

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

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

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

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

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

בְּנֵי	לְאַהֲרֹן	וּנְתַנְתֵּן	יָמִן	אֶת	פְּלִוִיִּם	לְעִמּוֹת	יְמִנָּה	נְתַנְתֵּן	יָמִן	אֶת	לְאַהֲרֹן	וּלְאֶתְנָהָרָן	בְּנֵי	
And I have given	H853	the Levites	And I have given	H175	to Aaron	among the children								
H5414		H3881	H5414		H175								H1121	
מִתּוֹךְ	בְּנֵי	עֲבָדָת	לְעַבְדָּה	וְיִשְׂרָאֵל	לְעַבְדָּה	בְּנֵי	מִתּוֹךְ	בְּנֵי	מִתּוֹךְ	בְּנֵי	מִתּוֹךְ	בְּנֵי	מִתּוֹךְ	
from among	H8432	among the children	of Israel	H3478	to do	H853	the service	H5647	H5656					
H1121		H1121	H3478		H5647	H5656								
בְּנֵי	לְיִשְׂרָאֵל	בְּאֹהֶל	מִזְבֵּחַ	בְּאֹהֶל	מִזְבֵּחַ	בְּנֵי	לְיִשְׂרָאֵל	בְּנֵי	לְיִשְׂרָאֵל	בְּנֵי	לְיִשְׂרָאֵל	בְּנֵי	לְיִשְׂרָאֵל	
among the children	H1121	of Israel	H3478	H168	of the congregation	H4150								
H1121		H3478		H168	H4150									
וְלִכְפֵּר	עַל	בְּנֵי	בְּנֵי	וְלִכְפֵּר	עַל	בְּנֵי	וְלִכְפֵּר	בְּנֵי	וְלִכְפֵּר	בְּנֵי	וְלִכְפֵּר	בְּנֵי	וְלִכְפֵּר	
and to make an atonement	H3722	H5921	among the children	H1121	of Israel	H3478	of Israel	H3808	H1961					
בְּנֵי	לְיִשְׂרָאֵל	בְּגַג	בְּגַג	בְּגַג	שְׁתִּים	בְּנֵי	לְיִשְׂרָאֵל	בְּגַג	שְׁתִּים	בְּנֵי	לְיִשְׂרָאֵל	בְּגַג	שְׁתִּים	
among the children	H1121	of Israel	H3478	H5063	H5066	come nigh	that there be no plague	H5063	H5066					
H1121		H3478		H5063	H5066									
בְּנֵי	לְיִשְׂרָאֵל	אֶל	בְּנֵי	בְּנֵי	בְּנֵי	בְּנֵי	לְיִשְׂרָאֵל	אֶל	בְּנֵי	לְיִשְׂרָאֵל	אֶל	בְּנֵי	לְיִשְׂרָאֵל	
among the children	H1121	of Israel	H3478	H413	H6944	unto the sanctuary	unto the sanctuary	H6944						
H1121		H3478		H413	H6944									

Additional Cross-References

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.

