

Numbers 18:26

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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—The Levitical tithe (מַעֲשֵׂר ma'aser, tenth) became their **inheritance** (נַחֲלָה nachalah) replacing landed property other tribes received. From this tithe-income, Levites offered a **heave offering** (תְּרוּמָה terumah, contribution lifted up) to God, practically given to priests.

The phrase **which I have given you from them** emphasizes divine sourcing—the tithe was God's gift to Levites, not merely Israelite generosity. This established that all resources ultimately come from God, even income from ministry service. Paul echoes this principle: 'What do you have that you did not receive?' (1 Corinthians 4:7).

Historical Context

Israel's eleven non-Levitical tribes gave 10% of agricultural and livestock produce to support Levites. Levites then gave 10% of their tithe-income (1% of Israel's total productivity) to Aaronic priests. This created economic interdependence across all tribes, binding the nation through mutual provision.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does viewing ministry income as 'inheritance from the LORD' (not earned wages) shape attitudes toward giving and stewardship?
2. What does the heave offering 'lifted up for the LORD' symbolize about directing all resources toward divine glory?
3. How can believers practice multi-level generosity, giving from what we've already received as gifts from God?

Interlinear Text

וְאֵל H413	הַלְוִיִּם unto the Levites H3881	תְּדַבֵּר Thus speak H1696	וְאָמַרְתָּ and say H559	אֲלֵהֶם H413	כִּי H3588
	וְתִקְחוּ unto them H3947	מֵאֵת H853	בְּנֵי of the children H1121	יִשְׂרָאֵל of Israel H3478	הַמַּעֲשֹׂר: even a tenth H4643
אֲשֶׁר H834	נָתַתִּי which I have given H5414	לָכֶם H0	מֵאֵת H853	בְּנֵיכֶם you from them H5159	לְיִרְשָׁתְּכֶם for your inheritance
וְהִרְמֹתֶם then ye shall offer H7311	מִמֶּנּוּ H4480	תְּרוֹמַת up an heave offering H8641	יְהוָה of it for the LORD H3068	הַמַּעֲשֹׂר: even a tenth H4643	
מִן H4480	הַמַּעֲשֹׂר: even a tenth H4643				

Additional Cross-References

Nehemiah 10:38 (Parallel theme): 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.

Numbers 18:21 (References Israel): 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.