

# Deuteronomy 18:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

## Analysis

**The priests the Levites, and all the tribe of Levi, shall have no part nor inheritance with Israel** (לֹא־יִהְיֶה לַכֹּהֲנִים הַלֵּוִיִּם כֶּל־שֶׁבֶט לִי חֵלֶק וְנַחֲלָה עַם־יִשְׂרָאֵל)—God Himself is their nachalah (inheritance). Unlike the other tribes who received land territories, the Levites' portion was sacred service and divine provision through **the offerings of the LORD made by fire** (isheh YHWH).

The phrase isheh refers specifically to burnt offerings consumed on the altar, while **his inheritance** (nachalato) means God's own portion. The Levites ate what was offered to God—a profound intimacy. This establishes a radical principle: those devoted to God's service depend entirely on His provision through His people's obedience. Numbers 18:20 makes this explicit: "I am thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel."

Paul applies this principle in 1 Corinthians 9:13-14—"they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple"—establishing that gospel ministers deserve material support. The Levitical model foreshadows the New Covenant reality that God Himself is the believer's true inheritance (Psalm 16:5, Ephesians 1:18).

## Historical Context

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This law was given on the plains of Moab (circa 1406 BC) just before Israel entered Canaan, where land distribution would occur. The tribe of Levi descended from Jacob's third son but was set apart for priesthood after the golden calf incident (Exodus 32:26-29). Instead of territorial inheritance, the Levites received 48 cities scattered throughout Israel's tribal territories (Numbers 35:1-8, Joshua 21), allowing them to teach the law and serve in worship centers while depending on tithes and offerings for sustenance.

## Related Passages

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**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

## Study Questions

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1. How does the Levitical model of God as inheritance challenge modern materialism and security-seeking?
2. What does it mean practically for believers today to say 'God is my portion' when we still need food, shelter, and income?

## Interlinear Text

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לֹא	הָיָה	לְכֹהֲנֵי יָם	הַלְוִיִּם	כָּל	שֵׁבֶט	לֵוִי
H3808	H1961	The priests	the Levites	H3605	and all the tribe	of Levi
		H3548	H3881		H7626	H3878
יֵהְיוּ	לֵךְ	וְנִחְלָתוֹ	עִם	יִשְׂרָאֵל	אֲשֶׁר	יְהוָה
	shall have no part	and his inheritance	H5973	with Israel	made by fire	of the LORD
	H2506	H5159		H3478	H801	H3068
וְנִחְלָתוֹ	יֹאכֲלוּ:					
and his inheritance	they shall eat					
H5159	H398					

## Additional Cross-References

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**Deuteronomy 10:9** (References Lord): Wherefore Levi hath no part nor inheritance with his brethren; the LORD is his inheritance, according as the LORD thy God promised him.

**Deuteronomy 12:19** (Parallel theme): Take heed to thyself that thou forsake not the Levite as long as thou livest upon the earth.

**Joshua 13:14** (Creation): 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.

**Numbers 18:20** (References Lord): 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.