

Numbers 8

Verses 1 – 4

Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ²“Speak to Aaron and say to him, ‘When you mount the lamps, the seven lamps will provide light in the front of the lampstand.’” ³Therefore Aaron did so; he mounted its lamps at the front of the lampstand, just as the Lord had commanded Moses. ⁴Now this was the workmanship of the lampstand, hammered work of gold; from its base to its flower ornamentation it was hammered work; according to the pattern which the Lord had shown Moses, so he made the lampstand.

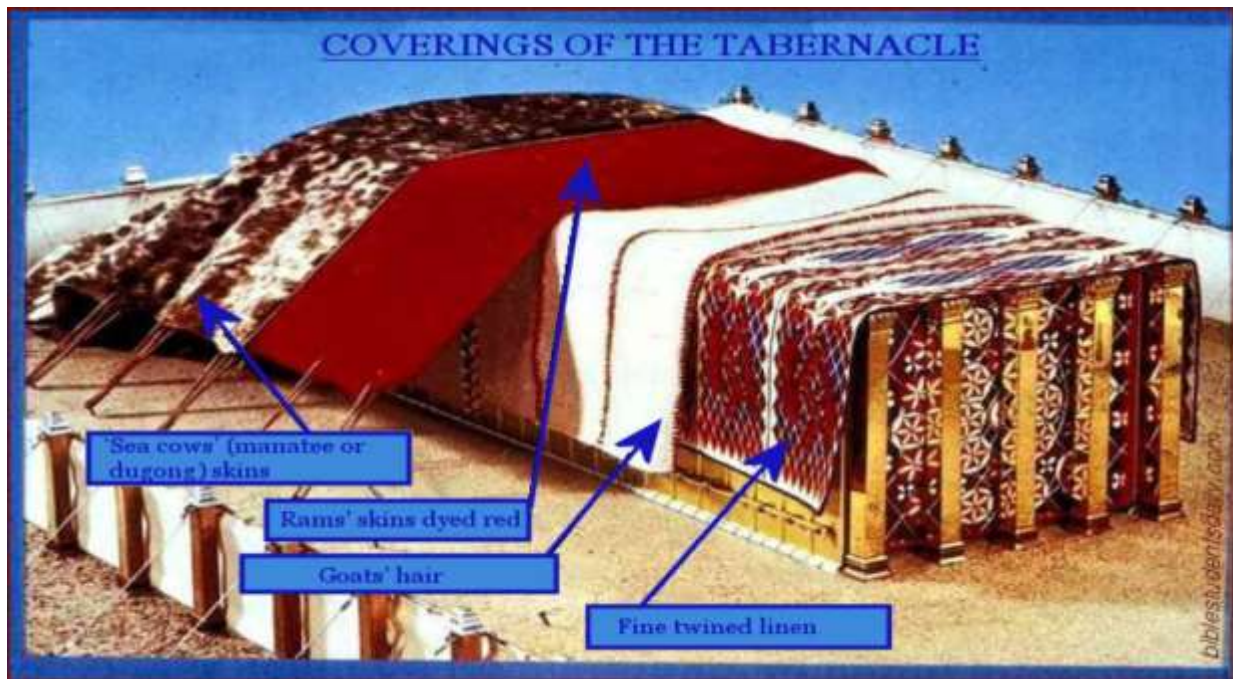
Therefore Aaron did so; he mounted its lamps at the front of the lampstand.

See pic 805 The Menorah



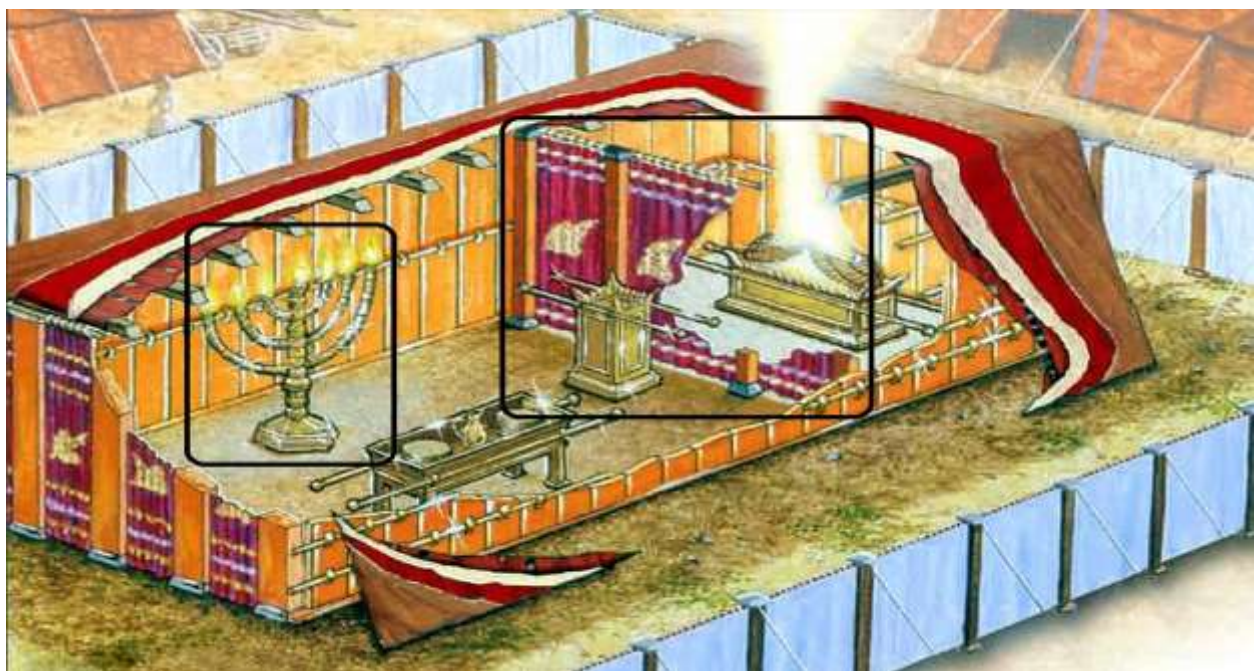
The lampstand was the only source of light in the sanctuary

See pic 810 No sunlight in the Tabernacle



The Menorah provided light in the Holy place but the Holy of Holies would have been dark because of the curtain that separated the two parts of the Tabernacle.

See pic 815



Was it completely dark in the Holy of Holies when the High Priest went in once a year?
Did God's presence provide the light that was needed for the High Priest to do his job?

Verses 5 – 13

Again the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ⁶“Take the Levites from among the sons of Israel and cleanse them. ⁷This is what you shall do to them, for their cleansing: sprinkle purifying water on them, and have them use a razor over their whole body, and they shall wash their clothes and cleanse themselves. ⁸Then have them take a bull with its grain offering, fine flour mixed with oil; and you shall take a second bull as a sin offering. ⁹So you shall present the Levites in front of the tent of meeting. You shall also assemble the whole congregation of the sons of Israel, ¹⁰and present the Levites before the Lord; and the sons of Israel shall lay their hands on the Levites. ¹¹Aaron then shall present the Levites before the Lord as a wave offering from the sons of Israel, so that they may qualify to perform the service of the Lord. ¹²Now the Levites shall lay their hands on the heads of the bulls; then you are to offer the one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering to the Lord, to make atonement for the Levites. ¹³And you shall have the Levites stand before Aaron and his sons so as to present them as a wave offering to the Lord.

Take the Levites from among the sons of Israel and cleanse them.

1. Sprinkle purifying water on them
2. Have them use a razor over their whole body

This was probably done to symbolize purity but it would have been unusual to see all these bald men at this ordination. How could you tell one from another? 😊 😊

3. They shall wash their clothes and cleanse themselves

You shall present the Levites in front of the tent of meeting before the Lord

This means the Tabernacle.

As far as we know the other tent of meeting where Moses talked with God still existed but that one was outside the camp.

You shall also assemble the whole congregation of the sons of Israel, ¹⁰ and present the Levites before the Lord

1. The sons of Israel shall lay their hands on the Levites
2. Aaron shall present the Levites before the Lord as a wave offering
3. The Levites shall lay their hands on the heads of the bulls
4. Then you are to offer the one as a sin offering
5. The other as a burnt offering

Verses 14 - 19

So you shall single out the Levites from among the sons of Israel, and the Levites shall be mine. ¹⁵ Then after that the Levites may go in to serve the tent of meeting. But you shall cleanse them and present them as a wave offering; ¹⁶ for they are exclusively given to me from among the sons of Israel. I have taken them for myself instead of the firstborn of every womb, the firstborn of all the sons of Israel. ¹⁷ For every firstborn among the sons of Israel are mine, among the people and among the animals; on the day that I fatally struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I sanctified them for myself. ¹⁸ But I have taken the Levites instead of every firstborn among the sons of Israel. ¹⁹ And 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 affliction among the sons of Israel due to their approaching the sanctuary.”

¹⁸ But I have taken the Levites instead of every firstborn among the sons of Israel.

The expression, the sons of Israel, is used 9 times in these 6 verses. Why would God do that?

If the other tribes had any hard feelings toward the Levites because they had been chosen to serve in the Tabernacle over them, God reminds the other tribes that the Levites were “family” and in addition this was to their (the other tribes) benefit.

The other tribes got to keep their 1st born sons at home instead of sending them to the Tabernacle that would be many miles away for many of them.

See map 820 Shiloh



The distance from the city of Dan in the north to Beersheba in the south was about 150 miles. The Tabernacle was centrally located at Shiloh, but it was still up to 75 miles away depending on one's location. This was a journey of many days in 1400 BC.

Verse 20 - 22

²⁰ **So *this is what* Moses, Aaron, and all the congregation of the sons of Israel did to the Levites; according to everything that the Lord had commanded Moses regarding the Levites, so the sons of Israel did to them. ²¹ The Levites, too, purified themselves from sin and washed their clothes; and Aaron presented them as a wave offering before the Lord. Aaron also made atonement for them to cleanse them. ²² Then after that the Levites went in to perform their service in the tent of meeting before Aaron and his sons; just as the Lord had commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so they did to them.**

So *this is what* Moses, Aaron, and all the congregation of the sons of Israel did to the Levites

If there were any hard feelings toward the Levites, God's words resolved the problem and everyone did as He had commanded.

Verse 23 – 26

²³ **Now the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ²⁴ “This is what *applies* to the Levites: from twenty-five years old and upward they shall enter to perform service in the work of the tent of meeting. ²⁵ But at the age of fifty years they shall retire from service in the work and not work anymore. ²⁶ They may, however, assist their brothers in the tent of meeting, to fulfill an obligation, but they *themselves* shall do no work. In this way you shall deal with the Levites in their obligations.”**

This is what *applies* to the Levites: from 25 years old and upward they shall enter to perform service in the work of the tent of meeting. ²⁵ But at the age of 50 years they shall retire from service in the work and not work anymore

In Numbers 4:46-48 the age for Levites to serve was 30 to 50.

Now it will be 25 to 50.

Why the change?

Several commentaries suggested a reason for the change but none of their suggestions stood out as plausible to me.