

# Numbers 18:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

This shall be thine of the most holy things, reserved from the fire: every oblation of their's, every meat offering of their's, and every sin offering of their's, and every trespass offering of their's, which they shall render unto me, shall be most holy for thee and for thy sons.

## Analysis

**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.** God designates specific sacrificial portions for priestly support. The phrase *qodesh haqqodashim* (שְׁדֵי קֹדֶשׁ, "most holy things") indicates supreme consecration—these offerings belonged to the highest category of holiness.

"Reserved from the fire" (*min ha-esh*, מִן הָאֵשׁ) means the portions not consumed on the altar. While most sacrifice was burned, specific parts became priestly food. The four categories—*minchah* (grain offering), *chattat* (sin offering), and *asham* (trespass/guilt offering)—represent the primary non-burnt sacrifices whose remains sustained the priesthood. This established the principle that those who serve the altar share in its provisions (1 Corinthians 9:13-14).

This divinely-ordained support system prevented priests from needing secular employment, freeing them for full-time ministry. The holy nature of their sustenance reminded them constantly that they lived on grace—their food came from offerings bringing reconciliation between God and His people. Paul later

applied this principle: those who preach the gospel should live by the gospel (1 Corinthians 9:14).

## Historical Context

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This instruction came after Korah's rebellion (Numbers 16-17) when God reaffirmed Aaron's priesthood and defined priestly prerogatives precisely. In ancient Near Eastern temples, priests typically consumed portions of sacrifices, but Israel's system was unique in tying priestly support directly to atonement offerings. Unlike Egyptian or Mesopotamian priests who often accumulated vast wealth and land, Israel's priests were sustained solely through designated sacrificial portions and tithes, preventing them from becoming a landed aristocracy. This arrangement continued throughout the temple period until AD 70.

## Related Passages

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**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

## Study Questions

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1. How does the principle of supporting spiritual workers 'from the altar' apply to supporting pastors and missionaries today?
2. What does it mean that those who minister holy things must be sustained by holy provision rather than secular wealth?
3. How does eating from atonement offerings daily remind ministers that they live by grace, not merit?

## Interlinear Text

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זֶה	יְהִי הֵ	לָב	קֹדֶשׁ יִם	קֹדֶשׁ יִם	
H2088	H1961	H0	This shall be thine of the most	This shall be thine of the most	
			H6944	H6944	
מִן	הָאֵשׁ	כָּל	קֹדֶשׁ רִבְּנִים	לְכָל	מִנְחָתָם
H4480	reserved from the fire	H3605	every oblation	H3605	of theirs every meat offering
	H784		H7133		H4503
וּלְכָל	חַטָּאתָם	וּלְכָל	אֲשָׁמָם		
H3605	of theirs and every sin offering	H3605	of theirs and every trespass offering		
	H2403		H817		
אֲשֶׁר	יִשְׁ יָבוּ	לִי	קֹדֶשׁ יִם		
H834	of theirs which they shall render	H0	This shall be thine of the most		
	H7725		H6944		
קֹדֶשׁ יִם	הָאֵשׁ	וּלְבָנֶיךָ			
This shall be thine of the most		for thee and for thy sons			
H6944		H1121			

## Additional Cross-References

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**Leviticus 7:7** (Sin): 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.

**Leviticus 4:22** (Sin): When a ruler hath sinned, and done somewhat through ignorance against any of the commandments of the LORD his God concerning things which should not be done, and is guilty;

**Leviticus 4:27** (Sin): And if any one of the common people sin through ignorance, while he doeth somewhat against any of the commandments of the LORD concerning things which ought not to be done, and be guilty;

**Leviticus 14:13** (Holy): And he shall slay the lamb in the place where he shall kill the sin offering and the burnt offering, in the holy place: for as the sin offering is the priest's, so is the trespass offering: it is most holy:

