

Numbers 8 - Thursday, July 1st, 2010

- Tonight, Lord willing, we will actually complete two chapters in our study of the book of Numbers beginning in chapter eight.

1 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 2 "Speak to Aaron, and say to him, 'When you arrange the lamps, the seven lamps shall give light in front of the lampstand.' "3 And Aaron did so; he arranged the lamps to face toward the front of the lampstand, as the LORD commanded Moses. 4 Now this workmanship of the lampstand was hammered gold; from its shaft to its flowers it was hammered work. According to the pattern which the LORD had shown Moses, so he made the lampstand.

- This is the lighting of the Menorah which was a lampstand consisting of seven lamps. It was the only source of light in the Tabernacle.
- It's interesting that these first four verses deal with lighting of the Menorah, then the rest of the chapter is about dedicating the Levites.
- One has suggested this is because everything we do in our service to the Lord - needs to be exposed in light of the Word of the Lord.

5 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 6 "Take the Levites from among the children of Israel and cleanse them ceremonially.7 Thus you shall do to them to cleanse them: Sprinkle water of purification on them, and let them shave all their body, and let them wash their clothes, and so make themselves clean.

- The Levite was to be ceremonially cleansed with the sprinkling of water then they would shave all their body and wash all their clothes.
- This is a picture of how the water of God's Word is what cleanses us, and symbolically this pictures a fresh start and new beginning.
- With no hair on the body, and having just been cleansed with water, it would have the idea of being a new-born, picturing the new birth.

8 Then let them take a young bull with its grain offering of fine flour mixed with oil, and you shall take another young bull as a sin offering.9 And you shall bring the Levites before the tabernacle of meeting, and you shall gather together the whole congregation of the children of Israel.10 So you shall bring the Levites before the LORD, and the children of Israel shall lay their hands on the Levites;11 and Aaron shall offer the Levites before the LORD like a wave offering from the children of Israel, that they may perform the work of the LORD.

- This portion of the dedication ceremony involved an offering before the Lord and a complete dedication to the Lord, and it was public.
- In other words, the whole congregation of the children of Israel would gather together as witnesses to this dedication ceremony.
- The laying on of hands and the wave offering were a symbolic gesture of presenting the Levites to the Lord in the service for the Lord.

12 Then the Levites shall lay their hands on the heads of the young bulls, and you shall offer one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering to the LORD, to make atonement for the Levites. 13 "And you shall stand the Levites before Aaron and his sons, and then offer them like a wave offering to the LORD.

- Here the Levites would need to make atonement by laying their hands on the young bulls as both a sin offering and a burnt offering.
- Once this was completed, they were to stand before Aaron and his sons in order to be offered as a wave offering to the Lord.

14 Thus you shall separate the Levites from among the children of Israel, and the Levites shall be Mine.15 After that the Levites shall go in to service the tabernacle of meeting. So you shall cleanse them and offer them like a wave offering.

- There's seemingly a transfer of ownership here in that God declares that the Levites are to be His, and that now they are not their own.
- It's interesting to note that after this ceremony ends, the work begins. They are to go into the Tabernacle and start serving.

16 For they are wholly given to Me from among the children of Israel; I have taken them for Myself instead of all who open the womb, the firstborn of all the children of Israel.17 For all the firstborn among the children of Israel are Mine, both man and beast; on the day that I struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I sanctified them to Myself.18 I have taken the Levites instead of all the firstborn of the children of Israel.

- The Lord repeats how He's taken the Levites as a replacement for the firstborn which indicates that the firstborn were His first choice.

19 And I have given the Levites as a gift to Aaron and his sons from among the children of Israel, to do the work for the children of Israel in the tabernacle of meeting, and to make atonement for the children of Israel, that there be no plague among the children of Israel when the children of Israel come near the sanctuary." 20 Thus Moses and Aaron and all the congregation of the children of Israel did to the Levites; according to all that the LORD commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so the children of Israel did to them.21 And the Levites purified themselves and washed their clothes; then Aaron presented them like a wave offering before the LORD, and Aaron made atonement for them to cleanse them.22 After that the Levites went in to do their work in the tabernacle of meeting before Aaron and his sons; as the LORD commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so they did to them.

- This is where we see that they actually followed through out of obedience and did all that the Lord had commanded to do.
- While it may seem redundant, we should never assume that just because we read what the Lord commanded, that they actually did it.
- I suppose this applies to our lives in the sense that just because we read the Word of God - doesn't mean we heed the Word of God.

23 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 24 "This is what pertains to the Levites: From twenty-five years old and above one may enter to perform service in the work of the tabernacle of meeting;25 and at the age of fifty years they must cease performing this work, and shall work no more.26 They may minister with their brethren in the tabernacle of meeting, to attend to needs, but they themselves shall do no work. Thus you shall do to the Levites regarding their duties."

- We covered this in a prior study, so suffice it to say; the primary reason for having them do this was for the older training the younger.
- Now we jump into chapter nine which deals with the Passover celebration which is at the one year mark of their Exodus out of Egypt.