

May 25

Scriptures: Read Numbers 8 & 9

Key Verse: “Aaron shall offer the Levites before the Lord, as though a wave offering from the children of Israel, that they may perform the work of the Lord.”(Numbers 8:11)

Overview

The Levites had already been chosen, counted, and organized; now we see their consecration for ministry in the Tabernacle. The ceremony was done in the sight of all the congregation of Israel, who ceremony was done in the sight of all the congregation of Israel, who put their hands on the heads of all the Levites, symbolizing their substitution for all the first-born (3:12-13). It was a solemn and sacred time, for the dedication of a life to the Lord is very serious and should be publicly expressed, testifying that God has cleansed them from sin and has authority and lordship over their life. Clearly, the wave offering of the Levites (8:11, 12) indicated that they were given over totally to God as a living sacrifice, that they might be acceptable to His service and do His will (Rom.12:1-2). The Lord then gave the Levites to the priests to help them in certain capacities of ministry, as well as serving as guards to protect the sacredness of the Tabernacle, thereby preventing any outbreak of God’s wrath upon the Israelite community (8:19).

The ceremony was mainly one of purification as was evident in their shaving the hair off their bodies, washing their clothes and being sprinkled with water (8:7). The ceremony of consecration for the priests was different from that of the Levites, since the priests were especially consecrated to holiness for service within the sanctuary. As well as being washed with water, the priests had special garments that were anointed with holy oil and had the blood applied (Lev.8). The various sacrifices for the Levites were to atone for their sins, signifying inner cleansing. Those who work for the Lord today must first be made pure through the substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ.

Chapter nine expresses the graciousness of God. His gracious provision is evident in His reply to Moses concerning the men who had to miss the second Passover celebration (Ex.12; Lev.23:4-5) because of being ceremonially unclean (9:6). Moses wisely told the men to wait while he went and sought the Lord. When we are in doubt about a spiritual matter, we too should seek the Lord and search His Word for guidance. God answered Moses with a merciful solution and yet He did not compromise; those who had missed the Passover celebration on the prescribed date could celebrate it one month later (9:10-12). Even the stranger or gentile among them who followed the ways of God might join in the Passover (9:14), but the Israelite who intentionally disobeyed and neglected it was to be “cut off” (excommunicated or killed).

The graciousness of God is also seen in the magnificent way He guided and protected His children with the pillar of cloud, which hovered over the Tabernacle. This was no ordinary cloud, for it represented the presence of God among His covenant people. It had the rightness of fire by night, and God moved it when He desired to lead them to another campsite. We also would do well to always follow God’s leading; not by a visible pillar of cloud, since “we walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor.5:7). This is the safest way to travel along life’s paths. Following our own way leads to death (Prov.14:12), but Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life”. Through faith in Him we find the only way to peace with God and everlasting life (John 14:6).

Prayer

Lord, we seek You for guidance and claim Your promise that if we will acknowledge You in all our ways and lean not into our own understanding, You will direct our paths.