

Numbers Chapter 18

Verses 1-20

This passage describes the priestly duties and provisions that God communicated to “Aaron” (Exodus 40:13).

One priority was that the priests make sure no one defiled the “sanctuary”.

The priests would be punished (“bear the iniquity”), if it was desecrated.

God gave the “Levites” to assist the priestly work and promised that the priest would receive a portion of the “offerings” since they did not inherit any land.

Verses 1-7

This portion contains God’s reply to the frightened call of the people (in 17:12-13).

It is given directly to Aaron, as opposed to Moses previously (6:22; 8:1).

God provided the priests and the Levites to guard the tabernacle against unauthorized persons trespassing.

The phrase “bear the iniquity of the sanctuary” indicated the Levites’ responsibility to guard against any misuse of the tabernacle or its furnishings, on penalty of God’s severe punishment.

Only Aaron and his family could minister with the holy articles of the sanctuary of God.

Numbers 18:1 "And the LORD said unto Aaron, Thou and thy sons and thy father's house with thee shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary: and thou and thy sons with thee shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood."

“The LORD said unto Aaron”:

Only here (in verses 1-25 and in Lev. 10:8), does the LORD speak directly to Aaron alone.

“Bear the iniquity”:

Aaron and his sons from this point forward were responsible for any offense against the holiness of the tabernacle or violations of the rules of priesthood.

This is a change in the message from God.

Up until now, the LORD spoke to Moses, or Moses and Aaron.

In this the LORD is speaking to Aaron.

In the last lesson, Aaron's rod bloomed, which gave unquestioned authority of the priesthood to Aaron and his sons.

We found in the book of Leviticus, that God spoke to the people through the Urim and Thummim of the High Priest.

Aaron's father's house was the Kohathites.

The mention of them has to do with the carrying of the furniture, curtains, and boards of the tabernacle.

The "bearing of the iniquity" speaks of the responsibility to teach against iniquity.

Numbers 18:2 "And thy brethren also of the tribe of Levi, the tribe of thy father, bring thou with thee, that they may be joined unto thee, and minister unto thee: but thou and thy sons with thee [shall minister] before the tabernacle of witness."

For his father Amram (the father of Moses, Aaron and Miriam), was of that tribe, and so the Levites were his brethren, as he is directed to consider them.

Which might serve to conciliate their minds, and make them easy with respect to his enjoyment of the priesthood.

"Bring thou with thee":

Into the court of the tabernacle, for further they might not go.

"That they may be joined unto thee":

As their name of Levites signifies.

Persons joined and united to others, as they were to the priests.

See reason of their patriarch's name Levi (in Gen. 29:34).

"And minister unto thee":

Be assisting to the priests in killing the sacrifices, receiving the blood, and flaying the beasts, and in other things about the sanctuary (Num. 3:6).

"But thou and thy sons with thee shall minister before the tabernacle of witness":

Which was the most Holy Place, where were the ark of the testimony or witness, and the tables of the covenant.

And they might be said to minister before that, when they ministered in the Holy Place, which was before it.

When they burned incense upon the altar of incense, ordered the showbread, and trimmed the lamps of the candlestick.

Which none but the priests the sons of Aaron might do.

This is separating out Aaron and his sons to work in the Holy Place, and in the Holy of Holies, while the other Kohathites do not minister in the tabernacle.

They just move the actual structure of the tabernacle, when they move from place to place.

Numbers 18:3 "And they shall keep thy charge, and the charge of all the tabernacle: only they shall not come nigh the vessels of the sanctuary and the altar, that neither they, nor ye also, die."

That is, the Levites, whatever Aaron and his sons, the priests, should charge them to do, or commit to their care and charge.

That they should observe; as to watch and keep out all unfit persons.

And to take down and set up the tabernacle when needful, etc.

"Only they shall not come nigh the vessels of the sanctuary":

As the ark and mercy seat in the Holy of Holies, the showbread table, and candlestick in the Holy Place.

Wherefore when these were removed from place to place in journeying, they were covered, that they might not touch them as they carried them.

"And the altar":

Both of incense and burnt offering, on neither of which might they offer.

"That neither they, nor you also, die":

The priests for suffering them to meddle with things that did not belong to them, and the Levites for intruding themselves.

Only Aaron and his sons are anointed of the oil of separation to come into the Holy Place.

The vessels can be handled only by them.

Even the carrying of the vessels from place to place, must be done by Aaron and his sons.

Anything in the Holy Place, or Holy of Holies, cannot be touched by anyone other than Aaron or his sons.

The penalty is death to those who touch them.

The penalty would be death for Aaron to allow them to touch them as well.

Numbers 18:4 "And they shall be joined unto thee, and keep the charge of the tabernacle of the congregation, for all the service of the tabernacle: and a stranger shall not come nigh unto you."

As assistants in the sacred service.

"And keep the charge of tabernacle of the congregation, for all the service of the tabernacle (see notes on Num. 3:7; 3:8).

"And a stranger shall not come nigh unto you":

Not any of the other tribes, only such as were of the tribe of Levi.

They only were to be brought with them, and joined unto them, and assist them, and minister to them (as in Num. 18:2).

The stranger, in this verse, is someone who is not a Levite.

Numbers 18:5 "And ye shall keep the charge of the sanctuary, and the charge of the altar: that there be no wrath any more upon the children of Israel."

That is the priests, Aaron and his sons.

The High Priest was to keep the charge of the most Holy Place particularly, and do what was to be done in that on the day of atonement.

And the common priests to keep the charge of the Holy Place, and do everything relating to the altar of incense, the showbread table, and candlestick.

"And the charge of the altar":

Of burnt offering, which stood in the court of the tabernacle.

"That there be no wrath any more upon the children of Israel":

As had been upon Korah and his company (Num. 16:32).

And as afterwards came on Uzziah (2 Chron. 26:19).

God does not want any more deaths.

He explains this over in detail, to show who has been anointed to do each job.

They are not to vary from what they are called to do.

This is telling Aaron that he is in charge of the tabernacle and the altar, and is responsible at all times for them.

With the great honor of being called to be High Priest, goes great responsibility.

He cannot point to someone else and blame them.

He is the responsible one.

Numbers 18:6 "And I, behold, I have taken your brethren the Levites from among the children of Israel: to you [they are] given [as] a gift for the LORD, to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation."

(See notes on Numbers 3:12).

Where the same is said, only they are here called the brethren of the priests for the reason given (Num. 18:2).

"To you they are given as a gift for the LORD, to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation":

See notes on Num. 3:7; 3:8; 3:9.

We remember from previous lessons that God separated out the tribe of Levi to substitute for the firstborn of each family.

They belong totally to God.

They are not even camped with the other tribes.

They are camped close to the tabernacle.

The tabernacle is their responsibility.

The Levites have no land, or really no private life.

They belong to God for His service.

Numbers 18:7 "Therefore thou and thy sons with thee shall keep your priest's office for every thing of the altar, and within the veil; and ye shall serve: I have given your priest's office [unto you as] a service of gift: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death."

“A service of gift”:

Even though the priesthood demanded much, the priests were to view it as a gift from the LORD.

The entire tribe of Levi was given to Aaron and his sons, and actually to God, to serve in the things Aaron and his sons cannot do.

They are actually helpers.

They help with the physical side of the ministry, while Aaron and his sons are responsible for the spiritual.

Verses 8-20

In return for their service to the LORD, the priests were to receive a portion of the offerings which the people presented in worship.

They could keep all of the parts of the sacrifices not consumed on the altar by fire.

Also, the offerings of firstfruits and everything devoted to the LORD were theirs as well.

In recognition of their altar service, the priests were to receive parts of the sacrifices, firstfruits of the harvest, and firstborn animals (compare Lev. 6:14 – 7:36; 27:26-33).

The priest’s families could also eat from these offerings as long as they were “clean”.

Their inheritance would be God Himself, who provided for their needs through His people’s gifts (verse 20).

Numbers 18:8 "And the LORD spake unto Aaron, Behold, I also have given thee the charge of mine heave offerings of all the hallowed things of the children of Israel; unto thee have I given them by reason of the anointing, and to thy sons, by an ordinance for ever."

Having pointed out to him the duty of his office, he now informs him of the perquisites of it.

Or having told him what was his work, and what his wages, or what was his service, and now his maintenance.

"Behold, I also have given thee charge of my heave offerings of all the hallowed things of the children of Israel":

Such as the heave shoulder and wave breast, and firstfruits, and all other Holy Things in general.

Such as were the most Holy Things (as in Num. 18:9).

And the lighter Holy Things, as the Jews call them (Num. 18:11).

The charge of these was given to keep for themselves, and for their families.

"Unto thee have I given them by reason of the anointing":

Because of his office as a priest, to which he was consecrated by anointing.

"And to thy sons, by an ordinance for ever":

See Lev. 7:34.

Aaron and his sons are to live of the offerings that come into the tabernacle.

They have no land, or no secular jobs.

They are to live of the gifts of the sanctuary.

Actually the people give these offerings to God, and God shares them with Aaron.

Numbers 18:9 "This shall be thine of the most holy things, [reserved] from the fire: every oblation of theirs, every meat offering of theirs, and every sin offering of theirs, and every trespass offering of theirs, which they shall render unto me, [shall be] most holy for thee and for thy sons."

For, as observed, there were some lighter and lesser Holy Things or sacrifices, and others superlatively so: and those are begun with.

Such as were;

"Reserved from the fire":

Those parts of sacrifices which were not burnt with fire on the altar of burnt offerings.

"Every oblation of theirs":

Which is a general word, including various offerings, the particulars follow:

"Every meat offering of theirs":

Or bread offering, for they were made of fine flour and oil, and burnt on the altar.

The remainder of which was eaten by Aaron and his sons (Lev. 6:14).

"Every sin offering of theirs":

Which was offered to make atonement for sin, which also belonged to the priests and their sons.

Excepting such whose blood was carried into the most Holy Place (Lev. 6:25).

"And every trespass offering of theirs, which they shall render unto me":

Which was offered for a trespass committed": What remained of this also, when burnt on the altar, was eaten by the priest and his sons (Lev. 7:5).

And this sacrifice was a ram, when a trespass was committed, either in the Holy Things of the LORD, or in wrongs done to men (Lev. 5:15).

Jarchi interprets it of an offering for a trespass committed by rapine or violence to a stranger.

These, all of them, it is added.

"Shall be most holy for thee and for thy sons":

For their use, and for theirs only.

We go into greater details about all of these offerings in our Bible study on Leviticus.

For the lesson here, I believe it is showing that Aaron and his family live of the offerings and sacrifices brought to the tabernacle.

Leviticus 2:3 "And the remnant of the meat offering [shall be] Aaron's and his sons': [it is] a thing most holy of the offerings of the LORD made by fire."

1 Corinthians 9:13 "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?"

Numbers 18:10 "In the most holy [place] shalt thou eat it; every male shall eat it: it shall be holy unto thee."

Not in the Holy of Holies, eminently so called.

Nor in the Holy Place, for they were neither of them places to eat in.

But in the tent of the congregation, as Aben Ezra states.

Or court, as Jarchi.

Called most holy, in distinction from and in comparison of the camp of Israel, and their tents.

As afterwards of Jerusalem, and their houses there, where they might not eat the most Holy Things.

"Every male shall eat it":

The sons of priests, and they only.

Not their wives, nor their daughters, and therefore not to be eaten at home, or in their own houses.

"It shall be holy unto thee":

Separated only for the use of him and his sons.

The Holy Place was the place for all meat offering, sin offering and trespass offering to be eaten.

This is speaking of things which must be eaten inside the tabernacle.

Many of the offerings, the entire family ate of.

The males mentioned here, are the priests who symbolize all believers, male and female.

Numbers 18:11 "And this [is] thine; the heave offering of their gift, with all the wave offerings of the children of Israel: I have given them unto thee, and to thy sons and to thy daughters with thee, by a statute for ever: every one that is clean in thy house shall eat of it."

What follow, which appertained to the priests, are the less or lighter Holy Things.

"The heave offering of their gift":

The right shoulder, given to the priest for a heave offering of the sacrifices of peace offerings (Lev. 7:32).

According to Jarchi, it was what was lifted up or heaved from the thank offering, the peace offerings, and the ram of the Nazarites (see Lev. 7:14).

"With all the wave offerings of the children of Israel":

Which were waved to and fro before the LORD, as the breast of the peace offerings, called therefore the wave breast (Lev. 7:30).

"I have given them unto thee, and to thy sons, and to thy daughters with thee, by a statute for ever.

For these were to be eaten in their own houses, and by their families.

Wives, children, and servants bought with their money, or born in their houses.

But not hired servants, nor sojourners, nor strangers.

Nor their daughters married to strangers though, if widows, or divorced, and without children, and returned to their father's house, they might eat of them (Lev. 22:10).

Thus, a provision was made for the maintenance of the priests of the LORD and their families, until the Messiah should come.

Who has also appointed that they that preach the Gospel should live of it (1 Cor. 9:13).

"Everyone that is clean in thy house shall eat of it":

That was clean in a ceremonial sense.

Had not touched a dead body, etc.

Jarchi says, this is said to comprehend his wife; but that might be concluded from what is said before, for if his children, much more might his wife eat of it.

The heave offering and the wave offering did not have to be eaten inside the tabernacle, and therefore, the whole family could eat of it.

Numbers 18:12 "All the best of the oil, and all the best of the wine, and of the wheat, the firstfruits of them which they shall offer unto the LORD, them have I given thee."

Or the "fat" of them.

The fat of anything being the best (see Deut. 32:14).

"The firstfruits of them":

The oil, and wine, and wheat.

"Which they shall offer unto the LORD, them have I given thee":

This Jarchi calls the great heave offering.

The firstfruits of their harvest and vintage, which being offered to the LORD, was given to the priests.

The quantity is not fixed, but left to the generosity of the people, and was a free gift.

Liberal men would give a fortieth part, those of a meaner spirit a fiftieth, and niggardly ones a sixtieth.

And less than that was not given (see notes on Exodus 22:29; compare Ezek. 45:13).

The firstfruits are of the vineyard, as well as the orchard and the gardens.

Since they were not destroyed in sacrifice, they were eaten of the family of the High Priest.

Numbers 18:13 "[And] whatsoever is first ripe in the land, which they shall bring unto the LORD, shall be thine; every one that is clean in thine house shall eat [of] it."

Of any other sort of fruit, figs, pomegranates, apples, plums, pears, etc.

Besides olives and vines.

"Which they shall bring unto the LORD, shall be thine":

Which they shall bring in a basket to the tabernacle.

Where it was, or to the temple, when built.

This the priests were to have (see Deut. 26:2).

"Everyone that is clean in thine house shall eat of it":

See notes on Num. 18:11.

Numbers 18:14 "Every thing devoted in Israel shall be thine."

Fields, houses, cattle, etc.

If absolutely devoted to the LORD, they were the priest's.

But if devoted to certain uses, they were appropriated to those uses, as the repairs of the temple, etc. (see Lev. 27:1).

When things were given to God in sacrifice, God in turn gave them to the priest's family.

The only ones forbidden to partake of it, would be those who were unclean for some reason.

Numbers 18:15 "Every thing that openeth the matrix in all flesh, which they bring unto the LORD, [whether it be] of men or beasts, shall be thine: nevertheless the firstborn of man shalt thou surely redeem, and the firstling of unclean beasts shalt thou redeem."

The firstborn of every creature.

"Which they bring unto the LORD":

As they were obliged, he claiming it as his own (Exodus 13:2).

"Whether it be of men or beasts, shall be thine":

Every firstborn of either, being the LORD's, became the priest's by his gift.

"Nevertheless the firstborn of man shalt thou surely redeem":

That is, take the redemption price for it, which was five shekels (as in Num. 18:16).

For the original proprietor was, strictly speaking, the redeemer, and paid the money.

And the priest was the receiver, to whom it was paid (see Exodus 13:13).

"And the firstlings of unclean beasts shalt thou redeem":

With lambs, as an ass, which is put for unclean beasts, is ordered to be redeemed with a lamb, or its neck to be broken (Exodus 13:13).

Earlier in these lessons, we learned that the firstborn of each family was purchased back from God for 5 shekels of silver.

The tribe of Levi got the 5 shekels, because they substituted for the firstborn.

Now we see that unclean beasts were purchased back as well.

Sometimes, the owner of the unclean animal would kill it, rather than pay the redemption money.

Numbers 18:16 "And those that are to be redeemed from a month old shalt thou redeem, according to thine estimation, for the money of five shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, which [is] twenty gerahs."

Which is to be understood not of unclean beasts last mentioned.

For they were redeemed with lambs and not with money.

And after they were eight days and not a month old, as follows (Exodus 13:13).

but of the firstborn of men.

"From a month old shalt thou redeem, according to thine estimation":

That is, take the redemption money next mentioned.

And though both time and price are fixed, yet said to be according to the estimation of the priest (see Lev. 27:5).

"For the money of five shekels":

Which is the price given for the redemption of the firstborn, when the Levites were taken in their stead (Num. 3:47).

"After the shekel of the sanctuary, which is twenty gerahs":

See notes on Numbers 3:47.

Of the manner of redeeming the firstborn (see notes on Exodus 13:15).

The shekels for redemption were silver.

Isn't it interesting that silver means redemption?

The number 5 means grace.

Numbers 18:17 "But the firstling of a cow, or the firstling of a sheep, or the firstling of a goat, thou shalt not redeem; they [are] holy: thou shalt sprinkle their blood upon the altar, and shalt burn their fat [for] an offering made by fire, for a sweet savor unto the LORD."

That is, shalt not take the redemption price for them, but the creatures themselves.

Which they, the priests, were to take for their own use.

"They are holy":

Separated to the LORD, and therefore not to be used in common by men, but were sacred to the LORD.

Or became the property of his priests (see Deut. 15:19).

How they were to be made use of follows.

"Thou shalt sprinkle their blood upon the altar":

For they were to be sacrificed, and their blood used as in other sacrifices.

"And shalt burn their fat for an offering made by fire, for a sweet savor unto the LORD":

As the fat of other sacrifices was, and particularly of the peace offerings, which were wholly eaten otherwise (Lev. 7:31).

The firstborn of the clean animals must be sacrificed to God.

They were not redeemed with money.

In some way, each of the sacrifices of the clean animals were a shadow of the great sacrifice that Jesus made for us all on the cross.

Numbers 18:18 "And the flesh of them shall be thine, as the wave breast and as the right shoulder are thine."

For him and his family to eat of, whether blemished or perfect the Jews say.

"As the wave breast and as the right shoulder are thine":

Which were his part of the peace offerings, for him and his sons to eat of (Lev. 7:34).

And the Jews observe, that as the wave breast and heave shoulder of the peace offerings might be eaten in two days and one night, so might those of the firstlings.

Aaron and his sons owned no cows, or other animals.

The firstborn was their portion.

They shared with the altar of God.

That is where their meat came from.

Numbers 18:19 "All the heave offerings of the holy things, which the children of Israel offer unto the LORD, have I given thee, and thy sons and thy daughters with thee, by a statute for ever: it [is] a covenant of salt for ever before the LORD unto thee and to thy seed with thee."

"A covenant of salt for ever".

Salt, which does not burn, was a metaphor to speak of durability.

As salt keeps its flavor, so the LORD's covenant with the priesthood was durable.

The LORD would provide though the offerings of His people for His priests forever.

Salt is a preservative, and when used in a covenant, showed that the covenant would not be broken.

It showed the covenant to be forever.

Salt also was a shadow of things that were incorruptible.

Numbers 18:20 "And the LORD spake unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them: I [am] thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel."

What is said, being what concerned the tribe of Levi, at the head of which Aaron was.

Even concerning the maintenance of the Levites.

"Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land":

In the land of Israel when they come to possess it, as the rest of the tribes had.

"Neither shalt thou have any part among them":

Any part of the land when it is divided by lot, as it was in the times of Joshua, when taken from the Canaanites.

No tract of land was peculiarly assigned to them as were to the other tribes, as fields, nor vineyards.

They had cities appointed them, and they had houses and fields devoted to the LORD which fell to them.

And others they had by gift or legacy, or by purchase, as had Jeremiah the priest and Barnabas the Levite (Jer. 32:9; Acts 4:36).

But they had no share in the distribution of the land of Canaan at the time of the division of it among the tribes.

"I am thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel":

In things temporal, the offerings, tithes, firstfruits, etc.

Which were given to the LORD, being bestowed upon them.

And in things spiritual, they being employed in the work and service of God, and having a peculiar nearness to Him, and communion with Him.

So all that are made priests unto God, as all believers in Christ are (1 Peter 2:5).

Who have God for their portion and inheritance.

God, in his persons and in all His perfections, and under every character, as the God of nature, providence, and grace, is the portion of His people.

And a rich, large, and satisfying portion He is, and which is inexhaustible, and will endure for ever.

He is their portion in life and at death, in time and to all eternity (see Psalm 73:26).

This is just saying they will not be allotted land, when they get to the land of promise.

Their inheritance is not in worldly things, such as land and cattle.

Their inheritance is in the things of God.

They will not be poor, because the offerings brought to the tabernacle belong to them and God.

Their living comes in the service to God.

Verses 21-24

Tithing was now provided for the tribe of Levi (Gen. 14:20; 28:22; Lev. 27:30-33).

The tithe was a payment “for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation (verse 21; compare 31).

It also compensated for their lack of an inheritance in the land.

Later they were given 48 villages which were scattered throughout the land (34:16 – 35:8).

Numbers 18:21 "And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, [even] the service of the tabernacle of the congregation."

The tenth part of the produce of the land.

Of the wheat, barley, oil, and wine.

The tenth part of their harvest and vintage.

So that though they were the least of the tribes, they had the greatest share of the increase of the land, and that without any labor or expense.

The other having but nine parts among them all.

And at the charge and labor of manuring, cultivating, etc. and this they were to have;

"For their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation":

See Num. 18:3.

Each of the twelve tribes of Israel brought 1/10 of everything they earned to God.

This 1/10 was used for the income of the tribe of Levi.

They had no other income.

This was fair pay for their services in the sanctuary.

Numbers 18:22 "Neither must the children of Israel henceforth come nigh the tabernacle of the congregation, lest they bear sin, and die."

To do any part of the priest's office, as to burn incense, as Korah and his company had done.

Or to do any part of the work of the Levites, by watching in the tabernacle, by taking it down and setting it up, and bearing the vessels of it.

Otherwise they might come to it, to bring their sacrifices, to pay their vows, and for their purification when necessary, and such like things.

"Lest they bear sin, and die":

Lest sin be charged upon them, and punishment be inflicted, even the punishment of death.

For it was death to intrude into the priest's office.

This is speaking of the most Holy Place, where just the High Priest could go.

The High Priest carried blood into the Holy of Holies for them on Day of Atonement, and they were cleansed of their sins.

They could not go in for themselves, lest they die.

This is a type and shadow of Jesus.

Hebrews 9:6-7 "Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service [of God]." "But into the second [went] the High Priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and [for] the errors of the people:"

Hebrews 9:12 "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption [for us]."

Jesus opened the way into the most Holy Place, when He was crucified.

Matthew 27:51 And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;"

Numbers 18:23 "But the Levites shall do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they shall bear their iniquity: [it shall be] a statute for ever throughout your generations, that among the children of Israel they have no inheritance."

In guarding the tabernacle, that no unclean persons enter into it.

Or any others take anything out of it.

And in assisting the priests in their service, and carrying the vessels of the sanctuary when required.

"And they shall bear their iniquity":

That is, when they fail in the duty of their office, are not careful in their service and work, and business appointed them.

If either they did not do their business themselves, or suffered others to do it.

Or such to come to the tabernacle who should not, they would be blameworthy and suffer for it

"It shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations, that among the children of Israel they have no inheritance":

Having such a plentiful provision made for them, by a statute as durable as this.

When the land is divided, after they finally get to the Promised Land, there is no land allotment for the Levites.

They live of the tabernacle.

Their inheritance is in the LORD.

They receive gifts of the people with the altar of the tabernacle.

Numbers 18:24 "But the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer [as] a heave offering unto the LORD, I have given to the Levites to inherit: therefore I have said unto them, Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance."

The tenth of the produce of their land, as before.

"Which they offer as a heave offering unto the LORD":

By way of gratitude to Him for giving them the land, and for making it so fruitful to them.

And as an acknowledgment of His being the sovereign LORD and proprietor of it.

"I have given to the Levites to inherit":

So that the Levites had the tithe not immediately from the Israelites, nor were they dependent on them for them.

But they were first given to the LORD, and then by Him to the Levites.

Who held them of Him, and not of the Israelites.

And were a portion and an inheritance, settled upon them by the LORD Himself.

Which they had as good a right and title unto as the rest of the tribes had to their several inheritances.

"Therefore have I said unto them, Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance":

As in (Num. 18:23).

Everything that is not consumed by fire, and all of the tithes are actually for the use of the tribe of Levi.

We listed earlier the few separate offerings, which were for Aaron and his sons.

The great portion of the gifts and sacrifices are to be divided with the members of the tribe of Levi.

Verses 25-32

They in turn were to tithe their allotted tithe, even the "best thereof, even the hallowed part" (compare Matt. 10:9-10; 1 Cor. 9:3-10; 16:2), for the paying of God's workers: ministers.

Every member of God's chosen people was to worship Him by returning to Him a portion of His blessings.

Even the Levites were to present God with a "tenth part of the tithe" they received, and to make sure it was the "best" of what they received.

Disobedience would result in death.

Numbers 18:25 "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,"

And not unto Aaron, because a tithe out of the tithe was to be given to Aaron, as Aben Ezra observes.

And it was not so proper that he should have this order to deliver to the Levites, in which he and his sons were so much concerned.

And therefore, it was given to Moses to acquaint them of it.

The earlier part of this lesson was addressed to Aaron.

Now the LORD speaks to Moses.

Numbers 18:26 "Thus speak unto the Levites, and say unto them, When ye take of the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then ye shall offer up a heave offering of it for the LORD, [even] a tenth [part] of the tithe."

Aaron was to tell them what a provision would be made for them on account of their service.

But Moses was to inform them what part Aaron was to have out of it.

"When ye take of the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance":

Which was done at the time of their harvest, and of the ingathering of the fruits of the earth.

"Then ye shall offer up a heave offering of it for the LORD":

In token of gratitude for the liberal provision He had made for the maintenance of them.

"Even a tenth part of the tithe":

A tenth part out of the tenth of the produce of the land of Israel.

We have been studying that the tithe, 1/10 of everything the Israelites made went to the LORD, and in return would wind up in the hands of the Levites.

This is now saying that everything the Levites received from God must be tithed as well.

They were to pay a tithe to God for use in the tabernacle.

The heave offering, we remember, had to do with offering first to God.

Numbers 18:27 "And [this] your heave offering shall be reckoned unto you, as though [it were] the corn of the threshing floor, and as the fullness of the winepress."

The tithe of the tithe, which though not properly heaved or lifted up, as the heave offerings.

Strictly so called, were, any more than the tithe itself (Num. 18:24).

Yet is so called, because separated to the use and service of the LORD, as they were.

"Shall be reckoned unto you, as though it were the corn of the threshing floor, and as the fullness of the winepress":

That is, it should be as acceptable to God as if they had fields and vineyards, threshing floors, and wine presses of their own.

From whence corn and wine were taken, as the Israelites when they received their tithes from them.

And what remained they had as good a right unto, and might make use of as their own, as well as they (see Num. 18:30).

Even though the living came from tithes paid to God in the tabernacle, the tithes must be paid on all they received by the Levites.

This is a living, the same as the farmer gives of his crop, and the vinedresser gives of his wine.

Numbers 18:28 "Thus ye also shall offer a heave offering unto the LORD of all your tithes, which ye receive of the children of Israel; and ye shall give thereof the LORD'S heave offering to Aaron the priest."

As the Israelites did when they paid tithes to them (Num. 18:24).

"Of all your tithes, which ye receive of the children of Israel":

Which heave offering was a tenth part of them.

"And ye shall give thereof the LORD's heave offering to Aaron the priest":

That is, the said tenth part of the tithe was to be given not to Aaron only, as the High Priest.

As some have thought, and so to his successors in the High Priesthood.

But to him and his sons, even to all the priests in common, the High Priest having his share of it.

And Josephus is clear for it, that the tithe of the annual fruits was paid to the Levites, and to the priests.

These offerings of the Levites actually go to Aaron, the High Priest.

Numbers 18:29 "Out of all your gifts ye shall offer every heave offering of the LORD, of all the best thereof, [even] the hallowed part thereof out of it."

Not only out of their tithes, but out of whatsoever gifts were given by the Israelites to them.

And out of the produce of the fields which belonged to their cities (Num. 35:4).

The Levites were to take a tenth, and bring it to the LORD as a heave offering.

That is, they were to give it to the priests, to testify their gratitude for everything they had.

And to sanctify the rest unto them, and confirm their right and title to it, and give them the free use of it.

"Of all the best thereof, even the hallowed part thereof out of it":

Which was the tenth part, for that was holy, as Aben Ezra says.

And that was to be the best of it, which was always to be given to the LORD.

This is saying everything they receive in way of payment for their services, must be tithed to the LORD, and in turn to the High Priest.

It matters not whether it is money, or gifts of some sort or other.

Everything must be tithed to the LORD.

Numbers 18:30 "Therefore thou shalt say unto them, When ye have heaved the best thereof from it, then it shall be counted unto the Levites as the increase of the threshing floor, and as the increase of the winepress."

The Targum of Jonathan is, "thou shalt say to them"; the priests.

But the words seem manifestly spoken to the Levites.

"When ye have heaved the best thereof from it":

Taken out the tenth part of it, and that the best.

"Then it shall be counted unto the Levites as the increase of the threshing floor, and as the increase of the wine press":

Then what remains shall be reckoned as much their own, and may be as lawfully enjoyed.

As the corn of the threshing floor, and the wine of the wine fat, of any Israelite whatever.

The Levites took tithes of the people, and the High Priest took tithes of the Levites.

Everything they receive should be treated the same as if it were earned money, like the grain or wine production.

Everything and everyone tithed.

Numbers 18:31 "And ye shall eat it in every place, ye and your households: for it [is] your reward for your service in the tabernacle of the congregation."

In any of their tents or dwelling houses.

Not being obliged to eat it in the tabernacle, where the priests, were obliged to eat many of their Holy Things.

And second tithes were only to be eaten at Jerusalem (Deut. 14:22).

"Ye, and your households":

They and their wives, their sons and daughters, their servants, whether bought or hired.

And they might sell it to strangers, to purchase other necessities with.

The Targum of Jonathan interprets this of the priests.

But the Levites only are plainly spoken of.

"For it is your reward for your service in the tabernacle of the congregation":

Which is said to encourage them in their work.

And animate them to it, as well as to clear their right to such a maintenance against all objections.

For the laborer is worthy of his reward, as those that labor in the word and doctrine are of theirs (1 Tim. 5:17).

This is for the family, as well as for the priest.

This is their living.

Numbers 18:32 "And ye shall bear no sin by reason of it, when ye have heaved from it the best of it: neither shall ye pollute the holy things of the children of Israel, lest ye die."

Shall have no blame laid upon them, or guilt imputed to them, or punishment inflicted on them.

On account of their having and enjoying their tithes and gifts.

"When ye have heaved from it the best of it":

Took out the tenth, and that the best, and given it to the priests.

Or otherwise they would be blameworthy, guilty, and liable to punishment.

"Neither shall ye pollute the Holy Things of the children of Israel":

The gifts they have given for holy uses, and so are holy. Which would be the case if they ate of them, or enjoyed them, without giving the priests the tenth part of them.

"Lest ye die":

For it seems such a neglect was punishable with death.

The person offering it must give it as a tithe.

It is tithed to the LORD.

There is provision made for it to be used of those who minister of the things of God.

If they minister the things of God, it is correct for them to live of the offerings.

The lesson in this is that all must give their share to the LORD.

It is not a sin for the minister to live of the gifts to the church.

Numbers Chapter 18 Questions

1. What is different about this message?
2. _____ rod bloomed.
3. What did this do for the priesthood of Aaron?
4. We found in Leviticus that, God spoke to the people through the _____ and _____ of the High Priest.
5. Aaron's father's house was the _____.
6. What did the "bearing of the iniquity" mean?

7. Who was Aaron to bring with him to minister helps to him?
8. What could the other Kohathites not do, that Aaron and his sons could?
9. What is the penalty for someone, other than Aaron or his sons, to touch the Holy Things?
10. Who was the stranger in verse 4?
11. The Levites substituted for the _____ of all Israel.
12. Where do the Levites camp?
13. What are the Levites, other than Aaron's and his son's, job?
14. What offerings were eaten in the sanctuary?
15. Why could the entire family eat of the heave and the wave offering?
16. What is the one restriction about eating of it?
17. Who did the firstfruits go to?
18. When they brought the firstborn of their animals to be sacrificed, who got the meat?
19. What was the price to buy back the firstborn son?
20. The shekels for redemption were _____.
21. What were all the sacrifices a shadow of?
22. Salt is a _____.
23. When used in a covenant, what did the salt show?
24. What was the tithe?
25. Who carried the blood into the Holy of Holies on day of atonement?
26. When was the veil of the temple rent?
27. Do the Levites tithe?
28. What lesson can we all learn from this?