

**Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)**

**Numbers 18: 8-20**

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank God, it's time to read the Bible again. We continue to read Numbers chapter 18. Today we will read from verse 8 to verse 20.

Through Aaron's rod that had budded, God made it clear that He had chosen Aaron to be the high priest. This established Aaron's identity and position among the people of Israel. After this, God spoke directly to Aaron. It was God who bestowed the priestly office upon Aaron and his sons, so that they could serve the LORD and minister before the Tabernacle. God also gave the Levites to the priests. They were to help the priests handle various responsibilities and to guard the Tabernacle, so that the Israelites would not commit the sin of trespassing against the sanctuary. The Levites, however, were not permitted to come into contact with the holy things, lest they commit the sin of trespassing against the responsibility entrusted to the priests. The priests and the Levites had to be joined to Aaron in order to fulfill their respective ministries properly.

From the perspective of New Testament typology, everything in the church today, whether spiritual matters or practical affairs, must be joined to Christ, the Head. Christ is the Head of the church; if we are not joined to Christ, there is no ministry. I hope that all the saints can reflect on and examine every ministry in the church: Is it joined to Christ? Does it begin with the will of Christ? Is it carried out by the power of Christ? And, ultimately, does all the glory go to Christ? If we examine every ministry in the church this strictly, we will discover that the church life is actually very simple and very light.

Next, God told Aaron what portion the priests were entitled to receive. This is like what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 9:14, "Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel." God desires to supply those who serve Him, so that they do not need to worry or labor for their livelihood.

**Verse 8: “And the Lord spoke to Aaron: “Here, I Myself have also given you charge of My heave offerings, all the holy gifts of the children of Israel; I have given them as a portion to you and your sons, as an ordinance forever.”**

When the Israelites presented a wave offering to God, they took the offering they intended to give and waved it up and down with their hands. This offering was thereby set apart as holy and given to God. God then entrusted these consecrated offerings to Aaron the high priest to administer. When the high priest was first inducted into the priestly office, he had already been anointed and was thereby completely set apart and consecrated to God. Therefore, he was able to administer the offerings that the people brought to God. God then gave these consecrated offerings to Aaron and his descendants as the priests’ perpetual portion.

There is a very important detail here: the people offered their offerings to God, and God then gave what they had offered as a provision to Aaron and his descendants. The people did not offer their offerings directly to the priests; rather, they offered them to God, and God then gave them to the priests. Today, in some churches that have a pastoral system, one of the most common difficulties is that the elders and deacons who represent the congregation often think that they are the ones supporting the pastor. Therefore, they establish all kinds of evaluation systems for the pastor and determine his salary based on his performance. This is a serious mistake. The offerings of the congregation are offered to God. Since they are offered to God, God has the sovereignty to give what has been offered to servants who are according to His heart. The congregation has no authority to manage the resources that they have already offered to God.

God entrusted the consecrated offerings brought by the Israelites to Aaron to administer. After that, even how Aaron distributed them among his descendants was not something Aaron could control according to his own will. God had already established many regulations concerning this matter. The following passages give very detailed instructions. Aaron had to distribute these consecrated offerings appropriately, according to the regulations that God had established.

**Verse 9-10: “This shall be yours of the most holy things reserved from the fire: every offering of theirs, every grain offering and every sin offering and every trespass offering which they render to Me, shall be most holy for you and your sons. In a most holy place you shall eat it; every male shall eat it. It shall be holy to you.”**

This is the first category of offerings that were given to the priests. When the people offered a grain offering, a sin offering, and a trespass offering, the grain offering was an accompanying offering. In other words, whenever the people offered a sin offering or a trespass offering, they were required to offer a grain offering together with it. When the people offered a grain offering, a sin offering, and a trespass offering, the best portion of these offerings was to be burned on the altar and offered to God as a sweet-smelling offering. For example, the fat and the entrails of the sacrificial animal were to pass through the fire. The priests were to handle these sacrifices according to the regulations concerning the offerings, and they were to burn the best portions on the altar and offer them to God. The portions that remained and did not pass through the fire were still most holy and were to belong to the priests—that is, to the male descendants of Aaron.

According to Leviticus 6:16, “The remainder of it Aaron and his sons shall eat; with unleavened bread it shall be eaten in a holy place; in the court of the tabernacle of meeting they shall eat it.” Leviticus 6:26 says, “The priest who offers it for sin shall eat it. In a holy place it shall be eaten, in the court of the tabernacle of meeting.” These two passages clearly establish that when the priests ate these most holy things, they had to eat them in a holy place. They were to eat these most holy portions that had not passed through the fire in the outer court of the Tabernacle. This was a special portion given to the priests. The women and children of the priests’ households were not permitted to come into the holy place, and therefore they naturally had no share in these most holy things.

More observant saints will notice that three of the five basic offerings are mentioned here: the grain offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering. However, the burnt offering and the peace offering are not included. The burnt offering consisted of the entire sacrificial animal, which was to be burned on the

altar as a sweet-smelling offering made by fire. Therefore, nothing was left over. The peace offering was an offering shared by God and man. A portion was offered to God, a portion was given to the priests, and another portion belonged to the person who brought the offering. The next verse deals with the peace offering.

**Verse 11: “This also is yours: the heave offering of their gift, with all the wave offerings of the children of Israel; I have given them to you, and your sons and daughters with you, as an ordinance forever. Everyone who is clean in your house may eat it.”**

This is the second category of offerings that were to be given to the priests. When the Israelites offered a peace offering as an expression of thanksgiving, to fulfill a vow, or as a freewill offering, they were to offer it to the LORD. They could offer cattle, sheep, or lambs, whether male or female. The fat of the sacrificial animal was to be burned on the altar and offered to God as a sweet-smelling offering made by fire. The breast was to be presented as a wave offering and given to Aaron and his descendants. The right thigh was to be presented as a heave offering and given to the priests who offered the sacrifice. The priests could take these wave offerings and heave offerings home. The members of the priests’ households could eat them as long as they were clean and had not become ceremonially defiled. This was the priests’ perpetual portion, and they could enjoy it together with their families.

**Verse 12-13: “All the best of the oil, all the best of the new wine and the grain, their firstfruits which they offer to the Lord, I have given them to you. Whatever first ripe fruit is in their land, which they bring to the Lord, shall be yours. Everyone who is clean in your house may eat it.”**

This is the third category of offerings that were to be given to the priests. After the Israelites entered the good land, they were to begin cultivating the land. At the time of the Feast of Firstfruits, they were to bring the firstfruits and offer them to God, including grain, oil, and new wine. They were to offer the best of these things.

The best portions offered to God were to belong to the priests. The priests were to take them home and enjoy them together with everyone in their households who was ceremonially clean.

**Verse 14: “Every devoted thing in Israel shall be yours.”**

This is the fourth category of offerings that were to be given to the priests. All the devoted things in Israel that were offered to God were also to belong to the priests. Leviticus 27 speaks of various offerings that people could dedicate to God. Among these was a category of offerings called “devoted things.” Leviticus 27:28 says: “Nevertheless no devoted offering that a man may devote to the LORD of all that he has, both man and beast, or the field of his possession, shall be sold or redeemed; every devoted offering is most holy to the LORD.” These devoted things were offerings that, once dedicated to God, could not be redeemed. All these devoted things were also to belong to the priests.

**Verse 15-18: “Everything that first opens the womb of all flesh, which they bring to the Lord, whether man or beast, shall be yours; nevertheless the firstborn of man you shall surely redeem, and the firstborn of unclean animals you shall redeem. And those redeemed of the devoted things you shall redeem when one month old, according to your valuation, for five shekels of silver, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, which is twenty gerahs. But the firstborn of a cow, the firstborn of a sheep, or the firstborn of a goat you shall not redeem; they are holy. You shall sprinkle their blood on the altar, and burn their fat as an offering made by fire for a sweet aroma to the Lord. And their flesh shall be yours, just as the wave breast and the right thigh are yours.”**

This is the fifth category of offerings that were to be given to the priests: the firstborn among the people of Israel and the firstborn of their livestock. At the first Passover, God struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt. Only in the houses of the Israelites, where the blood of the lamb had been put on the doorposts and

lintel, did the angel of death pass over. After the Passover, the Israelites left Egypt. In Exodus 13:2, God commanded: “Consecrate to Me all the firstborn, whatever opens the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and beast; it is Mine.” God therefore wanted to give these firstborn, who had been set apart and consecrated to Him, to the priests.

A firstborn male child was to be redeemed with five shekels of silver after he was one month old—that is, once he had survived the first month of life. The silver was to be given to the priests. If the firstborn of an animal was unclean, it also had to be redeemed. According to Exodus 34:20, it could be redeemed with a lamb. However, if the firstborn animal was clean, such as cattle, sheep, or goats, it could not be redeemed. It was to be set apart as holy and offered to God. The blood of the sacrificial animal was to be sprinkled on the altar, and its fat was to be offered to God as a sweet-smelling offering made by fire. The breast and the right thigh of the sacrificial animal were to belong to the priests. Deuteronomy 15:19–20 tells us that, in the case of a clean firstborn animal, the remaining portion was to belong to the person who brought the sacrifice.

**Verse 19: “All the heave offerings of the holy things, which the children of Israel offer to the Lord, I have given to you and your sons and daughters with you as an ordinance forever; it is a covenant of salt forever before the Lord with you and your descendants with you.”**

This verse actually corresponds closely with verse 8. Verse 8 says that the wave offerings that the Israelites presented to God were set apart as holy and were to be entrusted to Aaron to administer. The passage then goes on to list the five major categories of offerings presented to God that were to belong to Aaron and his descendants. Then, in verse 19, there is a concluding statement. It repeats once again that the wave offerings that the Israelites presented to God—that is, those things that had been set apart as holy—were given by God to Aaron and his descendants. This was the perpetual portion for the priestly family, and it was established before the LORD as an everlasting covenant of salt.

Salt is used to preserve food so that it does not spoil for a long time. Therefore, the covenant of salt typifies an everlasting covenant, a covenant that cannot be broken. God established a covenant of salt with Aaron, and his descendants—the priestly family—would receive the wave offerings that the people presented to God as their perpetual portion.

**Verse 20: “Then the Lord said to Aaron: “You shall have no inheritance in their land, nor shall you have any portion among them; I am your portion and your inheritance among the children of Israel.”**

The priests were mediators between God and the people. When the people offered various offerings to God, except for those portions that were to pass through the fire and be burned on the altar as offerings made by fire, the remaining portions were to be given to the priests. In this way, the priests received abundant provision from God. God said to Aaron that after the Israelites entered the good land, they would receive the land as an inheritance and begin to labor, obtaining all kinds of produce from the good land. But the priests were not to have any inheritance within the territory of the Israelites, nor were they to have any portion among them. God did not want the priests to labor and struggle for their livelihood. The priests were to devote themselves fully to serving God, leading the people to offer sacrifices to God and to worship Him. The priests’ livelihood was to be cared for by God.

Then God made a glorious declaration: “I am your portion and your inheritance.” The priests devoted themselves fully to serving God and had neither a portion nor an inheritance on the earth. But God Himself was their portion; God Himself was their inheritance. Everything the priests had was for God, and God gave everything to the priests. It is the same in the New Testament. If someone is willing to consecrate himself completely to the Lord, the Lord will likewise say: “I am your portion and your inheritance.”

The first lesson that every person who is willing to serve the Lord must learn is to lay down certain things for God. If a person is willing to give something up for God,

God will repay him with Himself. What a person gives up is temporary, perishable, and earthly; but what he receives is eternal, imperishable, and heavenly. This is truly a worthwhile exchange. After a person has had some initial experiences of this, he becomes willing to give up even more for God, and he also receives more heavenly blessings, because God has promised that for those who serve Him, God Himself is their portion and their inheritance.

Dear brothers and sisters, we need to hold on to God's promise. As priests of the gospel in the New Testament, God has entrusted the gospel to us, and therefore we must be faithful to our ministry in the gospel. Whether it is preaching the gospel and leading people to salvation, helping new believers come to know God and know His Word, or continuing to help people love God, serve God, and consecrate themselves to God, all these are part of the work of the priests of the gospel.

Paul describes his ministry in Romans 15:16: "That I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit." Actually, this is also our ministry: to be priests of the gospel, so that every saint in the church may be maturely offered up and become pleasing to God.

Finally, I would like to conclude with a well-known hymn written by William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army.

Verse 1: "When men forsake earth's treasures And come to live for God, The riches they possess are boundless, Too great for words to tell. For all things are theirs— Whether life or death, things present or things to come; Christ is their life, their breath, And He is also their dwelling place."

Verse 2: "Like me, the King has chosen me To have a share in His throne; Yet that I should refuse His call— How strange that would be! Never say that this is sacrifice! Whatever the cost may be, If only I may enter The army of Calvary, What a privilege beyond words!"

Verse 3: "Arise! Consider this exchange: Give up the fragments and receive the whole. All things, all possessions, and all people Are now yours to gain. When you

belong to Him, all things belong to you, And you are one with Him; You also receive eternal life without limit. What privilege could compare with this?"

Let us pray together: Lord, give us the bold and wholehearted spirit of William Booth, because he truly understood that for a person who has consecrated himself to the Lord and serves the Lord, the Lord Himself is his portion and his inheritance. Lord, help us understand how valuable it is to give things up for You. What we lay down is earthly, but what we receive is heavenly. What we lay down is perishable, but what we receive is imperishable. What we lay down is temporary, but what we receive is eternal, because You are our portion and You are our inheritance.

Bless the church where You have placed me, that You would raise up a group of saints who together become priests of the gospel. May we bear witness for You in the community around the church and help people receive Your grace and be saved. May we help people come to know God and know His Word, and also help them learn to love God, serve God, and consecrate themselves to God. May every saint in the church be maturely offered up and become pleasing to You. We pray in the precious name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen!