

Numbers 18 Commentary

PREVIOUS Numbers: Journey to God's Rest-Land by Irving Jensen- used by permission

NEXT

Source: Ryrie Study Bible

THE BOOK OF NUMBERS "Wilderness Wandering"								
WALKING Numbers 1-12			WANDERING Numbers 13-25			WAITING Numbers 26-36		
Counting & Camping Nu 1-4	Cleansing & Congregation Nu 5-8	Carping & Complaining Nu 9-12	12 Spies & Death in Desert Nu 13-16	Aaron & Levites in Wilderness Nu 17-18	Serpent of Brass & Story of Balaam Nu 21-25	Second Census 7 Laws of Israel Nu 26-30	Last Days of Moses as Leader Nu 31-33	Sections, Sanctuaries & Settlements Nu 34-36
Law & Order			Rebellion & Disorder			New Laws for the New Order		
Old Generation			Tragic Transition			New Generation		
Preparation for the Journey: Moving Out			Participation in the Journey: Moving On			Prize at end of the Journey: Moving In		
At Sinai Mt Sinai			To Moab Mt Hor			At Moab Mt Nebo		
En Route to Kadesh (Mt Sinai)			En Route to Nowhere (Wilderness)			En Route to Canaan (Plains of Moab)		
A Few Weeks to 2 Months			38 years, 3 months, 10 days			A Few Months		
Christ in Numbers = Our "Lifted-up One" (Nu 21:9, cp Jn 3:14-15)								
Author: Moses								

Numbers 18:1 So the LORD said to Aaron, "You and your sons and your father's household with you shall bear the guilt in connection with the sanctuary, and you and your sons with you shall bear the guilt in connection with your priesthood."

BGT Numbers 18:1 κα ε πεν κ ριος πρ ς Ααρων λ γων σ κα ο υ ο σου κα ο κος πατρι ς σου λ μψεσθε τ ς μαρτ ασ τ ν γ ων κα σ κα ο υ ο σου λ μψεσθε τ ς μαρτ ασ τ ς ερατε ασ μ ν

NET Numbers 18:1 The LORD said to Aaron, "You and your sons and your tribe with you must bear the iniquity of the sanctuary, and you and your sons with you must bear the iniquity of your priesthood."

NLT Numbers 18:1 Then the LORD said to Aaron: "You, your sons, and your relatives from the tribe of Levi will be held responsible for any offenses related to the sanctuary. But you and your sons alone will be held responsible for violations connected with the priesthood."

ESV Numbers 18:1 So the LORD said to Aaron, "You and your sons and your father's house with you shall bear iniquity connected with the sanctuary, and you and your sons with you shall bear iniquity connected with your priesthood."

NIV Numbers 18:1 The LORD said to Aaron, "You, your sons and your father's family are to bear the responsibility for offenses against the sanctuary, and you and your sons alone are to bear the responsibility for offenses against the priesthood."

KJV 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."

YLT Numbers 18:1 And Jehovah saith unto Aaron, 'Thou, and thy sons, and the house of thy father with thee, do bear the iniquity of the sanctuary; and thou, and thy sons with thee, do bear the iniquity of your priesthood;

LXE Numbers 18:1 And the Lord spoke to Aaron, saying, Thou and thy sons and thy father's house shall bear the sins of the holy things, and thou and thy sons shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood.

ASV Numbers 18:1 And Jehovah said unto Aaron, Thou and thy sons and thy fathers' house with thee shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary; and thou and thy sons with thee shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood.

CSB Numbers 18:1 The LORD said to Aaron, "You, your sons, and your ancestral house will be responsible for sin against the sanctuary. You and your sons will be responsible for sin involving your priesthood.

NKJ Numbers 18:1 Then the LORD said to Aaron: "You and your sons and your father's house with you shall bear the iniquity related to the sanctuary, and you and your sons with you shall bear the iniquity associated with your priesthood.

NRS Numbers 18:1 The LORD said to Aaron: You and your sons and your ancestral house with you shall bear responsibility for offenses connected with the sanctuary, while you and your sons alone shall bear responsibility for offenses connected with the priesthood.

- Thou: Nu 17:3,7,13 Heb 4:15
- shall bear: To counterbalance the high honour conferred on Aaron and his family, and to allay the fears and abate the envy of the people, it is here declared, that the priest must bear the blame of everything which was not properly conducted in the sanctuary. Nu 18:22 Nu 14:34 Ex 28:38 Lev 22:9 Isa 53:6,11 Eze 3:18,19 Ac 20:26,27 Heb 13:17 1Pe 2:24
- [Numbers 18 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



Aaron is Attentive to Adonai!

YAHWEH SPEAKS DIRECTLY TO AARON SAYING GUARD THE SANCTUARY!

The **KEY WORD** in Numbers 18 is **give** or **gift** - 10x - Nu 18:6 Nu 18:8 Nu 18:9 Nu 18:10 Nu 18:11 Nu 18:12 Nu 18:19 Nu 18:28 Nu 18:29 Nu 18:32. See [Wiersbe's practica summary](#) which emphasizes this key word.

God takes care of His own.

If He promised to give a rich land to the multitude of His people,
He would also give good things to the chosen servants of His house.

-- Jensen

Irving Jensen - When the Israelites would finally enter Canaan and appropriate the land and its fruit for a perpetual inheritance, there would have to be an understanding as to what lot and provision fell to those serving in the things of God's sanctuary, since they would own no land to produce a living. What would their inheritance be? It was at this point in the experiences of the Israelites that God revealed His plans for them, as He spoke through Aaron (18:1–24) and Moses (18:25–32).

First, the very office of priesthood was a gift of grace This was cited by God later in His words to Aaron: "You and your sons are to discharge your priestly duties in everything, from that which pertains to the altar to that which is inside the veil. Be sure to perform it, for the office of the priesthood is a gift which I am giving you" (Nu 18:7, Berkeley Version). The office was said to have the character of a gift, evidently because the priest's intimate fellowship with God was a privilege accorded not for works done, but wholly by the grace of God.

Second, God gave His ministers a spirit of responsibility for the critical task to which they had been called. The priests Aaron and his sons, together with those of his father's house (of the family of Kohathites),

were bearing the iniquity of the sanctuary and of their own priesthood (Nu 18:1). If there was atonement for any sin or defilement whatever—whether in the gifts or offerings themselves, in the people, in the priests, or in the Levites—that atonement applied only as the priests faithfully discharged their duties. The ultimate work of the priests was “that there be wrath no more upon the children of Israel” (Nu 18:5).

Third, God gave His ministers the gift of helpers. Concerning the Levites taken from the children of Israel (chaps. 3 and 4), God said to the priests, “To you they are a gift ... to do the service of the tent of meeting” (Nu 18:6). The phrase “joined unto thee” (Nu 18:2) indicates that the Levites were intimate helpers and were to serve the priests in their charges.

Fourth, God gave His ministers every provision for earthly needs. Since the priests and Levites would not be receiving land in Canaan from which to draw a livelihood, other than that of the Levite cities (see Nu 35), God designated that their income should be taken from the gifts and offerings brought to God in the sanctuary (Nu 18:8–32). Verse 8 identifies in general the source of income: “I have given thee the charge [keeping] of my heave-offerings,” the phrase “**heave-offerings**” being used here to include all the holy gifts brought to God in the offerings. This is borne out in the words of God which followed, identifying such gifts: meal offerings, sin offerings, trespass offerings, oil, vintage, grain, fruits, everything placed under a ban (Nu 18:14; cf. Lev. 27:28), and the firstborn of man and beast, the former being redeemed by money. **The Levites**, on the other hand, were to receive as their reward for service all the tithe of the land which the Israelites were to give to God according to the regulations described by Leviticus 27:30–33+. **Of this tithe, the Levites were to return a tenth to the Lord** (Nu. 18:25–32) as their offering to God.

Last, God gave the gift of Himself to His ministers. This was the greatest of all His gifts. In fact, God’s arrangement with the priests and Levites was such that they would be continually reminded of this. They were not to receive an inheritance of any portion of the land of Canaan, because their special portion was God Himself: “**I am thy portion and thine inheritance among the children of Israel**” (Nu 18:20). And since it was true that in one sense God was the spiritual portion of the people as well, it must be interpreted here that there were unique blessings of fellowship with God afforded His ministers which the people could not share. The people’s immediate **dependence** for provision was on the soil; the priests’ and Levites’ immediate **dependence** was on the effective functioning of worship in God’s sanctuary (for if there were no worshipers, there would be no gifts and tithes). Stated another way, “the worship (cultus) of Him is infinitely fuller of delight, and far more productive, than the cultivation (cultus) of any soil.”

In Nu 17:12-13+ we read "Then the sons of Israel spoke to Moses, saying, “Behold, we perish, we are dying, we are all dying! “Everyone **who comes near, who comes near to the tabernacle of the LORD, must die**. Are we to perish completely?”” After questioning Aaron’s right to be priest (Korah’s rebellion), they budding of Aaron’s rod finally convinced Israel that Aaron’s priesthood was valid, but they now fear going near the tabernacle because they think they will die. And in fact they are correct that they could not approach the Tent of Meeting, so here in chapter 18 God emphasizes that they do have one who can approach the Tabernacle for them. And so we see the rationale for the discussion of the Aaronic priesthood in this chapter. Yahweh was mercifully providing the people a legitimate priesthood. He was showing them grace in light of their fear of dying should they approach the Tabernacle. Aaron would be their intermediary.

UBS Handbook has a good introduction to this chapter - It is noteworthy that Numbers 18 comes directly after Numbers 16–17, in which Aaron’s authority was contested and confirmed. As is clear from Nu 18:1, God addresses Aaron alone for the first time in this book (so Alter, page 773). (It is only in this chapter and in Lev 10:8 that God speaks directly to Aaron alone [so Olson, page 114].) Most of the regulations in this chapter have been mentioned before (see Nu 3:1–4:49; Nu 8:5–26). But Numbers 18 does not intend to refer back to those earlier passages. Rather, **its role is to highlight Aaron’s authority after chapters 16–17**, perhaps now in the hearing of the new generation of Israelites who would enter the land of Canaan one day. The priests and Levites formed the first and second line of protection around the Tent of Meeting against death by the wrath of God. So this chapter appears to respond to the people’s fearful outcry at the end of chapter 17, which may be rendered “Anyone who even comes near the Tabernacle of the LORD will die! Are we all doomed to die?” (Nu 17:13+).

UBS titles Numbers 18 - Duties and income of priests and Levites - below is the division

- Duties of Priests and Levites (Nu 18:1–7)
- The Share of the Priests (Nu 18:8–20)
- The Share of the Levites (Nu 18:21–24)
- The Levites’ Tithe (Nu 18:25–32)

Wenham says "God’s reply to the people’s frightened cries (Nu 17:12–13) is given direct to Aaron." (TOTC-Nu)

Ronald Allen has a similar comment - The lament of the people in Nu 17:12–13+ was a genuine expression of distress; grievous sins against the holy meeting place of the Lord and his people would be judged with death. It was only in the mercy of the Lord in providing a legitimate priesthood that there could be any hope for deliverance from judgment. Modern readers are not always aware that the Lord's provision of the priesthood was an aspect of his grace. Without proper priests doing their work effectively, there would be only death among the sinning community. Psalm 99:6 (SEE BELOW) points to the grace of God in providing priests for his people. The provision of the Great Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb 4:14+), is in line with this work of his grace. (EBC)

Psalm 99:6+ Moses and Aaron were among His priests, And Samuel was among those who called on His name; They called upon the LORD and He answered them. --

Spurgeon - Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among them that call upon his name. Though not ordained to the typical priesthood, Moses was a true priest, even as Melchizedek had been before him. God has ever had a priesthood beside and above that of the law. The three holy men here mentioned all stood in his courts, and saw his holiness, each one after his own order. Moses saw the Lord in flaming fire revealing each perfect law, Aaron full often watched the sacred fire devour the sin-offering, and Samuel witnessed the judgment of the Lord on Eli's house, because of the error of his way. **These each one stood in the gap when the wrath of God broke forth, because his holiness had been insulted; and acting as intercessors, they screened the nation from the great and terrible God, who otherwise would in a dreadful manner have executed judgment in Jacob.** Let these men, or such as these, lead us in our worship, and let us approach the Lord at the mercy-seat as they did, for he is as accessible to us as to them. They made it their life's business to call upon him in prayer, and by so doing brought down innumerable blessings upon themselves and others. Does not the Lord call us also to come up into the mount with Moses, and to enter the most holy place with Aaron? Do we not hear him call us by our name as he did Samuel? And do we not answer, "**Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth**"?

They called upon the Lord, and he answered them. Not in vain were their prayers; but being a holy God he was true to his promises, and hearkened to them from off the mercy-seat. Here is reason for praise, for answers to the petitions of some are proofs of God's readiness to hear others. These three men asked large things, they pleaded for a whole nation, and they stayed great plagues and turned away fiery wrath; who would not exercise himself in adoring so great and merciful a God? If he were unholy he would be false to his word and refuse his people's cries; this, then, is recorded for our joy and for his glory, that holy men of old were not suffered to pray in vain.

Thou art coming to a King,
Large petitions with thee bring;
For His grace and power are such,
None can ever ask too much;
None can ever ask too much.
([Come, My Soul, Thy Suit Prepare](#))

Bush summarizes the intent of chapter 18 - The recent manifestations recorded in the two preceding chapters, had operated so effectually upon the congregation as to fill them with a kind of panic consternation in view of the danger of approaching the Tabernacle, or dealing in any way with the sanctities of worship. The divine benignity designs, in the present chapter, to reassure the Israelite's confidence, and at the same time to impress Aaron himself with a deep and abiding sense of the responsibility that rested upon him in the discharge of the duties of that sacred office which had been so signally confirmed to him by the miraculous tokens of the Lord's appointment. These indications might tend to puff him up with a conceit of his own importance, and therefore he is here reminded of the burden laid upon him and the duty required of him as a priest. The consequence would naturally be that instead of being made proud of his preferment, he would receive the honors of his office with reverence and holy awe, being made aware of the danger arising from any default in his service. When men are invested with authority, their responsibility rises in proportion. It is a law running through the whole providential economy of heaven, that **to whom much has been given, from them much is required.**

So the LORD said to Aaron- Only place in Numbers were God addresses Aaron by himself (also Nu 18:1, 8, 20). Most often Yahweh speaks either to Moses alone or to Moses and Aaron. In this case the subject is the responsibilities of the priesthood. **UBS** says "So renders well the Hebrew waw connector here (literally "And"), since the LORD is responding to the fearful cry of the Israelites in Nu 17:12–13. This is the first time the LORD addresses only Aaron in this book."

Currid points out that "The only other instance appears in Leviticus 10:8–11+. **Both times occur at the conclusion to events in which the worship structure of Israel has been under grave threats.**" (EPSC-Nu)

You and your sons and your father's household with you - He is speaking of the house and posterity of the tribe of Levi.

Shall bear the guilt in connection with the sanctuary - NET = "you must bear the iniquity"; NLT paraphrase = "will be held responsible for any offenses related to the sanctuary." The point is that the Levites and Aaronic priesthood would bear the punishment for any and all the iniquity that is done in the sanctuary. They are to prevent the "laymen" Israelites from approaching the sanctuary and would have to pay the penalty if they failed to fulfill their duty. If the sanctuary should be profaned by the intrusion of strangers or the unclean, the priests and the Levites were answerable for the offense, because they would be considered negligent for letting it take place.

David Guzik - God never gives authority without accountability; the two always go together. If God gives someone headship and expects others to submit to them in His order, God also has a special accountability for that person.

Jarchi: "Upon you will I bring the punishment of the strangers that shall sin concerning the sanctified things that are delivered unto you."

David Stubbs - The main duties of the priests and Levites were presented in Nu. 1, 4, 3, where an important function of those priestly classes was to guard the holy places and things against encroachment by outsiders (Nu 1:50-53; 3:10, 38). Now laws are given that stipulate the chain of responsibility when such order is broken down, when there are "offenses connected with the sanctuary" (Nu 18:1). The chain of responsibility is that the priests and Kohathites will be responsible for offenses by lay Israelites (Nu 18:1a), the priests for offenses by other priests (Nu 18:1b), and the priests and all the Levites for offenses by Levites (Nu 18:3) (Ashley 1993: 337; Milgrom 1990: 145). (Brazos Commentary-Numbers)

Ronald Allen - The words of the people in Nu 17:13+ were based on reality: it is a fearful thing to make an inappropriate approach to the shrine of God's dwelling. The priests, who have their work in the precincts of his dwelling, must realize that they are there at the leave of God. But they cannot forget where they are nor be casual in what they are to do. To act foolishly, brazenly, carelessly in the holy places is to invite disaster. Their priestly ministry puts them in roles of awesome responsibility (see Exod 28:38). (EBC)

and you and your sons with you shall bear the guilt in connection with your priesthood - In other words Aaron and sons would be held responsible for any iniquities committed in the discharge of their daily functions as priests. Only Aaron and his sons were authorized to carry out the ritual duties of the priesthood.

So, with the great privileges come great responsibilities.

-- NET Note

Rabbi. Menahem said "By this admonition was signified, that the priests should not intermeddle with the service of the Levites, nor the Levites with the service of the priests."

Bush has a good point commenting that "All this would tend to calm the apprehensions of the people, who were afraid they should die for every error committed in their approaches to the sanctuary (cf their cry in Nu 17:12-13+) , and it would serve also to extinguish any degree of envy they might cherish in respect to the priestly dignity, when they saw with how much peril its possession and exercise was attended.

NET NOTE - The responsibility for the sanctuary included obligations relating to any violation of the sanctuary. This was stated to forestall any further violations of the sanctuary. The priests were to pay for any ritual errors, **primarily if any came too near**. Since the priests and Levites come near all the time, they risk violating ritual laws more than any. So, with the great privileges come great responsibilities. The bottom line is that they were responsible for the sanctuary.

John Bennett - THE CHARGE OF THE TABERNACLE

It is important to distinguish between the priest and the Levite. The priest approached God and carried out the ritual of the tabernacle: the Levite served in the practical matters pertaining to the tabernacle. Not every Levite was a priest, but every priest was a Levite.

In our dispensation every believer is both a priest and a Levite, 1 Pet. 2:5. We have the wonderful privilege of approaching God in worship as well as engaging in the service of the tabernacle. The functions of the priest and Levite are now united in a spiritual sense in the New Testament believer.

Notice that the Levites were to be 'joined' to the priest, Nu 18:2. They were to act together. We need to learn the lesson that worship and service cannot be separated. But although they are joined, it is clear that the Levite was subordinate to the priest. He was 'given' to the priest as a gift, Nu 18:6, and the service of the Levite would be under the direction of the priest. The priestly man knew what to do in God's house. Service must spring from communion with God. Worship precedes service. The Father is looking for

worshippers first, John 4:23.

Perhaps this is one reason why our service may seem ineffective at times. Could it be that our service does not flow from our worship? We must not go into God's presence with our ideas for service: rather we should come from His presence with His ideas for service.

The remainder of the chapter deals with God's provision for both priest and Levite, Nu 18:8–32. Neither would have an inheritance in the land. Their function took priority over everything else. They must be free to serve the Lord without distraction. But although they had no inheritance, the priest and Levite had something better. The tithe or tenth of each offering was to be the portion of priest and Levite, v. 21. The tenth represents what is best and what was for God in the offering. God in effect is sharing His portion with the priest and Levite. As we understand priesthood and Levite service aright we will find that we are privileged to share in the very portion of God—adequate compensation for the lack of inheritance here! (Day by Day)

Wiersbe's practical summary of Numbers 18 - The emphasis in this chapter is on **GIFTS**. (See [Key Word above](#))

- **God gives helpers** (Nu 18:6) to assist us in our work, and we must accept them and be grateful for them. Some of the Levites had rebelled against Moses and Aaron, but God still gave them the privilege of serving Him and helping the priests
- **God gives us work to do** (Nu 18:7). If we are in the will of God, our work is a divine vocation, and we must do it for His glory (Eph 2:10, Mt 5:16).
- **God gives us what we need** (Nu 18:8ff.). He fed the priests from the sacrifices brought to the altar and also from the tithes (Nu 18:21). His action reminds us that "the laborer is worthy of his wages" (Luke 10:7; 1 Cor. 9:14; 1 Tim. 5:18).
- **God gives us Himself** (Nu 18:20). The priests and Levites were assigned places to live in Israel, but they did not have property from which they could get income (Josh. 13:14). They had to trust God to meet their needs. But when God is your inheritance, what more do you need? (See Ps. 16:5–6.) (With the Word Bible Commentary)

Ronald Allen in his excellent overview comments that "the modern reader comes to chapters 18–19 with a sense of foreboding; what, we may wonder, is in these chapters for me? The answer to that question is fivefold:

1. The reader of Scripture needs to have general knowledge about the major institutions of the biblical period just for Scripture to make sense.
2. Our understanding of the true worship of God begins with the sense that He controls and directs true worship; who the priests are and how they function are first His concerns. This means that worship is not a game where we may make up the rules as we play.
3. A general knowledge of the work of the priests in the Hebrew Bible gives many insights to the modern reader as to the interests of God in our own worship. **Often we think of worship in terms of what we like and appreciate.** (ED: "the preaching is good but they need better music!") This misses the mark; **worship is principally for God's pleasure.**
4. A general knowledge of the work of priests in the time of Hebrew worship gives the Christian reader significant insights into the priestly work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Book of Hebrews has an intense priestly orientation in its presentation of the Lord Jesus Christ, priest of God in the manner of Melchizedek.
5. In contrast with the highly regulated, highly structured patterns demanded of the priests of the Hebrew economy, **the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ today has a direct access to God through the Savior that is nearly unbelievable.** We are all priests; we can come near the presence of the Lord without an intermediary. Yet our privilege as believer-priests can only really be appreciated against the background of priests in the biblical period."

Thus it is not just for arcane, antiquarian reasons that we come to this chapter and the one following. (Expositor's Bible Commentary)

Rod Mattoon - PRINCIPLES ON RESPONSIBILITY & ACCOUNTABILITY— Nu 18:1

Aaron and his sons would bear the iniquity of the sanctuary and priesthood. They were accountable and responsible for the neglect or failure to comply with sacred duties. As leaders, they were responsible and accountable. By the way, if you are a pastor or leader in the church, you are responsible and accountable to your people and to the Lord.

- James 3:1—My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.

- Hebrews 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.

The believer is accountable for his life.

- Romans 14:12—So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

The word "account" is from the word logos which refers to "what is said, thought, or the motives of a person." We will give an account for our words, so be careful what you say.

- Matthew 12:36—But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

We will give an account for our work, abilities, opportunities, and knowledge.

- 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.

Our accountability to the Lord should motivate us to live godly lives and be responsible Christians.

- 1 Peter 4:5-6—Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead. [6] For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

Suffering the consequences of our actions tends to develop responsibility.

Numbers 18:2 "But bring with you also your brothers, the tribe of Levi, the tribe of your father, that they may be joined with you and serve you, while you and your sons with you are before the tent of the testimony."

BGT Numbers 18:2 κα το ς δελφο ς σου φυλ ν Λειυ δ μον το πατρ ς σου προσαγ γου πρ ς σεαυτ ν κα προστεθ τω σ ν σοι κα λειτουργε τω σ ν σοι κα σ κα ο υ ο σου μετ σο π ναντι τ ς σκην ς το μαρτυρ ου

NET Numbers 18:2 "Bring with you your brothers, the tribe of Levi, the tribe of your father, so that they may join with you and minister to you while you and your sons with you are before the tent of the testimony.

NLT Numbers 18:2 "Bring your relatives of the tribe of Levi-- your ancestral tribe-- to assist you and your sons as you perform the sacred duties in front of the Tabernacle of the Covenant.

ESV Numbers 18:2 And with you bring your brothers also, the tribe of Levi, the tribe of your father, that they may join you and minister to you while you and your sons with you are before the tent of the testimony.

NIV Numbers 18:2 Bring your fellow Levites from your ancestral tribe to join you and assist you when you and your sons minister before the Tent of the Testimony.

KJV 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.

YLT Numbers 18:2 and also thy brethren, the tribe of Levi, the tribe of thy father, bring near with thee, and they are joined unto thee, and serve thee, even thou and thy sons with thee, before the tent of the testimony.

LXE Numbers 18:2 And take to thyself thy brethren the tribe of Levi, the family of thy father, and let them be joined to thee, and let them minister to thee; and thou and thy sons with thee shall minister before the tabernacle of witness.

ASV Numbers 18:2 And thy brethren also, the tribe of Levi, the tribe of thy father, bring thou near with thee, that they may be joined unto thee, and minister unto thee: but thou and thy sons with thee shall be before the tent of the testimony.

CSB Numbers 18:2 But also bring your relatives with you from the tribe of Levi, your ancestral tribe, so they may join you and assist you and your sons in front of the tent of the testimony.

NKJ Numbers 18:2 "Also bring with you your brethren of the tribe of Levi, the tribe of your father, that they may be joined with you and serve you while you and your sons are with you before the tabernacle of witness.

NRS Numbers 18:2 So bring with you also your brothers of the tribe of Levi, your ancestral tribe, in order that they may be joined to you, and serve you while you and your sons with you are in front of the tent of the covenant.

- **joined:** There is a fine [paranomasia](#) in the original. Levi is desired from {lawah,} to join, couple, associate; hence Moses says, the Levites {yillawoo,} "shall be joined," or associated, with the priests: they shall conjointly perform the sacred office, but the priests shall be principal, the Levites their associates or assistants. Nu 18:4 Ge 29:34
- **serve:** Nu 3:6-9 Nu 8:19,22
- but thou: Nu 3:10-13 4:15 16:40 17:7 1Ch 16:39,40 2Ch 30:16 Eze 44:15
- [Numbers 18 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Numbers 3:6-10+ "Bring the **tribe of Levi** near and set them before Aaron the priest, that **they may serve** ([sharath](#)) **him**. 7 "They shall perform the duties for him and for the whole congregation before the tent of meeting, to do the service of the tabernacle. 8" They shall also keep all the furnishings of the tent of meeting, along with the duties of the sons of Israel, to do the service of the tabernacle. 9 "You shall thus **give the Levites to Aaron and to his sons; they are wholly given to him from among the sons of Israel**. 10 "So you shall appoint Aaron and his sons that they may keep their priesthood, but the layman who comes near shall be put to death."

Numbers 8:19; 22+ "I have given the Levites as a gift to Aaron and to his sons from among the sons of Israel, **to perform the service** of the sons of Israel at the tent of meeting and to make atonement on behalf of the sons of Israel, so that there will be no plague among the sons of Israel by their coming near to the sanctuary." (8:22) Then after that the Levites went in **to perform their service** in the tent of meeting before Aaron and before his sons; just as the LORD had commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so they did to them.

YAHWEH GIVES AARONITES THE LEVITES TO SERVE THEM

But bring with you also your brothers, the tribe of Levi, the tribe of your father, that they may be joined with you and serve ([sharath](#)) **you** - Comparing with the related passages above, this declaration is a reiteration of the fact that the tribe of Levi was a gift to Aaron and his sons to aid him in his priestly work in the Tent of Meeting. The Hebrew verb ([sharath](#)) is translated in the Lxx with [leitourgeo](#) which means to render special formal service.

Bush explains **joined with you** is the Hebrew "yillâvu, from the root lâvâh, signifying to join, to couple, to associate. From this root comes the name **Levi**, the reason of which was assigned by his mother at his birth, Ge. 29:34, "Now this time will my husband be joined unto me." And the term here employed displays a peculiar [paranomasia](#), or play upon words, equivalent to "may be Levited," i. e. adjoined to or associated with the priests. They shall conjointly perform the sacred office, but the priests shall be principal, the Levites their associates or assistants.

NET NOTE on **may be joined** - The verb forms a wordplay on the name Levi, and makes an allusion to the naming of the tribe Levi by Leah in the book of Genesis. There Leah hoped that with the birth of Levi her husband would be **attached to** (joined to) her (Ge 29:34). Here, with the selection of the tribe to serve in the sanctuary, there is the wordplay again showing that the Levites will be **attached to** Aaron and the priests. The verb is יָוָה (yillavu), which forms a nice wordplay with Levi (לֵוִי). **The tribe will now be attached to the sanctuary**. The verb is the imperfect with a vav (ו) that shows volitive sequence after the imperative, here indicating a purpose clause.

May be joined ([03867](#))(**lavah**) means to join (be joined), to accompany. The idea is attaching oneself to someone or something. It is used in Isaiah of strangers (sojourners, aliens, foreigners) who **join** to "house of Jacob" (Isa 14:1) or **join** "to the LORD" (Isa 56:3, Isa 56:6, similar in Jer 50:5), "all those who **allied** with" the Jews (Esther 9:27), "many nations **will join** themselves to the LORD in that day (Millennium in Zech 2:11). "Many **will join** with them in hypocrisy" (Da 11:34). Of Israel's enemies "Assyria also **has joined** with them

(other enemies of Israel)." (Ps 83:8). First use in Ge 29:34 "She conceived again and bore a son and said, "Now this time my husband will become attached to me, because I have borne him three sons." Therefore he was named Levi."

Lxx translates **lavah** in Numbers with the verb [prostithemi](#) = added to, be brought (Gives us our word "[prosthesis](#)" - in a sense the Levites were like a "prosthesis" [see [picture](#)] to the priests!)

TWOT - Used once in the Qal (Eccl. 8:15); the remaining usages are in the Niphal. *lāwâ* refers to the joining of an item or person to someone or something else. Most significant theologically is its usage to refer to foreigners who join themselves to God's people as converts. In general usage it refers to the way in which hedonistic pleasures "stay with" a man (Eccles. 8:15); also it is used for joining in a military alliance (Psalm 83:8 [H 9]), the conjugal joining of husband to wife (Genesis 29:34), and the joining of the Levites with Aaron for service at the tabernacle (Numbers 18:2-4). As a term referring to conversion it describes those who, impressed by God's work in restoring his people, will join themselves to the Hebrews in the worship and service of God, i.e. will be spiritually converted (Isaiah 14:1). Others will join themselves to God as a result of some divine judgment (cf. Esther 9:27). Such Gentile converts are assured that they will not be separated from God's Covenant (Isaiah 56:3-6). Someday God's repentant people will (re)join themselves to a true covenant relationship to God (Jeremiah 50:5). This usage of *lāwâ* to reflect religious dedication supports the notion that the name "Levi" expressed the religious dedication of the tribe of that name to the Lord's service."

Baker says this same word has another distinct meaning - A verb meaning to borrow, to lend. It has the sense of to ask for something as well as to lend something according to context (Dt. 28:12), especially money that is loaned out (Ex. 22:25[24]) or borrowed (Neh. 5:4). The wicked person borrows but does not pay back (Ps. 37:21); the righteous person both gives and lends to help others (Ps. 37:26; Ps 112:5). Lending to the poor is like giving to the Lord (Pr 19:17). Borrowing can lead to enslavement (Pr 22:7). God's judgments will encompass both borrower and lender (Isa. 24:2). (Complete Word Study Dictionary – OT).

Lavah - 22 verses - Ge. 29:34; Ex 22:25; Nu 18:2; Nu 18:4; Dt. 28:12; Dt. 28:44; Neh. 5:4; Est. 9:27; Ps. 37:21; Ps. 37:26; Ps. 83:8; Ps. 112:5; Pr. 19:17; Pr 22:7; Eccl. 8:15; Isa. 14:1; Isa. 24:2; Isa. 56:3; Isa. 56:6; Jer. 50:5; Da 11:34; Zech 2:11

While you and your sons with you are before the [tent of the testimony](#) - Hebrew "Before the tent of the testimony." Before the Most Holy Place in which the ark stood. The common priests, but not the Levites, ministered **before**, i. e. on the outside of, but not within, this inner room, which was separated from the outer by a veil. Only the high priest was allowed into the Holy of holies (Lev 16:16-17). The Levites were to assist and serve Aaron and his sons in killing the sacrifices, taking the blood, and giving it to the priests for sprinkling, and in general performing all the more menial tasks around the Tabernacle and its court. The warning was that only the appointed (Aaronic) priests could serve at the altar and in the Holy Place (or they would die - Nu 18:3).

Levites **joined** to Priests brings to mind the idea of harmony, unity (something the Levites did not exhibit under Korah's rebellion!) and reminds me that today in the NT we have that same picture of harmony and a sense of being joined together because we are in the body of Christ...

Colossian 2:19+ and not holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, **being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments**, grows with a growth which is from God.

Ephesians 4:15-16+ but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the Head, even Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, **being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part**, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

Mattoon - The tribe of Levi will levi (join) with you. Levites were to assist Aaron in the work of the Lord. They were a team that was to be united in doing God's work with each one in his place. The same truth holds for the church.

Romans 12:5—So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

Galatians 3:28—There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 4:11-13—And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; [12] For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: [13] Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

Ephesians 4:16—From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

Christians are to be in harmony and united!

Numbers 18:3 "And they shall thus attend to your obligation and the obligation of all the tent, but they shall not come near to the furnishings of the sanctuary and the altar, or both they and you will die.

BGT Numbers 18:3 κα φυλ ξονται τ ς φυλακ ς σου κα τ ς φυλακ ς τ ς σκην ς πλ ν πρ ς τ σκε η τ για κα πρ ς τ θυσιαστ ριον ο προσελε σονται κα ο κ ποθανο νται κα ο τοι κα με ς

NET Numbers 18:3 They must be responsible to care for you and to care for the entire tabernacle. However, they must not come near the furnishings of the sanctuary and the altar, or both they and you will die.

NLT Numbers 18:3 But as the Levites go about all their assigned duties at the Tabernacle, they must be careful not to go near any of the sacred objects or the altar. If they do, both you and they will die.

ESV Numbers 18:3 They shall keep guard over you and over the whole tent, but shall not come near to the vessels of the sanctuary or to the altar lest they, and you, die.

NIV Numbers 18:3 They are to be responsible to you and are to perform all the duties of the Tent, but they must not go near the furnishings of the sanctuary or the altar, or both they and you will die.

KJV 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.

YLT Numbers 18:3 'And they have kept thy charge, and the charge of all the tent; only, unto the vessels of the sanctuary and unto the altar they do not come near, and they die not, either they or you;

LXE Numbers 18:3 And they shall keep thy charges, and the charges of the tabernacle; only they shall not approach the holy vessels and the altar, so both they and you shall not die.

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

CSB Numbers 18:3 They are to perform duties for you and for the whole tent. They must not come near the sanctuary equipment or the altar; otherwise, both they and you will die.

NKJ Numbers 18:3 "They shall attend to your needs and all the needs of the tabernacle; but they shall not come near the articles of the sanctuary and the altar, lest they die-- they and you also.

NRS Numbers 18:3 They shall perform duties for you and for the whole tent. But they must not approach either the utensils of the sanctuary or the altar, otherwise both they and you will die.

- **but they shall not come near:** Nu 3:25,31,36 Nu 4:19,20 16:40
- **both they and you will die:** Nu 4:15
- [Numbers 18 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passage:

Numbers 4:15+ "When Aaron and his sons have finished covering the holy objects and all the furnishings of the sanctuary, when the camp is to set out, after that the sons of Kohath shall come to carry them, **so that they will not touch the holy objects and die.** These are the things in the tent of meeting which the sons of Kohath are to carry.

Numbers 4:19-20+ But do this to them that they may live and not die when they approach the most holy objects: Aaron and his sons shall go in and assign each of them to his work and to his load; 20 but **they shall not go in to see the holy objects even for a moment, or they will die.**"

**LEVITES RESTRICTIONS
PRIESTS RESPONSIBILITIES**

And they (LEVITES) shall thus attend to your obligation and the obligation of all the tent - (see similar charge to the Levites in Nu 3:7, 8) NET = "They must be responsible to care for you and to care for the entire tabernacle" **They** refers to the Levites given to Aaron to assist him and his sons in the sanctuary. But the assistance had limitations. The Levites were not to usurp the role of the priests (as Korah had sought to do in Nu 17). **Obligation** is the Hebrew noun [mishmereth](#) (used in Nu 18:3, 4, 5, 8) and is translated in the Lxx with a verb [phulasso](#) (to guard, watch, observe) and a noun [phulake](#) (a watch, guard).

This same word [mishmereth](#) was issued in Nu 1:53+ "the **Levites** shall camp around the tabernacle of the testimony, so that there will be no wrath on the congregation of the sons of Israel. So the Levites shall keep ([shamar](#)) **charge** ([mishmereth](#)) of the tabernacle of the testimony." Note a similar instruction is given to Aaron and sons in Nu 18:5 but there the subject to be watched over is not the whole tabernacle complex but the **sanctuary** ([qodesh](#)) the holy place and the altar.

Obligation (04931) ([mishmereth](#) from [shamar](#) = to watch, guard, protect, observe, keep) a guard, watch, charge, function, duty. There are two main meanings - (1) an obligation or service to be performed (2) having to do with something that is to be kept or preserved (the Passover lamb = "you shall keep it" Ex 12:6, manna = "to be kept" Ex 16:32-34; ashes of red heifer = "shall keep" = Nu 19:9) In several instances, it is used of a guard post (Isa. 21:8; Hab. 2:1). The idea of obedience (i.e., keeping the commandments) is often depicted, which leads to a translation of charge (Gen. 26:5; Deut. 11:1; Zech. 3:7) or duty (Nu 3:7; 9:23; 2 Chr. 8:14).

Gilbrant - A feminine noun, [mishmereth](#) is derived from the Hebrew verb, [shāmar](#) (HED #8490), "to observe," "to guard," "to keep." **The most basic meaning of this noun is "keeping" or "something kept."** [Mishmereth](#) can mean many different things depending on its context. Many times it is used with [shāmar](#) (Lev. 22:9; Num 3:7), "he shall keep my charge," sometimes with [hāyāh](#) (HED #2030; Exo. 12:6), "you shall keep," and often with the preposition [le](#) (HED #3937; Exo. 16:32), "to keep." Many of the usages describe certain duties to God. Some of the usages depict a guard, either to keep in or to keep out. The last category of meanings consists of things that are to be held in trust. Many of these occurrences are linked with the remembrance of God's activities.

Mishmereth is used to describe duties, or obligations, impressed by Yahweh. This noun can occur with a variety of different nouns in lists. In Gen. 26:5, commandment ([mitswāh](#)), statute ([chōq](#)), law ([tōrāh](#), HED4) are found with [mishmereth](#) (charge). But, the noun can also denote "the charge of the commandment of the Lord," (Josh. 22:3), or even the rites of purification (Neh. 12:45). So, obeying every charge (like obeying every law, statute or commandment) is a prerequisite for a covenant relationship. It is the observation of the laws, the stipulations of the Covenant, through righteous treatment of all humans and God that allows the Covenant to stand. It is also used for a more specialized duty. While describing the different duties in the Tabernacle, this word is used, "And the charge of the sons of Gershon in the tabernacle of the congregation shall be the tabernacle, and the tent" (Num. 3:25).

Mishmereth is used in a military context (just as [shāmar](#)), to describe guard duties or guard posts (Isa. 21:8; Hab. 2:1). In 2 Ki. 11:5ff, [mishmereth](#) describes the commands the captains of the hundreds received from Jehoiada when he installed Jehoash as king of Judah. This same word is translated "bodyguard," in 2 Sam. 20:3, to describe the guard that David put on his ten concubines after returning to his house.

Finally, [mishmereth](#) can describe something held in trust, usually for safekeeping. Several of the occurrences refer to items that were to be kept in the Ark of the Covenant: the manna (Exo. 16:32, 34) and Aaron's rod (Num. 17:10). The objects kept were items which confirmed that the Covenant was in place. The passover lamb was "kept" until the fourteenth day (Exo. 12:6). [Mishmereth](#) can also refer to the safekeeping of persons, "For he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life: but with me thou shalt be in safeguard" (1 Sam. 22:23). (Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary)

Mishmereth - 68 verse - allegiance(1), charge(27), duties(15), duty(2), guard post(2), guard*(1), guards(2), keep(1), keep*(1), kept(5), obligation(4), obligations(4), offices(1), posts(1), safe(1), service(2), service divisions(1), watch(4), worship(1). Gen. 26:5; Exod. 12:6; Exod. 16:23; Exod. 16:32; Exod. 16:33; Exod. 16:34; Lev. 8:35; Lev. 18:30; Lev. 22:9; Num. 1:53; Num. 3:7; Num. 3:8; Num. 3:25; Num. 3:28; Num. 3:31; Num. 3:32; Num. 3:36; Num. 3:38; Num. 4:27; Num. 4:28; Num. 4:31; Num. 8:26; Num. 9:19; Num. 9:23; Num. 17:10; Num. 18:3; Num. 18:4; Num. 18:5; Num. 18:8; Num. 19:9; Num. 31:30; Num. 31:47; Deut. 11:1; Jos. 22:3; 1 Sam. 22:23; 2 Sam. 20:3; 1 Ki. 2:3; 2 Ki. 11:5; 2 Ki. 11:6; 2 Ki. 11:7; 1 Chr. 9:23; 1 Chr. 9:27; 1 Chr. 12:29; 1 Chr. 23:32; 1 Chr. 25:8; 1 Chr. 26:12; 2 Chr. 7:6; 2 Chr. 8:14; 2 Chr. 13:11; 2 Chr. 23:6; 2 Chr. 31:16; 2 Chr. 31:17; 2 Chr. 35:2; Neh. 7:3; Neh. 12:9; Neh. 12:45; Neh. 13:30; Isa. 21:8; Ezek. 40:45; Ezek. 40:46; Ezek. 44:8; Ezek. 44:14; Ezek. 44:15; Ezek. 44:16; Ezek. 48:11; Hab. 2:1; Zech. 3:7; Mal. 3:14

But they (Levite helpers) shall not come near to the furnishings of the sanctuary and the altar, or both they and you will die- Notice that if the Levite helpers came near the holy things, not only would they die but so would the priests. In other words the priests (Aaron and sons) were held responsible to ensure that the Levites kept their distance from **the furnishings of the sanctuary!**

THOUGHT Come near is a key word in this chapter being mentioned 4x - (Nu 18:3, Nu 18:4, Nu 18:7, Nu

18:22). The verb [qarab](#) is used 3x and the cognate qareb once. Three of the uses of qarab are rendered in the Lxx with the Greek verb [proserchomai](#) which means to come facing toward, to approach and figuratively to worship. And so we see that while qarab is repeatedly used in a warning **not to draw near** to the holy place of Yahweh lest they die because of their unholiness, because of the sacrifice of our Great High Priest's who offered Himself once for all time on the "brazen altar" of the Cross, all who are now safe in Him by grace through faith are not warned to **stand clear**, but to **stand close**, to draw near and worship Him in spirit and in truth. What a great salvation our Savior has wrought for us!

Hebrews 4:16+ - Therefore let us **draw near** with confidence (BOLD ASSURANCE) to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 7:25+ - Therefore He is able also to save forever those who **draw near** to God through Him (OUR MEDIATOR CHRIST JESUS), since He always lives to make intercession for them.

Hebrews 10:19-22+ - Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, **let us draw near** with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

Wiersbe - It was dangerous to disobey even in the matter of how they dressed (Ex. 28:35, 42–43) or if they washed regularly (30:17–21). God held Aaron and his sons responsible for offenses committed against the sanctuary and the priesthood. ([Be Counted](#))

David Guzik - The Levites were not allowed to do what the priests did. In the same way, the New Testament says we are all different "parts" of the body, each with particular gifts and callings (1 Corinthians 12:4–7).

Bush adds that "Aaron is here commanded to make a strict discrimination between the priestly and the Levitical orders; the Levites having nothing to do but to be keepers and carriers of the Tabernacle and its utensils. Upon any movement of the camp, they were not allowed so much as to handle or touch (ED: OR EVEN SEE) the ark, altar, table, or candlestick (Nu 4:5-14+), but only to take them from the priests when they had packed them. The priests, on the other hand, were to use the Levites as ministers, and by their constant care and admonitions were to prevent all others from incurring the divine displeasure, on account of profane intrusions into so holy a function.

Allen comments "The Levites were joined (see [above](#)) to the priests as their assistants. But the Levites were never to be regarded as "priests in training." They had a serious "career ceiling" in their vocation. The sanctity of the Holy Place is not to be underestimated.

Come near (Draw near) ([07126](#))([qarab](#)) means to come near or approach. It is a verb which basically indicates coming physically closer. In most of the uses personal involvement is suggested so that the idea is not simply being close to something (someone) but being actively and personally involved with it (him). "**Do not come near** here; remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." (Ex 3:5+). Thus it was used of approaching God (Ex. 3:5; Dt. 4:11; 5:23, 27; Isa. 48:16; 1Sa. 14:36). See "[THOUGHT](#)" on qarab.

Sanctuary (most holy, holy things, sanctuary) ([06944](#)) see note on [qodesh](#) The Lxx renders [qodesh](#) with [hagios](#) indicating those things set apart from common use and for uses related to Yahweh. This is the name of God's people in the NT and the purpose is the same - set apart from the corrupt dying world and unto the use of our Holy God. Does my behavior substantiate this "definition"? Uses in Numbers 18 - Nu 18:3; Nu 18:5; Nu 18:8; Nu 18:9; Nu 18:10; Nu 18:16; Nu 18:17; Nu 18:19; Nu 18:32;

Rod Mattoon - THE PRINCIPLES ON CONFORMITY— Nu 18:3

God made it clear that He wanted His instructions followed. The Levites were to care for the Tabernacle, but not minister before the Lord in the Holy Place. That was the responsibility of Aaron's priestly family.

The Bible stresses repeatedly that our allegiance is to the Almighty; we are to submit to the Scriptures; we are to be in compliance and conform to the commands of Christ. We are to obey. This is where our greatest battles lie. Our flesh wants to conform to the crowd.

Exodus 23:2—Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment:

Romans 12:2—And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

God wants us to obey. Obedience brings great reward and blessings.

Numbers 18:4 "They shall be joined with you and attend to the obligations of the tent of meeting, for all the service of the tent; but an outsider may not come near you."

BGT Numbers 18:4 κα προστεθ σονται πρ ς σ κα φυλ ξονται τ ς φυλακ ς τ ς σκην ς το μαρτυρ ου κατ π σασ τ ς λειτουργ ασ τ ς σκην ς κα λλογεν ς ο προσελε σεται πρ ς σ

NET Numbers 18:4 They must join with you, and they will be responsible for the care of the tent of meeting, for all the service of the tent, but no unauthorized person may approach you.

NLT Numbers 18:4 The Levites must join you in fulfilling their responsibilities for the care and maintenance of the Tabernacle, but no unauthorized person may assist you.

ESV Numbers 18:4 They shall join you and keep guard over the tent of meeting for all the service of the tent, and no outsider shall come near you.

NIV Numbers 18:4 They are to join you and be responsible for the care of the Tent of Meeting--all the work at the Tent--and no one else may come near where you are.

KJV 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.

YLT Numbers 18:4 and they have been joined unto thee, and have kept the charge of the tent of meeting, for all the service of the tent; and a stranger doth not come near unto you;

LXE Numbers 18:4 And they shall be joined to thee, and shall keep the charges of the tabernacle of witness, in all the services of the tabernacle; and a stranger shall not approach to thee.

ASV Numbers 18:4 And they shall be joined unto thee, and keep the charge of the tent of meeting, for all the service of the Tent: and a stranger shall not come nigh unto you.

CSB Numbers 18:4 They are to join you and guard the tent of meeting, doing all the work at the tent, but no unauthorized person may come near you.

NKJ Numbers 18:4 "They shall be joined with you and attend to the needs of the tabernacle of meeting, for all the work of the tabernacle; but an outsider shall not come near you.

NRS Numbers 18:4 They are attached to you in order to perform the duties of the tent of meeting, for all the service of the tent; no outsider shall approach you.

- **outsider** : Nu 1:51 Nu 3:10 1Sa 6:19 2Sa 6:6,7
- [Numbers 18 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

They shall be joined with you and attend to the obligations of the tent of meeting, for all the service of the tent- NET = "They must join with you, and they will be responsible for the care of the tent of meeting" Yahweh is still referring to the Levites.

Bush writes on **joined with** "Heb. nilvu (see above on [lavah](#); Lxx = [prostithemi](#) = added to, be brought), that is, shall be adjoined Levitically—the same term with that previously used in a similar connection. A Levite was an adjunct. They were to be considered as an appended portion of that general body of men who were devoted to the special service of God in the work of the sanctuary."

but an outsider may not come near you - NLT = "but no unauthorized person may assist you" NET = "no unauthorized person may approach you" - So this refers not just to aliens (non-native Israelites) but also to Israelites. Anyone who was not a Levite was an "outsider." Read the following fearful cry from the congregation who now understood the serious holy nature of the holy tabernacle precincts.

Nu 17:12-13+ Then the sons of Israel spoke to Moses, saying, "Behold, we perish, we are dying, we are all dying! 13 **"Everyone who comes near, who comes near to the tabernacle of the LORD, must die** Are we to perish completely?"

Outsider (stranger) ([02114](#)) see discussion below on [zur](#)

Numbers 18:5 "So you shall attend to the obligations of the sanctuary and the obligations of the altar, so that there will no longer be wrath on the sons of Israel.

BGT Numbers 18:5 κα φυλ ξεσθε τς φυλακς τν γων κα τς φυλακς το θυσιαστηρου κα οκ σται θυμς ν το ς υ ο ς Ισραηλ

NET Numbers 18:5 You will be responsible for the care of the sanctuary and the care of the altar, so that there will be no more wrath on the Israelites.

NLT Numbers 18:5 "You yourselves must perform the sacred duties inside the sanctuary and at the altar. If you follow these instructions, the LORD's anger will never again blaze against the people of Israel.

ESV Numbers 18:5 And you shall keep guard over the sanctuary and over the altar, that there may never again be wrath on the people of Israel.

NIV Numbers 18:5 "You are to be responsible for the care of the sanctuary and the altar, so that wrath will not fall on the Israelites again.

KJV 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.

YLT Numbers 18:5 and ye have kept the charge of the sanctuary, and the charge of the altar, and there is no more wrath against the sons of Israel.

LXE Numbers 18:5 And ye shall keep the charges of the holy things, and the charges of the altar, and so there shall not be anger among the children of Israel.

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

CSB Numbers 18:5 "You are to guard the sanctuary and the altar so that wrath may not fall on the Israelites again.

NKJ Numbers 18:5 "And you shall attend to the duties of the sanctuary and the duties of the altar, that there may be no more wrath on the children of Israel.

NRS Numbers 18:5 You yourselves shall perform the duties of the sanctuary and the duties of the altar, so that wrath may never again come upon the Israelites.

- And ye: Nu 8:2 Ex 27:21 30:7-10 Lev 24:3 1Ch 9:19,23,33 24:5 1Ti 1:18 1Ti 3:15 5:21 6:20
- no wrath: Nu 8:19 16:46 Jer 23:15 Zec 10:3
- [Numbers 18 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

AARONIC PRIESTS TO WATCH OVER THE SANCTUARY

So you shall attend to the obligations of the sanctuary and the obligations of the altar- NLT= "You will be responsible for the care of the sanctuary and the care of the altar," CSB = "You are to guard the sanctuary and the altar" This refers to the first room of the Tabernacle, the holy place, that contained the Candlestick, the Table, and the Shew-bread.

A similar instruction had been given in Nu 3:31-32 - "Now their duties involved the ark, the table, the lampstand, the altars, and the utensils of the sanctuary with which they minister, and the screen, and all the service concerning them; 32and Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest was the chief of the leaders of Levi, and had the oversight of those who perform the duties of the sanctuary.

To **attend to the obligation** "was to exercise continual care night and day that all things were kept pure and uncorrupted, and administered strictly according to the divine will." (Bush)

Sanctuary (holy) ([06944](#)) see note on [qodesh](#)

so that - Term of purpose.

there will no longer be wrath on the sons of Israel - We have just seen an example of Yahweh's wrath breaking out in Nu 16:46

Moses said to Aaron, "Take your censer and put in it fire from the altar, and lay incense on it; then bring it quickly to the congregation and make atonement for them, for **wrath has gone forth from the LORD**, the plague has begun!"

Yahweh's wrath is mentioned in the book of Numbers in these passages - Nu 1:53 Nu 16:46 Nu 18:5 Nu 25:11

Stubbs writes "The assignment of responsibility serves two purposes in this context. It first reassures all the Israelites that their fear expressed in 17:12–13 will not come to pass. They can approach the tabernacle to worship and offer sacrifices without fear of death. It also reminds the priests and Levites that their election and call to service is not an election to privilege and power, but rather to an important service that has grave responsibilities attached to it." (Ibid)

Bush writes "That by constant care and vigilance all occasions of wrath might be precluded."

THOUGHT Are we not grateful we live after the Cross, after our Lord Jesus Christ came as the Lamb of God (Jn 1:29+) and bore the wrath of God that we justly deserved for our manifold sins (1 Peter 2:24+, 2 Cor 5:21+). Amazing grace indeed! But now as His priests, we need to apply these passages on the seriousness of guarding God's holiness lest "wrath" break out. Of course, for believers this would be in the form of divine discipline (Hebrews 12:5-10+) remembering that "All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness." (Hebrews 12:11+).

UBS Handbook - The purpose of the regulations for the priests and the Levites is to prevent another punishment of the people of Israel at large on account of the sin or violation of certain individuals or groups among them. If there are violations involving the sanctuary and its holy objects, God will punish his people again

Matthew Henry - "The preventing of sin is the preventing of wrath; and the mischief sin has done, should be a warning to us for the future, to watch against it both in ourselves and others."

Related Passages o the wrath of God...

Nu 1:53 But the Levites shall camp around the tabernacle of the testimony, **so that there will be no wrath on the congregation of the sons of Israel**. So the Levites shall keep charge of the tabernacle of the testimony."

Nu 16:46 Moses said to Aaron, "Take your censer and put in it fire from the altar, and lay incense on it; then bring it quickly to the congregation and make atonement for them, **for wrath has gone forth from the LORD**, the plague has begun!"

FSB - Approaching the sacred space of the tabernacle improperly brought judgment (Lev 10:6; Num 16:40). In Lev 10, Aaron's sons offered incense improperly and were struck dead (Lev 10:6). In Num 16, Korah and the men with him offered incense when challenging the authority of Moses and Aaron. They were also struck dead (Nu 16:40). This statement is likely a reminder of those tragic examples of divine wrath aroused by not following proper procedures related to sacred space.

Numbers 18:6 "**Behold**, I Myself have taken your fellow Levites from among the sons of Israel; they are a gift to you, dedicated to the LORD, to perform the service for the tent of meeting.

BGT Numbers 18:6 καὶ ἐγὼ ἑλεῖψα τοὺς δέλφους μὲν τοὺς Λευίτας κμ σου τὴν ἐν Ἰσραὴλ ὁ μὰ δέδομνον κυρ λειτουργεῖν τὴν λειτουργίαν τὴν ἐν τῷ μαρτυροῦ

NET Numbers 18:6 I myself have chosen your brothers the Levites from among the Israelites. They are given to you as a gift from the LORD, to perform the duties of the tent of meeting.

NLT Numbers 18:6 I myself have chosen your fellow Levites from among the Israelites to be your special assistants. They are a gift to you, dedicated to the LORD for service in the Tabernacle.

ESV Numbers 18:6 And behold, I have taken your brothers the Levites from among the people of Israel. They are a gift to you, given to the LORD, to do the service of the tent of meeting.

NIV Numbers 18:6 I myself have selected your fellow Levites from among the Israelites as a gift to you, dedicated to the LORD to do the work at the Tent of Meeting.

KJV 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.

YLT Numbers 18:6 'And I, lo, I have taken your brethren the Levites from the midst of the sons of Israel; to you a gift they are given by Jehovah, to do the service of the tent of meeting;

LXE Numbers 18:6 And I have taken your brethren the Levites out of the midst of the children of Israel, a present given to the Lord, to minister in the services of the tabernacle of witness.

ASV Numbers 18:6 And I, behold, I have taken your brethren the Levites from among the children of Israel: to you they are a gift, given unto Jehovah, to do the service of the tent of meeting.

CSB Numbers 18:6 Look, I have selected your fellow Levites from the Israelites as a gift for you, assigned by the LORD to work at the tent of meeting.

NKJ Numbers 18:6 "Behold, I Myself have taken your brethren the Levites from among the children of Israel; they are a gift to you, given by the LORD, to do the work of the tabernacle of meeting.

NRS Numbers 18:6 It is I who now take your brother Levites from among the Israelites; they are now yours as a gift, dedicated to the LORD, to perform the service of the tent of meeting.

- I: Ge 6:17 9:9 Ex 14:17 31:6 Isa 48:15 51:12 Eze 34:11,20
- I have: Nu 3:12,45
- a gift: Nu 3:9 Nu 8:16-19
- [Numbers 18 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Numbers 3:12, 41, 45+ "Now, **behold**, I have taken the Levites from among the sons of Israel instead of every firstborn, the first issue of the womb among the sons of Israel. **So the Levites shall be Mine.**(3:41) "You shall take the Levites for Me, I am the LORD, instead of all the firstborn among the sons of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the cattle of the sons of Israel." (3:45) "Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the sons of Israel and the cattle of the Levites. And **the Levites shall be Mine**; I am the LORD.

YAHWEH'S GIFT TO THE PRIESTS

Behold, I Myself have taken your fellow Levites from among the sons of Israel- This truth is repeated from Nu 3:12, 41, 45 (see passages above), Nu 8:6, 16, 18. The Levites were Yahweh's personal possession, but here He gives them to the Aaronic priests.

Bush on fellow Levites (KJV - your brethren the Levites) - The Levites are here called (in KJV) "**brethren**," that the priests might not be prompted to despise or disparage them by reason of the lesser duty in which they served. On the contrary, they were required to treat them with kindness and brotherly affection. Though directly assigned to you as servitors and assistants, yet let it not be overlooked that this gift is to [redound](#) ultimately to the Lord, to Whom you (Aaronic priests) are yourselves given as ministers.

they are a gift to you, dedicated (given) to the LORD, to perform the service for the tent of meeting - Yahweh is speaking to Aaron but the **you** is plural referring to all the Aaronic priests. Notice in the Related Passages above the Levites were initially the possession of Yahweh. The LORD gives the Levites to the priests to assist them by serving on the perimeter of the sanctuary.

Wiersbe - The priesthood was God's gift to Israel, for without priests the people couldn't approach God. The Levites were God's gift to the priests, relieving them of menial tasks so they could devote themselves fully to serving God and the people. The seven men appointed in Acts 6+, usually called deacons, had a similar relationship to the apostles. There's nothing demeaning about serving tables, but the apostles had more important work to do. ([Be Counted](#))

Numbers 3:9+ "You shall thus **give** (repetition of [nathan nathan](#) = "wholly give") the Levites to Aaron and to his sons; they are wholly given to him from among the sons of Israel.

Comment - That the Levites are subsidiary to the priests is made quite clear by the wording of this verse. The Hebrew for this expression is the repetition "given given" (netûnim netûnim), an idiom for totality. Compare the conduct of the Levites in Jdg 17-18 & Jdg 19-21 describing the tragic despicable events that occurred very early in the 300-350 year period of Judges after Joshua and the elders had

died.

Numbers 8:19+ **"I have given** the Levites as a gift to Aaron and to his sons from among the sons of Israel, to perform the service of the sons of Israel at the tent of meeting and to make atonement on behalf of the sons of Israel, so that there will be no plague among the sons of Israel by their coming near to the sanctuary."

Bush comments - To make an atonement. Heb. lekappër, to make atonement. The insertion of the particle "an" is superfluous, as the word expresses a continuous function. It confirms the interpretation suggested above, v. 12, that the making atonement by the act of sacrificing was not the province of the Levites, but of the priests. They were to serve as a kind of perpetual medium of atonement. **That there be no plague, etc.** Chaldee "No death." That is, that the people may be secured from the stroke of divine judgments by everything being done in exact accordance with the prescribed order, all others except the proper commissioned persons being excluded from officiating in and about the Tabernacle. **This plainly teaches that the surest preservation against disastrous visitations is a strict compliance with the divine injunctions.** Germane to this is the case of Phineas, Nu 25:7, 8, 13, who, in slaying the offenders **"stayed the plague,"** and is thereupon said to have **"made an atonement for the children of Israel."** The danger incurred by the infraction of this command is impressively taught, Lev. 10:1, 1 Chr 6:3.

Numbers 18:7 "But you and your sons with you shall attend to your priesthood for everything concerning the altar and inside the veil, and you are to perform service. I am giving you the priesthood as a bestowed service, but the outsider who comes near shall be put to death."

BGT Numbers 18:7 κα σ κα ο υ ο σου μετ σο διατηρ σετε τ ν ερατε αν μ ν κατ π ντα τρ πον το θυσιαστηρ ου κα τ νδοθεν το καταπετ σματος κα λειτουργ σετε τ ς λειτουργ ας δ μα τ ς ερατε ας μ ν κα λλογεν ς προσπορευ μενος ποθανε ται

NET Numbers 18:7 But you and your sons with you are responsible for your priestly duties, for everything at the altar and within the curtain. And you must serve. I give you the priesthood as a gift for service; but the unauthorized person who approaches must be put to death."

NLT Numbers 18:7 But you and your sons, the priests, must personally handle all the priestly rituals associated with the altar and with everything behind the inner curtain. I am giving you the priesthood as your special privilege of service. Any unauthorized person who comes too near the sanctuary will be put to death."

ESV Numbers 18:7 And you and your sons with you shall guard your priesthood for all that concerns the altar and that is within the veil; and you shall serve. I give your priesthood as a gift, and any outsider who comes near shall be put to death."

NIV Numbers 18:7 But only you and your sons may serve as priests in connection with everything at the altar and inside the curtain. I am giving you the service of the priesthood as a gift. Anyone else who comes near the sanctuary must be put to death."

KJV 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 vail; 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.

YLT Numbers 18:7 and thou, and thy sons with thee, do keep your priesthood, for everything of the altar, and within the vail, and ye have served; a service of gift I make your priesthood; and the stranger who is coming near is put to death.'

LXE Numbers 18:7 And thou and thy sons after thee shall keep up your priestly ministration, according to the whole manner of the altar, and that which is within the veil; and ye shall minister in the services as the office of your priesthood; and the stranger that comes near shall die.

ASV Numbers 18:7 And thou and thy sons with thee shall keep your priesthood for everything of the altar, and for that within the veil; and ye shall serve: I give you the priesthood as a service of gift: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.

CSB Numbers 18:7 But you and your sons will carry out your priestly responsibilities for everything concerning the altar and for what is inside the veil, and you will do that work. I am giving you the work of the priesthood as a gift, but an unauthorized person who comes near the sanctuary will be put to death."

NKJ Numbers 18:7 "Therefore you and your sons with you shall attend to your priesthood for everything at the altar and behind the veil; and you shall serve. I give your priesthood to you as a gift for service, but the outsider who comes near shall be put to death."

NRS Numbers 18:7 But you and your sons with you shall diligently perform your priestly duties in all that concerns the altar and the area behind the curtain. I give your priesthood as a gift; any outsider who approaches shall be put to death.

- **But you** : Nu 18:5 3:10
- **within**: Lev 16:2,12-14 Heb 9:3-6
- **service**: Nu 16:5-7 1Sa 2:28 Joh 3:27 Ro 15:15,16 Eph 3:8 Heb 5:4
- **outsider**: Nu 18:4 3:38 16:40
- [Numbers 18 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

AARONIC PRIESTS' DUTIES

But you and your sons with you shall attend to your priesthood for everything concerning the (brzen) altar (on the outside in the courtyard of the Tabernacle complex) **and inside the veil** - This verse summarizes the work of the priests (that is, Aaron and his sons) at the altar and within the Tabernacle (including both the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place, the latter of course being accessible only by the high priest and only once per year - Lev 16:1-34+).

Bush - "Keep or preserve it to yourselves, discharging its functions, and allow no other person to invade it. This you are to do with a twofold reference to the altar of burnt offerings, where the sacrifices are to be performed, the blood sprinkled, etc.; and also to all that is to be done, whether within the outer or the inner veil, as, for instance, burning incense, putting on the shew-bread, and lighting the lamps." (Bush)

and you are to perform service - NET = "And you must serve." **Matthew Henry** - "Not, 'Ye shall rule;' it was never intended that they should lord it over God's heritage, but 'Ye shall serve God and the congregation.' Note, The priesthood is a service. 'If any desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.' Ministers must remember that they are ministers, that is, servants; of whom it is required that they be humble, diligent, and faithful."

I am giving you the priesthood as a bestowed service - NLT = "I am giving you the priesthood as your special privilege of service" "That is, a service freely given you, and to be regarded as a favor and a privilege, imparting at the same time a corresponding duty and service. The priest's office, viewed as a "gift," was a privilege, and as a "service," a work, according to the language of the apostle, 1 Tim. 3:1, "If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.'" (Bush)

Bestowed ([04979](#))(**mattanah** from **mattan** = a gift) means something bestowed as a gift and could refer to "compensation or for support (Gen. 25:6; Esth. 9:22; Ezek. 46:16, 17); as offerings, gifts, to the Lord (Ex. 28:38; Lev. 23:38; Num. 18:29; Ps. 68:18). Persons in Israel gave as they were able (Dt. 16:7). The Levites were called the Lord's gift to the priesthood (Num. 18:6, 7). This word has the sense of a bribe in the wisdom literature (Prov. 15:27; Eccl. 7:7). (Baker - Complete Word Study Dictionary – OT).

Gilbrant - Used both literally and figuratively in idiomatic expressions, **mattānāh** is a feminine Hebrew noun which means "gift," "present." It is derived from **nathan**, "to give." It first occurs in Gen. 25:6. This describes the wisdom Abraham used in dividing his estate among all of his sons, not just to Isaac, his heir. "While he was still living, he gave gifts to the sons of his concubines and sent them away from his son Isaac to the land of the east" (NIV).

In a way symbolic of the great High Priest, Jesus Christ, the sons of Aaron were to "bear the guilt of the gifts the Israelites consecrate" (Exo. 28:38). The types of gifts given to the Lord through the ministry of the priests are described in various texts (see Lev. 23:38; Num. 18:29).

In a statement directed to Aaron, the Lord said, "I myself have selected your fellow Levites from among the Israelites as a gift to you, dedicated to the Lord to do the work at the Tent of Meeting" (Num. 18:6, NIV). Aaron and his sons were reminded always to thank Him for the service the Levites would render as fellow ministers. In perhaps an even more significant reminder, God said to Aaron, "I am giving you the service of the priesthood as a gift" (v. 8). The holy priesthood was a gift of God; it could not be bought, earned or attained by any human effort. In addition, this was a stern warning to any other tribe of Israel or individual who would aspire to the role of a priest.

In several passages, the word *mattānāh* is understood to mean "a bribe." For example, Prov. 15:27 says, "He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house; but he that hateth gifts shall live" (cf. Ecc. 7:7).

In a passage repeated by the Apostle Paul in Eph. 4:8, the psalmist writes, "When you ascended on high, you led captives in your train; you received gifts from men" (Ps. 68:18, NIV). The NT passage reads, "... you gave gifts to men." In both texts, the ascent of the Messiah, having triumphed over death, hell and the grave, is in view. Both describe the totality of the victory of the Lord. The variation between the Testaments has been explained in a number of ways. Perhaps it may simply be stated as follows: that Jesus, the victorious champion, gave back to his Church that which He had received, namely, the spoils of the defeated foe, i.e., the souls of men. (Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary)

Mattanah - 17x in 17v - bestowed(1), bribe(1), bribes(1), gift(3), gifts(10), give(1). Gen. 25:6; Exod. 28:38; Lev. 23:38; Num. 18:6; Num. 18:7; Num. 18:29; Deut. 16:17; 2 Chr. 21:3; Est. 9:22; Ps. 68:18; Prov. 15:27; Eccl. 7:7; Ezek. 20:26; Ezek. 20:31; Ezek. 20:39; Ezek. 46:16; Ezek. 46:17

but the outsider who comes near shall be put to death- This refers to native Israelites who are not of the seed of Aaron as well as aliens. The text does not say they were to put them to death, the implication being that Yahweh would bring about their demise, much like He did with Nadab and Abihu in Lev 10:1-2+.

This passage makes it sound like no one could bring an offering to the Tabernacle, but that is clearly not the case. The issue is how did they come to the altar? Did they come with humility, sorrow for sin, etc or did they come with an attitude like the 250 men with censers in Numbers 17?

Outsider (stranger) ([02114](#))(**zur**) is a verb which means to be a stranger. Things described as strange (in this sense the verb seems to be used as an adjective) - fire, gods (Dt 32:16, Ps 44:20), waters (2Ki 19:24 = water in foreign lands), children ("illegitimate" - NAS, "alien" - ESV) **Zur** frequently refers to a **layman** (anyone not a priest. Lxx == *allogenes* = another race, alien, foreign, stranger) could not eat the meat apportioned to the priests (Ex 29:33, KJV = "stranger", cp Ex 30:33, Lev 22:10, 12, 13, Nu 1:51, 3:10, 3:38, 16:40 all translated by Lxx with *allogenes*).

David Stubbs has some **excellent application** to us in the New Testament writing "The great responsibility attached to priestly leadership within the people of God is not limited to ancient Israel. The admonition of James concerning leadership within the people of God is similar: "Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers and sisters, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness" (Jas. 3:1+). The task of priestly leaders to keep out those who would approach the holy things of God unworthily also resonates with Paul's description of church leaders as "stewards of God's mysteries" (1 Cor. 4:1). His instructions about church discipline and the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11:27–34) highlight that such stewardship involves discernment and discipline within the people of God—for their own good: "Examine yourselves.... For all who eat and drink without discerning the body, eat and drink judgment against themselves. For this reason many of you are weak and ill, and some have died" (11:29–30). " (Brazos Commentary - Numbers)

Warren Wiersbe has a slightly different application of Numbers 18:1-7 - Everything rises or falls with leadership, and Aaron was the leader of the priestly family. He was accountable to God for what happened at the sanctuary. God doesn't dwell in temples made with hands (Acts 7:48+), but He does dwell in our bodies by His Holy Spirit 1 Cor. 6:19–20+) and among His people in the local assembly (1 Cor 3:16ff). We must be careful how we treat our bodies and what we do to the church of Jesus Christ. "If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple" (1 Cor 3:17NIV). ([Be Counted](#))

Numbers 18:8 Then the LORD spoke to Aaron, "Now behold, I Myself have given you charge of My offerings, even all the holy gifts of the sons of Israel I have given them to you as a portion and to your sons as a perpetual allotment.

BGT Numbers 18:8 καὶ ἠλάσεν κριος πρὸς Ααρων καὶ γένοιτο ὁ δῶκα μὲν τῶν διατηρησίων τῶν παρχῶν πρὸς τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραηλ σοὶ δῶκα αὐτῶν ἐς γέρας καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ σου μετὰ σὺν μίμονα υἱοῦν

NET Numbers 18:8 The LORD spoke to Aaron, "See, I have given you the responsibility for my raised offerings; I have given all the holy things of the Israelites to you as your priestly portion and to your sons as a perpetual ordinance.

NLT Numbers 18:8 The LORD gave these further instructions to Aaron: "I myself have put you in charge of all the holy offerings that are brought to me by the people of Israel. I have given all these consecrated offerings to

you and your sons as your permanent share.

ESV Numbers 18:8 Then the LORD spoke to Aaron, "Behold, I have given you charge of the contributions made to me, all the consecrated things of the people of Israel. I have given them to you as a portion and to your sons as a perpetual due.

NIV Numbers 18:8 Then the LORD said to Aaron, "I myself have put you in charge of the offerings presented to me; all the holy offerings the Israelites give me I give to you and your sons as your portion and regular share.

KJV 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.

YLT Numbers 18:8 And Jehovah speaketh unto Aaron: 'And I, lo, I have given to thee the charge of My heave-offerings, of all the hallowed things of the sons of Israel -- to thee I have given them for the anointing, and to thy sons, by a statute age-during.

LXE Numbers 18:8 And the Lord said to Aaron, And, behold, I have given you the charge of the first-fruits of all things consecrated to me by the children of Israel; and I have given them to thee as an honour, and to thy sons after thee for a perpetual ordinance.

ASV Numbers 18:8 And Jehovah spake unto Aaron, And I, behold, I have given thee the charge of my heave-offerings, even all the hallowed things of the children of Israel; unto thee have I given them by reason of the anointing, and to thy sons, as a portion for ever.

CSB Numbers 18:8 Then the LORD spoke to Aaron, "Look, I have put you in charge of the contributions brought to Me. As for all the holy offerings of the Israelites, I have given them to you and your sons as a portion and a permanent statute.

NKJ Numbers 18:8 And the LORD spoke to Aaron: "Here, I Myself have also given you charge of My heave offerings, all the holy gifts of the children of Israel; I have given them as a portion to you and your sons, as an ordinance forever.

NRS Numbers 18:8 The LORD spoke to Aaron: I have given you charge of the offerings made to me, all the holy gifts of the Israelites; I have given them to you and your sons as a priestly portion due you in perpetuity.

- **charge:** Nu 18:9 Lev 6:16,18,20,26 7:6,32-34 10:14,15 De 12:6,11 26:13
- by reason: Ex 29:21,29 40:13,15 Lev 7:35 8:30 21:10 Isa 10:27 Heb 1:9 1Jn 2:20,27
- [Numbers 18 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

YAHWEH GIVES PROVISIONS TO PRIESTS

Clyde Woods summarizes Lev 18:8-20 writing that "This paragraph treats five types of priestly revenues: (1) the portions of grain, sin, and guilt offerings not burned on the altar (vv. 9, 10); (2) the designated portions of the fellowship offerings (v. 11); (3) firstfruits (vv. 12–13); (4) devoted things (v. 14); and (5) firstlings, or, as required, their redemption fees (vv. 15–18). Introductory and concluding statements (vv. 8, 19–20) frame the list which, while not totally exhaustive, effectively summarizes priestly support." (Leviticus- Numbers)

Then the LORD spoke to Aaron, "Now behold, I Myself have given you charge of My offerings - NLT = "I myself have put you in charge of all the holy offerings that are brought to me by the people of Israel"

Offerings (heave offering) ([08641](#))(**terumah** from **rum** = to be high or exalted, depicts something being lifted up as one would do in an offering) is a feminine noun that means offering, the first use referring to the contributions from the sons of Israel to God for the building of the Tabernacle (Ex 25:2-3). **Terumah** describes a number of different offerings - contribution of materials for building (Ex 25:2; 35:5); an animal for sacrifice (Ex. 29:27; Nu 6:20); the thigh part of the animal to the priest (Lev 10:14); a shekel as a contribution to the LORD (Ex 30:13-15 - the purpose of the offering being to atone); gold for the priests (Nu 31:52); land for the priests (Ezek. 45:6, 7); the offering of war booty (Nu 31:29) and materials for an idol (Isa 40:20)! In one instance, this word is used to describe a ruler who "takes bribes" ("demands contributions" - HCSB) (Pr. 29:4). Translated allotment(15), contribution(20), contributions(10), heave offering(4), offered by lifting(2), offering(20), offerings(4), who takes bribes(1).

All uses in Numbers - Num. 5:9; Num. 6:20; Num. 15:19; Num. 15:20; Num. 15:21; Num. 18:8; Num. 18:11; Num. 18:19; Num. 18:24; Num. 18:26; Num. 18:27; Num. 18:28; Num. 18:29; Num. 31:29; Num. 31:41; Num. 31:52;

Even all the holy gifts of the sons of Israel I have given them to you as a portion and to your sons as a perpetual allotment - NKJ = "as an ordinance forever." Holy gifts would be gifts set apart by the Israelites for God alone. God shares these with those who are close to Him! (That's a thought worth pondering!). God's holy gifts are perpetual which is surely a shadow pointing toward God's gift of Christ, a "Gift" we will experience and enjoy eternally as our perpetual allotment.

THOUGHT The **sons** in the OT reminds me of the blessing of believers as **sons** in the NT John writing "See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called **children of God**; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him." (1 John 3:1+) To which Paul adds "For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are **sons of God**." (Ro 8:14+) " For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus." (Gal 3:26+)

NIVSB - The priests were to be supported in their work of ministry (Lev 6:14-7:36).

Perpetual allotment - only 3 times in the entire Bible, all in Numbers 18 - Nu 18:8, 11, 19

Holy (sanctuary) (06944) see note on [qodesh](#) The Lxx renders [qodesh](#) with [hagiazō](#) in perfect tense indicating the place permanently set apart from common use and for worship of Yahweh.

Perpetual (05769) see [olam](#)

Allotment (due, ordinance, portion)(02706) see notes below on [choq/hog](#)

Numbers 18:9 "This shall be yours from the most holy gifts reserved from the fire; every offering of theirs, even every grain offering and every sin offering and every guilt offering, which they shall render to Me, shall be most holy for you and for your sons.

BGT Numbers 18:9 κα το το στω μ ν π τ ν γιασμ νων γ ων τ ν καρπωμ των π π ντων τ ν δ ρων α τ ν κα π π ντων τ ν θυσιασμ των α τ ν κα π π της πλημμελε ας α τ ν κα π πασ ν τ ν μαρπ ν σα ποδιδ ασ ν μοι π π ντων τ ν γ ων σο σται κα το ς υ ο ς σου

NET Numbers 18:9 Of all the most holy offerings reserved from the fire this will be yours: Every offering of theirs, whether from every grain offering or from every purification offering or from every reparation offering which they bring to me, will be most holy for you and for your sons.

NLT Numbers 18:9 You are allotted the portion of the most holy offerings that is not burned on the fire. This portion of all the most holy offerings-- including the grain offerings, sin offerings, and guilt offerings-- will be most holy, and it belongs to you and your sons.

ESV Numbers 18:9 This shall be yours of the most holy things, reserved from the fire: every offering of theirs, every grain offering of theirs and every sin offering of theirs and every guilt offering of theirs, which they render to me, shall be most holy to you and to your sons.

NIV Numbers 18:9 You are to have the part of the most holy offerings that is kept from the fire. From all the gifts they bring me as most holy offerings, whether grain or sin or guilt offerings, that part belongs to you and your sons.

KJV 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.

YLT Numbers 18:9 This is thine of the most holy things, from the fire: all their offering, to all their present, and to all their sin-offering, and to all their guilt-offering, which they give back to Me, is most holy to thee, and to thy sons;

LXE Numbers 18:9 And let this be to you from all the holy things that are consecrated to me, even the burnt-offerings, from all their gifts, and from all their sacrifices, and from every trespass-offering of theirs, and from all their sin-offerings, whatever things they give to me of all their holy things, they shall be thine and thy sons'.

ASV Numbers 18:9 This shall be thine of the most holy things, reserved from the fire: every oblation of theirs,

even every meal-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.

CSB Numbers 18:9 A portion of the holiest offerings kept from the fire will be yours; every one of their offerings that they give Me, whether the grain offering, sin offering, or restitution offering will be most holy for you and your sons.

NKJ Numbers 18:9 "This shall be yours of the most holy things reserved from the fire: every offering of theirs, every grain offering and every sin offering and every trespass offering which they render to Me, shall be most holy for you and your sons.

NRS Numbers 18:9 This shall be yours from the most holy things, reserved from the fire: every offering of theirs that they render to me as a most holy thing, whether grain offering, sin offering, or guilt offering, shall belong to you and your sons.

- **every offering:** Lev 2:2,3 10:12,13
- **every sin:** Lev 4:22,27 6:25,26 10:17
- **every guilt:** Lev 5:1,6 7:1,7 10:12 14:13
- [Numbers 18 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

OFFERING PORTIONS TO BE EATEN ONLY BY PRIESTS

This shall be yours (Aaronic priests) **from the most holy gifts reserved from the fire- Most holy** is qodes (holy thing) and qadosh (holy) thus literally "holy holy things." **NLT** = "the most holy offerings that is not burned on the fire." For most sacrificial offerings only a portion was burned (Lev 2:2+ where "memorial portion" = a representative portion that was burned) and what was not burned was Yahweh's gift to the priests and was specifically called the **most holy gifts**. Note that there is a distinction between "**most holy gifts**" (Nu 18:9-10) and "**holy gifts**." (Nu 18:19), the former being given only for the priests themselves and the latter for the priests and their families.

Every offering ([qorban/korban](#); Lxx = [doron](#) = stresses gratuitous, voluntary nature-see [below](#)) **of theirs, even every grain offering** ([minchah](#); Lev 2:3+; Lev 5:13+; Lev 6:9+) **and every sin offering** ([chattat/chattath](#) - Lev 4:25, 26+) **and every guilt** (trespass) **offering** ([asham](#) - Lev. 2; Lev 4:1-6:7+; Lev 6:14-7:7+), **which they shall render to Me, shall be most holy for you and for your sons** - Notice that these **most holy** portions are reserved for the priests (not their families). Not mentioned here is the compensation from the burnt offering ([olah](#)) which was the hide of the burnt animal (Lev 7:8+)

Offering (of theirs) ([07133](#)) ([qorban/korban](#) from [qarab](#) signifies coming into near, intimate proximity of another [in Leviticus into intimate proximity with Jehovah!]) Does this root verb not help us discern the picture of "offering?" is a masculine noun which means that which is brought near (the altar), thus referring to an offering. Thus **qorban/korban** was a general term used for all Israelite sacrifices, offerings, or oblations. It is used in a variety of offerings in Leviticus. **Uses in Numbers** - Nu 5:15; Nu 6:14; Nu 6:21; Nu 7:3; Nu 7:10; Nu 7:11; Nu 7:12; Nu 7:13; Nu 7:17; Nu 7:19; Nu 7:23; Nu 7:25; Nu 7:29; Nu 7:31; Nu 7:35; Nu 7:37; Nu 7:41; Nu 7:43; Nu 7:47; Nu 7:49; Nu 7:53; Nu 7:55; Nu 7:59; Nu 7:61; Nu 7:65; Nu 7:67; Nu 7:71; Nu 7:73; Nu 7:77; Nu 7:79; Nu 7:83; Nu 9:7; Nu 9:13; Nu 15:4; Nu 15:25; Nu 18:9; Nu 28:2; Nu 31:50

It is worthy of note that the word [Doron](#) is usually used of offerings to God (in NT) except in Eph 2:8+ where it used of God's "offering" to us!!! Hallelujah!

Holy (gifts) ([06944](#)) see note on [qodesh](#) The Lxx renders [qodesh](#) with [hagios](#) indicating those things set apart from common use and for uses related to Yahweh.

Numbers 18:10 "As the most holy gifts you shall eat it; every male shall eat it. It shall be holy to you.

BGT Numbers 18:10 ν τ γ τ ν γ ω ν φ γεσθε α τ π ν ρ σε ν ι κ ν φ γεται α τ σ κ α ο υ ο σου για σται σοι

NET Numbers 18:10 You are to eat it as a most holy offering; every male may eat it. It will be holy to you.

NLT Numbers 18:10 You must eat it as a most holy offering. All the males may eat of it, and you must treat it as most holy.

ESV Numbers 18:10 In a most holy place shall you eat it. Every male may eat it; it is holy to you.

NIV Numbers 18:10 Eat it as something most holy; every male shall eat it. You must regard it as holy.

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

YLT Numbers 18:10 in the holy of holies thou dost eat it; every male doth eat it; holy it is to thee.

LXE Numbers 18:10 In the most holy place shall ye eat them; every male shall eat them, thou and thy sons: they shall be holy to thee.

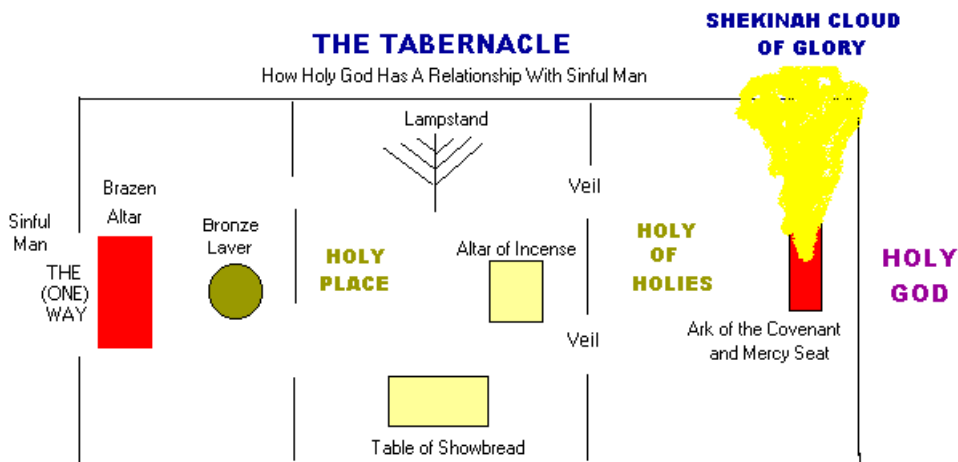
ASV Numbers 18:10 As the most holy things shalt thou eat thereof; every male shall eat thereof: it shall be holy unto thee.

CSB Numbers 18:10 You are to eat it as a most holy offering. Every male may eat it; it is to be holy to you.

NKJ Numbers 18:10 "In a most holy place you shall eat it; every male shall eat it. It shall be holy to you.

NRS Numbers 18:10 As a most holy thing you shall eat it; every male may eat it; it shall be holy to you.

- In the: Ex 29:31,32 Lev 6:16,26,29 7:6 10:13,17 14:13
- every male: Lev 6:18,29 7:6 21:22
- [Numbers 18 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



Brazen Altar- The Cross of Christ

Laver- Sanctification

Table of Showbread- Christ is the Bread of Life

Lampstand- Christ is the Light of the World

Altar of Incense- Christ Our Intercessor

Ark of the Covenant- Christ is the Word Personified

Mercy Seat- Blood of Christ

Delivers from the Penalty and Power of Sin

HOLY MEALS IN A HOLY PLACE IN THE COURT OF THE TENT OF MEETING

As the most holy gifts you shall eat it; every male shall eat it. It shall be holy to you- The NAS is not the best translation for the Hebrew is more accurately rendered "**In a most holy place** shall you eat it" (ESV) Note these **most holy gifts** are only for the males. And as noted above, these were to be consumed only by the Aaronic priests (not even their families) and the were to be consumed in a **holy place**. In Leviticus 6:16+ we read "What is left of it Aaron and his sons are to eat. It shall be eaten as unleavened cakes in a **holy place**; they are to eat it in **the court of the tent of meeting**."

Holy (gifts)...**Holy** (to you) (06944)(**qodesh**) is a masculine noun which means set apart, distinct, unique. **Qodesh** describes that which has been consecrated or set apart for sacred use and was not to be used for common or profane tasks. If it were used for profane things, in simple terms, it became "not holy." It is fitting that the first OT use of **qodesh** was in God's instruction to Moses - "Do not come near here; remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is **holy** ground." (Ex 3:5). NET Note on Ex 3:5 "What made a mountain or other place holy was the fact that God chose that place to reveal himself or to reside among his people. Because God was in this place, the ground was different – it was holy." The Lxx renders **qodesh** with **hagios** indicating those things set apart from common use and for uses related to Yahweh. This is the name of God's people in the NT and the purpose is the same - set apart from the corrupt

dying world and unto the use of our Holy God. Does my behavior substantiate this "definition"?

Numbers 18:11 "This also is yours, the offering of their gift, even all the wave offerings of the sons of Israel; I have given them to you and to your sons and daughters with you as a perpetual allotment. Everyone of your household who is clean may eat it."

BGT Numbers 18:11 κα το το σται μ ν παρχ δομ των α τ ν π π ν των τ ν πιθεμ των τ ν υ ν Ισραηλ σο δ δωκα α τ κα το ς υ ο ς σου κα τα ς θυγατρ σιν σου μετ σο ν μιμον α νιον π ς καθαρ ς ν τ ο κ σου δεται α τ

NET Numbers 18:11 "And this is yours: the raised offering of their gift, along with all the wave offerings of the Israelites. I have given them to you and to your sons and daughters with you as a perpetual ordinance. Everyone who is ceremonially clean in your household may eat of it.

NLT Numbers 18:11 "All the sacred offerings and special offerings presented to me when the Israelites lift them up before the altar also belong to you. I have given them to you and to your sons and daughters as your permanent share. Any member of your family who is ceremonially clean may eat of these offerings.

ESV Numbers 18:11 This also is yours: the contribution of their gift, all the wave offerings of the people of Israel. I have given them to you, and to your sons and daughters with you, as a perpetual due. Everyone who is clean in your house may eat it.

NIV Numbers 18:11 "This also is yours: whatever is set aside from the gifts of all the wave offerings of the Israelites. I give this to you and your sons and daughters as your regular share. Everyone in your household who is ceremonially clean may eat it.

KJV 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.

YLT Numbers 18:11 'And this is thine: the heave-offering of their gift, to all the wave-offerings of the sons of Israel, to thee I have given them, and to thy sons, and to thy daughters with thee, by a statute age-during; every clean one in thy house doth eat it;

LXE Numbers 18:11 And this shall be to you of the first-fruits of their gifts, of all the wave-offerings of the children of Israel; to thee have I given them and to thy sons and thy daughters with thee, a perpetual ordinance; every clean person in thy house shall eat them.

ASV Numbers 18:11 And this is thine: the heave-offering of their gift, even 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, as a portion for ever; every one that is clean in thy house shall eat thereof.

CSB Numbers 18:11 "The contribution of their gifts also belongs to you. I have given all the Israelites' presentation offerings to you and to your sons and daughters as a permanent statute. Every ceremonially clean person in your house may eat it.

NKJ Numbers 18:11 "This also is yours: the heave offering of their gift, with all the wave offerings of the children of Israel; I have given them to you, and your sons and daughters with you, as an ordinance forever. Everyone who is clean in your house may eat it.

NRS Numbers 18:11 This also is yours: I have given to you, together with your sons and daughters, as a perpetual due, whatever is set aside from the gifts of all the elevation offerings of the Israelites; everyone who is clean in your house may eat them.

- **wave offerings:** Nu 18:8 Ex 29:27,28 Lev 7:14,30-34
- **to you:** Lev 10:14 De 18:3
- **everyone:** Lev 22:2,3,11-13
- [Numbers 18 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**PROVISION FOR
PRIESTS' FAMILIES**

This also is yours, the offering of their gift, even all the wave offerings of the sons of Israel; I have given them to you and to your sons and daughters with you as a perpetual allotment - NLT = "All the sacred offerings and special offerings presented to me when the Israelites lift them up before the altar also belong to you."

Offering (08641) see notes above on [terumah](#) from rum = to be high or exalted, depicts something being lifted up as one would do in an offering. Note that [terumah](#) is a **key word** in Numbers 18 occurring 8 times - Nu 18:8; Nu 18:11; Nu 18:19; Nu 18:24; Nu 18:26; Nu 18:27; Nu 18:28; Nu 18:29;

Perpetual (05769) see [olam](#)

Allotment (due, ordinance, portion)(02706) see notes below on [choq/hoc](#)

Wave offering (08573)([tenupah](#) from **nuph** = to move to and fro, to wave, to sprinkle) is a feminine noun which means swinging, waving, then wave offering. **Tenupah** implies the side to side motion involved in waving and thus is usually a reference to a "wave offering" but twice is translated simply as "offering" (Ex 38:24, 29). Halladay says it is "an offering waved toward the altar & away fm. it in consecration." **All uses in Numbers** - Num. 6:20; Num. 8:11; Num. 8:13; Num. 8:15; Num. 8:21; Num. 18:11; Num. 18:18;

Andrew Bowling adds this note on **wave offering** - This noun has two cultic usages: **first**, as a general term applied to a variety of gifts and offerings and, **secondly, as a specific term for those parts of the offerings which are designated for the officiating priest.** As a general term it is applied to such diverse things as gold (Exodus 35:22), the "bronze of the wave offering" (Exodus 38:29; literal translation), the sheaf of the firstfruits (Leviticus 23:11-15), the two loaves offered on the Day of Pentecost (Leviticus 23:17), the male lamb of the trespass offering for cleansing of lepers (Leviticus 14:12, 21), and, finally, the entire tribe of Levi (Numbers 8:11). The verb *nûp* alone describes the offering of the cereal offering (ASV meal offering) of jealousy (Numbers 5:25). In some cases a ritual act of waving is clearly alluded to as when Moses waved the wave offering in Aaron's hands (Leviticus 8:27). In other cases the literal waving is impossible, as in the "waving" of the Levites. In such cases the significance of waving is lost and the terms mean offering" and to offer" respectively. If these terms have a characteristic, specific usage, it occurs in repeated references to the "breast of the wave offering" together with the "thigh of the heave offering" as the priest's portion of the peace offering (Leviticus 7:30; Leviticus 10:14; Numbers 6:19-20; Note: The second ram of Aaron's dedication ritual—Exodus 29:26-34; Leviticus 8:22-27, 31-32—with its wave breast and heave thigh is also a peace offering since it, like the peace offering, was eaten by the offerers). These portions are so characteristically the priest's that they serve as the standard to which other priest's portions are compared (Numbers 18:18). However, even in this usage, the terminology is not exact since the term "wave offering" once includes both the breast and the thigh (Leviticus 9:21) and the things burned as the "offering by fire" (cf. Leviticus 3:3-4) and the right thigh may be included in the term wave offering" (Exodus 29:22-24; Leviticus 8:25-27). ([Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament](#))

Related Resource:

- [What is a wave offering? | GotQuestions.org](#)

Everyone of your household who is clean may eat it - **Wenham** says "as long as they are 'clean', i.e. not suffering from skin diseases, bodily discharges or contact with the dead (cf. 5:2; Lev. 7:19–21; 22:2–9)." (TOTC-Nu)

NIVSB - Provisions for cleansing were stated in Lev 22:4–8.

Clean (adjective) (pure) (02889)([tahor](#) means pure, clean, purified, genuine, unalloyed (God's Word in Ps 12:6). "It is applied concretely to substances that are genuine or unadulterated as well as describing an unstained condition of a spiritual or ceremonial nature... **Clean** most frequently describes the purity maintained by avoiding contact with other human beings, abstaining from eating animals, and using things that are declared ceremonially clean. Conversely, cleansing results if ritual procedures symbolizing the removal of contamination are observed." (Vine) The idea of **tahor** is the identification and distinction of those things (utensils, places, people) that were culturally pure, capable of being used in, or taking part in the religious rituals of Israel. The Lord decreed that Israel must mark off the clean from the unclean (Lev. 10:10; 11:47; Job 14:4). While clean things were considered normal, unclean things were considered polluted, but could be restored to purity (Lev 13:13). However some things, especially certain animals were permanently unclean (Lev. 11:7, 26, 29-31). The deeper sense of **tahor** was in God's desire that His people be morally pure ("Your eyes are too **pure** to approve evil" = Hab 1:13), and so after his sin with Bathsheba, David asked God to create in him a **clean** heart. (Ps 51:10).

The **Septuagint** uses the adjective **katharos** which describes that which is clean and free of adulterating matter

Numbers 18:12 "All the best of the fresh oil and all the best of the fresh wine and of the grain, the first fruits of those which they give to the LORD, I give them to you.

BGT Numbers 18:12 π σα παρχ λα ου κα π σα παρχ ο νου κα σ του παρχ α τ ν σα ν δ σ ι τ κυ ρ σο
δ δ ω κ α τ

NET Numbers 18:12 "All the best of the olive oil and all the best of the wine and of the wheat, the first fruits of these things that they give to the LORD, I have given to you.

NLT Numbers 18:12 "I also give you the harvest gifts brought by the people as offerings to the LORD-- the best of the olive oil, new wine, and grain.

ESV Numbers 18:12 All the best of the oil and all the best of the wine and of the grain, the firstfruits of what they give to the LORD, I give to you.

NIV Numbers 18:12 "I give you all the finest olive oil and all the finest new wine and grain they give the LORD as the firstfruits of their harvest.

KJV 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.

YLT Numbers 18:12 all the best of the oil, and all the best of the new wine, and wheat -- their first -fruits which they give to Jehovah -- to thee I have given them.

LXE Numbers 18:12 Every first-offering of oil, and every first-offering of wine, their first-fruits of corn, whatsoever they may give to the Lord, to thee have I given them.

ASV Numbers 18:12 All the best of the oil, and all the best of the vintage, and of the grain, the first-fruits of them which they give unto Jehovah, to thee have I given them.

CSB Numbers 18:12 I am giving you all the best of the fresh olive oil, new wine, and grain, which the Israelites give to the LORD as their firstfruits.

NKJ Numbers 18:12 "All the best of the oil, all the best of the new wine and the grain, their firstfruits which they offer to the LORD, I have given them to you.

NRS Numbers 18:12 All the best of the oil and all the best of the wine and of the grain, the choice produce that they give to the LORD, I have given to you.

- **best of the:** Heb. fat, Nu 18:29
- **the first fruits:** Nu 15:19-21 Ex 22:29 23:19 34:26 Lev 2:14 23:17,20 De 18:4 De 26:2 Ne 10:35-37
- [Numbers 18 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE PRIESTS RECEIVE THE CREME OF THE CROP

All the best of the fresh oil and all the best of the fresh wine and of the grain, the first fruits of those which they give to the LORD, I give them to you - The Hebrew word for **best** ([heleb](#) - used Nu 18:12, 29, 30, 32) refers to fat, the covering of the interior of the body, which was considered the best part of an animal and was God's portion in offerings (1 Sa 2:15,16), not to be eaten by men. In the present context it clearly refers to the best agricultural products of the land. So the phrase the "fat of the land" was the best part of the land (Ge 45:18)

God gives His best to His priests!

Today we are His priests!

(1 Pe 2:9+)

First-fruits ([07225](#)) ([reshith](#)) means (1) The beginning or the first step in a course of action (as in Ps 111:10, Pr 17:14, Mic 1:13) or as used here in numbers (2) The chief thing as the principal aspect or component of something and so as here refers to the first products of a harvest and so may be translated as

"firstfruits" (e.g., Lev. 2:12; Nu 15:20; Deut. 26:2). **Uses in the Pentateuch** - Gen. 1:1; Gen. 10:10; Gen. 49:3; Exod. 23:19; Exod. 34:26; Lev. 2:12; Lev. 23:10; Num. 15:20; Num. 15:21; Num. 18:12; Num. 24:20; Deut. 11:12; Deut. 18:4; Deut. 21:17; Deut. 26:2; Deut. 26:10; Deut. 33:21.

Reshith is translated with [aparche](#) the first of any crop or offspring of livestock, consecrated before the rest could be used and in Mosaic ceremonial law was a technical term for the first portion of grain and fruit harvests and flocks offered to God.

Numbers 18:13 "The first ripe fruits of all that is in their land, which they bring to the LORD, shall be yours; everyone of your household who is clean may eat it."

BGT Numbers 18:13 τ πρωτογεν ματα π ντα σα ν τ γ α τ ν σα ν ν γκωσιν κυρ σο σται π ς καθαρ ς ν τ ο κ σου δεται α τ

NET Numbers 18:13 And whatever first ripe fruit in their land they bring to the LORD will be yours; everyone who is ceremonially clean in your household may eat of it.

NLT Numbers 18:13 All the first crops of their land that the people present to the LORD belong to you. Any member of your family who is ceremonially clean may eat this food.

ESV Numbers 18:13 The first ripe fruits of all that is in their land, which they bring to the LORD, shall be yours. Everyone who is clean in your house may eat it.

NIV Numbers 18:13 All the land's firstfruits that they bring to the LORD will be yours. Everyone in your household who is ceremonially clean may eat it.

KJV 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.

YLT Numbers 18:13 'The first-fruits of all that is in their land, which they bring in to Jehovah, are thine; every clean one in thy house doth eat it;

LXE Numbers 18:13 All the first-fruits that are in their land, whatsoever they shall offer to the Lord, shall be thine: every clean person in thy house shall eat them.

ASV Numbers 18:13 The first-ripe fruits of all that is in their land, which they bring unto Jehovah, shall be thine; every one that is clean in thy house shall eat thereof.

CSB Numbers 18:13 The firstfruits of all that is in their land, which they bring to the LORD, belong to you. Every clean person in your house may eat them.

NKJ Numbers 18:13 "Whatever first ripe fruit is in their land, which they bring to the LORD, shall be yours. Everyone who is clean in your house may eat it.

NRS Numbers 18:13 The first fruits of all that is in their land, which they bring to the LORD, shall be yours; everyone who is clean in your house may eat of it.

- whatsoever: Ex 22:29 Jer 24:2 Ho 9:10 Mic 7:1
- every one: Nu 18:11
- [Numbers 18 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

The first ripe fruits of all that is in their land, which they bring to the LORD, shall be yours; everyone of your household who is clean may eat it - First ripe fruits is one Hebrew word ([bikkuriym](#)) a plural noun that refers to the first products of grain and food, a portion of which were to be given to Yahweh as a thank offering but here Yahweh assigns to the priests for their support. So in contrast to the restrictions to the priests (Nu 18:8-10), these provisions are for **everyone** in the priests **household**. The only condition is that the person partaking must be clean.

Wiersbe explains why they had to be "clean" - whoever in the priestly family ate of the sacrifices given to God had to be ceremonially clean and treat the food with reverence, because it had been sanctified by being presented to God. ([Be Counted](#))

Clean (adjective) (pure) ([02889](#)) see notes above on [tahor](#) in the Septuagint [katharos](#).

Related Resource:

- [What does the Bible mean when it says something is unclean? | GotQuestions.org](#)

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

BGT Numbers 18:14 π ν νατεθεματισμ νον ν υ ο ς Ισραηλ σο σται

NET Numbers 18:14 "Everything devoted in Israel will be yours.

NLT Numbers 18:14 "Everything in Israel that is specially set apart for the LORD also belongs to you.

ESV Numbers 18:14 Every devoted thing in Israel shall be yours.

NIV Numbers 18:14 "Everything in Israel that is devoted to the LORD is yours.

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

YLT Numbers 18:14 every devoted thing in Israel is thine,

LXE Numbers 18:14 Every devoted thing among the children of Israel shall be thine.

ASV Numbers 18:14 Everything devoted in Israel shall be thine.

CSB Numbers 18:14 "Everything in Israel that is permanently dedicated to the LORD belongs to you.

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

NRS Numbers 18:14 Every devoted thing in Israel shall be yours.

- Lev 27:28 Eze 44:29
- [Numbers 18 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

DEVOTED THINGS GIVEN TO THE PRIESTS

Every devoted thing in Israel shall be yours - The NLT is a relatively good paraphrase " "Everything in Israel that is specially set apart for the LORD (ED: THIS IS THE ESSENCE OF THE MEANING OF THE HEBREW WORD [herem](#)) also belongs to you." The Septuagint translated devoted (herem) with [anathematizo](#) which means in essence calling on God to punish if what is solemnly spoken is not true or carried out. As **Leon Wood** says (of [herem](#)) "Whatever is devoted to the Lord, whether man, animal, or property, is considered most holy by God and is therefore not to be sold or redeemed by substituting something else. According to Numbers 18:14 and Ezekiel 44:29, all such objects are to be given to the priests for the support of the religious ceremonies." (TWOT)

Leviticus 27:28+ 'Nevertheless, anything which a man sets apart to the LORD out of all that he has, of man or animal or of the fields of his own property, shall not be sold or redeemed. Anything **devoted** ([herem](#)) to destruction is most holy to the LORD.

Devoted ([02764](#))([herem](#)) conveys the basic of the exclusion of an object from the use or abuse of man and its irrevocable surrender to God. In other words it is something devoted unto divine service, and is under a [ban](#) (forbidding to use for something else). It is interesting that the word "harem," meaning the special quarters for Muslim wives, comes from it.

NET NOTE on devoted - The "ban" (כֶּרֶם, kherem) in Hebrew describes that which is exclusively the LORD's, either for his sanctuary use, or for his destruction. It seems to refer to an individual's devoting something freely to God.

Numbers 18:15 "Every first issue of the womb of all flesh, whether man or animal, which they offer to the LORD, shall be yours; nevertheless the firstborn of man you shall surely redeem, and the firstborn of unclean animals you shall redeem.

BGT Numbers 18:15 κα π ν διανο γον μ τραν π π σης σαρκ ς προσφ ρουσιν κυρ π νθρ που ως κτ νους σο σται λλ λ τροις λυτρωθ σεται τ πρωτ τοκα τ ν νθρ πων κα τ πρωτ τοκα τ ν κτην ν τ ν καθ ρτων λυτρ σ

NET Numbers 18:15 The firstborn of every womb which they present to the LORD, whether human or animal, will be yours. Nevertheless, the firstborn sons you must redeem, and the firstborn males of unclean animals you must redeem.

NLT Numbers 18:15 "The firstborn of every mother, whether human or animal, that is offered to the LORD will be yours. But you must always redeem your firstborn sons and the firstborn of ceremonially unclean animals.

ESV Numbers 18:15 Everything that opens the womb of all flesh, whether man or beast, which they offer to the LORD, shall be yours. Nevertheless, the firstborn of man you shall redeem, and the firstborn of unclean animals you shall redeem.

NIV Numbers 18:15 The first offspring of every womb, both man and animal, that is offered to the LORD is yours. But you must redeem every firstborn son and every firstborn male of unclean animals.

KJV 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.

YLT Numbers 18:15 every one opening a womb of all flesh which they bring near to Jehovah, among man and among beast, is thine; only, thou dost certainly ransom the first-born of man, and the firstling of the unclean beast thou dost ransom.

LXE Numbers 18:15 And every thing that opens the womb of all flesh, whatsoever they bring to the Lord, whether man or beast, shall be thine: only the first-born of men shall be surely redeemed, and thou shalt redeem the first-born of unclean cattle.

ASV Numbers 18:15 Everything that openeth the womb, of all flesh which they offer unto Jehovah, both of man and beast shall be thine: nevertheless the first-born of man shalt thou surely redeem, and the firstling of unclean beasts shalt thou redeem.

CSB Numbers 18:15 The firstborn of every living thing, man or animal, presented to the LORD belongs to you. But you must certainly redeem the firstborn of man, and redeem the firstborn of an unclean animal.

NKJ Numbers 18:15 "Everything that first opens the womb of all flesh, which they bring to the LORD, whether man or beast, shall be yours; nevertheless the firstborn of man you shall surely redeem, and the firstborn of unclean animals you shall redeem.

NRS Numbers 18:15 The first issue of the womb of all creatures, human and animal, which is offered to the LORD, shall be yours; but the firstborn of human beings you shall redeem, and the firstborn of unclean animals you shall redeem.

- **Every first issue:** Nu 3:13 Ex 13:2,12 22:29 34:20 Lev 27:26
- the firstborn: Ex 13:13 34:20 Lev 27:27
- [Numbers 18 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passage:

Nu 3:12 "Now, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the sons of Israel instead of every firstborn, the first issue of the womb among the sons of Israel. So the Levites shall be Mine.

REDEMPTION OF THE FIRSTBORN

Numbers 18:15-18 deal with this category of offerings that are given to the priests.

Every first issue of the womb (literally "the splitter of the womb") **of all flesh whether man or animal, which they offer to the LORD, shall be yours** - In other words this describes the first one to "split" or separate from the mother's womb (cf Nu 8:16) and so it refers to the firstborn. Yahweh decrees the firstborn belong to the Aaronic priests.

Nevertheless (Hebrew particle introduces a strong contrast) **the firstborn of man you** (Aaronic priests) **shall surely redeem, and the firstborn of unclean animals you shall redeem** - (Compare Numbers 3:46-51) The **GNT** has "you must accept payment to buy back every first-born child" which emphasizes that it is the Israelite who presents his firstborn child who pays, not the priest. They were to redeem the **firstborn** of men and of unclean animals by payment of a price described in verse 16. Note

that **Redeem** is repeated for emphasis of this point. The Hebrew word **padah** is translated in the first use in the Lxx with **lutrosis** which means providing a ransom. The second use of redeem is translated with **lutroo** meaning to free by paying a ransom. The **unclean animals** were those that were ritually impure, such as donkeys.

UBS Handbook notes that "Firstborn sons belong to God but are not acceptable for sacrifice because their life is sacred, while the firstborn males of unclean animals are not acceptable because unclean animals cannot be used in the cult."

Firstborn (01060) (**bekor**) means an offspring who came first in the order of birth (animals Ge 4:4) or persons (Ge 25:13). The firstborn of clean animals were sacrificed to the Lord (Dt. 12:6, 17), but the firstborn males of unclean animals could be redeemed (Nu 18:15). The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates **bekor** with Greek word **prototokos**.

Redeem (06299) (**padah**) has the basic meaning to achieve the transfer of ownership from one to another through payment of a price or an equivalent substitute. **Padah** is used to depict God's act of redeeming; He **redeemed** His people with a mighty hand from Pharaoh and the slavery they were under in Egypt (Dt. 7:8; Mic. 6:4). Egypt was literally the house of slavery and became the symbol of slavery and oppression from which Israel was delivered (Dt. 9:26; 24:18).

NET NOTE on **shall surely redeem** - The construction uses the infinitive absolute and the imperfect tense of the verb "to redeem" in order to stress the point—they were to be redeemed. N. H. Snaitch suggests that the verb means to get by payment what was not originally yours, whereas the other root לָאָד (ga'al) means to get back what was originally yours (Leviticus and Numbers [NCB], 268).

Unclean (02931) (**tame**) describes that which is (ceremonially) defiled or impure, ritually impure and unfit for use or consumption. It describes that which is not cleansed in a ceremonial sense and that which must be abstained from according to the Levitical law, lest impurity be contracted.

Numbers 18:16 "As to their redemption price, from a month old you shall redeem them, by your valuation, five shekels in silver, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, which is twenty gerahs.

BGT Numbers 18:16 κα λ τρωσις α το π μηνια ου συντ μησις π ντε σ κλων κατ τ ν σ κλον τ ν γιον ε κοσι βολο ε σιν

NET Numbers 18:16 And those that must be redeemed you are to redeem when they are a month old, according to your estimation, for five shekels of silver according to the sanctuary shekel (which is twenty gerahs).

NLT Numbers 18:16 Redeem them when they are one month old. The redemption price is five pieces of silver (as measured by the weight of the sanctuary shekel, which equals twenty gerahs).

ESV Numbers 18:16 And their redemption price (at a month old you shall redeem them) you shall fix at five shekels in silver, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, which is twenty gerahs.

NIV Numbers 18:16 When they are a month old, you must redeem them at the redemption price set at five shekels of silver, according to the sanctuary shekel, which weighs twenty gerahs.

KJV 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.

YLT Numbers 18:16 'And their ransomed ones from a son of a month, thou dost ransom with thy valuation, of silver, five shekels, by the shekel of the sanctuary, twenty gerahs it is.

LXE Numbers 18:16 And the redemption of them shall be from a month old; their valuation of five shekels-- it is twenty oboli according to the holy shekel.

ASV Numbers 18:16 And those that are to be redeemed of them from a month old shalt thou redeem, according to thine estimation, for the money of five shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary (the same is twenty gerahs).

CSB Numbers 18:16 You will pay the redemption price for a month-old male according to your assessment: five shekels of silver by the standard sanctuary shekel, which is 20 gerahs.

NKJ Numbers 18:16 "And those redeemed of the devoted things you shall redeem when one month old,

according to your valuation, for five shekels of silver, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, which is twenty gerahs.

NRS Numbers 18:16 Their redemption price, reckoned from one month of age, you shall fix at five shekels of silver, according to the shekel of the sanctuary (that is, twenty gerahs).

- **according:** Nu 3:47 Lev 27:2-7
- **which is:** Ex 30:13 Lev 27:25 Eze 45:12
- [Numbers 18 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

SETTING THE PRICE OF REDEMPTION

As to their redemption price (see above on [padah](#)), **from a month old you shall redeem ([padah](#)) them, by your valuation** ("according to your estimation" - NET), **five shekels in silver, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, which is twenty gerahs** - NLT = "as measured by the weight of the sanctuary shekel, which equals twenty gerahs." GNT = "Children shall be bought back at the age of one month for the fixed price of five pieces of silver...."

NIVSB - shekel. A unit of weight, not a coin (Ge 20:16). **according to the shekel of the sanctuary.** In keeping with the standard weights used at the tabernacle. They may have differed slightly from those used in the marketplace.

Wenham - The redemption fee for first-born children is fixed at five shekels, that is about six months' pay (TOTC-Nu)

Gilbrant on shekel - The shekel was the common unit of weight throughout Canaan and Mesopotamia, but it apparently varied somewhat in weight according to the place and time. There is now evidence that suggests there were three kinds of shekels in use in Israel. The temple shekel weighed about ten grams, the standard shekel weighed about eleven and one-half grams and the royal shekel weighed about thirteen grams (TWOT).

Related Resource:

- [What was the sanctuary shekel? | GotQuestions.org](#) - **Excerpt** - Scholars are uncertain what exactly a shekel was, but here is one calculation of its value: the sanctuary shekel was defined as 20 gerahs. A gerah has been traditionally measured as 1/50 of an ounce, or 0.6 gram. The sanctuary shekel would then equal 0.4 of an ounce of gold (20 times 1/50 of an ounce), or 12 grams. Based on a price of 46.43 USD per gram, the approximate value of a sanctuary shekel would be \$557.16, in today's market. An important distinction is that the standard shekel and the sanctuary shekel were two different weights. This is the reason the shekel in Exodus 30:13 is defined as a particular kind of shekel called "the shekel of the sanctuary." This shekel was defined by weights kept in the tabernacle as the standard. ([Click for full explanation](#))

you shall redeem Redemption of the firstborn is one of the rites which are still practised among the Jews. According to Leo of Modena, it is performed in the following manner:--When the child is thirty days old, the father sends for one of the descendants of Aaron: several persons being assembled on the occasion, the father brings a cup, containing several pieces of gold and silver coin. The priest then takes the child into his arms, and addressing himself to the mother, he says, "Is this thy son?" Mother. "Yes." Priest. "Hast thou never had another child, male or female, a miscarriage, or untimely birth?" Mother. "No." Priest. "This being the case, this child, as firstborn, belongs to me." Then turning to the father, he says, "If it be thy desire to have this child, thou must redeem it." Father. "I present thee with this gold and silver for this purpose." Priest. "Thou dost wish, therefore, to redeem this child?" Father. "I do wish so to do." The priest then turning himself to the assembly, says, "Very well: this child, as first-born, is mine; as it is written in Bemidbar, (ch. 18:16,) Thou shalt redeem the first-born of a month old for five shekels; but I shall content myself with this in exchange." He then takes two gold crowns, or thereabouts, and returns the child to his parents.

Numbers 18:17 "But the firstborn of an ox or the firstborn of a sheep or the firstborn of a goat, you shall not redeem; they are holy. You shall sprinkle their blood on the altar and shall offer up their fat in smoke as an offering by fire, for a soothing aroma to the LORD.

BGT Numbers 18:17 πλ ν πρωτ τοκα μ σχων κα πρωτ τοκα προβ των κα πρωτ τοκα αγ ν ο λυτρ σ γι σπιβ κα τ α μα α τ ν προσχε ς πρ ς τ θυσιαστ ριον κα τ στ αρ νο σεις κ ρπωμα ε ς σμ ν ε ωδ ας κυρ

NET Numbers 18:17 But you must not redeem the firstborn of a cow or a sheep or a goat; they are holy. You must splash their blood on the altar and burn their fat for an offering made by fire for a pleasing aroma to the

LORD.

NLT Numbers 18:17 "However, you may not redeem the firstborn of cattle, sheep, or goats. They are holy and have been set apart for the LORD. Sprinkle their blood on the altar, and burn their fat as a special gift, a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

ESV Numbers 18:17 But the firstborn of a cow, or the firstborn of a sheep, or the firstborn of a goat, you shall not redeem; they are holy. You shall sprinkle their blood on the altar and shall burn their fat as a food offering, with a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

NIV Numbers 18:17 "But you must not redeem the firstborn of an ox, a sheep or a goat; they are holy. Sprinkle their blood on the altar and burn their fat as an offering made by fire, an aroma pleasing to the LORD.

KJV 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 savour unto the LORD.

YLT Numbers 18:17 'Only, the firstling of a cow, or the firstling of a sheep, or the firstling of a goat, thou dost not ransom, holy they are: their blood thou dost sprinkle on the altar, and of their fat thou makest perfume, a fire-offering of sweet fragrance to Jehovah,

LXE Numbers 18:17 But thou shalt not redeem the first-born of calves and the first-born of sheep and the first-born of goats; they are holy: and thou shalt pour their blood upon the altar, and thou shalt offer the fat as a burnt-offering for a smell of sweet savour to the Lord.

ASV 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 Jehovah.

CSB Numbers 18:17 "However, you must not redeem the firstborn of an ox, a sheep, or a goat; they are holy. You are to sprinkle their blood on the altar and burn their fat as a fire offering for a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

NKJ Numbers 18:17 "But the firstborn of a cow, the firstborn of a sheep, or the firstborn of a goat you shall not redeem; they are holy. You shall sprinkle their blood on the altar, and burn their fat as an offering made by fire for a sweet aroma to the LORD.

NRS Numbers 18:17 But the firstborn of a cow, or the firstborn of a sheep, or the firstborn of a goat, you shall not redeem; they are holy. You shall dash their blood on the altar, and shall turn their fat into smoke as an offering by fire for a pleasing odor to the LORD;

- the firstling: De 15:19-22
- thou shalt: Ex 29:16 Lev 3:2-5
- [Numbers 18 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

But (another strong contrast) **the firstborn ([bekor](#)) of an ox** (mature male bovine) **or the firstborn ([bekor](#)) of a sheep or the firstborn ([bekor](#)) of a goat** (female goat, kid that was milked and eaten), **you shall not redeem ([padah](#)); they are holy ([qodesh](#))**. - "But you must not accept payment to buy back any firstborn [male] calf, sheep, or goat." (UBS) The idea inherent in **they are holy** is that they belong completely to Yahweh. God had prior claim on the firstborn of these animals.

You shall sprinkle their blood on the altar ([mizbeah](#)) and shall offer up their fat in smoke as an offering by fire, for a soothing aroma to the LORD - This describes the sacrifice to Yahweh of the 3 animals above. The priests would throw blood on the brazen altar after killing the animal (See see Lev 1:5, 11; 3:2, 8). The **fat ([heleb](#) - translated "[best](#)" in Nu 18:12+)** belonged to the LORD and thus was burned completely and was not to be eaten (Lev 3:16, 17).

Sprinkle (scatter, throw) ([02236](#))([zaraq](#)) means to sprinkle, to toss, to throw, to scatter in abundance, to be sprinkled and most of the OT uses (see below) refer to the priest's actions in carrying out the rituals of the sacrifices and offerings. The priests were to sprinkle blood on the altar in the burnt offering (Lev 1:5,11, Lev 9:12, 2Ki 16:15), the peace offering (Lev 3:2, 8, 13, Lev 9:18, 17:5-6, 2Ki 16:13), the guilt (trespass) offering (Lev 7:2).

Offer up in smoke ([06999](#))([qatar](#) from [qetoreth](#) = smoke, odor of burning sacrifice, incense) means to produce smoke, to cause to rise up in smoke, smoke, turn into fragrance by fire (esp as act of worship), burn (incense, sacrifice) (upon), (altar for) incense, kindle, offer (incense, a sacrifice). Often smoke is made by

burning incense, but every major offering may also be associated with this word (Ex. 30:7; Lev. 1:9; 2:2; 3:5; 4:10; 7:5).

Offering by fire (0801)(**ishsheh** from **esh** = a fire) means an offering made by fire. It refers to any offering or portion of an offering that is wholly or partially consumed by fire -- burnt offering (Lev 1:9, 13); the cereal/grain offering (Lev 2:3); peace offering (Lev 3:3); the guilt offering (Lev 7:5); the consecration offering (Lev 8:28) Clearly this offering stresses the death of the sacrifice. Notice all uses except Josh 13:14 and 1Sa 2:28 are in the Pentateuch. All of these offerings were the Lord's (Nu 28:2), and the phrase "to the Lord" is explicitly stated most of the time. The first use is in Ex 29:18 in Yahweh's instruction to Moses regarding the ordination of priests "And you shall offer up in smoke the whole ram on the altar; it is a burnt offering to the LORD: it is a soothing aroma, an offering by fire to the LORD." The phrase "soothing aroma" is usually associated with the offerings by fire, this phrase signifying that Jehovah had accepted the offerer's offering. Other uses in Numbers - Num. 15:3; Num. 15:10; Num. 15:13; Num. 15:14; Num. 15:25; Num. 18:17; Num. 28:2; Num. 28:3; Num. 28:6; Num. 28:8; Num. 28:13; Num. 28:19; Num. 28:24; Num. 29:6; Num. 29:13; Num. 29:36;

Soothing (sweet) (05207)(**nihoah** from **nuach** = to rest) means a quieting, soothing, tranquilizing. In 20 of the 43 uses of nichoach, this noun (usually with the sense of an adjective) is used with the phrase "burnt offering." Almost all uses describe the odor of a sacrifice as pleasing or acceptable to God. The Septuagint translates soothing with euodia and aroma with osme.

Soothing aroma - phrase 42x - Gen. 8:21; Exod. 29:18; Exod. 29:25; Exod. 29:41; Lev. 1:9; Lev. 1:13; Lev. 1:17; Lev. 2:2; Lev. 2:9; Lev. 2:12; Lev. 3:5; Lev. 3:16; Lev. 4:31; Lev. 6:15; Lev. 6:21; Lev. 8:21; Lev. 8:28; Lev. 17:6; Lev. 23:13; Lev. 23:18; Num. 15:3; Num. 15:7; Num. 15:10; Num. 15:13; Num. 15:14; Num. 15:24; Num. 18:17; Num. 28:2; Num. 28:6; Num. 28:8; Num. 28:13; Num. 28:24; Num. 28:27; Num. 29:2; Num. 29:6; Num. 29:8; Num. 29:13; Num. 29:36; Ezek. 6:13; Ezek. 16:19; Ezek. 20:28; Ezek. 20:41

Dr S Lewis Johnson has an interesting comment on the original Hebrew of "**soothing aroma**" - In the Hebrew text, it is literally an **odor of rest**, and the word translated "**rest**" in that literal expression is the one from which the name **Noah** comes. That was his name: "**rest giver**" or "**rest**" was his name. So the idea is that as a result of our Lord smelling the sweet savor of the sacrifice he has an **odor of rest**. And because it is an **odor of rest**, His claims are met in the sacrifice and He, therefore, rests. This stresses the fact that the animal completely satisfies God and in the antitype is a (beautiful) reference to our Lord Jesus' finished work. When he said, "It is finished," it was then that in the whole Godhead there was an **odor of rest**. It's a beautiful expression - an odor of rest and is referred in the New Testament in Ephesians 5:2, "An odor of a sweet smell to the Lord." ([Hebrews 2:1-16](#))

THE NEW TESTAMENT PARALLEL - Ephesians 5:2+ "and **Walk** in love ([present imperative](#) - command calling for this to be our lifestyle), just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a **fragrant (sweet) aroma**."

Comment: What is Paul commanding, a natural or a supernatural lifestyle? Clearly the latter. And so this begs the question of how we can possibly obey this command! Of course, God's commandments always include His enablements. His enablement is His Spirit Who alone can give us the "desire" and the "power" for this quality of conduct (See Php 2:13NLT-[note](#); see our part in Php 2:12-[note](#), also only possible as the Spirit enables us)! **Agape** speaks of a "death to self" type of love if you will, a love that is sacrificial, a love that gives expecting nothing in return. We can only walk this supernatural walk as we are obeying the command to be continually **filled** with the Spirit of Christ (Eph 5:18+) and the command to "**Walk** by the Spirit" (Gal 5:16+). When we do that, we are empowered by the indwelling Spirit to walk in love like Christ, and like Him (and because of Him) our life gives off a wonderfully fragrant aroma, a soothing aroma, to our Father and to those we encounter (cp 2 Cor 2:14-15 where God "manifests through us the **sweet aroma** of the knowledge of Him [Christ] in every place" and goes on to explain "we are a fragrance of Christ to God (The Father) among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.") That we as fallen sinful men and women can now live in such a way that our life is a soothing aroma to the Father should cause us all to cry out like Paul "Who is adequate for these things?" (2Cor 2:16) Only the Redeemer is adequate but because of His redemption, we are now in Christ, and have the incredible privilege of daily living as "sweet savor" sacrifices to the Living

and Holy God. Does this truth not overwhelm us and humble us and motivate us to daily present ourselves to Him as "living and holy sacrifice acceptable (pleasing) to Him?" (Ro 12:1+; cp Ro 6:12-14+) O, the breadth and length and height and depth of God's amazing, redeeming, transforming grace! Thank You Jesus. Amen!

Numbers 18:18 "Their meat shall be yours; it shall be yours like the breast of a wave offering and like the right thigh.

BGT Numbers 18:18 κα τ κρ α σται σο καθ κα τ στηθ νιον το πιθ ματος κα κατ τ ν βραχ ονα τ ν δεξι ν σο σται

NET Numbers 18:18 And their meat will be yours, just as the breast and the right hip of the raised offering is yours.

NLT Numbers 18:18 The meat of these animals will be yours, just like the breast and right thigh that are presented by lifting them up as a special offering before the altar.

ESV Numbers 18:18 But their flesh shall be yours, as the breast that is waved and as the right thigh are yours.

NIV Numbers 18:18 Their meat is to be yours, just as the breast of the wave offering and the right thigh are yours.

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

YLT Numbers 18:18 and their flesh is thine, as the breast of the wave-offering, and as the right leg, it is thine;

LXE Numbers 18:18 And the flesh shall be thine, as also the breast of the wave-offering and as the right shoulder, it shall be thine.

ASV Numbers 18:18 And the flesh of them shall be thine, as the wave-breast and as the right thigh, it shall be thine.

CSB Numbers 18:18 But their meat belongs to you. It belongs to you like the breast of the presentation offering and the right thigh.

NKJ Numbers 18:18 "And their flesh shall be yours, just as the wave breast and the right thigh are yours.

NRS Numbers 18:18 but their flesh shall be yours, just as the breast that is elevated and as the right thigh are yours.

- Numbers 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Their meat shall be yours - The priest could eat all the meat from the sacrifice of the firstborn animals except for the fat.

it shall be yours like the breast of a wave offering and like the right thigh- As described in Exodus and reiterated in Leviticus.

Exodus 29:26-28+ "Then you shall take the **breast of Aaron's ram** of ordination, and wave it as a **wave offering** before the LORD; and it shall be your portion. 27 "You shall consecrate the **breast of the wave offering** and the **thigh of the heave offering** which was waved and which was offered from the ram of ordination, from the one which was for Aaron and from the one which was for his sons. 28 "It shall be for Aaron and his sons as their portion forever from the sons of Israel, for it is a heave offering; and it shall be a heave offering from the sons of Israel from the sacrifices of their peace offerings, even their heave offering to the LORD.

Leviticus 7:31-34 The priest shall offer up the fat in smoke on the altar, but the breast shall belong to Aaron and his sons. 32'You shall give the right thigh to the priest as a contribution from the sacrifices of your peace offerings. 33'The one among the sons of Aaron who offers the blood of the peace offerings and the fat, the right thigh shall be his as his portion. 34'For I have taken the breast of the wave offering and the thigh of the contribution from the sons of Israel from the sacrifices of their peace offerings, and have given them to Aaron the priest and to his sons as their due forever from the sons of Israel.

UBS - They could eat this meat just as they could eat the breast and the right rear shank of a peace offering.

Wave offering (08573) see note above on [tenupah](#)

Numbers 18:19 "All the offerings of the holy gifts, which the sons of Israel offer to the LORD, I have given to you and your sons and your daughters with you, as a perpetual allotment. It is an everlasting covenant of salt before the LORD to you and your descendants with you."

BGT Numbers 18:19 π ν φ α ρ ε μ α τ ν γ ω ν σ α ν φ λ ω σ ι ν ο υ ο Ι σ ρ α η λ κ υ ρ ο σ ο δ ὄ ω κ α κ α τ ο ς υ ο ς σ ο υ κ α τ α ς θ υ γ α τ ρ σ ι ν σ ο υ μ ε τ σ ο ν μ ι μ ο ν α ν ι ο ν δ ι α θ κ η λ ς α ω ν ο υ σ τ ν ν α ν τ ι κ υ ρ ο υ σ ο κ α τ σ π ρ μ α τ σ ο υ μ ε τ σ

NET Numbers 18:19 All the raised offerings of the holy things that the Israelites offer to the LORD, I have given to you, and to your sons and daughters with you, as a perpetual ordinance. It is a covenant of salt forever before the LORD for you and for your descendants with you."

NLT Numbers 18:19 Yes, I am giving you all these holy offerings that the people of Israel bring to the LORD. They are for you and your sons and daughters, to be eaten as your permanent share. This is an eternal and unbreakable covenant between the LORD and you, and it also applies to your descendants."

ESV Numbers 18:19 All the holy contributions that the people of Israel present to the LORD I give to you, and to your sons and daughters with you, as a perpetual due. It is a covenant of salt forever before the LORD for you and for your offspring with you."

NIV Numbers 18:19 Whatever is set aside from the holy offerings the Israelites present to the LORD I give to you and your sons and daughters as your regular share. It is an everlasting covenant of salt before the LORD for both you and your offspring."

KJV 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.

YLT Numbers 18:19 all the heave-offerings of the holy things which the sons of Israel lift up to Jehovah I have given to thee and to thy sons, and to thy daughters with thee, by a statute age-during, a covenant of salt, age-during it is before Jehovah, to thee and to thy seed with thee.'

LXE Numbers 18:19 Every special offering of the holy things, whatsoever the children of Israel shall specially offer to the Lord, I have given to thee and to thy sons and to thy daughters with thee, a perpetual ordinance: it is a covenant of salt for ever before the Lord, for thee and thy seed after thee.

ASV Numbers 18:19 All the heave-offerings of the holy things, which the children of Israel offer unto Jehovah, have I given thee, and thy sons and thy daughters with thee, as a portion for ever: it is a covenant of salt for ever before Jehovah unto thee and to thy seed with thee.

CSB Numbers 18:19 "I give to you and to your sons and daughters all the holy contributions that the Israelites present to the LORD as a permanent statute. It is a permanent covenant of salt before the LORD for you as well as your offspring."

NKJ Numbers 18:19 "All the heave offerings of the holy things, which the children of Israel offer to the LORD, I have given to you and your sons and daughters with you as an ordinance forever; it is a covenant of salt forever before the LORD with you and your descendants with you."

NRS Numbers 18:19 All the holy offerings that the Israelites present to the LORD I have given to you, together with your sons and daughters, as a perpetual due; it is a covenant of salt forever before the LORD for you and your descendants as well.

- **the offerings:** Nu 18:8,11 Nu 15:19-21 Nu 31:29,41 Lev 7:14 De 12:6 2Ch 31:4
- **covenant of salt:** Lev 2:13 2Ch 13:5
- Numbers 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Numbers 18:8 Then the LORD spoke to Aaron, "Now behold, I Myself have given you charge of My offerings, even all the holy gifts of the sons of Israel I have given them to you as a portion and to your sons as a perpetual allotment.

Numbers 18:11 "This also is yours, the offering of their gift, even all the wave offerings of the sons of Israel; I have given them to you and to your sons and daughters with you as a perpetual allotment. Everyone of your household who is clean may eat it.

Leviticus 2:13+ "Every grain offering of yours, moreover, you shall **season with salt**, so that the **salt of the covenant** of your God shall not be lacking from your grain offering; with all your offerings you shall offer salt.

2 Chronicles 13:5 "Do you not know that the LORD God of Israel gave the rule over Israel forever to David and his sons by a **covenant of salt**?"

COVENANT OF SALT

All the (heave or raised) **offerings** ([terumah](#) from [rum](#)) **of the holy gifts, which the sons of Israel offer** ([rum](#) - raise or lift up high) **to the LORD, I have given to you and your sons and your daughters** (all your descendants, both male and female) **with you, as a perpetual** ([olam](#)) **allotment** - Notice how Yahweh ends up His direct discourse to Aaron regarding their provisions with words almost identical to those in Nu 18:8, which may function as an [inclusio](#) which bookends (so to speak) the LORD's provisions for the priesthood. In a sense, this verse also summarizes Numbers 18:8-18. **Given** is the Hebrew verb [nathan](#) translated in Lxx by [didomi](#) which is in the perfect tense indicating a past completed act with enduring (in this case "perpetual") results or effects. God is faithful to His promises to His people.

Offerings (heave offering) ([08641](#)) see notes above on [terumah](#) from [rum](#) = to be high or exalted, depicts something being lifted up as one would do in an offering) Note that [terumah](#) is a **key word** in Numbers 18 occurring 8 times - Nu 18:8; Nu 18:11; Nu 18:19; Nu 18:24; Nu 18:26; Nu 18:27; Nu 18:28; Nu 18:29;

Holy (most holy, holy things, sanctuary) ([06944](#)) see note on [godesh](#) The Lxx renders [godesh](#) with [hagios](#) indicating those things set apart from common use and for uses related to Yahweh. Today the "holy gift" we should offer up to God is ourselves, Paul writing "Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to **present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable (pleasing) to God**, which is your spiritual service of worship. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." (Ro 12:1-2+)

Perpetual ([05769](#)) see [olam](#)

Allotment (due, ordinance, portion) ([02706](#)) ([choq/hoq](#) from [chaqaq](#) = to cut in or engrave in stone - hew a tomb in rock Is 22:16, draw picture on a brick Eze 4:1 or a wall Eze 23:14) is a masculine noun that means regulation, law, ordinance, decree, custom. The primary sense of hoq is an expectation or mandate prescribed by decree or custom. In the present context [choq/hoq](#) designates "privilege" or "due." The Egyptian priests had a right which exempted them from selling their land (Ge 47:22). The Aaronic priest's share in the sacrifice was a perpetual right (Ex 29:28; Lev 24:9), established by God's decree. The Septuagint translates choq with nomimos which means in agreement with law or pertaining to being conformable to law

It is an everlasting covenant of salt before the LORD to you and your descendants with you." UBS= "These privileges apply forever. In my eyes they are as irrevocable as a covenant that is affirmed by eating salt together." There was a Near Eastern custom of establishing a bond of friendship through the eating of salt. It was said that once you had eaten a man's salt, you were his friend for life. **Salt** was included in all of the offerings in [Lev 2:4-10, 14-16] since salt was emblematic of permanence or loyalty to the covenant. Each grain offering must include salt. Salt was an important part of the offering, because it spoke of purity, of preservation, and of expense. **Salt**, as a preservative, will arrest the normal operations of the flesh - it is the nature of flesh to spoil, but salt cured meats will stay good.

Related Resource:

- Henry Clay Trumbull's book [The covenant of salt as based on the significance and symbolism of salt in primitive thought](#)

Wenham - The binding and permanent nature of these obligations is underlined by calling them a covenant of salt, that is to say, this covenant is indestructible, like salt (19; cf. 2 Chr. 13:5; Exod. 13:2; 22:29f.; 34:19f.; Lev. 27:26-27, 6). (TOTC-Nu)

NET NOTE on **salt** - Salt was used in all the offerings; its importance as a preservative made it a natural symbol for the covenant

which was established by sacrifice. Even general agreements were attested by sacrifice, and the phrase "covenant of salt" speaks of such agreements as binding and irrevocable. Note the expression in Ezra 4:14, "we have been salted with the salt of the palace."

Salt of the Covenant - an emblem of perpetuity and incorruptibility. (John Eadie)

Ryrie - salt stands for permanence and incorruption (cf. Num. 18:19; 2 Chron. 13:5). (In 2 Chr 13:5) The permanency of the Davidic covenant (see note on 2 Sam. 7:12-16) is emphasized by referring to it as a covenant of salt. See notes on Lev. 2:13 and Num. 18:8-20.

Criswell - Since salt was associated with permanence, the expression "covenant of salt" was used to emphasize the binding or permanent nature of the stipulation (cf. Ex. 30:35; Lev. 2:13, note; 2 Chr. 13:5; Ezek. 43:24).

Morris - A "covenant of salt" was understood in ancient nations to be permanent and unbreakable. This covenant was ratified by a meal seasoned with salt and shared by the two parties. Salt was considered to be a very valuable and significant component of the meal. When God was one of the parties, the food was first sacrificed to Him (Leviticus 2:13; Numbers 18:19).

Spurgeon on the **covenant of salt**: "By which was meant that it was an unchangeable, incorruptible covenant, which would endure as salt makes a thing to endure, so that it is not liable to putrefy or corrupt."

Everlasting (05769) see [olam](#)

Covenant (01285) ([berit/berith/beriyth](#)) means covenant, treaty, compact, agreement between two parties (first use in God's covenant with Noah - Ge 6:18, Ge 9:9, 11-13, 15-17). **Covenant** is a solemn, binding arrangement between two parties and entails a variety of responsibilities, benefits and penalties depending on the specific covenant which is being studied. OT covenants were made between God and man (eg, God with Noah - Ge 6:18, with Abram - Ge 15:18) or between men (Abraham and Abimelech - Ge 21:27, Isaac and Abimelech - Ge 26:28, Jacob and Laban - Ge 31:44) For summary of covenants see - [Covenant in the Bible](#).

Question: [What is a salt covenant?](#)

Answer: There is more to salt than meets the taste buds. Salt has been used in many cultures as a valuable commodity. The word *salary* comes from an ancient word meaning "salt-money," referring to a Roman soldier's allowance for the purchase of salt. Someone who earns his pay is still said to be "worth his salt." Salt has also been used to express promises and friendship between people. It was even considered by the Greeks to be divine. Today in many Arab cultures, if two men partake of salt together they are sworn to protect one another—even if they had previously been enemies. In some cultures, people throw salt over their shoulders when they make a promise. Who knew sodium chloride was so important?

In the ancient world, ingesting salt was a way to make an agreement legally binding. If two parties entered into an agreement, they would eat salt together in the presence of witnesses, and that act would bind their contract. King Abijah's speech in 2 Chronicles 13:5 mentions just such a salt covenant: "Don't you know that the LORD, the God of Israel, has given the kingship of Israel to David and his descendants forever by a covenant of salt?" Here, Abijah refers to the strong, legally binding promise of God to give Israel to David and his sons forever.

The Old Testament Law commands the use of salt in all grain offerings and makes clear that the "salt of the covenant" should not be missing from the grain offerings (Leviticus 2:13). Since the [Levitical priests](#) did not have land of their own, God promised to provide for them via the sacrifices of the people, and He called this promise of provision a "**salt covenant**" (Numbers 18:19). Salt has always been known for its preservative properties, and it is also possible that God instructed the use of salt so that the meat would last longer and taste better—and thus be of more value to the priests who depended upon it for their daily food.

The idea of a salt covenant carries a great deal of meaning because of the value of salt. Today, salt is easy to come by in our culture, and we don't necessarily need it as a preservative because of refrigeration. But to the people of Jesus' day, salt was an important and precious commodity. So, when Jesus told His disciples that they were "the [salt of the earth](#)," He meant that believers have value in this world and are to have a preserving influence (Matthew 5:13).

The salt covenant is never explicitly defined in the Bible, but we can infer from the understanding of salt's value and the contexts in which a salt covenant is mentioned that it has much to do with the keeping of promises and with God's good will toward man. [GotQuestions.org](#)

Numbers 18:20 Then the LORD said to Aaron, "You shall have no inheritance in their land nor own any portion among them; I am your portion and your inheritance among the sons of Israel.

BGT Numbers 18:20 καὶ ἔφη ὁ κύριος πρὸς Ἀαρὼν ὅτι οὐκ ἔσται σοὶ κληρονομία σου ἐν τῇ γῆ Ἰσραὴλ· ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ κληρονομία σου καὶ ἡ μερὶς σου ἐν τῇ γῆ Ἰσραὴλ.

NET Numbers 18:20 The LORD spoke to Aaron, "You will have no inheritance in their land, nor will you have any portion of property among them— I am your portion and your inheritance among the Israelites.

NLT Numbers 18:20 And the LORD said to Aaron, "You priests will receive no allotment of land or share of property among the people of Israel. I am your share and your allotment.

ESV Numbers 18:20 And the LORD said to Aaron, "You shall have no inheritance in their land, neither shall you have any portion among them. I am your portion and your inheritance among the people of Israel.

NIV Numbers 18:20 The LORD said to Aaron, "You will have no inheritance in their land, nor will you have any share among them; I am your share and your inheritance among the Israelites.

KJV 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.

YLT Numbers 18:20 And Jehovah saith unto Aaron, 'In their land thou dost not inherit, and a portion thou hast not in their midst: I am thy portion, and thine inheritance in the midst of the sons of Israel;

LXE Numbers 18:20 And the Lord said to Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any portion among them; for I am thy portion and thine inheritance in the midst of the children of Israel.

ASV Numbers 18:20 And Jehovah said unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any portion among them: I am thy portion and thine inheritance among the children of Israel.

CSB Numbers 18:20 The LORD told Aaron, "You will not have an inheritance in their land; there will be no portion among them for you. I am your portion and your inheritance among the Israelites.

NKJ Numbers 18:20 Then the LORD said to Aaron: "You shall have no inheritance in their land, nor shall you have any portion among them; I am your portion and your inheritance among the children of Israel.

NRS Numbers 18:20 Then the LORD said to Aaron: You shall have no allotment in their land, nor shall you have any share among them; I am your share and your possession among the Israelites.

- no inheritance: Nu 18:23,24 26:62 De 10:9 12:12 14:27,29 Jos 14:3
- I am thy part: De 18:1,2 Jos 13:14,33 14:3 18:7 Ps 16:5 73:26 142:5 La 3:24 Eze 44:28 1Co 3:21-23 Rev 21:3
- Numbers 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

YAHWEH TO BE THE PORTION OF AARONIC PRIESTS

Then the LORD said to Aaron, "You shall have no inheritance in their land nor own any portion among them; I am your portion and your inheritance among the sons of Israel - It is as if Yahweh saved the best for last -- not the land, but the LORD! Is there even any comparison? That's rhetorical of course! In short, they were to be dependent on the LORD alone for their livelihood, and as stated below the same principle applies to the Levites. "The words portion and inheritance have a chiasmic arrangement in this verse to highlight what God is saying." (UBS Handbook).

In a word the inheritance of the priests is the BEST!

Their ultimate provision to the priests and Levites was the great "I Am" Himself. It is as if Jehovah says to them "I Am" anything and everything you will ever need! This reminds me of Peter's wonderful words

Seeing that His divine power has granted ([doreomai](#) [from [didomi](#)] in perfect tense as [above](#) in Nu 18:19) to us **everything pertaining to life and godliness**, through the true knowledge ([epignosis](#) speaks of intimate experiential knowledge, not just "head knowledge") of Him (JESUS OUR LORD - 2 Pe 1:2+, cf 2 Pe 3:18+) Who called us by His own glory and excellence. (2 Peter 1:3+)

The truth in this passage reminds me of our portion in Heaven in the LORD so beautifully affirmed by Asaph

Ps 73:25-26+ **Whom have I in heaven but You?** And besides You, I desire nothing on earth. 26 My flesh and my heart may fail, But God is the strength of my heart and **my portion forever**.

And even now Christ is our life

Col 3:4+ When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.

And 2 Corinthians 6

16 Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "**I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.**" 17 "Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE," says the Lord. "AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN; And I will welcome you. 18 "And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me," Says the Lord Almighty.

Our inheritance...

1 Peter 1:4+ to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,

Romans 8:17+ and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.

Inheritance (possession)(05157)(nahal) means inherit, get possession of, take as a possession. **TWOT** says it "basically signifies giving or receiving property which is part of a permanent possession and as a result of succession. Sometimes the idea of succession is absent but the "possessing" carries with it a connotation of permanence (e.g. Ex 34:9; Pr 14:18)."

THOUGHT - Lxx translates nahal with [kleronomeo](#) which in NT is literally, as receiving a possession or gift from someone who has died. Believers now "inherit salvation" (Heb 1:14+) because Someone Sinless died in our place!

Thou shalt have: The principal part of what was offered to God was the portion of the priests; who had no inheritance of land in Israel. The Rabbins say, 24 gifts were given to the priests; all of which are expressed in the law. Eight were only eaten in the sanctuary: 1. The flesh of the sin-offering. (Lev 6:25, 26.) 2. The flesh of the trespass-offering. (Lev 7:1, 6.) 3. The peace-offering of the congregation. (Lev 23:19, 20.) 4. The remainder of the sheaf. (Lev 23:10.) 5. The remnants of the meat-offerings. (Lev 6:16.) 6. The two loaves. (Lev 23:17.) 7. The shew-bread. (Lev 24:9.) 8. The log of oil offered by the leper. (Lev 14:10.) Five they ate only at Jerusalem: 1. The breast and shoulder of the peace-offerings. (Lev 7:31-34.) 2. The heave-offering of confession. (Lev 7:12-14.) 3. The heave-offering of the Nazarite's ram. (Lev 6:17-20.) 4. The firstling. (ch. 18:15.) 5. The first-fruits. (18:13.) Five were due to them only in the land of Israel: 1. The heave-offering of first-fruits. (ver. 12.) 2. Of the tithe. (ver. 28.) 3. The cake. (ch. 15:20.) 4. The first of the fleece. (De 18:4.) 5. The field of possession. (ch. 35.) Five were due both within and without the land: 1. The gifts of slain beasts. (De 18:3.) 2. The redemption of the first-born. (ver. 15.) 3. The lamb for a firstling ass. (Ex 4:20.) 4. That taken by violence from a stranger. (ch. 5:8.) 5. All devoted things. One was from the sanctuary, the skins, etc. (Lev 7:8.)

Numbers 18:21 "To the sons of Levi, behold, I have given all the tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service which they perform, the service of the tent of meeting.

UBS Listen, I hereby give to the Levites every tithe that the Israelites present to me. This is in payment for their service in taking care of the Tent of Meeting

BGT Numbers 18:21 κα το ς υ ο ς Λευι δο δ δωκα π ν πιδ κατον ν Ισραηλ ν κλ ρ ντ τ ν λειτουργι ν α τ ν σα α το λειτουργο σιν λειτουργ αν ν τ σκην το μαρτυρου

NET Numbers 18:21 See, I have given the Levites all the tithes in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they perform—the service of the tent of meeting.

NLT Numbers 18:21 As for the tribe of Levi, your relatives, I will compensate them for their service in the Tabernacle. Instead of an allotment of land, I will give them the tithes from the entire land of Israel.

ESV Numbers 18:21 "To the Levites I have given every tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service that they do, their service in the tent of meeting,

NIV Numbers 18:21 "I give to the Levites all the tithes in Israel as their inheritance in return for the work they do while serving at the Tent of Meeting.

KJV 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.

YLT Numbers 18:21 and to the sons of Levi, lo, I have given all the tenth in Israel for inheritance in exchange for their service which they are serving -- the service of the tent of meeting.

LXE Numbers 18:21 And, behold, I have given to the sons of Levi every tithe in Israel for an inheritance for their services, whereinsoever they perform ministry in the tabernacle of witness.

ASV Numbers 18:21 And unto the children of Levi, behold, I have given all the tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service which they serve, even the service of the tent of meeting.

CSB Numbers 18:21 "Look, I have given the Levites every tenth in Israel as an inheritance in return for the work they do, the work of the tent of meeting.

NKJ Numbers 18:21 "Behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tithes in Israel as an inheritance in return for the work which they perform, the work of the tabernacle of meeting.

NRS Numbers 18:21 To the Levites I have given every tithe in Israel for a possession in return for the service that they perform, the service in the tent of meeting.

- **the tithe** : Nu 18:24-26 Lev 27:30-32 De 12:17-19 14:22-29 2Ch 31:5,6,12 Ne 10:37-29 12:44 13:12
- **service**: Nu 18:6 3:7,8 1Co 9:13,14 Ga 6:6
- Numbers 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Leviticus 27:30-32+ 'Thus all the tithe of the land, of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD'S; it is holy to the LORD. 31 'If, therefore, a man wishes to redeem part of his tithe, he shall add to it one-fifth of it. 32 'For every tenth part of herd or flock, whatever passes under the rod, the tenth one shall be holy to the LORD.

UBS Handbook comment - The tithe: with the possible exception of Genesis 14:20, this is the first clear reference to a tithe to the Lord in the Old Testament (unless Jacob's bargaining position in Gen 28:22 is taken as a kind of tithe). In this verse it refers to that part of what the soil produces (one tenth of the total) that the Israelites dedicated to God as a sign of their gratitude to him. It provided the basic revenue of the priests and Levites serving God in the sanctuary.

YAHWEH'S GIFT TO THE LEVITES

Numbers 18:21-24 conclude Yahweh's direct communication with Aaron as He summarizes His provision for the Levites.

To the sons of Levi, behold - Behold is [hinneh](#) (Lxx = [idou](#)) which serves to draw attention to what follows.

UBS Handbook - The tithe refers to that part of what the soil produced (one tenth of the total) that the Israelites dedicated to the LORD as a sign of their gratitude to him for allowing the earth to produce. It provided the basic revenue for the Levites serving God in the Tabernacle

I have given all the tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service which they perform, the service of the tent of meeting - **Given** is the Hebrew verb [nathan](#) translated in Lxx by [didomi](#) which is in the perfect tense indicating a past completed act with enduring (in this case "perpetual") results or effects. Jehovah gives the privilege of serving Him and here we see He recompenses those who serve Him.

THOUGHT - This OT shadow is seen in "substance" in the NT in which our benevolent Father has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ (Eph 1:3+). And like the Levites our inheritance is not in land, but in a life a life in Christ and Christ in us! Christ in us the hope of glory (Col 1:27+). Christ who is our life (Col 3:4+). And as if that were not enough, we will be "be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." (2 Cor 5:10+, cf Moses in Heb 11:26-27+). And not only that but we are " heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him." (Ro 8:17+) How blessed we are! Sinners redeemed by grace and eternally gifted by grace for " in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." (Eph 2:7+) Thank You dear Father God, precious Son and sweet Holy Spirit. Amen.

Tithe (04643)(**maaser**) means a tenth part or tithe. **Maaser** is related to the numerical adjective **eser** (04643) used in 157 passages in the OT most often with the meaning of the number ten. A tithe is 10 percent of one's grain, fruit, animals, or money (Lev. 27:30–34; Neh. 13:5). The Lxx translates **maaser** with the adjective **epidekatos** meaning one in ten (the tenth).

Related Resources:

- [What is the difference between tithes and offerings? | GotQuestions.org](#) - Excerpt - "The tithe was a requirement of the Law in which all Israelites were to give 10 percent of everything they earned and grew to the tabernacle/temple (Leviticus 27:30; Numbers 18:26; Deuteronomy 14:24; 2 Chronicles 31:5). "
- American Tract Society [Tithe](#)
- Bridgeway Bible Dictionary [Tithes](#)
- Baker Evangelical Dictionary [Tithe, Tithing](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Tithe](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Tithes](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Tithe](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Tithes](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Tithe Tithes](#)
- King James Dictionary [Tithe Tithing](#)
- People's Dictionary of the Bible [Tithes](#)
- Smith Bible Dictionary [Tithe](#)
- Vines' Expository Dictionary [Tithes Tithe](#)
- Watson's Theological Dictionary [Tithes](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Tithe](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopaedia [Tithe](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Tithes Tithe](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Tithe](#)

Numbers 18:22 "The sons of Israel shall not come near the tent of meeting again, or they will bear sin and die.

BGT Numbers 18:22 κα ο προσελε σονται πι ο υ ο Ισραηλ ες τ ν σκην ν το μαρτυρ ου λαβε ν μαρτ αν θανατηφ ρον

NET Numbers 18:22 No longer may the Israelites approach the tent of meeting, or else they will bear their sin and die.

NLT Numbers 18:22 "From now on, no Israelites except priests or Levites may approach the Tabernacle. If they come too near, they will be judged guilty and will die.

ESV Numbers 18:22 so that the people of Israel do not come near the tent of meeting, lest they bear sin and die.

NIV Numbers 18:22 From now on the Israelites must not go near the Tent of Meeting, or they will bear the consequences of their sin and will die.

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

YLT Numbers 18:22 'And the sons of Israel come no more near unto the tent of meeting, to bear sin, to die,

LXE Numbers 18:22 And the children of Israel shall no more draw nigh to the tabernacle of witness to incur fatal guilt.

ASV Numbers 18:22 And henceforth the children of Israel shall not come nigh the tent of meeting, lest they bear sin, and die.

CSB Numbers 18:22 The Israelites must never again come near the tent of meeting, or they will incur guilt and die.

NKJ Numbers 18:22 "Hereafter the children of Israel shall not come near the tabernacle of meeting, lest they bear sin and die.

NRS Numbers 18:22 From now on the Israelites shall no longer approach the tent of meeting, or else they will incur guilt and die.

- **shall not come near** : Nu 18:7 Nu 1:52 Nu 3:10,38
- **bear sin**: Lev 20:20 Lev 22:9
- Numbers 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

GUIDELINES FOR THE LAYMAN

The sons of Israel shall not come near the tent of meeting again, or they will bear sin and die- NLT = "From now on, no Israelites except priests or Levites may approach the Tabernacle. If they come too near, they will be judged guilty and will die."

NET Note - "To bear their sin" would mean that they would have to suffer the consequences of their sin.

Numbers 18:7+ "But you and your sons with you shall attend to your priesthood for everything concerning the altar and inside the veil, and you are to perform service. I am giving you the priesthood as a bestowed service, but **the outsider who comes near shall be put to death.**"

Numbers 3:10+ "So you shall appoint Aaron and his sons that they may keep their priesthood, but **the layman who comes near shall be put to death.**"

Numbers 3:38+ Now those who were to camp before the tabernacle eastward, before the tent of meeting toward the sunrise, are Moses and Aaron and his sons, performing the duties of the sanctuary for the obligation of the sons of Israel; but **the layman coming near was to be put to death.**

Numbers 16:16+ Moses said to Korah, "You and all your company be present before the LORD tomorrow, both you and they along with Aaron. 17 "Each of you take his firepan and put incense on it, and each of you bring his censer before the LORD, two hundred and fifty firepans; also you and Aaron shall each bring his firepan." 18 So they each took his own censer and put fire on it, and laid incense on it; and **they stood at the doorway of the tent of meeting** (THE CAME NEAR THE TENT OF MEETING!), with Moses and Aaron.....35 Fire also came forth from the LORD and **consumed the two hundred and fifty men who were offering the incense.**

Leviticus 10:1-2+ Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took their respective firepans, and after putting fire in them, placed incense on it and offered strange fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. 2 **And fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD.**

Numbers 18:23 "Only the Levites shall perform the service of the tent of meeting, and they shall bear their iniquity; it shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations, and among the sons of Israel they shall have no inheritance.

BGT Numbers 18:23 κα λειτουργει Λευ της α τς τν λειτουργ αν τς σκην ς το μαρτυρου κα ατο λ μψονται τ μαρτ ματα α τν ν μιμον α νιον ε τς γενε ς α τν κα ν μ σ υ ν Ισραηλ ο κληρονομουσιν κληρονον αν

NET Numbers 18:23 But the Levites must perform the service of the tent of meeting, and they must bear their iniquity. It will be a perpetual ordinance throughout your generations that among the Israelites the Levites have no inheritance.

NLT Numbers 18:23 Only the Levites may serve at the Tabernacle, and they will be held responsible for any offenses against it. This is a permanent law for you, to be observed from generation to generation. The Levites will receive no allotment of land among the Israelites,

ESV Numbers 18:23 But the Levites shall do the service of the tent of meeting, and they shall bear their iniquity. It shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations, and among the people of Israel they shall have no inheritance.

NIV Numbers 18:23 It is the Levites who are to do the work at the Tent of Meeting and bear the responsibility for offenses against it. This is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. They will receive no inheritance among the Israelites.

KJV 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.

YLT Numbers 18:23 and the Levites have done the service of the tent of meeting, and they -- they bear their iniquity; a statute age-during to your generations, that in the midst of the sons of Israel they have no inheritance;

LXE Numbers 18:23 And the Levite himself shall perform the service of the tabernacle of witness; and they shall bear their iniquities, it is a perpetual statute throughout their generations; and in the midst of the children of Israel they shall not receive an inheritance.

ASV Numbers 18:23 But the Levites shall do the service of the tent of meeting, and they shall bear their iniquity: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations; and among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance.

CSB Numbers 18:23 The Levites will do the work of the tent of meeting, and they will bear the consequences of their sin. The Levites will not receive an inheritance among the Israelites; this is a permanent statute throughout your generations.

NKJ Numbers 18:23 "But the Levites shall perform the work of the tabernacle of meeting, and they shall bear their iniquity; it shall be a statute forever, throughout your generations, that among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance.

NRS Numbers 18:23 But the Levites shall perform the service of the tent of meeting, and they shall bear responsibility for their own offenses; it shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations. But among the Israelites they shall have no allotment,

- **the service:** Nu 3:7
- **among:** Nu 18:20
- Numbers 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passage:

Numbers 1:51+ "So when the tabernacle is to set out, the Levites shall take it down; and when the tabernacle encamps, the Levites shall set it up. But the layman who comes near shall be put to death.

Only the Levites shall perform the service of the tent ([ohel](#)) of meeting, and they shall bear their iniquity - Since the Levites have the privilege of caring for the tabernacle, they also have the responsibility of guarding against intrusions and "they will be held responsible for any offenses against it." (NLT) **Their iniquity** most likely refers to the iniquity of the Levites, not the sons of Israel.

UBS Handbook - A violation of the sacred space of the Tent of Meeting was a sin against the holiness of the LORD himself and therefore had to be punished accordingly

Iniquity (punishment, guilt) ([05771](#)) ('**avon** from verb '**avah** = to bend, twist, distort) describes the iniquity, evil, punishment or guilt which is associated with a twisting of the standard or deviation from it. Since there is a deliberate twisting or perverting, '**avon** describes sin that is particularly evil. It may also describe the punishment or disaster that befalls those who practice wickedness.

It shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations, and among the sons of Israel they shall have no inheritance - As with the priests, the Levites would not be land owners.

Perpetual ([05769](#)) see [olam](#)

Inheritance (possession) ([05157](#)) see above on [nahal](#)

Numbers 18:24 "For the tithe of the sons of Israel, which they offer as an offering to the LORD, I have given to the Levites for an inheritance; therefore I have said concerning them, 'They shall have no inheritance among the sons of Israel.'"

BGT Numbers 18:24 τι τ πιδ κατα τ ν υ ν Ισραηλ σα ν φορ σωσιν κυρ φα ρεμα δ δωκα το ς Λευ ται ς ν κλ ρ δι το το ε ρηκα α το ς ν μ σ υ ν Ισραηλ ο κληρονομ σουσιν κλ ρον

NET Numbers 18:24 But I have given to the Levites for an inheritance the tithes of the Israelites that are offered to the LORD as a raised offering. That is why I said to them that among the Israelites they are to have no inheritance."

NLT Numbers 18:24 because I have given them the Israelites' tithes, which have been presented as sacred offerings to the LORD. This will be the Levites' share. That is why I said they would receive no allotment of land among the Israelites."

ESV Numbers 18:24 For the tithe of the people of Israel, which they present as a contribution to the LORD, I have given to the Levites for an inheritance. Therefore I have said of them that they shall have no inheritance among the people of Israel."

NIV Numbers 18:24 Instead, I give to the Levites as their inheritance the tithes that the Israelites present as an offering to the LORD. That is why I said concerning them: 'They will have no inheritance among the Israelites.' "

KJV Numbers 18:24 But the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer as an 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.

YLT Numbers 18:24 but the tithe of the sons of Israel which they lift up to Jehovah, a heave-offering, I have given to the Levites for inheritance; therefore I have said of them, In the midst of the sons of Israel they have no inheritance.'

LXE Numbers 18:24 Because I have given as a distinct portion to the Levites for an inheritance the tithes of the children of Israel, whatsoever they shall offer to the Lord; therefore I said to them, In the midst of the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance.

ASV Numbers 18:24 For the tithe of the children of Israel, which they offer as a heave-offering unto Jehovah, I have given to the Levites for an inheritance: therefore I have said unto them, Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance.

CSB Numbers 18:24 For I have given them the tenth that the Israelites present to the LORD as a contribution for their inheritance. That is why I told them that they would not receive an inheritance among the Israelites."

NKJ Numbers 18:24 "For the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer up as a heave offering to the LORD, I have given to the Levites as an inheritance; therefore I have said to them, 'Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance.'"

NRS Numbers 18:24 because I have given to the Levites as their portion the tithe of the Israelites, which they set apart as an offering to the LORD. Therefore I have said of them that they shall have no allotment among the Israelites.

- Mal 3:8-10

For - Term of explanation - explaining why the Levites will receive no inheritance of land.

The tithe of the sons of Israel, which they offer as an offering to the LORD, I have given to the Levites for an inheritance

NLT = "because I have given them the Israelites' tithes, which have been presented as sacred offerings to the LORD. This will be the Levites' share."

therefore I have said concerning them, 'They shall have no inheritance among the sons of Israel.'-Therefore introduces God's conclusion concerning the Levites. "That is why I said they would receive no allotment of land among the Israelites." GNT = "That is why I told them that they would have no permanent property in Israel."

Inheritance (possession)([05157](#)) see above on [nahal](#)

Tithe ([04643](#)) see note above on [maaser](#)

Numbers 18:25 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

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YAHWEH NOW BEGINS DISCOURSE TO MOSES

Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

Numbers 18:26 "Moreover, you shall speak to the Levites and say to them, 'When you take from the sons of Israel the tithe which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then you shall present an offering from it to the LORD, a tithe of the tithe.'

BGT Numbers 18:26 κα το ς Λευ ται ς λα λ σει ς κα ρε ς πρ ς α το ς ν λ βη τε πα ρ τ ν υ ν Ισραη λ τ πι δ κα τον δ ὄ ω κα μ ν πα ρ α τ ν ν κ λ ρ κα φε λε τε με ς π α το φα ρε μα κυ ρ πι δ κα τον π το πι δε κ του

NET Numbers 18:26 "You are to speak to the Levites, and you must tell them, 'When you receive from the Israelites the tithe that I have given you from them as your inheritance, then you are to offer up from it as a raised offering to the LORD a tenth of the tithe.'

NLT Numbers 18:26 "Give these instructions to the Levites: When you receive from the people of Israel the tithes I have assigned as your allotment, give a tenth of the tithes you receive-- a tithe of the tithe-- to the LORD as a sacred offering.

ESV Numbers 18:26 "Moreover, you shall speak and say to the Levites, 'When you take from the people of Israel the tithe that I have given you from them for your inheritance, then you shall present a contribution from it to the LORD, a tithe of the tithe.'

NIV Numbers 18:26 "Speak to the Levites and say to them: 'When you receive from the Israelites the tithe I give you as your inheritance, you must present a tenth of that tithe as the LORD's offering.'

KJV 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 an heave offering of it for the LORD, even a tenth part of the tithe.

YLT Numbers 18:26 'And unto the Levites thou dost speak; and thou hast said unto them, When ye take from the sons of Israel the tithe which I have given to you from them, for your inheritance, then ye have lifted up from it the heave-offering of Jehovah, a tithe of the tithe;

LXE Numbers 18:26 Thou shalt also speak to the Levites, and shalt say to them, If ye take the tithe from the children of Israel, which I have given you from them for an inheritance, then shall ye separate from it a heave-offering to the Lord, a tenth of the tenth.

ASV Numbers 18:26 Moreover thou shalt speak unto the Levites, and say unto them, When ye take of the children of Israel the tithe which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then ye shall offer up a heave-offering of it for Jehovah, a tithe of the tithe.

CSB Numbers 18:26 "Speak to the Levites and tell them: When you receive from the Israelites the tenth that I have given you as your inheritance, you must present part of it as an offering to the LORD-- a tenth of the tenth.

NKJ Numbers 18:26 "Speak thus to the Levites, and say to them: 'When you take from the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them as your inheritance, then you shall offer up a heave offering of it to the LORD, a tenth of the tithe.'

NRS Numbers 18:26 You shall speak to the Levites, saying: When you receive from the Israelites the tithe that I have given you from them for your portion, you shall set apart an offering from it to the LORD, a tithe of the tithe.

- **shall:** Nu 18:19
- **tithe:** Ne 10:38
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LEVITES ORDERED TO

GIVE TITHE OF TITHE TO AARON

Moreover, you shall speak to the Levites and say to them - Moses not Aaron will address the Levites. "Here the LORD's speech is no longer directed at Aaron, but at Moses. It would be a conflict of interest for Aaron himself to command the Levites to present an offering to Aaron and his sons, and so the LORD turns to Moses for this part of the instructions." (UBS)

When you take from the sons of Israel the tithe which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then you shall present ([rum](#) - lift up) an offering from it to the LORD, a tithe of the tithe- You...your...you are plural and refer to the Levites. **Take** (NAS, ESV) is not the best translation as it suggests they are robbing the sons of Israel. The **NET** has "When you receive from the Israelites the tithe that I have given you from them as your inheritance, then you are to offer up from it as a raised offering to the LORD a tenth of the tithe."

UBS Handbook on a tithe of the tithe - When the Levites give their own tithe to the priests, their action will be the equivalent of the actions of the Israelites who give a tithe from their crops to the priests

Tithe ([04643](#)) see note above on [maaser](#)

Offering (heave offering) ([08641](#)) see notes on [terumah](#) from [rum](#) = to be high or exalted, depicts something being lifted up as one would do in an offering). Note that **present** is actually the very [rum](#) so literally reads "have lifted up from it the heave-offering of Jehovah." Note also that [terumah](#) is a **key word** in Numbers 18 occurring 8 times - Nu 18:8; Nu 18:11; Nu 18:19; Nu 18:24; Nu 18:26; Nu 18:27; Nu 18:28; Nu 18:29;

Numbers 18:27 'Your offering shall be reckoned to you as the grain from the threshing floor or the full produce from the wine vat.

BGT Numbers 18:27 κα λογισθησεται μιν τ φαιρ ματα μιν ς σ τος π λω κα φα ρεμα π ληνο

NET Numbers 18:27 And your raised offering will be credited to you as though it were grain from the threshing floor or as new wine from the winepress.

NLT Numbers 18:27 The LORD will consider this offering to be your harvest offering, as though it were the first grain from your own threshing floor or wine from your own winepress.

ESV Numbers 18:27 And your contribution shall be counted to you as though it were the grain of the threshing floor, and as the fullness of the winepress.

NIV Numbers 18:27 Your offering will be reckoned to you as grain from the threshing floor or juice from the winepress.

KJV Numbers 18:27 And this your heave offering shall be reckoned unto you, as though it were the corn of the threshingfloor, and as the fulness of the winepress.

YLT Numbers 18:27 and your heave-offering hath been reckoned to you as corn from the threshing-floor, and as fulness from the wine-vat;

LXE Numbers 18:27 And your heave-offerings shall be reckoned to you as corn from the floor, and an offering from the wine-press.

ASV Numbers 18:27 And your heave-offering shall be reckoned unto you, as though it were the grain of the threshing-floor, and as the fulness of the winepress.

CSB Numbers 18:27 Your offering will be credited to you as if it were your grain from the threshing floor or the full harvest from the winepress.

NKJ Numbers 18:27 `And your heave offering shall be reckoned to you as though it were the grain of the threshing floor and as the fullness of the winepress.

NRS Numbers 18:27 It shall be reckoned to you as your gift, the same as the grain of the threshing floor and the fullness of the wine press.

- as though: Lev 6:19-23
- the corn: Nu 18:30 15:20 De 15:14 2Ki 6:27 Ho 9:1,2
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Your offering shall be reckoned to you as (though it were like) **the grain from the threshing floor or the full produce from the wine vat** - When the Levites give a tithe of the tithe, their tithe offering will be credited to them. It will be as if they had grown the grain (and grapes) themselves and then given a tithe of them as the sons of Israel were required to do of their produce (and wine produced).

UBS on wine vat - A wine press was cut from bedrock to form a flat surface on which people walked with bare feet on the grapes to squeeze out the juice. The juice flowed into a vat that was located at a lower level and connected by a channel

Offering (heave offering) ([08641](#)) see notes on [terumah](#) from [rum](#) = to be high or exalted, depicts something being lifted up as one would do in an offering). Note that [terumah](#) is a **key word** in Numbers 18 occurring 8 times - Nu 18:8; Nu 18:11; Nu 18:19; Nu 18:24; Nu 18:26; Nu 18:27; Nu 18:28; Nu 18:29.

Numbers 18:28 'So you shall also present an offering to the LORD from your tithes, which you receive from the sons of Israel; and from it you shall give the LORD'S offering to Aaron the priest.'

BGT Numbers 18:28 ο τω ς φε λε τε κα με ς π τ ν φαι ρε μ τ ω ν κυ ρ ου π π ν τ ω ν πι δε κ τ ω ν μ ν σα ν λ β η τε πα ρ τ ν υ ν Ι σ ρ α η λ κα δ σε τε π α τ ν φα ρε μα κυ ρ Α α ρ ω ν τ ε ρε

NET Numbers 18:28 Thus you are to offer up a raised offering to the LORD of all your tithes which you receive from the Israelites; and you must give the LORD's raised offering from it to Aaron the priest.

NLT Numbers 18:28 You must present one-tenth of the tithe received from the Israelites as a sacred offering to the LORD. This is the LORD's sacred portion, and you must present it to Aaron the priest.

ESV Numbers 18:28 So you shall also present a contribution to the LORD from all your tithes, which you receive from the people of Israel. And from it you shall give the LORD's contribution to Aaron the priest.

NIV Numbers 18:28 In this way you also will present an offering to the LORD from all the tithes you receive from the Israelites. From these tithes you must give the LORD's portion to Aaron the priest.

KJV Numbers 18:28 Thus ye also shall offer an 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.

YLT Numbers 18:28 so ye do lift up -- ye also -- the heave-offering of Jehovah from all your tithes which ye receive from the sons of Israel; and ye have given from it the heave-offering of Jehovah to Aaron the priest;

LXE Numbers 18:28 So shall ye also separate them from all the offerings of the Lord out of all your tithes, whatsoever ye shall receive from the children of Israel; and ye shall give of them an offering to the Lord to Aaron the priest.

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

CSB Numbers 18:28 You are to present an offering to the LORD from every tenth you receive from the Israelites. Give some of it to Aaron the priest as an offering to the LORD.

NKJ Numbers 18:28 `Thus you shall also offer a heave offering to the LORD from all your tithes which you receive from the children of Israel, and you shall give the LORD'S heave offering from it to Aaron the priest.

NRS Numbers 18:28 Thus you also shall set apart an offering to the LORD from all the tithes that you receive from the Israelites; and from them you shall give the LORD's offering to the priest Aaron.

- and ye shall: Ge 14:18 Heb 6:20 7:1-10
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So you shall also present an offering to the LORD from your tithes, which you receive from the sons of Israel; and from it you shall give the LORD'S offering to Aaron the priest - Yahweh reiterates the preceding instructions but now focuses on Aaron as the recipient of the tithes **to the LORD**. "You are to give this special contribution for the LORD to Aaron the priest." (GNT)

Offering (heave offering) ([08641](#)) see notes on [terumah](#) from [rum](#) = to be high or exalted, depicts something being lifted up as one would do in an offering). Note that [terumah](#) is a **key word** in Numbers 18 occurring 8 times - Nu 18:8; Nu 18:11; Nu 18:19; Nu 18:24; Nu 18:26; Nu 18:27; Nu 18:28; Nu 18:29;

Tithe (04643) see note above on [maaser](#)

Numbers 18:29 'Out of all your gifts you shall present every offering due to the LORD, from all the best of them, the sacred part from them.'

BGT Numbers 18:29 π π ντων τ ν δομ των μ ν φελε τε φα ρεμα κυρ π π ντων τ ν παρχ ν τ γιασμ νον π α το

NET Numbers 18:29 From all your gifts you must offer up every raised offering due the LORD, from all the best of it, and the holiest part of it.'

NLT Numbers 18:29 Be sure to give to the LORD the best portions of the gifts given to you.

ESV Numbers 18:29 Out of all the gifts to you, you shall present every contribution due to the LORD; from each its best part is to be dedicated.'

NIV Numbers 18:29 You must present as the LORD's portion the best and holiest part of everything given to you.'

KJV 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.

YLT Numbers 18:29 out of all your gifts ye do lift up the whole heave-offering of Jehovah; out of all its fat, -- its hallowed part -- out of it.

LXE Numbers 18:29 Of all your gifts ye shall offer an offering to the Lord, and of every first-fruit the consecrated part from it.

ASV Numbers 18:29 Out of all your gifts ye shall offer every heave-offering of Jehovah, of all the best thereof, even the hallowed part thereof out of it.

CSB Numbers 18:29 You must present the entire offering due the LORD from all your gifts. The best part of the tenth is to be consecrated.

NKJ Numbers 18:29 `Of all your gifts you shall offer up every heave offering due to the LORD, from all the best of them, the consecrated part of them.'

NRS Numbers 18:29 Out of all the gifts to you, you shall set apart every offering due to the LORD; the best of all of them is the part to be consecrated.

- **best:** Nu 18:12 (best)
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Out of all your gifts you shall present every offering due to the LORD, from all the best of them, the sacred part from them.' - The NLT conveys the sense well "Be sure to give to the LORD the best portions of the gifts given to you." The Hebrew word for **best** ([heleb](#) - used Nu 18:12, 29, 30, 32) refers literally to fat, the covering of the interior of the body, which was considered the best part of an animal and was God's portion in offerings (1 Sa 2:15,16), not to be eaten by men. In the present context [heleb](#) is used figuratively to refer to the **best** products of the tithe the Levites received. (See [comments](#) on Nu 18:12). **The sacred part** refers to the tithe of the Levites as "the consecrated part," that part set apart for the LORD.

Offering (heave offering) (08641) see notes on [terumah](#) from [rum](#) = to be high or exalted, depicts something being lifted up as one would do in an offering). Note that [terumah](#) is a **key word** in Numbers 18 occurring 8 times - Nu 18:8; Nu 18:11; Nu 18:19; Nu 18:24; Nu 18:26; Nu 18:27; Nu 18:28; Nu 18:29;

Sacred (04720) ([miqdash](#) from [qadash](#) = to set apart, to separate) describes that which is set apart from all common or secular purposes to some religious use. **Sacred** in the Lxx is translated with the verb [hagiazō](#) meaning consecrated, dedicated, sanctified and is in the perfect tense. **Miqdash** is the same word rendered **sanctuary** in Nu 18:1.

Numbers 18:30 "You shall say to them, 'When you have offered from it the best of it, then the rest shall be reckoned to the Levites as the product of the threshing floor, and as the product of the wine vat.

BGT Numbers 18:30 κα ρε ς π ρ ς α τ ο ς τ α ν φ α ι ρ τ ε τ ν π α ρ χ ν π α τ ο κ α λ ο γ ι σ θ σ ε τ α ι τ ο ς λ ε υ τ α ι ς ς γ ν η μ α π λ ω κ α ς γ ν η μ α π λ η ν ο

NET Numbers 18:30 "Therefore you will say to them, 'When you offer up the best of it, then it will be credited to the Levites as the product of the threshing floor and as the product of the winepress.

NLT Numbers 18:30 "Also, give these instructions to the Levites: When you present the best part as your offering, it will be considered as though it came from your own threshing floor or winepress.

ESV Numbers 18:30 Therefore you shall say to them, 'When you have offered from it the best of it, then the rest shall be counted to the Levites as produce of the threshing floor, and as produce of the winepress.

NIV Numbers 18:30 "Say to the Levites: 'When you present the best part, it will be reckoned to you as the product of the threshing floor or the winepress.

KJV 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.

YLT Numbers 18:30 'And thou hast said unto them, In your lifting up its fat out of it, then it hath been reckoned to the Levites, as increase of a threshing-floor, and as increase of a wine-vat;

LXE Numbers 18:30 And thou shalt say to them, When ye shall offer the first-fruits from it, then shall it be reckoned to the Levites as produce from the threshing-floor, and as produce from the wine-press.

ASV Numbers 18:30 Therefore thou shalt say unto them, When ye heave the best thereof from it, then it shall be reckoned unto the Levites as the increase of the threshing-floor, and as the increase of the wine-press.

CSB Numbers 18:30 "Tell them further: Once you have presented the best part of the tenth, and it is credited to you Levites as the produce of the threshing floor or the winepress,

NKJ Numbers 18:30 "Therefore you shall say to them: 'When you have lifted up the best of it, then the rest shall be accounted to the Levites as the produce of the threshing floor and as the produce of the winepress.

NRS Numbers 18:30 Say also to them: When you have set apart the best of it, then the rest shall be reckoned to the Levites as produce of the threshing floor, and as produce of the wine press.

- the best: Nu 18:28 Ge 43:11 De 6:5 Pr 3:9,10 Mal 1:8 Mt 6:33 10:37-39 Php 3:8,9
- then it shall: Nu 18:27
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FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE LEVITES

You shall say to them - Yahweh gives Moses more instructions He wants Moses to give to the Levites. **NET NOTE** however says "The wording of this verse is confusing; it may be that it is addressed to the priests, telling them how to deal with the offerings of the Levites."

'When you have offered from it the best of it - "IT" could refer to the tithes of the Israelites and the **CSB** renders it "the best part of the tenth." UBS however says that "A majority of translations take the pronoun **"IT"** as a reference to all the tithes received by the Levites from the Israelites **minus the best part of those gifts** (Nu 18:28–29). It refers to the rest of the gifts that remain after the Levites have themselves presented the best part of these gifts as a tithe to the priests. The Levites are allowed to keep the gifts that remain." (UBS Handbook)

The Hebrew word for **best** ([heleb](#) - used Nu 18:12, 29, 30, 32) refers literally to fat, the covering of the interior of the body, which was considered the best part of an animal and was God's portion in offerings (1 Sa 2:15,16), not to be eaten by men. In the present context [heleb](#) is used figuratively to refer to the **best** products of the tithe the Levites received. (See [comments](#) on Nu 18:12).

Then the rest shall be reckoned to the Levites - "it will be credited to the Levites." (NET)

As the product of the threshing floor, and as the product of the wine vat- NLT "it will be considered as though it came from your own threshing floor or winepress."

Numbers 18:31 'You may eat it anywhere, you and your households, for it is your compensation in return for your service in the tent of meeting.'

BGT Numbers 18:31 κα δεσθε ατ ν παντ τπ μες κα ο ο κοι μν τιμισθς οτος μν στιν ντ τν λειτουργι ν μ ν τ ν ντ σκην το μαρτυρ ου

NET Numbers 18:31 And you may eat it in any place, you and your household, because it is your wages for your service in the tent of meeting.

NLT Numbers 18:31 You Levites and your families may eat this food anywhere you wish, for it is your compensation for serving in the Tabernacle.

ESV Numbers 18:31 And you may eat it in any place, you and your households, for it is your reward in return for your service in the tent of meeting.

NIV Numbers 18:31 You and your households may eat the rest of it anywhere, for it is your wages for your work at the Tent of Meeting.

KJV 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.

YLT Numbers 18:31 and ye have eaten it in every place, ye and your households, for it is your hire in exchange for your service in the tent of meeting;

LXE Numbers 18:31 And ye shall eat it in any place, ye and your families; for this is your reward for your services in the tabernacle of witness.

ASV Numbers 18:31 And ye shall eat it in every place, ye and your households: for it is your reward in return for your service in the tent of meeting.

CSB Numbers 18:31 then you and your household may eat it anywhere. It is your wage in return for your work at the tent of meeting.

NKJ Numbers 18:31 `You may eat it in any place, you and your households, for it is your reward for your work in the tabernacle of meeting.

NRS Numbers 18:31 You may eat it in any place, you and your households; for it is your payment for your service in the tent of meeting.

- in every: De 14:22,23
- **your compensation:** Mt 10:10 Lu 10:7 1Co 9:10-14 2Co 12:13 Ga 6:6 1Ti 5:17,18
- Numbers 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

COMPENSATION FOR SERVICE OF THE LEVITES

You (Levites) **may eat it anywhere, you and your households** (families) - "The pronoun **it** can only refer to the rest of the food tithed by the Israelites, which the Levites are allowed to keep for themselves." (UBS)

For - Term of explanation. Explains why the Levites may eat the remaining food tithed by the Israelites.

It is your compensation in return for your service in the tent of meeting- **Compensation** ([sakar](#); Lxx = [misthos](#)) refers to wages, pay, reward, in this case "wages" consisting of produce of the land. In a sense they are compensated doubly for not only do they have the privilege of close proximity to Yahweh, they receive reward from Yahweh for serving Him (and the Aaronic priests).

Compensation (reward, hire) ([07939](#))([sakar](#) from the verb **sakar** = to hire) is masculine noun indicating wages, a reward, pay. Sakar refers either to monetary pay or pay with goods (Ge 30:28, 32, 33; Ex. 2:9; Nu 18:31). In Ge 15:1 **sakar** is the **reward** (Lxx = [misthos](#)) from God to Abraham for faithfulness.

Numbers 18:32 'You will bear no sin by reason of it when you have offered the best of it. But you shall not profane the sacred gifts of the sons of Israel, or you will die.'"

BGT Numbers 18:32 κα ο λ μψεσθε δι ατ μαρταν π ν φαιρτε τ ν παρχ ν π ατο κα τ για τ ν υ ν Ισραηλ ο βεβηλ σετε να μ ποθ νητε

NET Numbers 18:32 And you will bear no sin concerning it when you offer up the best of it. And you must not profane the holy things of the Israelites, or else you will die."

NLT Numbers 18:32 You will not be considered guilty for accepting the LORD's tithes if you give the best portion to the priests. But be careful not to treat the holy gifts of the people of Israel as though they were common. If you do, you will die."

ESV Numbers 18:32 And you shall bear no sin by reason of it, when you have contributed the best of it. But you shall not profane the holy things of the people of Israel, lest you die."

NIV Numbers 18:32 By presenting the best part of it you will not be guilty in this matter; then you will not defile the holy offerings of the Israelites, and you will not die.' "

KJV 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.

YLT Numbers 18:32 and ye bear no sin for it, in your lifting up its fat out of it, and the holy things of the sons of Israel ye do not pollute, and ye die not.'

LXE Numbers 18:32 And ye shall not bear sin by reason of it, for ye shall have offered an offering of first-fruits from it, and ye shall not profane the holy things of the children of Israel, that ye die not.

ASV Numbers 18:32 And ye shall bear no sin by reason of it, when ye have heaved from it the best thereof: and ye shall not profane the holy things of the children of Israel, that ye die not.

CSB Numbers 18:32 You will not incur guilt because of it once you have presented the best part of it, but you must not defile the Israelites' holy offerings, so that you will not die."

NKJ Numbers 18:32 `And you shall bear no sin because of it, when you have lifted up the best of it. But you shall not profane the holy gifts of the children of Israel, lest you die."

NRS Numbers 18:32 You shall incur no guilt by reason of it, when you have offered the best of it. But you shall not profane the holy gifts of the Israelites, on pain of death.

- **bear**: Nu 18:22 Lev 19:8
- **profane**: Lev 22:2,15 Mal 1:7 1Co 11:27,29
- Numbers 18 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

A REASSURANCE AND/OR WARNING

Good News Translation - You will not become guilty when you eat it, as long as you have presented the best of it to the LORD. But be sure not to profane the sacred gifts of the Israelites by eating any of the gifts before the best part is offered; **if you do, you will be put to death.**" (This is more of a warning)

NIV - By presenting the best part of it you will not be guilty in this matter; then you will not defile the holy offerings of the Israelites, **and you will not die.'** " (This is more of a reassurance)

You will bear no sin by reason of it when you have offered the best([heleb](#)) **of it.** - NLT = "You will not be considered guilty for accepting the LORD's tithes if you give the best portion to the priests."

But you shall not profane the sacred gifts ([qodesh](#)) **of the sons of Israel, or you will die** - NLT = "But be careful not to treat the holy gifts of the people of Israel as though they were common. If you do, you will die."

NET NOTE - The final clause could also be rendered "in order that you do not die." The larger section can also be interpreted differently; rather than take it as a warning, it could be taken as an assurance that when they do all of this they will not be profaning it and so will not die (R. K. Harrison, Numbers [WEC], 253).

Profane (verb) ([02490](#))([chalal](#)) means to profane, defile, pollute; prostitute; make common; loose; to break. (**the most common meaning**) In fact the first OT use of **chalal** describes sexual defilement or incest (Ge 49:4) To profane means to treat (something sacred) with abuse, irreverence, or contempt.

Sacred gifts (holy) ([06944](#)) see note on [qodesh](#) The Lxx renders [qodesh](#) with [hagios](#) indicating those things

set apart from common use and for uses related to Yahweh.