

Numbers 18

Verses 1- 7

So the Lord said to Aaron, “You, 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. ² But also bring your brothers with you, the tribe of Levi, the tribe of your father, so that they may join you and serve you, while you and your sons with you are before the tent of the testimony. ³ And they shall perform duties for you and the duties of the whole tent, but they shall not come near the furnishings of the sanctuary and the altar, or both they and you will die. ⁴ They shall join you and perform the duties of the tent of meeting, for all the service of the tent; but an unauthorized person shall not come near you. ⁵ So you shall perform the duties of the sanctuary and the duties of the altar, so that there will no longer be wrath on the sons of Israel. 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.* ⁷ But you and your sons with you shall attend to your priesthood for everything that concerns the altar and inside the veil, and you are to perform service. I am giving you the priesthood as a service that is a gift, and the unauthorized person who comes near shall be put to death.”

So the Lord said to Aaron, “You, 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.

The Levites under Korah wanted the priesthood but that was not what God had commanded. But dreams die hard, and this idea will resurface again in the future. So God told the priests to keep the Levites in check.

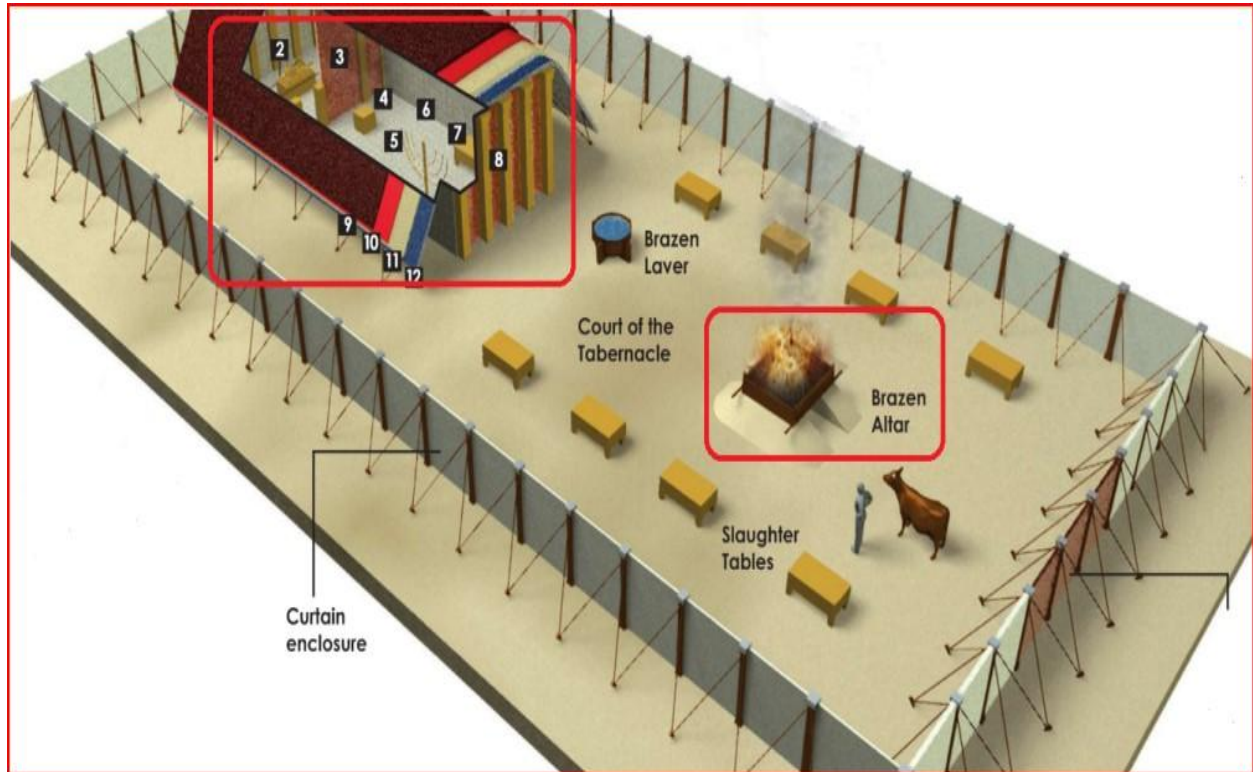
See verse 3

³ And they shall perform duties for you and the duties of the whole tent, but they shall not come near the furnishings of the sanctuary and the altar, or both they and you will die.

If a priest allowed a Levite to perform a task that was limited to the priesthood, the priest would die along with Levite, because he did not stop the Levite from doing it.

⁷ But you and your sons with you shall attend to your priesthood for everything that concerns the altar and inside the veil, and you are to perform service. I am giving you the priesthood as a service that is a gift, and the unauthorized person who comes near shall be put to death.”

See Pic 1805



The priests performed the duties that were performed inside the physical building and the offering of sacrifices on the Bronze Altar in the courtyard. The specific duties of the priests and Levites are not mentioned here but they are outlined throughout the last four books of the Pentateuch.

Verses 8 – 10

Then the Lord spoke to Aaron, “Now behold, I myself have put you in charge of my offerings, all the holy gifts of the sons of Israel I have given to you as a portion and to your sons as a permanent allotment. ⁹ This shall be yours from the most holy *gifts reserved* from the fire; every offering of theirs, namely every grain offering, every sin offering, and every guilt offering, with which they shall make restitution to me, *shall be* most holy for you and for your sons. ¹⁰ As the most holy *gifts* you shall eat it; every male shall eat it. It shall be holy to you.

Then the Lord spoke to Aaron, “Now behold, I myself have put you in charge of my offerings, all the holy gifts of the sons of Israel I have given to you as a portion and to your sons as a permanent allotment.

Only Aaron and his sons were chosen to be priests and they were responsible for offering the sacrifices that the people brought to God.

⁹ This shall be yours from the most holy *gifts reserved* from the fire; every offering of theirs, namely every grain offering, every sin offering, and every guilt offering, with which they shall make restitution to me, *shall be* most holy for you and for your sons.

The grain, sin and guilt offerings were to be eaten by the priests (The male descendants of Aaron). The Burnt offering was completely burned as an offering to God. This left one other offering, the Peace (fellowship) offering, which is covered in the next paragraph.

Verses 11 – 14

¹¹ This also is yours, the offering of their gift, that is, 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 permanent allotment. Everyone of your household who is clean may eat it.

¹² All the best of the fresh oil and all the best of the fresh wine and of the grain, the first fruits of what they give to the Lord, I have given them to you. 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. ¹⁴ Everything banned from secular use in Israel shall be yours.

¹¹ This also is yours, the offering of their gift, that is, 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 permanent allotment. Everyone of your household who is clean may eat it.

The Wave offering was a part of the Peace Offering. It could be eaten by the priests and their sons and daughters. Part of the peace offering was also eaten by the family who gave the offering.

¹² **All the best of the fresh oil and all the best of the fresh wine and of the grain, the first fruits of what they give to the Lord, I have given them to you.**

The first fruits were offered at different times of the year because the different crops each had their own growing season.

See chart 1810 Harvest seasons

Harvest Seasons							
	March	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept
Barley	x	x	x				
Flax	x	x	x				
Wheat			x	x	x		
Figs			x	x	x		
Grapes				x	x		
Pomegranates				x	x		
Olives					x	x	
Dates						x	x
Figs 2nd crop						x	x

Barley looks a lot like wheat

See pics 1815



Olives are a fruit that grows on trees. See 1820



Olive oil was used for cooking and used as fuel in traditional lamps.

Pomegranates were used for the prevention or treatment of many conditions including heart disease, high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol levels, cancer, and diabetes. They are low in calories and fat but high in fiber, vitamins, and minerals.

See Pics 1825



Verses 15 - 20

¹⁵ Every firstborn of the womb of all flesh, whether human or animal, which they offer to the Lord, shall be yours; however you must redeem the human firstborn, and the firstborn of unclean animals you shall redeem. ¹⁶ As to their redemption price, from a month old you shall redeem them, by your assessment, five shekels in silver by the shekel of the sanctuary, which is twenty gerahs. ¹⁷ But the firstborn of an ox, 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 offer up their fat in smoke as an offering by fire, for a soothing aroma to the Lord. ¹⁸ However, their meat shall be yours; it shall be yours like the breast of a wave offering and like the right thigh. 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 permanent allotment. It is a permanent covenant of salt before the Lord to you and your descendants with you.” 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.

¹⁵ Every firstborn of the womb of all flesh, whether human or animal, which they offer to the Lord, shall be yours; however you must redeem the human firstborn, and the firstborn of unclean animals you shall redeem

The 1st born of every womb had to be sacrificed or redeemed. Unclean animals had to be redeemed because they could not be sacrificed. The law regarding human firstborns applied to firstborn sons, not daughters.

¹⁷ But the firstborn of an ox, the firstborn of a sheep, or the firstborn of a goat, you shall not redeem; they are holy.

The ox, sheep and goat were all used for sacrifices so the firstborn could not be redeemed.

¹⁹It is a permanent covenant of salt before the Lord to you and your descendants with you.”

From the most ancient times, salt was a sign of covenant. Those who shared salt were considered to be in a special relationship with each other by the people of the Ancient Near East.

All grain offerings were salted.

See Leviticus 2:13

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

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.

This did not mean that the priests had a low social standing. The priests were in a position of authority and were well compensated for their work.

See chart 1830

Income of the priests

Num. 18:8-20 What the Priests received from God

- 1 Every grain, sin and guilt offering
- 2 All the wave offerings
The breast and right thigh of peace offerings
- 3 The first born of the womb
For humans that was five shekels in silver
The meat of the firstborn ox, sheep, or goat
- 4 And the first fruits

Num. 18:21-32 The Levites received all the tithes of the people
They gave a tithe of their income to the priests

Deut. 18:4 the first fleece of the peoples sheep

Verses 21 -24

²¹ **“To the sons of Levi, behold, I have given all the tithe in Israel as an inheritance, in return for their service which they perform, the service of the tent of meeting.**

²² **And the sons of Israel shall not come near the tent of meeting again, or they will bring sin on themselves and die. ²³ Only the Levites shall perform the service of the tent of meeting, and they shall bear their *own* guilt; *it shall be* a permanent statute throughout your generations, and among the sons of Israel they shall have no inheritance. ²⁴ For the tithe of the sons of Israel, which they offer as an offering to the Lord, I have given to the Levites as an inheritance; therefore I have said concerning them, ‘They shall have no inheritance among the sons of Israel.’”**

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

The tithe was an ancient custom and preceded the Law by 500 years. Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek in Genesis 14 (1915 BC). Jacob vowed to give the tithe of all his possessions.

See Genesis 28:20-22

²⁰ **Jacob also made a vow, saying, “If God will be with me and will keep me on this journey that I take, and give me food to eat and garments to wear, ²¹ and I return to my father’s house in safety, then the Lord will be my God. ²² And this stone, which I have set up as a memorial stone, will be God’s house, and of everything that You give me I will assuredly give a tenth to You.”**

²⁴ **For the tithe of the sons of Israel, which they offer as an offering to the Lord, I have given to the Levites as an inheritance; therefore I have said concerning them, ‘They shall have no inheritance among the sons of Israel.’”**

The Levites that were not priests received the tithe of the people and in turn gave a tithe to the priests.

The Levites (both priests and non-priests) did not get a tribal area like the other 12 tribes; however, they did get cities and pasture land within the 12 tribes. After entering Canaan, the Levites were given 48 cities and the pasture land around each of the forty-eight cities.

See pic 1835

Towns for the Levites

Joshua 21

The Levites do not inherit a portion of the land of Israel; instead they receive cities throughout the other tribes' portions

Towns Assigned ●

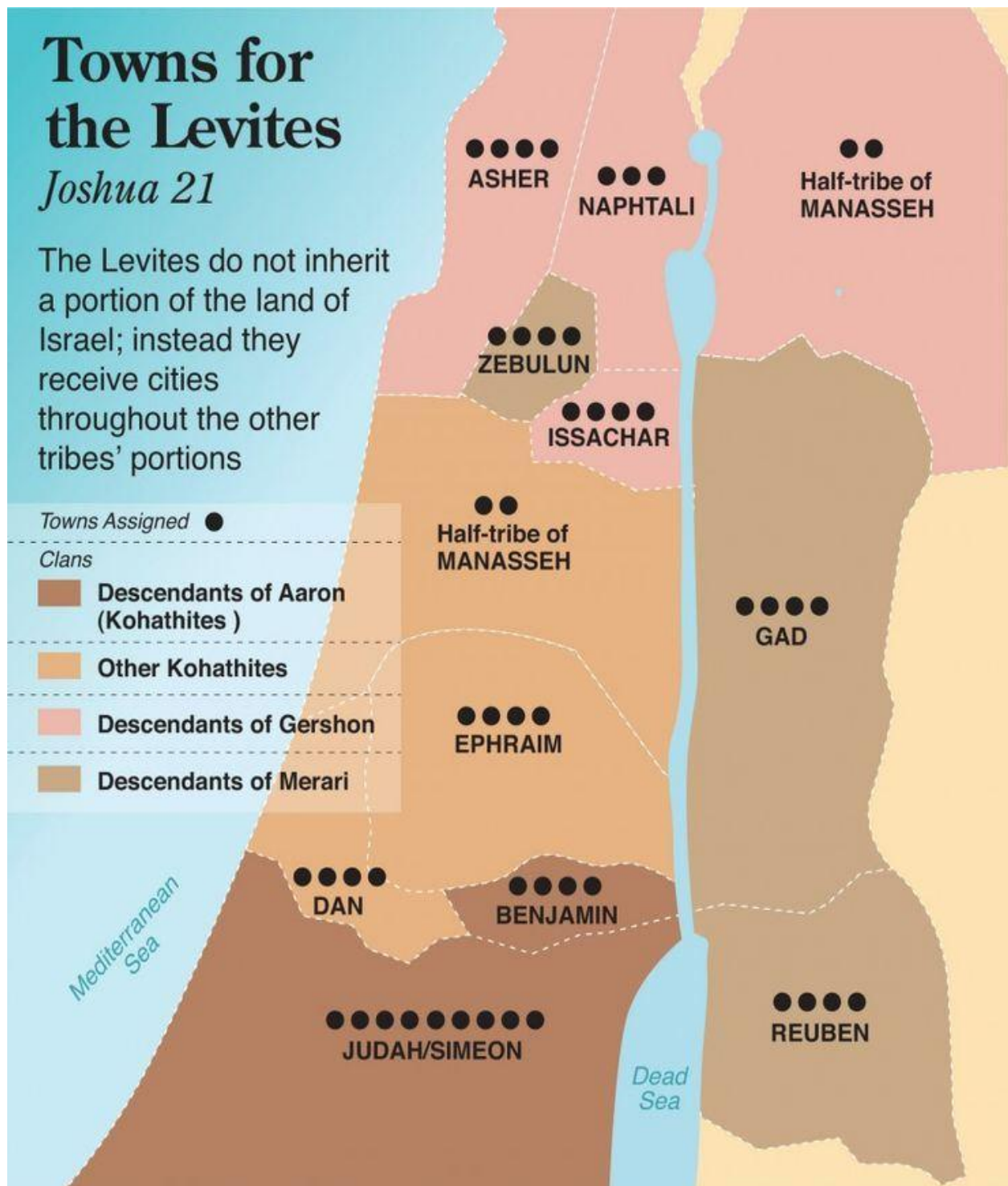
Clans

Descendants of Aaron (Kohathites)

Other Kohathites

Descendants of Gershon

Descendants of Merari



Unfortunately there were times in Israel when the Jewish people as a whole were not following God or His law and the Levites found themselves in a desperate situation. See Judges 17 & 18.

Verses 25 - 32

²⁵ Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 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. ²⁷ Your offering shall be credited to you like the grain from the threshing floor or the full produce from the wine vat. ²⁸ So you shall also present an offering to the Lord from all your tithes, which you receive from the sons of Israel; and from it you shall give the Lord’s offering to Aaron the priest. 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.’ ³⁰ And you shall say to them, ‘When you have offered from it the best of it, then *the rest* shall be credited to the Levites like the product of the threshing floor, and like the product of the wine vat. 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. ³² And you will bring on yourselves 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, so that you do not die.’”

²⁸ So you shall also present an offering to the Lord from all your tithes, which you receive from the sons of Israel; and from it you shall give the Lord’s offering to Aaron the priest.

The Levites gave a tithe to God, which went to the priests.

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.**

The tithes given to the Levites were most likely crops of the field, the fruit of trees, animals, and sometimes money. Whatever they received was theirs to enjoy after they had given the best to the priests.

³² **And you will bring on yourselves 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, so that you do not die.’”**

If the Levites failed to give a tithe of the best which they had received from the people, they would bear that sin and die, because they would be guilty of profaning the holy things by keeping the best for themselves instead of giving it to the priests.