

Numbers 8:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Take the Levites from among the children of Israel, and cleanse them.

Analysis

God commands Moses to separate the Levites and 'cleanse them' for service. The Hebrew 'tahir' (cleanse/purify) indicates ceremonial purification, requiring sprinkling with 'water of purifying' (mei chatat - literally 'water of sin'), shaving all their flesh, washing their clothes, and offering sacrifices (v.7). This thorough purification emphasizes that even serving God's house requires cleansing - human effort and sincerity aren't sufficient. The Levites' consecration typifies believers' cleansing through Christ's blood and water (1 John 5:6), being separated from the world unto God's service. The laying on of Israel's hands (v.10) identified Levites as the nation's representatives before God.

Historical Context

This consecration occurred at Sinai before Israel's wilderness march. The Levites replaced Israel's firstborn in tabernacle service (v.16-18), requiring special purification exceeding ordinary Israelites'. The ceremony was public, involving the entire congregation (v.9), demonstrating that those who lead in worship must be visibly set apart and purified. The Levitical system continued until the Second Temple's destruction in 70 AD. Modern pastors and church leaders, while not priestly mediators, should model similar consecration and moral purity (1 Tim 3:1-13).

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. Have you undergone spiritual cleansing and separation unto God's service, or are you trying to serve with uncleansed hands?
2. How does understanding your need for daily cleansing affect your ministry and witness?

Interlinear Text

ח	ק	את	הַלְוִיִּם	מִתּוֹךְ	בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל	וְטָהַרְתָּ
Take	H853	the Levites	from among	the children	of Israel	and cleanse
H3947		H3881	H8432	H1121	H3478	H2891

אַתֶּם:

H853

Additional Cross-References

2 Corinthians 7:1 (Parallel theme): Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

James 4:8 (Parallel theme): Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.