

# Numbers 8:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thus shalt thou separate the Levites from among the children of Israel: and the Levites shall be mine.

## Analysis

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Thus shalt thou separate the Levites from among the children of Israel: and the Levites shall be mine.<sup>1</sup> God commands the Levites' consecration, separating them from other tribes for His service. The verb 'separate' (badal, 'בָּדַל') indicates setting apart, distinguishing from common use. The possessive 'shall be mine' declares divine ownership. The Levites belonged to God in a special way beyond general covenant membership. This demonstrates the principle of consecrated service—God claims certain ones for dedicated ministry. The separation wasn't superiority but specialized calling. Paul uses similar language: 'separated unto the gospel of God' (Romans 1:1). All believers are God's possession (1 Corinthians 6:19-20), but some are specially called to vocational ministry. The Levites' setting apart teaches that God's service requires distinct consecration, not casual availability.

## Historical Context

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The Levites' consecration ceremony (Numbers 8:5-22) involved washing, shaving entire body, offering sacrifices, and the Israelites laying hands on them, symbolically transferring the firstborn's service to Levites. This occurred after the tabernacle's dedication (Numbers 7) during the Sinai encampment. The laying on of hands represented identification and substitution—the Levites stood in for all Israel's firstborn (Numbers 3:12-13). Ancient Near Eastern priestly consecrations often involved washing and special clothing, but Israel's ceremony was unique in involving the entire congregation. The Levites' service began at age twenty-five or thirty (Numbers 4:3; 8:24) and ended at fifty, ensuring capable workers. Their

separation meant no tribal land inheritance (Numbers 18:20-24) but receiving tithes and living in designated cities (Numbers 35:1-8). The principle of separating individuals for God's service continued in apostolic ordination (Acts 13:2-3).

## Related Passages

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**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

## Study Questions

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1. What does the Levites' separation unto God teach about the distinctiveness required for ministry service?
2. How does the principle of being 'separated unto God' apply to all Christians, and specially to those in vocational ministry?

## Interlinear Text

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וְתִדְלֹת	את	בָּלִים	מִתְּנִינָה	בְּנֵי
Thus shalt thou separate	H853	and the Levites	from among	the children
	H914		H3881	H1121
לְ	וּ	בְּ	יְ	יִשְׁרָאֵל
of Israel	H1961	H0	and the Levites	
	H3478		H3881	

## Additional Cross-References

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**Malachi 3:17** (Parallel theme): And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.

**Numbers 3:45** (References Israel): 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.

**Numbers 18:6** (References Israel): 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.

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