

## **200325-4 Nu 8, Lighting the Candlestick & Cleansing the Levites for Service- CThurman**

All of the princes came from the twelve tribes that were situated afar off from the Tabernacle to dedicate and anoint (משח, ma-shach [from which we have *Messiah*], LXX, Gr. χρίω, christen) the brazen altar for service. At this time the princes brought six wagons with two oxen apiece. The LORD commanded Moses to receive these things from them and how to distribute them to certain of the family of Levi, who are Merari and Gershon. The Kohathites were excluded from this because their work was to bear upon their shoulders that which was assigned to them of the tabernacle.

Then each tribe, on their own day and according to their tribal order (Nu.2) voluntarily brought sacrifices and gifts to dedicate and anoint (christen) brazen altar to service. They brought burnt offerings, sin offerings, & peace offerings, as well as gifts of silver dishes & bowls filled with meal offerings, as well as gold spoons filled with frankincense. My opinion is that the silver dishes and bowls were dedicated to the service of the brazen altar and the gold spoons, to the service of the golden altar of incense.

If I could make a remark here about something that I said in the last lesson to the effect that only gold vessels were used in the Tabernacle. Rethinking that, it is very likely that one of the uses of the silver bowls was to capture the blood of the sacrificial animal when slain. If that is true, it would have been this bowl that the high priest would have brought with blood into the Holiest of All on the Day of Atonement. As far as I know this is the only occasion when a vessel other than gold came into the tabernacle. Otherwise the only silver that I know of is the 96 sockets of silver, that were under the boards of the sanctuary, two for each board. (see note at Ex.38.27)

Now we read of the lighting the golden candlestick and the cleansing of the Levites, and the offering up of them in behalf of Israel to serve the priests.

### **Chapter 8**

**1 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,**

**2 Speak unto Aaron, and say unto him, When thou lightest the lamps,**

when thou lightest, *בְּהֵעֲלֶתָּךְ*, Hiphil (causative act.) infin. with the prefixed *בְּ*, with the & a 2psm. suff. to the verb root *עָלָה*, tss to bring up, to light, to take up, to offer, to come up; so 'to light' is from the idea of *with the bringing up of the lamps*.

the lamps, *אֶת־הַנֵּרוֹת*, defect for the noun *הַנֵּרוֹת*, han-ney-roth, see *נֵר*, neyr, tss. lamp, candle, light; see also the masc. noun *נֹר*, noor, tss. fiery, fire.

	<i>אֶל־מוֹל פְּנֵי</i>	<i>הַמְּנוֹרָה</i>
<b><i>the seven lamps shall give light</i></b>	<b><i>over against</i></b>	<b><i>the candlestick.</i></b>
	to the front of the face of (Wigram) the menorah.	

*over against*, *אֶל־מוֹל*, *אֶל*, a preposition *against, to, beside, through*, etc.; Davidson, 'in general, motion or direction towards any thing ...', tss. God-ward, forefront, *over against* (Wigram, to the front of the face of); **Nu.8.2, 3; 22.5**

untranslated, *פְּנֵי*, masc. pl. noun of *פָּנִים*, in plural form, tss. *face of, open, presence of, countenance, before*, etc.

'[B]ut the truer meaning of the phrase is, that the seven lamps gave light, as they were to do, to that part of the holy place that was opposite to the candlestick, the north part of it, where stood the shew-bread table, the candlestick being in the south, Exod. xl.22, 24.' *Exposition of the Old & New Testaments*, vol. 1, p.738

In other words, the candlestick was positioned against the south wall of the tabernacle so that lamps cast their light to the opposite side, north wall. In this case the branches of the candlestick, Menorah, would have extended to the east and the west, running lengthwise along the gold-covered boards of shittim wood which would fill the room with a glorious brightness. Clearly, this speaks of the Son of God.

*Heb 1:3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person ...*

The main purpose for the candlestick was to give light to all that were within the tabernacle.

*Mt 5:15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.*

As the candlestick was the only source of light for the priesthood as they ministered about the things in the tabernacle, so Christ is the only source of light by which the saints minister from within the context of His NT church. Is there any other source of light that can substitute for the thoughts, words and actions of the Christians? No, there is not. The light of natural reason is insufficient to know the will of God, to know how communicate the things of God, and to do His works. Without that light all of the children of God are subject to what I and you think, what we feel in our hearts. That's not enough. We have a most sure word of prophecy from the Lord in the Bible. It is, He is our Light.

*Ps.119.97 ¶ MEM. O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.*

*98 ¶ Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me.*

*99 I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation.*

*100 I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.*

*101 ¶ I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word.*

*102 ¶ I have not departed from thy judgments: for thou hast taught me.*

*103 ¶ How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!*

*104 Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.*

*105 ¶ NUN. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*

*106 ¶ I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.*

He is the Light that lighted every man with life that comes into this world. (Jn.1.9) He is the Light of life. (Jn.8.12) He is the Light of Jacob & Israel. (Is.2.5; 9.2) He is the Light to lighten the Gentiles. (Lk.2.23; Eph.5.14) He is the light of the world. (Jn.1.5; 8.12; 9.5;12.46) He is the Light from heaven. (Ac.9.3) He is the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God. (2Co.4.6) He is our Light and salvation. (Ps.27.1) His is a lamp to my feet and the Light to my path. (Ps.119.105) He is the Light of the eternal city & the world to come. (Re.21.23) As Christians we should grow and walk in this Light.

Consider that without the Light of the candlestick the priesthood would have been serving in the dark, not knowing where to walk. Stumbling to find the table of showbread, the altar of incense, to understand the division between the sanctuary and the holiest all. All of this a type for fellowship, and prayers, and understanding the greatness of the love of God. But this is what a Christian's life is like when he chooses to walk in ignorance of the word of God. He stumbles around in things that should be important. He should know how to approach unto God. He should be able to discern what real and spiritual fellowship consists of. He should be able to discern the truth of God from error. And because all of the lamps of the candlestick were lighted the servants of God could see what they were doing, knew where they were to walk, and how to order their lives and the things of the tabernacle correctly. Brethren, their lives depended on it. The LORD could have broken out in wrath against them for violating His way. And we are subject to the loving & chastening hand of God when we walk contrary to the will of God. Not everything that calls itself Christian is Christian. We have the Light of the word of God before us. Will we treasure it by reading, meditating, changing our minds to agree with God, walking day by day in its light?

*1Jo 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*

**3 And Aaron did so;**

The charge concerning the maintenance of the lamps fell primarily to Aaron his sons were also were involved.

**Aaron**

*Le 24:3 Without the veil of the testimony, in the tabernacle of the congregation, shall Aaron order it from the evening unto the morning before the LORD continually: it shall be a statute for ever in your generations.*

**Aaron & sons**

*Ex.27.20 ¶ And thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always.*

*21 In the tabernacle of the congregation without the veil, which is before the testimony, Aaron and his sons shall order it from evening to morning before the LORD: it shall be a statute for ever unto their generations on the behalf of the children of Israel.*

But Aaron was the first of them to light the lamps.

***he lighted the lamps thereof over against the candlestick,***  
[to give light] to the front of the face of the menorah.

***as the LORD commanded Moses.***

***4 And this work of the candlestick was of beaten gold, unto the shaft thereof, unto the flowers thereof, was beaten work: according unto the pattern which the LORD had shewed Moses, so he made the candlestick.***

For the gold to be beaten gold represents the sufferings. Much about the tabernacle speaks of His sufferings for us. What we have is because God so loved us that He sent His Son to suffer and die for us. That light didn't to them without the beating, pressing and crushing of the olive fruit which gave them the precious oil. (Ex.27.20) He gave His life that we might live. And because He did he gave us His word to walk by.

The frankincense was beaten small for incense. (Le.16.12) The priest took the coals from upon the brazen altar where the sacrifice was offered up to God. He put those coals in a golden censure and brought it into the sanctuary where he poured them into the golden altar. Then he sprinkled handfuls of incense upon those burning coals. This is a type of prayer. We have communication with God because Christ suffered in our place. Our prayers are heard because He spoke for us to God.

The gold was formed by beating it out into thin plates for wires to be sewn into the high priestly garments. (Ex.39.3) Great chunks of gold were beaten into forms which made the the mercy seat (Ex.25.17, 18) and the menorah, or candlestick. Because Christ died for us, atoned for our sins once for all God speaks to us in mercy. Because Christ died for us we have received the Light which brought forth life and shows us how to live. All of this we received through Christ's sufferings for us.

*Ex.25.31 ¶ And thou shalt make a candlestick of pure gold: of beaten work shall the candlestick be made: his shaft, and his branches, his bowls, his knops, and his flowers, shall be of the same.*

...

*36 Their knops and their branches shall be of the same: all it shall be one beaten work of pure gold.*

*37 And thou shalt make the seven lamps thereof: and they shall light the lamps thereof, that they may give light over against it.*

...

*39 Of a talent of pure gold shall he make it, with all these vessels (incl. the tongs & snuffdishes, v.38).*

(cf. Ex.37.17-24)

Now we consider the cleansing of the Levites.

**5 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,**

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

**7 And thus shalt thou do unto them, to cleanse them:**

*cleanse*, טָהַר, Piel pret. (intensive act.), to be busy about the business of cleaning; also tss. *to make clean, to purge, to purify*; in this instance this has to do with washing away external defilement or filthiness.

***Sprinkle water of purifying upon them,***

That I know of this refers to the water of purification that is made from the ashes of a red heifer. (cf. Nu.19.9, 17) While some might object to this being the water by saying that the LORD hadn't given these instructions for making purification water until later, I'm not sure that that is true. To me it seems more of a stretch to say that they used the water in the laver for this purpose. (cf. Ex.30.19-21, stating the purpose for the brass laver)

***and let them shave all their flesh, and let them wash their clothes, and so make themselves clean.***

There is here an interesting distinction that can be seen between the priests the Levites. On the one hand the priests *were washed* (cf. Ex.29.4) and *dressed upon* with new priestly garments (cf. Ex.40.12-14), and on the other the Levites were *sprinkled* and *washed* their garments clean.

Together this gives us a full picture of the believer's salvation experience. First, the type of priests, is that the sinner receives a washing in the inner man by regeneration and is renewed to His standing before God, clothed upon with the holy & righteous garments of Jesus Christ. His old nature isn't changed, but He is dressed upon with a new nature, the divine nature, nature of Jesus Christ. I think intellectually we know this but experientially I think we all struggle with the reality of it ... the old man remains just as alive as he ever was, but I am a new creature created in Christ Jesus. So we enter into the battle between the flesh & the spirit; Christian warfare. I now have both an old and new nature. But this experience, which is the event of the new birth, is a one-time only, once-for-all, never to be repeated again, experience.

*Tit 3.4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,*

*5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;*

*6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;*

*7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

Following this soul-changing experience the Levites present the other side of the life of the believer. As he begins his walk with Christ he thinks things, says things, and does things that he shouldn't do. By these things he contracts dirt, filthiness. To put that away he doesn't need to be washed & clothed with new garments, but rather he needs to be have his conscience cleansed from the filth and, as it were, wash his garments.

*Heb 9:13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh:*

*14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*

What we need is to confess our sins to God, ask for forgiveness and cleansing. In this act of faith our conscience is sprinkled from the defilement, the filthiness of sin so that we may start over again as if we have never sinned. The Christian walk is a life filled with new beginnings or conversion experiences.

*1Jn.1.8 ¶ If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*

*9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

*10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*

***8 Then let them take a young bullock with his meat offering, even fine flour mingled with oil, and another young bullock shalt thou take for a sin offering.***

***9 And thou shalt bring the Levites before the tabernacle of the congregation: and thou shalt gather the whole assembly of the children of Israel together:***



**10 And thou shalt bring the Levites before the LORD: and the children of Israel shall put their hands upon the Levites:**

However one wants to interpret this, the fact is that this was done. It seems to me that the main idea in this text is substitution and imputation. The Levites are being offered up to be a substitution for the firstborn of Israel. (vss.17-19) The children of Israel *impute* to the Levites their work. (v.10) The whole camp was called to witness the event, but the dedication service could have been implemented by the princes of the tribes of Israel and Levi.

**11 And Aaron shall offer (wave) the Levites before the LORD for an offering (wave offering) of the children of Israel, that they may execute the service of the LORD.**

*offer*, וָהִנִּיף, Hiphil (causative act.) pret., 3psm of הָנִיף, nooph; tss. Pv.7.17, *to perfume* (as in wafting); Is.10.32, *to shake*; Ex.20.25, *to lift up*; Ex.29.24, 26; Lev. 9.21; 14.12, etc, *to wave*; Is.30.28, *to sift*; Ex.35.22, *to offer*; Ps.68.9, *to send*, etc.

The Levites are presented as a *wave offering* by Aaron. A wave offering is to heave up a portion of a sacrifice before the Lord. That portion is often dedicated as the priests' portion. (cf. Lev.10.14; Lev.23.9-22, Pentecost is a heave or wave offering of the firstfruits, which is a type for the resurrection) In this case the Levites are being *waved* before the Lord in the place of Israel and dedicated to serve the priests.

**12 And the Levites shall lay their hands (imputation) upon the heads of the bullocks: and thou shalt offer the one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering, unto the LORD, to make an atonement (כַּפָּרָה, ka-phar) for the Levites.**

**13 And thou shalt set the Levites before Aaron, and before his sons, and offer (wave) them for an offering (wave offering) unto the LORD.**

**14 Thus shalt thou separate the Levites from among the children of Israel: and the Levites shall be mine.**

**15 And after that shall the Levites go in to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation: and thou shalt cleanse them, and offer (wave) them for an offering (wave offering).**

**16 For they are wholly given unto me from among the children of Israel; instead of such as open every womb, even instead of the firstborn of all the children of Israel, have I taken them unto me.**

**17 For all the firstborn of the children of Israel are mine, both man and beast: on the day that I smote every firstborn in the land of Egypt I sanctified them for myself.**

**18 And I have taken the Levites for all the firstborn of the children of Israel.**

**19 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 (כַּפַּר, ka-phar) 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.**

*plague, נִגְף, ne-géph, a masc. noun tss. plague (6), stumbling (1, Is.8.14).*

In this instance the word *atone* means that the service of the Levites stands as a covering for the service due by Israel. In this way their work atoned for Israel so that the Lord did not break out in a plague upon them. Were it ever that any of Israel intrude into the service of the Levites it would be disastrous. So the service of Levi atones for Israel. For example Phinehas *atoned* for Israel's grievous sin against the LORD when they committed whoredom with Moab. How? By His actions to zealously stand for the name of the LORD, that the LORD not consume the children of Israel in his jealousy.

*Nu.25.11 Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy.*

*12 Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace:*

*13 And he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement (כָּפַר, ka-phar) for the children of Israel.*

***20 And Moses, and Aaron, and all the congregation of the children of Israel, did to the Levites according unto all that the LORD commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so did the children of Israel unto them.***

***21 And the Levites were purified, and they washed their clothes; and Aaron offered (waved) them as an offering (wave offering) before the LORD; and Aaron made an atonement (כָּפַר, ka-phar) for them to cleanse them.***

***22 And after that went the Levites in to do their service in the tabernacle of the congregation before Aaron, and before his sons: as the LORD had commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so did they unto them.***

***23 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,***

***24 This is it that belongeth unto the Levites: from twenty and five years old and upward they shall go in to wait upon the service of the tabernacle of the congregation:***

***25 And from the age of fifty years they shall cease waiting upon the service thereof, and shall serve no more:***

***26 But shall minister with their brethren in the tabernacle of the congregation, to keep the charge, and shall do no service. Thus shalt thou do unto the Levites touching their charge.***

Earlier in Numbers we read that the ages of service were from 30 years of age to 50. (cf. Nu.4.3) It is only my opinion but this appears to be the prime age of service, especially as it concerns transporting the tabernacle and all of the equipment. After 50, the men are retired from the transporting duties, but still may serve to help the priests in their service about the things of the Lord. The stipulation of 25 years might begin a period of training and observing what their brethren do in the service to the priesthood. The business of assisting the priesthood and the manner of handling the tabernacle and all of the equipment must be an important work that should be done correctly.

1Chr.23.25-32, near the end of the reign of king David the age for service of the Levites was once modified. Here we also have an idea of the manner of service involved for the Levites.

*1Chr.23.25 For David said, The LORD God of Israel hath given rest unto his people, that they may dwell in Jerusalem for ever:  
26 And also unto the Levites; they shall no more carry the tabernacle, nor any vessels of it for the service thereof.  
27 For by the last words of David the Levites were numbered from twenty years old and above:  
28 Because their office was to wait on the sons of Aaron for the service of the house of the LORD, in the courts, and in the chambers, and in the purifying of all holy things, and the work of the service of the house of God;  
29 Both for the shewbread, and for the fine flour for meat offering, and for the unleavened cakes, and for that which is baked in the pan, and for that which is fried, and for all manner of measure and size;  
30 And to stand every morning to thank and praise the LORD, and likewise at even;  
31 And to offer all burnt sacrifices unto the LORD in the sabbaths, in the new moons, and on the set feasts, by number, according to the order commanded unto them, continually before the LORD:  
32 And that they should keep the charge of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the charge of the holy place, and the charge of the sons of Aaron their brethren, in the service of the house of the LORD.*