

RELATIONSHIP OF PRIEST TO LEVITES

NUMBERS 18

Intro: While the Hebrews named the book of Numbers “B^emidbar” meaning in the wilderness, our name “Numbers” comes from the Latin and refers to the Numbering of the children of Israel on two different occasions (at Sinai and at Moab).

1. There are valuable lessons we can and should learn from the book of Numbers. Our discussion will center around chapter 18.
2. In Numbers 16, God records the rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram.
3. In Numbers 17, God gives further indication of His choice of the Levites as the priestly tribe. He demonstrates this in allowing Aaron’s rod to bud while the other rods did not bud.
4. This brings us to our chapter in which God gives further instructions to those whom He has chosen.

I. LEVITES OFFICIAL DUTIES

A. Num. 18:1-7

B. God gives responsibilities to Aaron and the Kohathites.

1. Their specific work.
 - a. They are to do the work of the temple.
 - b. They are to make sure that no one touches the vessels of the sanctuary.
2. When God bestows an honor upon someone there also rest greater responsibility.
 - a. Luke 12:48 “But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few *stripes*. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.”
 - b. Parable of the talents; Mat. 25:15-30.

C. The Gershonites and Merarites were to assist the Levites in their work.

1. They are given the charge not to come near to the vessels of the sanctuary.
 - a. God demands that man respect His Word.
 - b. Those who do not properly respect God’s Word, God will punish.
 - (1) 2 Sam. 6 (Uzzah).
 - (2) 2 The. 1:8-9 “In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: ⁹Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;”
 - (3) We do not have the right to add to, take away from, or substitute anything for what God said.
2. They are to help in setting up and taking down the temple.
 - a. Only as those designated by God performed their duties and allowed no one else, would the people flourish.
 - b. God will not bless those who usurp the duties God has placed upon someone else, nor those who relinquish their duties.
 - (1) In the home.
 - (a) Husband as the head of the home.
 - (b) The wife in submission to her husband.
 - (c) The children obeying and honoring their parents.
 - (d) Eph. 5:23-24 “For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. ²⁴Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in every thing.”

- (e) Eph. 6:1-2 “Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. ²Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;)”
- (2) In the church.
 - (a) Those who usurp the authority of the elders.
 - i) Acts 20:28 “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”
 - ii) Heb. 13:17 “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that *is* unprofitable for you.”
 - (b) Women who take an active leadership role within the church.
 - i) 1 Cor. 14:34-35 “Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but *they are commanded* to be under obedience, as also saith the law. ³⁵And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.”
 - ii) 1 Tim. 2:11-14 “Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. ¹²But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. ¹³For Adam was first formed, then Eve. ¹⁴And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.”

D. Work given by God is a favor He bestows upon us.

1. God’s work is not a burden to us.
 - a. Mat. 11:28-30 “Come unto me, all *ye* that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. ³⁰For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light.”
 - b. 1 John 5:3 “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.”
2. God’s work is an honor and blessing.
 - a. Eph. 2:10 “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”
 - b. Tit. 2:14 “Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”

II. PRIESTLY DUES

A. Num. 18:8-20

B. The priest were to work in the priesthood.

1. They did not have an inheritance in the land.
2. They would not have the time for secular work (farming).

C. God takes care of His own.

1. He provides by allowing them to share in the offerings and gifts brought by the people.
 - a. They were to keep the heave offerings as belonging to them.
 - (1) This represented all the holy gifts.
 - (2) While the heave offering belonged to God it was a gift from God to them.
 - b. They were to receive the wave offering.
 - c. They were to receive the best of the firstfruits brought to God; the human firstborn was redeemed when they were one month old for five shekels.

2. Num. 18:14 speaks of things devoted; "Every thing devoted in Israel shall be thine."
 - a. "The Hebrew word here is *cherem* which means more than a mere dedication. It was indicative of a way of devoting a thing to God in such a fashion that it could not be redeemed or ever again used for ordinary purposes. The vow was irrevocable. The firstborn of all animals belonged to God, but they could be redeemed with a price and used for ordinary purposes. They were *godesh* rather than *cherem*. Both belonged to God, but the first could be redeemed." (Kenneth E. Jones).
 - b. We should learn that some things are devoted to God and should not be used in a secular way.
 - (1) God's name.
 - (2) The Lord's Supper.
 - (3) The Bible.
 - (4) The name Christian.
3. God will take care of us today.
 - a. Psa. 37:25 "I have been young, and *now* am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."
 - b. Mat. 6:33 "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."
 - c. Rom. 8:28 "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose."
 - d. 1 Pet. 5:7 "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you."
 - e. Song:

Be not dismayed whate'er betide, God will take care of you; Beneath His wings of love abide, God will take care of you.
 Thru days of toil when heart doth fail God will take care of you; When dangers fierce your path assail, God will take care of you.
 All you may need He will provide, God will take care of you; Nothing you ask will be denied, God will take care of you.
 No matter what may be the test, God will take care of you; Lean, weary one, upon His breast, God will take care of you.
 God will take care of you, Thru ev'ry day, O'er all the way; He will take care of you, God will take care of you.

III. LEVITES DUES

A. Num. 18:21-24

B. God gives the Levites one-tenth from the tribe of Israel.

1. The Levites tenth.
 - a. This is in place of an inheritance in the land.
 - b. It was their pay for the work they performed.
2. Paul uses this principle for paying preachers.
 - a. It is right for congregations to pay preachers.
 - (1) 1 Cor. 9:13-14 "Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live *of the things* of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? ¹⁴Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel."
 - (2) Congregations should not require a preacher to live a life of financial hardship.
 - b. Preachers should not make merchandise of congregations.
 - (1) Financially.
 - (2) by laziness.

C. Again God stresses no one is to come near or touch the tabernacle (as we noted earlier).

IV. PRIEST DUES FROM THE LEVITES

A. Num. 18:25-32

B. No one is exempt from giving.

1. The Levites received a tenth from the people.
2. The Levites must give a tenth of that which they received.

C. God is not pleased with leftovers.

1. The priest must give their best or choicest part.
2. God expects our best in what we give and in what we do.

D. All are to give monetarily today.

1. 1 Cor. 16:1-2 “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. ²Upon the first *day* of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as *God* hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.”
 - a. A command.
 - b. Done upon the first day of the week (Sunday).
 - c. As God has prospered us.
2. 2 Cor. 9:6-7 “But this *I say*, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. ⁷Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, *so let him give*, not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.”
 - a. Giving is to be planned (purposed).
 - b. Give cheerfully.
 - c. Give bountifully.

Conclusion: This chapter stresses the importance of giving. While we are not under the Law of Moses, and the tithe today, the value of giving is no less important. Let us learn the great lessons God placed within the pages of the Old Testament; Rom. 15:4 “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.”