

# Numbers 8:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And I have given the Levites as a gift to Aaron and to his sons from among the children of Israel, to do the service of the children of Israel in the tabernacle of the congregation, and to make an atonement for the children of Israel: that there be no plague among the children of Israel, when the children of Israel come nigh unto the sanctuary.

## Analysis

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God says: 'I have given the Levites as a gift to Aaron and to his sons... to make an atonement for the children of Israel.' The threefold repetition of 'given' emphasizes divine appointment. Levites served as gifts to help priests fulfill their duties, making 'atonement' (kaphar - covering/reconciliation) through assisting in sacrificial worship. This service prevented plagues when Israelites came near the sanctuary (v.19b). The giving of persons as gifts illustrates Christ's gift of spiritual leaders to the church (Eph 4:11) and ultimately the Spirit's gifting of all believers for ministry (1 Cor 12:4-11). All ministry is God's gift, not human achievement.

## Historical Context

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This consecration followed elaborate purification rituals (v.5-18) setting Levites apart for service. The phrase 'make atonement' here refers not to forgiveness of sins (only blood sacrifices accomplished that) but to maintaining proper relationship between holy God and the people. Levites' service in handling sacred objects and maintaining the sanctuary prevented unauthorized approach that would bring divine judgment. The arrangement protected both God's holiness and

Israel's safety, demonstrating that worship requires qualified mediators - ultimately fulfilled in Christ, our great High Priest.

## **Related Passages**

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**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

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

## **Study Questions**

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1. Do you recognize spiritual leaders and your own gifts as God's gracious provision to the church, not achievements to boast about?
2. How are you using your spiritual gifts to assist in building up the body and preventing spiritual harm to the congregation?

## Interlinear Text

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וְנָתַנְי יִם	אֶת	הַלְוִיִּם	וְנָתַנְי יִם	לְאַהֲרֹן	בְּנֵי
And I have given	H853	the Levites	And I have given	to Aaron	among the children
H5414		H3881	H5414	H175	H1121
מִתּוֹךְ	בְּנֵי	יִשְׂרָאֵל	לַעֲבֹד	אֶת	עֲבֹדָת
from among	among the children	of Israel	to do	H853	the service
H8432	H1121	H3478	H5647		H5656
בְּנֵי	יִשְׂרָאֵל	בְּאֵל	מוֹעֵד		
among the children	of Israel	in the tabernacle	of the congregation		
H1121	H3478	H168	H4150		
וְלָכַף	עַל	בְּנֵי	יִשְׂרָאֵל	וְלֹא	יְהִי הָ
and to make an atonement	H5921	among the children	of Israel	H3808	H1961
H3722		H1121	H3478		
בְּנֵי	יִשְׂרָאֵל	וְגַם	בֵּגֶד		
among the children	of Israel	that there be no plague	come nigh		
H1121	H3478	H5063	H5066		
בְּנֵי	יִשְׂרָאֵל	אֶל	הַקֹּדֶשׁ:		
among the children	of Israel	H413	unto the sanctuary		
H1121	H3478		H6944		

## Additional Cross-References

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**Numbers 1:53** (Temple): But the Levites shall pitch round about the tabernacle of testimony, that there be no wrath upon the congregation of the children of Israel: and the Levites shall keep the charge of the tabernacle of testimony.

**Numbers 16:46** (Parallel theme): And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly unto the congregation, and make an atonement for them: for there is wrath gone out from the LORD; the plague is begun.

