

Numbers 8:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

Thou shalt set the Levites before Aaron, and before his sons—the positioning matters: the Levites stand between the priests and the people, subordinate to the Aaronic priesthood yet elevated above the laity. **Offer them for an offering unto the LORD** repeats the *tenufah* concept from verse 11, emphasizing that this is no mere assignment but a solemn presentation. The Hebrew root נָתַן (*natan*, 'to give') appears throughout this chapter—the Levites are 'given' ones, wholly devoted.

This three-tiered structure (people—Levites—priests) reflects the gradations of holiness in God's dwelling place. Yet it also anticipates the NT breaking down of barriers: Christ our High Priest makes all believers both 'kings and priests' (Revelation 1:6), collapsing the hierarchy through his mediating work.

Historical Context

Aaron, as high priest, received the Levites as assistants to the priesthood. This organizational structure remained until the Babylonian exile (586 BC), though Levitical roles evolved significantly during the monarchy period with temple construction.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does the 'given' status of the Levites challenge modern concepts of self-determination and autonomy?
2. What gradations of service exist in the church today, and how do they relate to this ancient pattern?
3. How does Christ's priesthood both fulfill and abolish the Levitical order?

Interlinear Text

וְהַעֲמַדְתָּ	אֶת	הַלְוִיִּם	וּלְפָנַי	אַהֲרֹן	וּלְפָנַי	בְּנֵי יוֹ
And thou shalt set	H853	the Levites	and before	Aaron	and before	his sons
H5975		H3881	H6440	H175	H6440	H1121
וְהִנֵּפְתָּ	אֹתָם	תְּנוֹפֵף	לִיהוָה:			
and offer	H853	them for an offering	unto the LORD			
H5130		H8573	H3068			

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 8:11 (Sacrifice): 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.

Numbers 8:21 (Sacrifice): 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.