normal word for generations, but it speaks about a genealogy, in other words, so this is the genealogies of Aaron and Moses. Now we know something. Both Aaron and Moses were from the same tribe, the tribe of Levi. And therefore we see something. Keep reading. These are the genealogies of Aaron and Moses and the day that the Lord spoke with Moses in Mount Sinai. Now this goes back. It speaks of a time when the children of Israel were called to assemble in that third month, the third month out of coming out of Egypt, in the first month, they were brought to Mount Sinai, and there they experienced God. God wanted to give them a miraculous experience, but the people rejected, and therefore they are going to worship God and serve God. But hear this, according to the sages of Israel, in an inferior way, because they are an inferior people. Now, I want to pause for a moment if you look sometime at the book. Of Exodus, chapter 20, when the people were there at Mount Sinai, God was mighty. He was moving. There were the thundering, there was smoke, the mountain was shaking, and the presence of God was there with a purpose, and that was to bring a change upon the people that they would know God's will and they would receive a new experience, this miraculous experience where they could not sin. That's what the scripture says. But the people stood at a distance, and that is an idiom. They rejected what God wanted to do, and that is indeed a human tendency. We tend to reject what God wants to do in order to do what we want to do, and that always, always brings about problems. It causes hardships. It is a catalyst to sorrow and shame. So we ought not do that. So the people were at Mount Sinai, and we see here that what we're going to be talking about is after this time, but it reminds us of God's intent. What was the will of God, and now, because of Israel's rejection of this change, this miraculous experience that God wanted to give his people at Mount Sinai, they are now going to worship God and serve God in an inferior way, not to the full measure that they could have if they would have believed and submitted and accepted the work of God in their life. Look again at verse one. These are the genealogies of Aaron and Moses and the day that the Lord spoke with Moses in Mount Sinai verse two, and these are the names of the children of Aaron. Now, Moses and Aaron were brothers. Aaron was a Levite. So too was Aharon or Aaron. But we see through Aaron came about a very unique people. What people am I talking about? The cohenin, the priest, and the Levites, as I said, were set apart in order to assist, to come alongside, to escort, to walk with and to serve jointly with the priests in assisting them to fulfill the purposes of God, specifically in the worship of the Lord, the God of Israel, first in the tabernacle and then in the temple. This will be more clear in a moment. Look again at verse two. These are the names of the children of Aaron, the firstborn, naduv. Now we see that Nadav and his brother, notice Avi, who what happened to them. Well, we'll come to that in a moment. But notice it says that there's two other brothers, el Azhar and E Tamar. And these individuals, these four brothers, again, we find that Nadav was the firstborn. Verse three, these are the names of the children of Aaron, the priests, the ones who were anointed, who and we have an expression Malay yadam, which means they they filled the place. Now, they came into to this chapter for the purpose of fulfilling something. Now, some will say they were presented, but it's a word of authority. When we deal with this expression of Yad or hand. It speaks about power. It speaks about a word or a deed or an action or a work, and therefore they were called into this service. And what was that? Well, notice the last word in verse three, where it says lay kahen, which means to serve. Now I made mention ago of that term Cohen, meaning a priest, but but we can understand Cohen this term with another Hebrew word, meshred, which is simply a servant, someone who understands that he's under the authority Mita hat Yad, under the authority of another. So these Levites and the priests, they were anointed to serve, and this anointing brought them under the authority of God and hopefully committed to the purposes of God. Look at verse four. It's. And

native died, and Avi who before the Lord when they came near, and what did they can't come near with, when they came near with a strange fire before the Lord in the wilderness of Sinai and the children. It says here the sons. They were not to them, meaning they had no children. These two men, and therefore, what was the outcome? Eleazar, their brother, and Itamar also their brother. They served, meaning they took on this role of a priest

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before Aaron, their father. So with these two men and what two men, Nadav and a behu, Naida, being the firstborn and a be who his his brother, they were were struck down by God. Now you can read about this in the book of Leviticus, in chapter 10, and we see a rebellious spirit. God had told the priest, you cannot just come anytime into the most holy place, that Holy of Holies, but you need to submit to God's instructions and come there with what God tells you to bring. And to do it at the time that God tells you to bring it, everything was to demonstrate submissiveness to the Lord these two men, Nadav and a Bihu, they decided to do it their way, and because they did it their way at their time, in the place that God says you are not to come just any time they did in this rebelliousness. And therefore, they brought a incense offering. They offered up a strange fire, esh, Zarah, and because of that, God slayed them. Now all of this is to teach us how important worship is. Worship, if it's done right, it brings about a change to our life. If it's done wrong, it brings about an end to our life. That's how significant worship is. Look now to to verse verse five, and the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, Bring near the tribe of Levi that they should should should stand, that, that, that you stand him. Now, I want to get this right. It's the word to stand. I understand that many Bibles will say present, but it's literally the word that that is being introduced here. Let's look at again, verse six, bring near the tribe of Levy, and you shall stand him. Now I realize that most English Bibles will say them, because we're speaking about the koanin the priests. Priests is plural, but what we see here is that the subject of this this pronoun, is the tribe of Levy, and a Levi is speaking about the tribe. And so it's masculine, the tribe Shevat in Hebrew. So here we have a different word. We have the word in verse six, mate, which is a synonym for Shevat or tried so you shall stand him, meaning the tribe of Levi before Aaron, the priests, and they shall serve him. So now we have a very clear instruction that the tribe of levy is brought before Aaron, in order that they might serve Him. Very important that we see it they is the tribe, the tribe of levy is to serve the priests. So this is very simple to understand. It's very straightforward in what God is saying. But also we see this phrase they share to from the word sheret, which is to serve. So they are servants of the priests verse seven, and they shall keep. And we have a word mismerit. Mismérit is like a shift. For example, if you work in a factory, there might be multiple shifts, the first shift, the second shift, the ninth shift. And what this is talking about is simply a call to serve. It is an expression that relates to work that is to be done. So they are to keep this. This shift, meaning, keep this labor, do this work, and the work of all the the congregation before the tent of the meeting to serve this this labor, or work or worship of the tabernacle. Now I translated in multiple ways because we have the word Avoda. Avoda means work, but it can also relate to service or worship. So the same word in Hebrew for work can also relate to worship. And it says here, look at this scripture that they are to do the work instead of the all the congregation. They do it where at the Tent of Meeting, that is at the tabernacle, to serve the worship. And the implication is the worship that took place at the tabernacle verse eight, and they shall keep every vessel of the Tent of Meeting. Now what they're speaking about here is it is the Levites that had the responsibility of setting up the tabernacle and tearing it down. And when they traveled, they were the ones who would bring the various furniture, the instruments, the vessel and the tabernacle itself. So

they carried it. And I want you to see something. Most of the time we would think, Wow, that is difficult labor, having to tear it down and set it up and also be responsible for carrying something Well, what we learn here is that it's a privilege, and it is a unique call to participate in the things of God. And As believers, we are that, that that priesthood. We are also servants of God that come along the side for the purpose of serving. If we are a believer and we're not committed to serving God, we have understood incorrectly what it means to be saved. We are saved to serve. And therefore, look at the verse. It says here, verse, verse eight, once more, they are to keep all the vessels of the tent of meeting and the the work or the keeping or charge of the children of Israel to serve with worshiping. That is the worship at the tabernacle, verse nine, and you shall give it meaning, this, this charge, this, this instruction you shall give it to the Levites and to Aaron and his sons. This, this data, this information, that which is given by God to them and they should be to Him, meaning that this is to these things are to him, to the tribe of Levi in place of the children of Israel. Now we're going to learn something of great significance. Why is it the Levites that replace the firstborn of Israel? What is the change? And why is this concept of firstborn so important? And I want you to see that there is something of great, great significance that is being taught in this this section. Look, if you would now to to verse verse 10, where it says And Aaron and his sons, you're supposed to do something, you are supposed to to count, and they shall keep the Priest, their priesthood, and no foreigner, meaning one that's not in the tribe of Levi shall not come near for this sacred work, lest he will die, meaning be put to death. If someone comes to do this work that's not called and anointed by God, then the penalty is that the children of Israel should put them to death. So look again, Aaron and his sons, you are to to deposit. And in this case, it means to count, and they shall keep their priesthood. They should do this work and a four. Earth shall not come near, lest he will be put to death. Now, again, we have this relationship, and the purpose of this last verse that we read was to show a relationship between the priests and Levites. They're all from the same tribe, but the household of Aaron is the priest, and the rest of the Levites are just that. Levites that come along to participate and assist the the priest in their work look now to verse, verse 11, and the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,

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and I behold now this word Behold, as I've shared with you many times, is a word of emphasis. It means, in a simple way, pay attention, because what is going to be revealed to us after this word Behold, is very significant. It usually is where the lesson, the primary teaching, is found in a passage or in a particular verse. Look again at verse 12, and I behold, I have taken the Levites from the midst of the children of Israel in place of every firstborn. Now this is where we're coming to a key point. And if we miss this, remember that word, Behold, the Hebrew word, hinay, something significant God is about to reveal, and it has to do with this call upon the Levites, and why they have this call, not for what purpose, but why did God sanctify the Levites as the firstborn of Israel rather than the literal firstborn? It involves a change that's clear, because it's no longer the firstborns that are called to serve God in this unique service, but rather it's the Levites. Look again at verse 12,

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and I behold, I have taken the Levites from the midst of the children of Israel, in place of every firstborn. Now the firstborn that it says, opens up the womb from the children of Israel, and they shall be to Me, or for me, the Levites. And we could say they shall be for me these escorts. Who are they to escort the priests to come along the side of and serve together with assisting, helping and doing everything. But

the priesthood has a preference over the Levites. It is a privilege to be a servant, to assist others in doing the things of God. Now we keep reading because something is going to be revealed of great significance. Look at the next verse. Verse 13, For to me, is every firstborn. Now this is something that that we've been taught. It is not something new or something that is a mystery to us. God has said repeatedly in a variety of different contexts and in a variety of different biblical locations, that the firstborn belonged to him. Now, why is that? What is the purpose? What is the message that's being conveyed to us? Well, it's a very important one. We'll come to it in a moment. But Look again at verse 13, key li ko, the hor, which means, for to me, or for me, is every firstborn, and now he's going to make mention of their firstborn, where he says, beyom hakoti in the day that I struck every firstborn where, well, we know that the last plague in the land of Egypt was the plague of the firstborn, firstborn of the household, meaning of the human beings. But also God struck down the firstborn of the animals. So this firstborn was related to the Exodus from Egypt. Now, when did that take place? The only answer is Passover. We find that the exodus of Egypt is a Passover experience, and that Exodus and Passover relates to and I've said this numerous times, it relates to redemption. Passover is the festival redemption. So what we see here there is a memory being given by God to the people he wants them to remember their time in Egypt. That that God acted, and he claimed the firstborn as his. For what purpose? For the purpose of redemption. Now let me say that that this plague of the firstborn could be averted, but only by one means, by the blood of the Passover Lamb. Therefore, this plague, this punishment, this judgment, could have been averted through the power of redemption. And what we see here is that through redemption, there is life and there is what well, all of this we're talking about, how the Levites are the new firstborn for the children of Israel, not a literal but a spiritual firstborn that comes because of redemption. And we see that the outcome is the Levites, the firstborn of Israel participates and assists the priests in the worship avodah Hashem in the worship of the Lord. This is what's being emphasized, why the Levites have a connection to worship, and worship has a connection to redemption. We cannot worship God unless first we are redeemed, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, the Passover lamb, and that's why Messiah was crucified on Passover, so that he could cause us to become redeemed and redeemed eternally, whereby we can now worship God and serve God and come alongside of the Lord's work and fulfill the purposes of God. Notice what it says here. Look again at verse 13, because for me, is every firstborn on the day that I struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I sanctified to me every firstborn in Israel, both of man and beasts. For to me, they are, I am the Lord. Now that is a very powerful expression, a ne Hashem, I am the Lord. He is the Lord. Therefore he has an absolute right to do something. What is the key word here? Well, look a little bit earlier. Word says, hikdashti, that is, I have sanctified for me every firstborn. Now we see another term of significance that is an outcome from redemption. And what is that sanctification? What is sanctification? Well, many people will rightly say it has to do with being set apart for a purpose. But we need to be more specific in a spiritual sense, and that which is pleasing to God, sanctification is being set aside for the purposes of God. There is general sanctification, meaning something is just set apart for a purpose. That purpose can be bad or good, but God's sanctification is always good meaning. It always sanctifies us. Sets apart for the will of God that we might participate in the things of God, the things that are pleasing, and, excuse me, the things that relate to the purposes of God, His purposes are inherently related to his plans. So Look again at verse 13, where it says, I have sanctified for me every firstborn in Israel, both of man and beasts. Unto me, they shall be, I am the Lord. Now nothing is written by chance in the scripture, and the fact that it says, I am the Lord, and it uses that sacred name of God that you'd hate. Vav, Hey, those four letters, and we know that this word should be if we're

looking at it, it's never the word Yahweh. That is a false teaching. It is not in agreement with Hebrew grammar. It is better understood, and we'll use the English Jehovah. Now, why is that? Because it's only when we look at that word and we understand Hebrew grammar, that word has a transcendent context. What do I mean by that? When we look at that? Yud, hey. Vav, Hey, we see that it has characteristics of the future, of the present and of the past. And therefore what it's saying here is that our God, the God of Israel, He transcends time, and not just time, but it's the transcendent name of God, meaning that God is without limitations. God is all powerful. He's able to do everything now. God will never violate his character. Why his character perfect? Therefore God will never do anything that is imperfect. Everything that God does is right, it is glorious, it is righteous, and it is in line with who he is. So he will never violate his character in doing something. So it says, Here,

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I am the Lord. When we approach God through redemption, we'll be able to worship God and experience God without limitations, that that there's nothing that God holds back. He wants to share all of himself with us, and again, all of this is given to us within the context of worship. And what I would say is this, you cannot overestimate the benefits of worshiping God in spirit and truth, worshiping God as a recipient of the Holy Spirit and according to the truth of God, meaning according to his Word. Let's move on. Look at verse 14. And the Lord spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, saying so again, we see over and over here this term Sinai. Why? Because it was at Mount Sinai that the children of Israel rejected. And what God is doing now is that he is going to give them this service in order to raise them up, meaning to bring them up to the spiritual level that God intended at Mount Sinai to bring about upon them, but they rejected that they stood at a distance. And therefore God now is growing them, maturing them slowly, through this tabernacle service and eventually the temple service. So Look again at verse 14, and the Lord spoke to Moses in the wilderness. That's important. It could have just simply said, Be Sinai at Sinai, but it doesn't. It says the wilderness. Why is that important? Well, as I've shared with you, the term mid bar wilderness is a word. Whenever it appears in the Bible, it speaks about dependence, relying, submitting. It is a word of recognizing one's absolute dependence upon God, and it's only that dependence that is going to produce a spirit of trusting in the Lord. Now we can talk about trusting with the word batua, which is sure, when we trust in God, we can expect surely that he will respond, that there is going to be the outcome that he has promised. Now that word, but tua is also the Hebrew word be tua, which is insurance. And insurance is an outcome of a company's obligations. You purchase insurance, that company is obligated. When we trust in God, God obligates itself to us to do what, to do His will in our life. That's what God desires look on to the next verse, verse 15. Again, we have that same phrase, count the children of Levi, according to the house of their fathers, according to their families, every male from one month old and above, you shall count them now, that is, deposit them into this service. Notice from a very young age, one month now, here again, Hebrew is a unique language. Things are being conveyed here, that if we don't know the language we miss out on it says, Here, want to go back to our verse, verse 15, where it says, Here, me, Ben. Ben means a son of and it's a way of expressing age and how old. Well, we've already mentioned this a son who is Hodesh. Hodesh is month, but it's derived from the Hebrew word Hadash, which is new. And the word new is a kingdom word, what God is saying here is now through this obedient service, if you submit. Two the command I've given to you, this charge, this service, it is going to bring about a newness. Why? That's what worship does? Worship brings about a kingdom, newness to us, whereby we don't think any longer according to the world. That's the old way. We don't belong to this world. We are a new

creation, a kingdom creation through that kingdom covenant. What covenant? The new covenant? We become a new creation through the New Covenant, where we will spend eternity in the New Jerusalem. All of this is emphasizing the word new and the word month one month old is derived from that same word, Hadash, in this case, Hodesh, meaning month. Then look at verse 16 and Moses. He counted them according to the word of the Lord or the instruction is word P concerning the mouth, meaning what came forth from the mouth of God. He counted them according to the mouth of the Lord, just as he was commanded. So we see that Moses, what's he doing submitting. Now, many of the rabbinical scholars see this verse as greatly significant because Moses is what he's a Levite, and what is he doing? He's an example. He is demonstrating submissiveness and obedience to what the Lord has commanded. This is a paradigm for the Levites in totality that they need to do as well, what the Lord has commanded through the mouth of the Lord, what God has spoken they need to implement into their life. Let's look at our last verse, verse 17, where it says, And these will be among the children of Levites. So the children of Levites will be these with their names, and it's going to reveal three families. What are these three families? Gershon, kahat and merrari. These three families are going to be the three primary families of the Levites, and we're going to see, as we continue this chapter next week, how God is calling them. What is His purposes for them, and what do they bring about for the children of Israel in their service, when they do their charge, when they are faithful, in their rotation, their shift, when they are serving. What is the outcome of that? And again, what is being emphasized here is how significant worship is. There's many, many, many benefits for worship. But here's the takeaway, we cannot worship until first we are redeemed, and redemption brings a kingdom newness into us. Where why we become that new creation now able to worship God. Serve God and be changed by God. The message is we need change, and it's worship that brings it about. And the foundation of any worship experience is redemption. While close with that until next week, and we press on in this third chapter of the Book of Numbers, until that time, Shalom from Israel.

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Well, we hope you will benefit from today's message and share it with others. Please plan to join us each week at this time and on this channel for our broadcast of loveisrael.org. Again to find out more about us, please visit our website, loveisrael.org, there you will find articles in numerous other lectures by Baruch. These teachings are in video form. May download them or watch them in streaming video until next week, may the Lord bless you in our Messiah, Yeshua, that is Jesus as you walk with Him, Shalom from Israel. He.