

Numbers 8:8-11

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/num/num-8/numbers-88-11/>

Verses 8 – 11 are concerned with inward purification. Since this could be done only with sacrifice, a grain offering and a sin offering were required. This was to be done in front of all the Israelites.

Along with outward purification, the Levites needed to be cleansed inwardly. To do this, the LORD instructed them to *take a bull with its grain offering, fine flour mixed with oil; and a second bull you shall take for a sin offering* (v. 8). The “grain offering” was connected with worship designed to bring the LORD pleasure. It was a symbol of sacrificing oneself and committing oneself to serving the LORD and a symbol of the person’s (man or woman) dedication to keeping His law.

To give a *sin offering* was an act of a person’s desire to be set apart to the LORD. It also represented the LORD’s acceptance of the offeror. The same is true of the believer who presents himself or herself a “living sacrifice” in service to the LORD (Romans 12:1–2).

With these offerings, Moses was then to *present the Levites before the tent of meeting* (v. 9). To be *before the tent of meeting* was to be in a very sacred place—the presence of the LORD Himself. He was also instructed to *assemble the whole congregation of the sons of Israel* so they could witness personally the separation of the Levites to the service of the priests and the tabernacle.

Once assembled, Moses was to *present the Levites before the Lord* (v. 10), and *the sons of Israel shall lay their hands on the Levites*. The laying on of hands was indicative of an ordination ceremony which was a visible demonstration of the Levites’ separation to be dedicated to the service of worshipping the LORD.

Finally, *Aaron then shall present the Levites before the Lord as a wave offering from the sons of Israel* (v. 11). The *wave offering* symbolized an offering made to the LORD (the offering was “waved” back and forth before the LORD to signify that it belonged to the LORD. The priest would elevate the sheaf of grain up and down in a vertical motion, then side-to-side in a horizontal motion. It has been noted that this motion creates the shape of a cross (Leviticus 23:11). It was then given to the priests as a provision for their physical care, in order to sustain them (Exodus 29:26; Leviticus 7:30 – 31).

All of these activities were done so *that they may qualify to perform the service of the Lord*. The Levites were separated from the other Israelites in order to serve the LORD by assisting the priests and maintaining the tabernacle, the dwelling of the LORD.

Biblical Text

⁸Then let them take a bull with its grain offering, fine flour mixed with oil; and a second bull you shall take for a sin offering. ⁹So you shall present the Levites before the tent of meeting. You shall also assemble the whole congregation of the sons of Israel, ¹⁰and present the Levites before the Lord; and the sons of Israel shall lay their hands on the Levites. ¹¹Aaron then shall present the Levites before the Lord as a wave offering from the sons of Israel, that they may qualify to perform the service of the Lord.