

# THE MAINTENANCE OF THE PRIESTS AND LEVITES

**BIBLE TEXT** : Numbers 18:1-32

LESSON 98 Senior Course

**MEMORY VERSE:** "The LORD Is the portion of mine Inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot!" (Psalm 16:5).

## BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

### Numbers 18:1-32 (KJV)

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> Therefore thou and thy sons with thee shall keep your priest's office for every thing of the altar, and within the veil; 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.

## BIBLE REFERENCES:

### I The Responsibilities of the Priests and Levites

1. The priests were to be responsible for God's worship in the sanctuary, to represent the people before God, Numbers 18:1, 2, 5, 7;

#### 1 Corinthians 4:1-2 (KJV)

<sup>1</sup> Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.

<sup>2</sup> Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

#### 1 Peter 4:10 (KJV)

<sup>10</sup> As every man hath received the gift, *even so* minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

2. The Levites were to be responsible for the Tabernacle itself and were also to assist the priests in certain duties, Numbers 18:2-4, 6, 21-23;

#### 2 Kings 3:11 (KJV)

<sup>11</sup> But Jehoshaphat said, *Is there* not here a prophet of the LORD, that we may enquire of the LORD by him? And one of the king of Israel's servants answered and said, Here *is* Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah.

#### Matthew 10:42 (KJV)

<sup>42</sup> And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold *water* only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

#### Mark 10:43-44 (KJV)

<sup>43</sup> But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister:

<sup>44</sup> And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.

### II God's Material Provision for His, Priests and Their Families

1. The priests were given, for their own personal food, some of the offerings that were not burned, among them being the trespass offerings, certain sin offerings, and portions of the meat offerings, Numbers 18:8-10;

#### Leviticus 2:3 (KJV)

<sup>3</sup> And the remnant of the meat offering *shall be* Aaron's and his sons': *it is* a thing most holy of the offerings of the LORD made by fire.

#### Leviticus 2:9-10 (KJV)

<sup>9</sup> And the priest shall take from the meat offering a memorial thereof, and shall burn *it* upon the altar: *it is* an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD.

<sup>10</sup> And that which is left of the meat offering *shall be* Aaron's and his sons': *it is* a thing most holy of the offerings of the LORD made by fire.

#### Leviticus 6:16 (KJV)

<sup>16</sup> And the remainder thereof shall Aaron and his sons eat: with unleavened bread shall it be eaten in the holy place; in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation they shall eat it.

#### Leviticus 6:23 (KJV)

<sup>23</sup> For every meat offering for the priest shall be wholly burnt: it shall not be eaten.

#### Leviticus 6:25-26 (KJV)

<sup>25</sup> Speak unto Aaron and to his sons, saying, This *is* the law of the sin offering: In the place where the burnt offering is killed shall the sin offering be killed before the LORD: *it is* most holy.

<sup>26</sup> The priest that offereth it for sin shall eat it: in the holy place shall it be eaten, in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation.

#### Leviticus 6:30 (KJV)

<sup>30</sup> And no sin offering, whereof *any* of the blood is brought

<sup>8</sup> 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.

<sup>9</sup> 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.

<sup>10</sup> In the most holy *place* shalt thou eat it; every male shall eat it: it shall be holy unto thee.

<sup>11</sup> 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.

<sup>12</sup> 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.

<sup>13</sup> *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.

<sup>14</sup> Every thing devoted in Israel shall be thine.

<sup>15</sup> 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.

<sup>16</sup> And those that are to be redeemed from a month old shalt thou redeem, according to thine

into the tabernacle of the congregation to reconcile *withal* in the holy *place*, shall be eaten: it shall be burnt in the fire.

**Leviticus 7:5-10 (KJV)**

<sup>5</sup> And the priest shall burn them upon the altar *for* an offering made by fire unto the LORD: *it is* a trespass offering.

<sup>6</sup> Every male among the priests shall eat thereof: it shall be eaten in the holy place: *it is* most holy.

<sup>7</sup> As the sin offering *is*, so *is* the trespass offering: *there is* one law for them: the priest that maketh atonement therewith shall have *it*.

<sup>8</sup> And the priest that offereth any man's burnt offering, *even* the priest shall have to himself the skin of the burnt offering which he hath offered.

<sup>9</sup> And all the meat offering that is baked in the oven, and all that is dressed in the fryingpan, and in the pan, shall be the priest's that offereth it.

<sup>10</sup> And every meat offering, mingled with oil, and dry, shall all the sons of Aaron have, one *as much* as another.

**Leviticus 10:12-13 (KJV)**

<sup>12</sup> And Moses spake unto Aaron, and unto Eleazar and unto Ithamar, his sons that were left, Take the meat offering that remaineth of the offerings of the LORD made by fire, and eat it without leaven beside the altar: for *it is* most holy:

<sup>13</sup> And ye shall eat it in the holy place, because *it is* thy due, and thy sons' due, of the sacrifices of the LORD made by fire: for so I am commanded.

**Leviticus 10:16-20 (KJV)**

<sup>16</sup> And Moses diligently sought the goat of the sin offering, and, behold, it was burnt: and he was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, the sons of Aaron *which were* left *alive*, saying,

<sup>17</sup> Wherefore have ye not eaten the sin offering in the holy place, seeing *it is* most holy, and *God* hath given it you to bear the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the LORD?

<sup>18</sup> Behold, the blood of it was not brought in within the holy *place*: ye should indeed have eaten it in the holy *place*, as I commanded.

<sup>19</sup> And Aaron said unto Moses, Behold, this day have they offered their sin offering and their burnt offering before the LORD; and such things have befallen me: and *if* I had eaten the sin offering to day, should it have been accepted in the sight of the LORD?

<sup>20</sup> And when Moses heard *that*, he was content.

**Deuteronomy 18:3 (KJV)**

<sup>3</sup> And this shall be the priest's due from the people, from them that offer a sacrifice, whether *it be* ox or sheep; and they shall give unto the priest the shoulder, and the two cheeks, and the maw.

**Matthew 10:9-10 (KJV)**

<sup>9</sup> Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses,

<sup>10</sup> Nor scrip for *your* journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat.

**1 Corinthians 9:9-14 (KJV)**

<sup>9</sup> For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen?

<sup>10</sup> Or saith he *it* altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, *this* is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope.

<sup>11</sup> If we have sown unto you spiritual things, *is it* a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?

<sup>12</sup> If others be partakers of *this* power over you, *are* not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ.

<sup>13</sup> Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live *of the things* of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar?

<sup>14</sup> Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

**Galatians 6:6 (KJV)**

<sup>6</sup> Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.

**Philippians 4:14 (KJV)**

<sup>14</sup> Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did

estimation, for the money of five shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, which *is* twenty gerahs.

<sup>17</sup> 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.

<sup>18</sup> And the flesh of them shall be thine, as the wave breast and as the right shoulder are thine.

<sup>19</sup> 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.

<sup>20</sup> 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.

<sup>21</sup> 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.

<sup>22</sup> Neither must the children of Israel henceforth come nigh the tabernacle of the congregation, lest they bear sin, and die.

<sup>23</sup> 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.

<sup>24</sup> 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

communicate with my affliction.

**1 Timothy 5:18 (KJV)**

<sup>18</sup> For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward.

**Ezekiel 44:29 (KJV)**

<sup>29</sup> They shall eat the meat offering, and the sin offering, and the trespass offering; and every dedicated thing in Israel shall be theirs.

2. The money brought by the Israelites to redeem the firstborn, because their service was being done by the Levites, was given to the priests, Numbers 18:15, 16;

**Numbers 3:44-51 (KJV)**

<sup>44</sup> And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

<sup>45</sup> Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites instead of their cattle; and the Levites shall be mine: I *am* the LORD.

<sup>46</sup> And for those that are to be redeemed of the two hundred and threescore and thirteen of the firstborn of the children of Israel, which are more than the Levites;

<sup>47</sup> Thou shalt even take five shekels apiece by the poll, after the shekel of the sanctuary shalt thou take *them*: (the shekel *is* twenty gerahs:)

<sup>48</sup> And thou shalt give the money, wherewith the odd number of them is to be redeemed, unto Aaron and to his sons.

<sup>49</sup> And Moses took the redemption money of them that were over and above them that were redeemed by the Levites:

<sup>50</sup> Of the firstborn of the children of Israel took he the money; a thousand three hundred and threescore and five *shekels*, after the shekel of the sanctuary:

<sup>51</sup> And Moses gave the money of them that were redeemed unto Aaron and to his sons, according to the word of the LORD, as the LORD commanded Moses.

**Exodus 34:20 (KJV)**

<sup>20</sup> But the firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb: and if thou redeem *him* not, then shalt thou break his neck. All the firstborn of thy sons thou shalt redeem. And none shall appear before me empty.

3. Restitution money, when the injured party was not living and had no living relatives, was given to the priests, Numbers 5:8-10;

**2 Kings 12:16 (KJV)**

<sup>16</sup> The trespass money and sin money was not brought into the house of the LORD: it was the priests'.

4. Portions of some offerings of animals, the offerings of the firstfruits, the firstborn of all clean animals, and the substitute for the firstborn of all unclean animals, were to be given to the priests to be used as food for their families, Numbers 18:11-14, 17-19;

**Deuteronomy 18:4-5 (KJV)**

<sup>4</sup> The firstfruit *also* of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the first of the fleece of thy sheep, shalt thou give him.

<sup>5</sup> For the LORD thy God hath chosen him out of all thy tribes, to stand to minister in the name of the LORD, him and his sons for ever.

**Leviticus 10:14 (KJV)**

<sup>14</sup> And the wave breast and heave shoulder shall ye eat in a clean place; thou, and thy sons, and thy daughters with thee: for *they be* thy due, and thy sons' due, *which* are given out of the sacrifices of peace offerings of the children of Israel.

**Ezekiel 44:30-31 (KJV)**

<sup>30</sup> And the first of all the firstfruits of all *things*, and every oblation of all, of every *sort* of your oblations, shall be the priest's: ye shall also give unto the priest the first of your dough, that he may cause the blessing to rest in thine house.

<sup>31</sup> The priests shall not eat of any thing that is dead of itself, or torn, whether it be fowl or beast.

5. The priests were not to have any property inheritance, God being their inheritance, Numbers 18:20; 26:62;

**Numbers 26:62 (KJV)**

<sup>62</sup> And those that were numbered of them were twenty and three thousand, all males from a month old and upward: for they were not numbered among the children of Israel,

inherit: therefore I have said unto them, Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance.

<sup>25</sup> And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

<sup>26</sup> 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.

<sup>27</sup> 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.

<sup>28</sup> 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.

<sup>29</sup> 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.

<sup>30</sup> 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 threshingfloor, and as the increase of the winepress.

<sup>31</sup> 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.

<sup>32</sup> 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.

because there was no inheritance given them among the children of Israel.

**Joshua 13:14 (KJV)**

<sup>14</sup> Only unto the tribe of Levi he gave none inheritance; the sacrifices of the LORD God of Israel made by fire *are* their inheritance, as he said unto them.

**Ezekiel 44:28 (KJV)**

<sup>28</sup> And it shall be unto them for an inheritance: I *am* their inheritance: and ye shall give them no possession in Israel: I *am* their possession.

### III The Provision for the Levites and Their Families

1. The tithes of the Israelites were paid to the Levites to be used for their support, Numbers 18:21-24;

**Genesis 14:20 (KJV)**

<sup>20</sup> And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.

**Genesis 28:20-22 (KJV)**

<sup>20</sup> And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on,

<sup>21</sup> So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God:

<sup>22</sup> And this stone, which I have set *for* a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.

**Leviticus 27:30-33 (KJV)**

<sup>30</sup> And all the tithe of the land, *whether* of the seed of the land, *or* of the fruit of the tree, *is* the LORD'S: *it is* holy unto the LORD.

<sup>31</sup> And if a man will at all redeem *ought* of his tithes, he shall add thereto the fifth *part* thereof.

<sup>32</sup> And concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock, *even* of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the LORD.

<sup>33</sup> He shall not search whether it be good or bad, neither shall he change it: and if he change it at all, then both it and the change thereof shall be holy; it shall not be redeemed.

**Deuteronomy 14:28-29 (KJV)**

<sup>28</sup> At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year, and shalt lay *it* up within thy gates:

<sup>29</sup> And the Levite, (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee,) and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which *are* within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest.

**Deuteronomy 26:12-15 (KJV)**

<sup>12</sup> When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine increase the third year, *which is* the year of tithing, and hast given *it* unto the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled;

<sup>13</sup> Then thou shalt say before the LORD thy God, I have brought away the hallowed things out of *mine* house, and also have given them unto the Levite, and unto the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all thy commandments which thou hast commanded me: I have not transgressed thy commandments, neither have I forgotten *them*:

<sup>14</sup> I have not eaten thereof in my mourning, neither have I taken away *ought* thereof for *any* unclean *use*, nor given *ought* thereof for the dead: *but* I have hearkened to the voice of the LORD my God, *and* have done according to all that thou hast commanded me.

<sup>15</sup> Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people Israel, and the land which thou hast given us, as thou swarest unto our fathers, a land that floweth with milk and honey.

**2 Chronicles 31:4-5 (KJV)**

<sup>4</sup> Moreover he commanded the people that dwelt in Jerusalem to give the portion of the priests and the Levites, that they might be encouraged in the law of the LORD.

<sup>5</sup> And as soon as the commandment came abroad, the children of Israel brought in abundance the firstfruits of corn, wine, and oil, and honey, and of all the increase of the field; and the tithe of all *things* brought they in

abundantly.

**Nehemiah 12:44 (KJV)**

<sup>44</sup> And at that time were some appointed over the chambers for the treasures, for the offerings, for the firstfruits, and for the tithes, to gather into them out of the fields of the cities the portions of the law for the priests and Levites: for Judah rejoiced for the priests and for the Levites that waited.

**Malachi 3:10 (KJV)**

<sup>10</sup> Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that *there shall not be room enough to receive it.*

**Matthew 23:23 (KJV)**

<sup>23</sup> Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier *matters* of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

**1 Corinthians 16:2 (KJV)**

<sup>2</sup> Upon the first *day* of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as *God* hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

**Hebrews 7:5 (KJV)**

<sup>5</sup> And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham:

2. The Levites were to give a tithe of the tithe to assist the priests in their material needs, Numbers 18:25-29;

**Nehemiah 10:38-39 (KJV)**

<sup>38</sup> And the priest the son of Aaron shall be with the Levites, when the Levites take tithes: and the Levites shall bring up the tithe of the tithes unto the house of our God, to the chambers, into the treasure house.

<sup>39</sup> For the children of Israel and the children of Levi shall bring the offering of the corn, of the new wine, and the oil, unto the chambers, where *are* the vessels of the sanctuary, and the priests that minister, and the porters, and the singers: and we will not forsake the house of our God.

3. That which was left was for the Levites to use as they desired, as freely as if they had raised it themselves, Numbers 18:30-32

4. The Levites received no inheritance in Israel, but were allocated certain cities in the Promised Land in which to live that they might carry on God's work throughout the nation, Numbers 35: 1-8;

**Deuteronomy 10:9 (KJV)**

<sup>9</sup> Wherefore Levi hath no part nor inheritance with his brethren; the LORD *is* his inheritance, according as the LORD thy God promised him.

**Deuteronomy 12:12 (KJV)**

<sup>12</sup> And ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God, ye, and your sons, and your daughters, and your menservants, and your maidservants, and the Levite that *is* within your gates; forasmuch as he hath no part nor inheritance with you.

**Deuteronomy 12:19 (KJV)**

<sup>19</sup> Take heed to thyself that thou forsake not the Levite as long as thou livest upon the earth.

**Deuteronomy 14:27 (KJV)**

<sup>27</sup> And the Levite that *is* within thy gates; thou shalt not forsake him; for he hath no part nor inheritance with thee.

**Deuteronomy 14:29 (KJV)**

<sup>29</sup> And the Levite, (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee,) and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which *are* within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest.

**Deuteronomy 18:1-2 (KJV)**

<sup>1</sup> The priests the Levites, *and* all the tribe of Levi, shall have no part nor inheritance with Israel: they shall eat the offerings of the LORD made by fire, and his inheritance.

<sup>2</sup> Therefore shall they have no inheritance among their brethren: the LORD *is* their inheritance, as he hath said unto them.

**Joshua 13:33 (KJV)**

<sup>33</sup> But unto the tribe of Levi Moses gave not *any* inheritance: the LORD God of Israel *was* their inheritance, as he said unto them.

**NOTES:**

**Solemn Responsibilities**

God had chosen the priests and Levites from the 12 tribes of Israel to serve Him in His holy sanctuary in varying capacities according to His own plan. To the descendants of Aaron He gave the responsible privilege of conducting the worship, of offering the sacrifices, and of appearing before Him in behalf of the people. The Levites were given the responsibility of moving the Tabernacle during the wilderness wanderings. After the Israelites became settled in the Promised Land that duty was no longer necessary, so other tasks in and around the Tabernacle were given to the Levites. They preserved and taught the Law, judged the people, took part in the worship and praise - many of them being musicians and singers - and served in many capacities that we classify as ministerial duties today (**Deuteronomy 17:8-12 (KJV)**)<sup>8</sup> If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment, between blood and blood, between plea and plea, and between stroke and stroke, *being* matters of controversy within thy gates: then shalt thou arise, and get thee up into the place which the LORD thy God shall choose; <sup>9</sup> And thou shalt come unto the priests the Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days, and enquire; and they shall shew thee the sentence of judgment: <sup>10</sup> And thou shalt do according to the sentence, which they of that place which the LORD shall choose shall shew thee; and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they inform thee: <sup>11</sup> According to the sentence of the law which they shall teach thee, and according to the judgment which they shall tell thee, thou shalt do: thou shalt not decline from the sentence which they shall shew thee, *to* the right hand, nor *to* the left. <sup>12</sup> And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the priest that standeth to minister there before the LORD thy God, or unto the judge, even that man shall die: and thou shalt put away the evil from Israel. **Deuteronomy 24:8 (KJV)**<sup>8</sup> Take heed in the plague of leprosy, that thou observe diligently, and do according to all that the priests the Levites shall teach you: as I commanded them, so ye shall observe to do. **Deuteronomy 27:14 (KJV)**<sup>14</sup> And the Levites shall speak, and say unto all the men of Israel with a loud voice, **Deuteronomy 31:9-13 (KJV)**<sup>9</sup> And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and unto all the elders of Israel.<sup>10</sup> And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of *every* seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, <sup>11</sup> When all Israel is come to appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing. <sup>12</sup> Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the LORD your God, and observe to do all the words of this law: <sup>13</sup> And *that* their children, which have not known *any thing*, may hear, and learn to fear the LORD your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it. **Deuteronomy 31:26 (KJV)**<sup>26</sup> Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee. **1 Chronicles 23:27-32 (KJV)**<sup>27</sup> For by the last words of David the Levites *were* numbered from twenty years old and above: <sup>28</sup> Because their office *was* to wait on

the sons of Aaron for the service of the house of the LORD, in the courts, and in the chambers, and in the purifying of all holy things, and the work of the service of the house of God; <sup>29</sup> Both for the shewbread, and for the fine flour for meat offering, and for the unleavened cakes, and for *that which is baked in the pan*, and for that which is fried, and for all manner of measure and size; <sup>30</sup> And to stand every morning to thank and praise the LORD, and likewise at even; <sup>31</sup> And to offer all burnt sacrifices unto the LORD in the sabbaths, in the new moons, and on the set feasts, by number, according to the order commanded unto them, continually before the LORD: <sup>32</sup> And that they should keep the charge of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the charge of the holy *place*, and the charge of the sons of Aaron their brethren, in the service of the house of the LORD. **2 Chronicles 29:34 (KJV)** <sup>34</sup> But the priests were too few, so that they could not flay all the burnt offerings: wherefore their brethren the Levites did help them, till the work was ended, and until the *other* priests had sanctified themselves: for the Levites *were* more upright in heart to sanctify themselves than the priests). At one time in the later history of the Israelites certain captive people were put to work drawing water and hewing wood for the tabernacle worship, to relieve the Levites who had been given duties of a more exacting nature.

These sacred responsibilities taxed the strength of the priests and Levites and made great demands upon their available time. That they might be free to give their whole time and strength to God's service, it was ordained that they should be supported by the people they served, in the manner set forth in the plan of God. If they had found it necessary to work at secular employment to obtain their material necessities, it would have taken a great portion of their time from God's service. This would have caused the worship of God to fall into decay quickly, because the demands it made were more than could be met unless their whole time was devoted to it.

### **God Knew Their Needs**

The method of providing for their needs was adequate, but at no time was it of such volume as to make them wealthy. However, God had said that He would be their inheritance; and along with each material provision He gave them a spiritual blessing that made their life a joyous one, as long as they faithfully served Him.

There is no life that is as blessed as the one that is wholly given to God. There is no happiness that can equal that joy which comes to a person who serves God "in his sanctuary" or devotes his life to God's work, no matter how humble that work may be. The joy of the Lord became the strength of these devoted men; and because that fact was so fully demonstrated to them, they could go out and teach the people the blessings of the covenant promises, and all would be benefited.

Some of the provisions of the Law gave consideration to the needs of these servants of God during the wanderings in the wilderness, while others were particularly applicable to their needs in the Promised Land, when they were settled in their final locations. But all the provisions were centered in and around the worship of God. The Apostle tells us that the Lord has ordained that those who preach the Gospel should

live of the Gospel. We know that in Israel's history this privileged position was greatly abused by some who used it for their personal gain. These were no longer preaching the Gospel or serving God in spiritual worship, but were serving their own personal gain and fleshly desires instead, causing the people to abhor the worship of God (**1 Samuel 2:12-17 (KJV)** <sup>12</sup> Now the sons of Eli *were* sons of Belial; they knew not the LORD. <sup>13</sup> And the priests' custom with the people *was, that*, when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant came, while the flesh was in seething, with a fleshhook of three teeth in his hand; <sup>14</sup> And he struck *it* into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; all that the fleshhook brought up the priest took for himself. So they did in Shiloh unto all the Israelites that came thither. <sup>15</sup> Also before they burnt the fat, the priest's servant came, and said to the man that sacrificed, Give flesh to roast for the priest; for he will not have sodden flesh of thee, but raw. <sup>16</sup> And *if* any man said unto him, Let them not fail to burn the fat presently, and *then* take *as much* as thy soul desireth; then he would answer him, *Nay*; but thou shalt give *it me* now: and if not, I will take *it* by force. <sup>17</sup> Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD: for men abhorred the offering of the LORD. **1 Samuel 2:22-24 (KJV)** <sup>22</sup> Now Eli was very old, and heard all that his sons did unto all Israel; and how they lay with the women that assembled *at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. <sup>23</sup> And he said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people. <sup>24</sup> *Nay*, my sons; for *it is* no good report that I hear: ye make the LORD'S people to transgress ).

### **The Equitable Distribution According to Responsibility**

God gave those dedicated to Him a number of sacrificial gifts, some of which were to be eaten only in the sanctuary by the priests, because of their sacred or expiatory nature. The others could be taken to their homes and eaten in any clean place. Those that were to be eaten only in the sanctuary by the priests included the trespass offerings, some of the sin offerings (where the blood was not taken into the Holy Place and put upon the golden altar), the peace offerings, the sheaf of the firstfruits of the harvest, part of the meat offerings, the two loaves brought during the feast of weeks, the shewbread, and olive oil (**Leviticus 6:25-26 (KJV)** <sup>25</sup> Speak unto Aaron and to his sons, saying, This *is* the law of the sin offering: In the place where the burnt offering is killed shall the sin offering be killed before the LORD: *it is* most holy.<sup>26</sup> The priest that offereth it for sin shall eat it: in the holy place shall it be eaten, in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation. **Leviticus 6:30 (KJV)** <sup>30</sup> And no sin offering, whereof *any* of the blood is brought into the tabernacle of the congregation to reconcile *withal* in the holy *place*, shall be eaten: it shall be burnt in the fire. **Leviticus 7:1-38 (KJV)** <sup>1</sup> Likewise *this is* the law of the trespass offering: *it is* most holy. <sup>2</sup> In the place where they kill the burnt offering shall they kill the trespass offering: and the blood thereof shall he sprinkle round about upon the altar. <sup>3</sup> And he shall offer of it all the fat thereof; the rump, and the fat that covereth the inwards, <sup>4</sup> And the two kidneys, and the fat that *is* on them, which *is* by the flanks, and the caul *that is* above the liver, with the kidneys, it shall he take away: <sup>5</sup> And the priest shall burn them upon the altar *for* an offering made by fire unto the LORD: *it is* a trespass offering. <sup>6</sup> Every male among the priests shall eat thereof: it shall be eaten in the holy place: *it is* most holy. <sup>7</sup> As the sin offering *is*, so *is* the trespass offering: *there is* one law for them: the priest that maketh atonement therewith shall have *it*. <sup>8</sup> And the priest that offereth any man's burnt offering, *even* the priest shall have to himself the skin of the burnt offering which he hath offered.<sup>9</sup> And all the meat



offering that is baked in the oven, and all that is dressed in the fryingpan, and in the pan, shall be the priest's that offereth it. <sup>10</sup> And every meat offering, mingled with oil, and dry, shall all the sons of Aaron have, one *as much* as another. <sup>11</sup> And this is the law of the sacrifice of peace offerings, which he shall offer unto the LORD. <sup>12</sup> If he offer it for a thanksgiving, then he shall offer with the sacrifice of thanksgiving unleavened cakes mingled with oil, and unleavened wafers anointed with oil, and cakes mingled with oil, of fine flour, fried. <sup>13</sup> Besides the cakes, he shall offer *for* his offering leavened bread with the sacrifice of thanksgiving of his peace offerings. <sup>14</sup> And of it he shall offer one out of the whole oblation *for* an heave offering unto the LORD, *and* it shall be the priest's that sprinkleth the blood of the peace offerings. <sup>15</sup> And the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings for thanksgiving shall be eaten the same day that it is offered; he shall not leave any of it until the morning. <sup>16</sup> But if the sacrifice of his offering *be* a vow, or a voluntary offering, it shall be eaten the same day that he offereth his sacrifice: and on the morrow also the remainder of it shall be eaten: <sup>17</sup> But the remainder of the flesh of the sacrifice on the third day shall be burnt with fire. <sup>18</sup> And if *any* of the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings be eaten at all on the third day, it shall not be accepted, neither shall it be imputed unto him that offereth it: it shall be an abomination, and the soul that eateth of it shall bear his iniquity. <sup>19</sup> And the flesh that toucheth any unclean *thing* shall not be eaten; it shall be burnt with fire: and as for the flesh, all that be clean shall eat thereof. <sup>20</sup> But the soul that eateth *of* the flesh of the sacrifice of peace offerings, that *pertain* unto the LORD, having his uncleanness upon him, even that soul shall be cut off from his people. <sup>21</sup> Moreover the soul that shall touch any unclean *thing*, *as* the uncleanness of man, or *any* unclean beast, or any abominable unclean *thing*, and eat of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace offerings, which *pertain* unto the LORD, even that soul shall be cut off from his people. <sup>22</sup> And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, <sup>23</sup> Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, Ye shall eat no manner of fat, of ox, or of sheep, or of goat. <sup>24</sup> And the fat of the beast that dieth of itself, and the fat of that which is torn with beasts, may be used in any other use: but ye shall in no wise eat of it. <sup>25</sup> For whosoever eateth the fat of the beast, of which men offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD, even the soul that eateth *it* shall be cut off from his people. <sup>26</sup> Moreover ye shall eat no manner of blood, *whether it be* of fowl or of beast, in any of your dwellings. <sup>27</sup> Whatsoever soul *it be* that eateth any manner of blood, even that soul shall be cut off from his people. <sup>28</sup> And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, <sup>29</sup> Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, He that offereth the sacrifice of his peace offerings unto the LORD shall bring his oblation unto the LORD of the sacrifice of his peace offerings. <sup>30</sup> His own hands shall bring the offerings of the LORD made by fire, the fat with the breast, it shall he bring, that the breast may be waved *for* a wave offering before the LORD. <sup>31</sup> And the priest shall burn the fat upon the altar: but the breast shall be Aaron's and his sons'. <sup>32</sup> And the right shoulder shall ye give unto the priest *for* an heave offering of the sacrifices of your peace offerings. <sup>33</sup> He among the sons of Aaron, that offereth the blood of the peace offerings, and the fat, shall have the right shoulder *for* his part. <sup>34</sup> For the wave breast and the heave shoulder have I taken of the children of Israel from off the sacrifices of their peace offerings, and have given them unto Aaron the priest and unto his sons by a statute for ever from among the children of Israel. <sup>35</sup> This is *the portion* of the anointing of Aaron, and of the anointing of his sons, out of the offerings of the LORD made by fire, in the day *when* he presented them to minister unto the LORD in the priest's office; <sup>36</sup> Which the LORD commanded to be given them of the children of Israel, in the day that he anointed them, *by* a statute for ever throughout their generations. <sup>37</sup> This is the

law of the burnt offering, of the meat offering, and of the sin offering, and of the trespass offering, and of the consecrations, and of the sacrifice of the peace offerings; <sup>38</sup> Which the LORD commanded Moses in mount Sinai, in the day that he commanded the children of Israel to offer their oblations unto the LORD, in the wilderness of Sinai).

The following could be taken to any clean place in the camp and eaten by the families of the priests: the heave offerings, the wave offerings, parts of the Nazarite's ram, the firstlings of the flocks, and the firstfruits of harvests (**Numbers 6:17 (KJV)** <sup>17</sup> And he shall offer the ram *for* a sacrifice of peace offerings unto the LORD, with the basket of unleavened bread: the priest shall offer also his meat offering, and his drink offering. **Numbers 6:20 (KJV)** <sup>20</sup> And the priest shall wave them *for* a wave offering before the LORD: this *is* holy for the priest, with the wave breast and heave shoulder: and after that the Nazarite may drink wine. **Numbers 18:11-19**).

Certain offerings were exclusive to life in Canaan and were brought to the set-apart servants of God as directed by Him: the heave offering of the firstfruits of the regular harvest, the tithes of their increase, the cake of the first of their dough, the first of the fleece; and also certain cities and fields of possession in which to live (**Numbers 15:20 (KJV)** <sup>20</sup> Ye shall offer up a cake of the first of your dough *for* an heave offering: as *ye do* the heave offering of the threshingfloor, so shall ye heave it. **Numbers 18:12 (KJV)** <sup>12</sup> 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. **Numbers 18:28 (KJV)** <sup>28</sup> 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. **Numbers 35:1-34 (KJV)** <sup>1</sup> And the LORD spake unto Moses in the plains of Moab by Jordan *near* Jericho, saying, <sup>2</sup> Command the children of Israel, that they give unto the Levites of the inheritance of their possession cities to dwell in; and ye shall give *also* unto the Levites suburbs for the cities round about them. <sup>3</sup> And the cities shall they have to dwell in; and the suburbs of them shall be for their cattle, and for their goods, and for all their beasts. <sup>4</sup> And the suburbs of the cities, which ye shall give unto the Levites, *shall reach* from the wall of the city and outward a thousand cubits round about. <sup>5</sup> And ye shall measure from without the city on the east side two thousand cubits, and on the south side two thousand cubits, and on the west side two thousand cubits, and on the north side two thousand cubits; and the city *shall be* in the midst: this shall be to them the suburbs of the cities. <sup>6</sup> And among the cities which ye shall give unto the Levites *there shall be* six cities for refuge, which ye shall appoint for the manslayer, that he may flee thither: and to them ye shall add forty and two cities. <sup>7</sup> So all the cities which ye shall give to the Levites *shall be* forty and eight cities: them *shall ye give* with their suburbs. <sup>8</sup> And the cities which ye shall give *shall be* of the possession of the children of Israel: from *them that have many* ye shall give many; but from *them that have few* ye shall give few: every one shall give of his cities unto the Levites according to his inheritance which he inheriteth. <sup>9</sup> And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, <sup>10</sup> Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come over Jordan into the land of Canaan; <sup>11</sup> Then ye shall appoint you cities to be cities of refuge for you; that the slayer may flee thither, which killeth any person at unawares. <sup>12</sup> And they shall be unto you cities for refuge from the avenger; that the manslayer

die not, until he stand before the congregation in judgment. <sup>13</sup> And of these cities which ye shall give six cities shall ye have for refuge. <sup>14</sup> Ye shall give three cities on this side Jordan, and three cities shall ye give in the land of Canaan, *which* shall be cities of refuge. <sup>15</sup> These six cities shall be a refuge, *both* for the children of Israel, and for the stranger, and for the sojourner among them: that every one that killeth any person unawares may flee thither. <sup>16</sup> And if he smite him with an instrument of iron, so that he die, he is a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death. <sup>17</sup> And if he smite him with throwing a stone, wherewith he may die, and he die, he is a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death. <sup>18</sup> Or *if* he smite him with an hand weapon of wood, wherewith he may die, and he die, he is a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death. <sup>19</sup> The revenger of blood himself shall slay the murderer: when he meeteth him, he shall slay him. <sup>20</sup> But if he thrust him of hatred, or hurl at him by laying of wait, that he die; <sup>21</sup> Or in enmity smite him with his hand, that he die: he that smote *him* shall surely be put to death; *for* he is a murderer: the revenger of blood shall slay the murderer, when he meeteth him. <sup>22</sup> But if he thrust him suddenly without enmity, or have cast upon him any thing without laying of wait, <sup>23</sup> Or with any stone, wherewith a man may die, seeing *him* not, and cast *it* upon him, that he die, and *was* not his enemy, neither sought his harm: <sup>24</sup> Then the congregation shall judge between the slayer and the revenger of blood according to these judgments: <sup>25</sup> And the congregation shall deliver the slayer out of the hand of the revenger of blood, and the congregation shall restore him to the city of his refuge, whither he was fled: and he shall abide in it unto the death of the high priest, which was anointed with the holy oil. <sup>26</sup> But if the slayer shall at any time come without the border of the city of his refuge, whither he was fled; <sup>27</sup> And the revenger of blood find him without the borders of the city of his refuge, and the revenger of blood kill the slayer; he shall not be guilty of blood: <sup>28</sup> Because he should have remained in the city of his refuge until the death of the high priest: but after the death of the high priest the slayer shall return into the land of his possession. <sup>29</sup> So these *things* shall be for a statute of judgment unto you throughout your generations in all your dwellings. <sup>30</sup> Whoso killeth any person, the murderer shall be put to death by the mouth of witnesses: but one witness shall not testify against any person *to cause him* to die. <sup>31</sup> Moreover ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer, which is guilty of death: but he shall be surely put to death. <sup>32</sup> And ye shall take no satisfaction for him that is fled to the city of his refuge, that he should come again to dwell in the land, until the death of the priest. <sup>33</sup> So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye *are*: for blood it defileth the land: and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it. <sup>34</sup> Defile not therefore the land which ye shall inhabit, wherein I dwell: for I the LORD dwell among the children of Israel.

**Deuteronomy 18:4 (KJV)** <sup>4</sup> The firstfruit *also* of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the first of the fleece of thy sheep, shalt thou give him. **Leviticus 22:17 (KJV)** <sup>17</sup> And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, **Leviticus 22:25 (KJV)** <sup>25</sup> Neither from a stranger's hand shall ye offer the bread of your God of any of these; because their corruption is in them, *and* blemishes *be* in them: they shall not be accepted for you).

In addition to these offerings other things were designated as belonging to the priests and their families, or the Levites and their families, according to the plan ordained by God. These were given to supply their needs and to be used by them as freely as if they, personally, had

raised the produce or tenderly cared for the young animal. These could also be used in every place where they were: gifts of slain animals, the redemption money brought to redeem the firstborn Children of Israel (whose original places were in God's service but who were supplanted by the Levites), the lamb substituted for the firstling of an unclean animal, certain things that were unclaimed, things devoted to God - one of which was the skin of the burnt offering offered in either the morning or evening sacrifice, or other burnt offerings brought for special or seasonal sacrifices, - and restitution money when it was impossible to contact the injured party (**Exodus 34:20 (KJV)** <sup>20</sup> But the firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb: and if thou redeem *him* not, then shalt thou break his neck. All the firstborn of thy sons thou shalt redeem. And none shall appear before me empty. **Leviticus 7:8 (KJV)** <sup>8</sup> And the priest that offereth any man's burnt offering, *even* the priest shall have to himself the skin of the burnt offering which he hath offered. **Numbers 5:8 (KJV)** <sup>8</sup> But if the man have no kinsman to recompense the trespass unto, let the trespass be recompensed unto the LORD, *even* to the priest; beside the ram of the atonement, whereby an atonement shall be made for him. **Numbers 18:15-19 (KJV)** <sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> And the flesh of them shall be thine, as the wave breast and as the right shoulder are thine. <sup>19</sup> 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. **Deuteronomy 18:3-5 (KJV)** <sup>3</sup> And this shall be the priest's due from the people, from them that offer a sacrifice, *whether it be* ox or sheep; and they shall give unto the priest the shoulder, and the two cheeks, and the maw. <sup>4</sup> The firstfruit *also* of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the first of the fleece of thy sheep, shalt thou give him. <sup>5</sup> For the LORD thy God hath chosen him out of all thy tribes, to stand to minister in the name of the LORD, him and his sons for ever). The flesh of burnt offerings was not given to the priests or Levites, because it was to be entirely consumed on the altar.

God reminded the people, through Moses, that they should never forget the Levites who were separated unto Him and who had no inheritance of real property in the Promised Land (**Deuteronomy 14:27 (KJV)** <sup>27</sup> And the Levite that is within thy gates; thou shalt not forsake him; for he hath no part nor inheritance with thee. **Deuteronomy 16:11 (KJV)** <sup>11</sup> And thou shalt rejoice before the LORD thy God, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that is within thy gates, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that *are* among you, in the place which the LORD thy God hath chosen to place his name there. **Deuteronomy 16:14 (KJV)** <sup>14</sup> And thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless, and the

widow, that *are within thy gates*). The people were admonished to treat these separated ones kindly and with a certain reverence and honor, because of the place they filled in God's worship and service.

God spoke of these obligations which He placed upon the Israelites, the keeping of which was essential to the happiness, well-being, and security of the nation as a whole as well as of the individual, in the same way as He would speak of a covenant. In fact, He made a covenant with them and called it a "covenant of salt." This figure of speech came from the well-known fact that salt preserved and kept foods, and especially meats, from decay or corruption. Therefore, a "covenant of salt" was one that would not change or pass away but would be preserved forever.

### **God's Plan for Us Today**

The days of the kingdom of Israel are examples to us in many ways. We, too, can come to God with our spiritual sacrifices and offerings of the firstfruits to receive definite blessings from Him. But, it must be remembered, the requirements of the Gospel period are no less than the exacting rules of the Law. Obedience is sure to bring great blessing while disobedience will cause divine displeasure and certain judgment.

The payment of the tithes of their increase was a solemn responsibility for all the Israelites and, as we have seen, the main source of support for the Levites and priests. But the payment of tithes was not new with the giving of the Law, for we read that 600 years earlier Abraham observed that practice; and later, Jacob, also. They acknowledged by their acts that tithing was a principle already instituted by God previous to their time.

**(Hebrews 7:1-6 (KJV)** <sup>1</sup> For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; <sup>2</sup> To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; <sup>3</sup> Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually. <sup>4</sup> Now consider how great this man *was*, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. <sup>5</sup> And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham:<sup>6</sup> But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises. **Genesis 28:22 (KJV)** <sup>22</sup> And this stone, which I have set *for* a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.) Therefore, the payment of tithes, like the moral principles of the Law, was not a practice instituted for the Jews alone but is also an obligation for us today.

The Apostle Paul wrote the Christians at Corinth, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him" (I Corinthians 16:2). Jesus not only sanctioned the giving to God of a widow's last two mites but commended her for doing so. Jesus also positively stated that tithing was for the present time when He reproved the scribes and Pharisees by saying, "Woe unto

you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone" (Matthew 23:23).

There is great blessing promised to those who obey God's Word. He tells us that He will pour out a blessing upon us that will be greater than our ability to receive, if we honor Him by obeying His Word in this matter. (**Malachi 3:8-10 (KJV)** <sup>8</sup> Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. <sup>9</sup> Ye *are* cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, *even* this whole nation. <sup>10</sup> Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that *there shall not be room enough to receive it.*) He also said, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

Happy are those people, indeed, who keep God's covenants and who walk in His ways! Happy are they who do His will and never fail to honor His Word by keeping every particular of it! Happy are those who dedicate **their lives to His service and who trust Him for their** daily bread and sustenance, whose strength is the joy of the Lord and whose inheritance is the Lord Himself! There is no joy to compare with theirs, and no satisfaction that can equal that which comes with each day spent entirely in laboring in His vineyard!

### **QUESTIONS**

- 1 Why did God concern Himself with the material maintenance of His servants?
- 2 What were the responsibilities of the priests?
- 3 What main responsibilities were given the Levites?
- 4 Describe how the priests were maintained, particularly in the matter of their food.
- 5 How did the families of the priests get their food and other necessities?
- 6 What great provision of God's ordinance took care of the main needs of the Levites?
- 7 What must the Levites give to the priests before their own personal needs could be satisfied?
- 8 Tell of the principle of redemption of the firstborn of unclean animals.
- 9 Why did the firstborn son have to be redeemed and to whom was the redemption money given?
- 10 What obligation do Christians today have toward the maintenance of God's work?