

Numbers 8:1 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
Numbers 8:2 Speak unto Aaron, and say unto him, When thou lightest the lamps, the seven lamps shall give light over against the candlestick.
Numbers 8:3 And Aaron did so; he lighted the lamps thereof over against the candlestick, as the LORD commanded Moses.
Numbers 8:4 And this work of the candlestick *was of* beaten gold, unto the shaft thereof, unto the flowers thereof, *was* beaten work: according unto the pattern which the LORD had shewed Moses, so he made the candlestick.

The LORD told Moses to instruct Aaron to light the seven lamps of the candlestick so as to illuminate the area in front of it; I don't know how the light could have been directed to a certain area. I've looked at several diagrams, and the candlestick appears to be the only light source for the holy place that housed the altar of incense and the table of showbread.

We learned in Exodus that the candlestick was to be made from solid gold that had been beaten into shape. The lamps were fueled with pure olive oil from beaten olives.

Everything in the tabernacle was intended to point to the Messiah. The lampstand pictures Jesus as the light of the world.

John 12:46 "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness."

The oil is a type of the Holy Spirit; and the seven lampstands remind us of the words of Isaiah that speak of the fullness of the Spirit that would rest upon the Messiah.

*Isaiah 11:2 "And the **spirit of the LORD** shall rest upon him, the spirit of **wisdom and understanding**, the spirit of **counsel and might**, the spirit of **knowledge** and of the **fear of the LORD...."***

The branches of the lampstand had flowerlike cups with buds and blossoms. I believe these represent the fruit the Holy Spirit produces in our lives. We, as Christians, are like the branches reaching out to others and showing the light of Jesus in our lives through the fruit we produce (our works).

The fact that God commanded that pure gold and pure olive oil be used points to the holiness and righteousness of the Messiah.

Numbers 8:5 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
Numbers 8:6 Take the Levites from among the children of Israel, and cleanse them.
Numbers 8:7 And thus shalt thou do unto them, to cleanse them: Sprinkle water of purifying upon them, and let them shave all their flesh, and let them wash their clothes, and so make themselves clean.

I admit to a bit of wonder at how Moses jumps around in his discourse. He now

proceeds to reveal how the LORD commanded the separation and anointing of the Levites as His special servants among the people.

The LORD told Moses to separate out the Levites and cleanse them using a particular process. The first part was as follows.

- Sprinkle them with the water of purification (using the ashes of the red heifer)
- have them shave their whole body
- have them wash their clothes

Numbers 8:8 Then let them take a young bullock with his meat offering, *even* fine flour mingled with oil, and another young bullock shalt thou take for a sin offering.

Numbers 8:9 And thou shalt bring the Levites before the tabernacle of the congregation: and thou shalt gather the whole assembly of the children of Israel together:

Numbers 8:10 And thou shalt bring the Levites before the LORD: and the children of Israel shall put their hands upon the Levites:

Numbers 8:11 And Aaron shall offer the Levites before the LORD *for* an offering of the children of Israel, that they may execute the service of the LORD.

After that:

- Have them bring a young bull as a meat offering
- Have them bring another young bull as a sin offering
- Assemble the Levites before the whole congregation of the people of Israel before the tabernacle
- Have the people lay hands on the Levites
- Have Aaron present them as an offering before the LORD to serve Him and witnessed by the whole congregation

Numbers 8:12 And the Levites shall lay their hands upon the heads of the bullocks: and thou shalt offer the one *for* a sin offering, and the other *for* a burnt offering, unto the LORD, to make an atonement for the Levites.

The Levites were to lay their hands upon the heads of the bulls being offered as a sin offering and burnt offering acknowledging their need for God's atonement for their sin.

It seems to me that when the people laid hands on the Levites and the Levites laid hands on the heads of the bulls, it had to have been done by representatives if done en masse—which is how it reads.

This whole process emphasizes the cleanliness and righteousness that is required to serve in the presence of the LORD. Thankfully, we are imputed the very righteousness of Jesus when we accept His gift of salvation.

2 Corinthians 5:21 "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

Numbers 8:13 And thou shalt set the Levites before Aaron, and before his sons, and offer them *for* an offering unto the LORD.

Numbers 8:14 Thus shalt thou separate the Levites from among the children of Israel: and the Levites shall be mine.

Numbers 8:15 And after that shall the Levites go in to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation: and thou shalt cleanse them, and offer them *for* an offering.

Numbers 8:16 For they *are* wholly given unto me from among the children of Israel; instead of such as open every womb, *even instead of* the firstborn of all the children of Israel, have I taken them unto me.

Numbers 8:17 For all the firstborn of the children of Israel *are* mine, *both* man and beast: on the day that I smote every firstborn in the land of Egypt I sanctified them for myself.

Numbers 8:18 And I have taken the Levites for all the firstborn of the children of Israel.

Numbers 8:19 And I have given the Levites *as* a gift to Aaron and to his sons from among the children of Israel, to do the service of the children of Israel in the tabernacle of the congregation, and to make an atonement for the children of Israel: that there be no plague among the children of Israel, when the children of Israel come nigh unto the sanctuary.

This section of verses emphasizes that the Levites have been given to the LORD in lieu of all the firstborn children of Israel that were delivered from death on the night of the first Passover in Egypt. The LORD determined to give the Levites to Aaron and his sons, the priests, to serve in the tabernacle and make atonement for the people of Israel to ensure that they were not struck with plague when coming near the place of His presence. The word "atonement" means "to cover" among other things. So it seems that the service of the Levites provided a protective cover for the people who came to the tabernacle. They were there to help ensure that the people followed all the instructions required for the sacrifices and offerings that were made there. We have already seen that Nadab and Abihu were struck dead when they decided to ignore God's command.

Numbers 8:20 And Moses, and Aaron, and all the congregation of the children of Israel, did to the Levites according unto all that the LORD commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so did the children of Israel unto them.

Numbers 8:21 And the Levites were purified, and they washed their clothes; and Aaron offered them *as* an offering before the LORD; and Aaron made an atonement for them to cleanse them.

Numbers 8:22 And after that went the Levites in to do their service in the tabernacle of the congregation before Aaron, and before his sons: as the LORD had commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so did they unto them.

Moses records that everything concerning the Levites was done according to the LORD's command. After that, the Levites were ready to serve in the tabernacle according to their assigned responsibilities and assist the priests as required.

Numbers 8:23 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
Numbers 8:24 This *is it* that *belongeth* unto the Levites: from twenty and five years old and upward they shall go in to wait upon the service of the tabernacle of the congregation:
Numbers 8:25 And from the age of fifty years they shall cease waiting upon the service *thereof*, and shall serve no more:
Numbers 8:26 But shall minister with their brethren in the tabernacle of the congregation, to keep the charge, and shall do no service. Thus shalt thou do unto the Levites touching their charge.

The LORD also instructed Moses that the Levites were not eligible to serve in the tabernacle until they were 25 years old and they had to retire from active service at age 50. When I looked up the Hebrew for “charge,” it seemed to indicate that they were allowed to serve as sentries or observers, keeping watch to ensure that all was done correctly.

We read in chapter four that the Levites were to serve from the ages of 30-50. Commentators note that the rabbis reason that the first five years were sort of like an internship, a time of learning under supervision.