

Numbers 8:1-26 The Lamps, Levites and the Firstborn

YeHoVaH gave very precise Instructions to Moses requiring him to show great attention to the details for making the Tabernacle, the furniture, and the Priest's garments. Instructions for setting up the Tabernacle and the location of each item of furniture were also meticulously given.

In the previous Chapter, we looked at the Offerings and Dedication of the Tabernacle. In this study, we will look at the Instructions given for the placement of the Lampstand and the "setting apart" of the Levites for service and their connection to the firstborn.

YeHoVaH repeatedly laid claim and ownership to His Creation and the work of service each member of His Creation was given to do.

Israel
Firstborns
Priests
Levites
All Creation

Prior to the Exodus, the Priests nor the Levites had any role other than being a tribal member and the rulers amongst their tribe.

- YeHoVaH assigned roles and responsibilities to Moses.
- YeHoVaH assigned Aaron to assist Moses and serve as High Priest.
- Aaron's sons and their descendants were to succeed Aaron as High Priest and Priests.
- The Levites were assigned to the Priests to serve them and the people on behalf of YeHoVaH.
- Leaders of each tribal family were to lead YeHoVaH's Armies.

YeHoVaH's demonstrated Leadership and Organizational abilities were continually displayed before Israel from the least to the greatest. No one was "greater than" as far as His Creation was concerned, but the set-apart people were given set-apart roles and responsibilities that distinguished them from one another by their assignments.

The Candlestick was made according to the pattern given Moses in Exodus.

Ex 25:31 And thou shalt make a candlestick of pure gold: of beaten work shall the candlestick be made: his shaft, and his branches, his bowls, his knobs, and his flowers, shall be of the same.

Ex 25:32 And six branches shall come out of the sides of it; three branches of the candlestick out of the one side, and three branches of the candlestick out of the other side:

Ex 25:33 Three bowls made like unto almonds, with a knob and a flower in one branch; and three bowls made like almonds in the other branch, with a knob and a flower: so in the six branches that come out of the candlestick.

Ex 25:34 And in the candlestick shall be four bowls made like unto almonds, with their knobs and their flowers.

Ex 25:35 And there shall be a knob under two branches of the same, and a knob under two branches of the same, and a knob under two branches of the same, according to the six branches that proceed out of the candlestick.

Ex 25:36 Their knobs and their branches shall be of the same: all it shall be one beaten work of pure gold.

Ex 25:37 And thou shalt make the seven lamps thereof: and they shall light the lamps thereof, that they may give light over against it.

Ex 25:38 And the tongs thereof, and the snuffdishes thereof, shall be of pure gold.

Ex 25:39 Of a talent of pure gold shall he make it, with all these vessels.

Ex 25:40 And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shown thee in the mount.

The Menorah

The location of the Candlestick was positioned to give light to the Holy Place. It was lit for the Priests to do their daily service unto YeHoVaH in the Holy Place.

Ex 26:35 And thou shalt set the table without the veil, and the candlestick over against the table on the side of the tabernacle toward the south: and thou shalt put the table on the north side.

Nu 8:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Nu 8:2 Speak unto Aaron, and say unto him, When thou lightest the lamps, the seven lamps shall give light over against the candlestick.

Nu 8:3 And Aaron did so; he lighted the lamps thereof over against the candlestick, as the LORD commanded Moses.

Nu 8:4 And this work of the candlestick *was of* beaten gold, unto the shaft thereof, unto the flowers thereof, *was* beaten work: according unto the pattern which the LORD had shown Moses, so he made the candlestick.

Cleansing the Levites

Nu 8:5 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Nu 8:6 Take the Levites from among the children of Israel, and cleanse them.

Nu 8:7 And thus shalt thou do unto them, to cleanse them: Sprinkle water of purifying upon them, and let them shave all their flesh, and let them wash their clothes, and so make themselves clean.

The Levites' cleansing required them to shave all their flesh (from head to toe).

Unlike the Priests, the Levites did not have special clothing made for them as instructed by Moses per YeHoVaH's Command.

The Levites had to wash their clothes and serve in their own clothes.

Nu 8:8 Then let them take a young bullock with his meat offering, *even* fine flour mingled with oil, and another young bullock shalt thou take for a sin offering.

Nu 8:9 And thou shalt bring the Levites before the tabernacle of the congregation: and thou shalt gather the whole assembly of the children of Israel together:

Nu 8:10 And thou shalt bring the Levites before the LORD: and the children of Israel shall put their hands upon the Levites:

The people of Israel had to lay their hands on the Levites.

Nu 8:11 And Aaron shall offer the Levites before the LORD *for an* offering of the children of Israel, that they may execute the service of the LORD.

Offering – **08573** תִּנּוּפָה tenuwphah {ten-oo-faw'}

Meaning: 1) swinging, waving, wave offering, offering 1a) a swinging, brandishing 1a1) of God's hand, weapons 1b) waving, wave-offering (technical term of sacrifice) 1c) offering (of gold or brass)

Usage: AV - wave offering 14, wave 8, offering 6, shaking 2; 30

The Levites were a Wave Offering of the Children of Israel unto YeHoVaH.

Nu 8:12 And the Levites shall lay their hands upon the heads of the bullocks: and thou shalt offer the one *for* a sin offering, and the other *for* a burnt offering, unto the LORD, to make an atonement for the Levites.

The Levites had to lay their hands on the sacrifices as a sin offering and a burnt offering.

Many confuse Levites with Priests. **All Priests were Levites, but not all Levites were Priests.**

Most information searches online for Levites will give you information about Priests.

The Levites were given to the Priests to serve.

Nu 3:5 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Nu 3:6 Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister unto him.

Nu 3:7 And they shall keep his charge, and the charge of the whole congregation before the tabernacle of the congregation, to do the service of the tabernacle.

Nu 3:8 And they shall keep all the instruments of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the charge of the children of Israel, to do the service of the tabernacle.

Nu 3:9 **And thou shalt give the Levites unto Aaron and to his sons:** they *are* wholly given unto him out of the children of Israel.

Nu 3:10 And thou shalt appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall wait on their priest's office: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.

There were clear distinctions between the Levites and the Priests:

- The Priests were anointed and consecrated, Leviticus 8.
- The Levites were cleansed and separated.
- The Priests were anointed, washed, and given new garments.
- The Levites washed their own garments.
- The Levites were given to Aaron and his sons.

Nu 8:13 And thou shalt set the Levites before Aaron, and before his sons, and offer them *for* an offering unto the LORD.

Nu 8:14 Thus shalt thou separate the Levites from among the children of Israel: and the Levites shall be mine.

Separate – **0914** בָּדַל badal {baw-dal'}

Meaning: 1) to divide, separate 1a) (Hiphil) 1a1) to divide, separate, sever 1a2) to separate, set apart 1a3) to make a distinction, difference 1a4) to divide into parts 1b) (Niphal) 1b1) to separate oneself from (reflexive of 1a2) 1b2) to withdraw from 1b3) to separate oneself unto 1b4) to be separated 1b5) to be excluded 1b6) to be set apart

Usage: AV - separate 25, divide 8, difference 4, asunder 2, severed 2, sever out 1, separation 1, utterly 1 (inf. for emphasis); 42

Nu 8:15 And after that shall the Levites go in to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation: and thou shalt cleanse them, and offer them *for* an offering.

The Levites Replaced the Firstborn Sons

Nu 8:16 For they *are* wholly given unto me from among the children of Israel; instead of such as open every womb, *even instead of* the firstborn of all the children of Israel, have I taken them unto me.

Nu 3:11 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Nu 3:12 And I, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of all the firstborn that openeth the matrix among the children of Israel: therefore the Levites shall be mine;

Nu 3:13 Because all the firstborn *are* mine; *for* on the day that I smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I hallowed unto me all the firstborn in Israel, both man and beast: mine shall they be: I *am* the LORD.

Nu 8:17 For all the firstborn of the children of Israel *are* mine, *both* man and beast: on the day that I smote every firstborn in the land of Egypt I sanctified them for myself.

Nu 8:18 And I have taken the Levites for all the firstborn of the children of Israel.

Nu 8:19 And I have given the Levites as a gift to Aaron and to his sons from among the children of Israel, to do the service of the children of Israel in the tabernacle of the congregation, and to make an atonement for the children of Israel: that there be no plague among the children of Israel, when the children of Israel come nigh unto the sanctuary.

- YeHoVaH took the Levites in exchange for all the firstborn of the Children of Israel.
- YeHoVaH gave the Levites as a gift to Aaron and his sons from among the Children of Israel.
- The Levites were to do the service of the Children of Israel in the Tabernacle of the Congregation.
- The Levites were an atonement for the Children of Israel.
- The Levites' service prevented plagues among the Children of Israel.

Nu 8:20 And Moses, and Aaron, and all the congregation of the children of Israel, did to the Levites according unto all that the LORD commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so did the children of Israel unto them.

Nu 8:21 And the Levites were purified, and they washed their clothes; and Aaron offered them as an offering before the LORD; and Aaron made an atonement for them to cleanse them.

It is interesting that the use of the word "purified" is the same Hebrew word for sin. Here it is used to purify from sin or uncleanness.

Purified – **02398** *ḵunchata'* {khaw-taw'}

Meaning: 1) to sin, miss, miss the way, go wrong, incur guilt, forfeit, purify from uncleanness 1a) (Qal) 1a1) to miss 1a2) to sin, miss the goal or path of right and duty 1a3) to incur guilt, incur penalty by sin, forfeit 1b) (Piel) 1b1) to bear loss 1b2) **to make a sin-offering 1b3) to purify from sin 1b4) to purify from uncleanness** 1c) (Hiphil) 1c1) to miss the mark 1c2) to induce to sin, cause to sin 1c3) to bring into guilt or condemnation or punishment 1d) (Hithpael) 1d1) to miss oneself, lose oneself, wander from the way 1d2) to purify oneself from uncleanness

Usage: AV - sin 188, purify 11, cleanse 8, sinner 8, committed 6, offended 4, blame 2, done 2, fault 1, harm 1, loss 1, miss 1, offender 1, purge 1, reconciliation 1, sinful 1, trespass 1; 238

After the Levites were purified, they were fit to serve and entered into service to the Priests who served in the Tabernacle.

Nu 8:22 And after that went the Levites in to do their service in the tabernacle of the congregation before Aaron, and before his sons: as the LORD had commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so did they unto them.

Nu 8:23 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

The Levites' Age for Service

Nu 8:24 This *is it* that *belongeth* unto the Levites: from twenty and five years old and upward they shall go in to wait upon the service of the tabernacle of the congregation:

- The Levites' service began at 25 years old.
- The Levites' retirement age was 50 years old.

Nu 8:25 And from the age of fifty years they shall cease waiting upon the service *thereof*, and shall serve no more:

The Levites' official service was completed at 50 years of age, but they could assist their brethren.

The sons of Gershon, Kohath, and Merari, who were responsible for transporting the Tabernacle and its accessories, begin their service at 30 according to Numbers 4.

Nu 8:26 But shall minister with their brethren in the tabernacle of the congregation, to keep the charge, and shall do no service. Thus shalt thou do unto the Levites touching their charge.

At what age were the Priests allowed to begin their service?

What was the retirement age of the Priests?

Don't confuse information by assigning information concerning the Levites to the Priests.

The Priests and Levites served different roles/services unto YeHoVaH!