

## **Day 155 - SUNDAY: May 14th**

### Numbers 8

Numbers 8:1-26 NKJV

And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: "Speak to Aaron, and say to him, 'When you arrange the lamps, the seven lamps shall give light in front of the lampstand.' " And Aaron did so; he arranged the lamps to face toward the front of the lampstand, as the LORD commanded Moses. 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. Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: "Take the Levites from among the children of Israel and cleanse them ceremonially. 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. 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. And you shall bring the Levites before the tabernacle of meeting, and you shall gather together the whole congregation of the children of Israel. So you shall bring the Levites before the LORD, and the children of Israel shall lay their hands on the Levites; 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. 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. "And you shall stand the Levites before Aaron and his sons, and then offer them like a wave offering to the LORD. Thus you shall separate the Levites from among the children of Israel, and the Levites shall be Mine. 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. 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. 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. I have taken the Levites instead of all the firstborn of the children of Israel. 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." 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. 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. 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. Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "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; and at the age of fifty years they must cease performing this work, and shall work no more. 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."

### **Daily Deep Dive:**

The UCG reading plan states the following for this chapter: "The system of sacrifices and offerings in the Old Testament often seems too complicated for us to grasp. Yet in this chapter another dimension is added—we see the Levites themselves being offered to God by Aaron as a wave offering—as if he lifts them up to present them to God for His acceptance. Indeed, waving overhead was the typical way of presenting something to God, who dwells above in heaven (compare Exodus 29:24–27; Leviticus 7:30, Leviticus 7:34; Leviticus 8:27, Leviticus 8:29). We see that God does accept the Levites, stating that they are now His (Numbers 8:14).

Interestingly, the High Priest today, Jesus Christ, also "lifts" His servants—His priesthood the Church (see 1 Peter 2:5, 1 Peter 2:9)—to present them before God the Father as if a wave offering. We find this in Ephesians 2:4–7: "God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and *raised us up together* [out of spiritual death and into God's presence], and made us sit together in the *heavenly places* in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might

show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus" (emphasis added).

Of course, "the ages to come" is what we are really waiting for, when we will be perfected and sinless and given God's Kingdom. But we are "raised up" and "waved" before God for Him to accept us right now. And He does—thanks to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ that covers our sins. We find this portrayed in the ceremony that took place in ancient Israel on the Feast of Pentecost, when two leavened loaves of the firstfruits of the wheat harvest were waved before God.

These "wave loaves" represented God's converted followers of Old and New Testament times, the "firstfruits" in God's plan of salvation (compare Romans 8:23; James 1:18; Revelation 14:1–4; Hebrews 12:23). The leaven shows that these firstfruits are not yet perfect and still beset with sin (see Leviticus 2:11–12; 1 Corinthians 5:6–8; and highlights covering the grain offering in Leviticus 2). Yet the loaves were accepted because a sin offering was waved *with* them (see Leviticus 23:16–20). The same is true today. When Christ presents His followers before the Father, His perfect sacrifice is presented with them—and they are accepted. Returning to the Levites, there was a training period of five years, a sort of apprenticeship, for them before they

assumed their full duties at age 30 (verse 24; 4:3). After age 50, it seems they went into a kind of semi-retirement with limited duties (Numbers 8:25–26; Numbers 4:3).

The purpose of the laying on of hands, mentioned here, is to set someone apart for a specific purpose such as in ordinations and healings. The first mention of laying on of hands in the Scriptures is when Israel (Jacob) placed his blessing and name on Ephraim and Manasseh (Genesis 48:13). In this case of the Levites, we see representatives of all Israel laying on their hands to set the Levites apart for the special service of the tabernacle (verse 10). The laying on of hands, according to the book of Hebrews, is one of the basic doctrines of the Bible (Hebrews 6:1–2).” [END]

Verse 7 – Commentaries speculate as to why the Levites were required to shave their bodies, but what is clear, is that God required the Levites to be sprinkled with water, shave their bodies and wash their clothes, all as part of the process for them to be clean before Him.

Verse 10 – The Adam Clarke’s commentary states: “it appears that what was done on this occasion meant no more than that the people gave up this whole tribe to God in place of their firstborn; and that by this act they bound

themselves to provide for them who, because of their sacred service, could follow no secular work. And surely it was right, that they who served the altar should live by the altar. The ministers of God perform offices for the people which the people cannot perform for themselves; and nothing can be more reasonable than that the people should give them the necessaries and comforts of life while they are thus employed in their behalf.” [END]

Verse 12 – One offering for Atonement to God for their sinful natures (Sin Offering) and one for Atonement to God showing that they were giving themselves fully to God (Burnt Offering).

Verse 15 – After they were cleansed, the Levites went in the court of the Tabernacle to serve the priests. John Gill’s commentary states: “cleanse them by sprinkling the water of purifying on them, and offer them by waving them as before; and indeed this is no new thing which is here observed, but what was already done, and therefore should be rendered, "when thou shalt have cleansed them", or "after thou hast cleansed them", &c. and so the particle "vau" is sometimes used” [END]

Verse 19 - The Levites belonged to God, so God gave them as a gift to Aaron & his sons to help with the work.