

Gleanings from the Pentateuch

The Levites: Symbols of Redemption (Numbers 8:5-26)

The Levites

Introduction/Review

- **Chapter 1:** first introduced to the Levites and their unique role (not part of the census)
- **Chapter 3:** census and general duties of the Levites
- **Chapter 4:** specific duties of each family of the Levites and census of men 30-50 yrs. old
- **Chapter 8:** consecration ceremony of the Levites for their unique role (*occurred earlier*)

The Levites

Introduction/Review

➤ *Unique Function*

- they were not priests but served the priests
- they performed the “guard service” for the tabernacle and the holy objects
- they alone were responsible for dismantling, transporting and erecting the tabernacle

The Levites

Numbers 8:5-26

1. Consecration Ceremony

- The Levites are presented as a substitutionary (living) sacrifice
- The Levites are presented as a “wave offering” – they belong to the priests

The Levites

Numbers 8:5-26

2. Explanation

- The Levites belong exclusively to the Lord and are given to the priests to assist with the tabernacle
- The Lord takes the Levites instead of every first-born male of the sons of Israel

The Levites

Excursus: *Theology of the first-born*

1. *Passover* – in the final plague God delivered the first-born of Israel through the blood of a lamb

- principle #1 – deliverance from judgment and slavery through a substitutionary death
- principle #2 – deliverance by God (redemption) results in belonging uniquely to the Lord

The Levites

Excursus: *Theology of the first-born*

2. Consecration – every first-born son had to be consecrated to God

- The first-born were consecrated to God by means of a redemption price
- This consecration was only ceremonial – there was no outward expression of it

Numbers 3:40-51 – *The Levites instead of the first-born*

The Levites

Theological Significance

- The Levites demonstrate consecration to the Lord that is the result of redemption
 - They were exclusively devoted to the tabernacle
 - They had no inheritance in the land
 - They were supported by the tithe of the people

The Levites

New Covenant Application

➤ *The Levites picture the consecration of every redeemed disciple of Jesus*

- As redeemed, we belong uniquely and exclusively to Christ (1 Cor. 6:19-20)
- Every disciple of Jesus is a “full-time” servant
- Every aspect of life is to be an act of service/worship – no distinction between “sacred” and “secular”

The Levites

“Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men; knowing that from the Lord you will receive your reward. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.” – Colossians 3:23-24

“Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” – 1 Corinthians 10:31

“And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.” – Colossians 3:17

The Levites

Romans 12:1

“I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.