### Numbers

## Chapter 8

1Then the Lord spoke to Moses and said:  
  
 2‘Speak to Aaron and tell him that when he assembles the [sacred] lamp, the 7 lanterns must be arranged to illuminate the area across from the lamp.’  
  
3And that’s what Aaron did. He [assembled and] lit the lamps to illuminate the area directly across from the lamp, just as the Lord had instructed Moses.  
  
4The Sacred Lamp’s base and stem were made of solid gold, as were its lilies. They were made following the pattern that Jehovah had shown to Moses.  
  
  
[Editor note: Now follows instructions for the purification rituals. The story resumes in Numbers 8:20.]  
  
  
5Then the Lord spoke to Moses and said:  
  
 6‘Remove the Levites from among the children of IsraEl and purify them… 7And this is how you should perform their purification:  
  
 ‘Have them rinse themselves in clean water and shave all the hair from their bodies, then have them wash their clothes… Make sure that they’re clean!  
  
 8‘Then they must bring 2 yearling calves from the herd along with a food offering and some fine flour mixed with oil. 9And thereafter, assemble the entire gathering of the sons of IsraEl and bring the Levites up before them at the Tent of Proofs... 10Stand them there in front of Jehovah, and have the sons of IsraEl lay their hands on the Levites.  
  
 11‘Aaron must set the Levites aside as a gift to Jehovah from the children of IsraEl, and they must be made ready to perform Jehovah’s work. 12Then have the Levites lay their hands on the heads of the calves, and you should sacrifice one as a sin offering and the other as a whole-burnt offering to Jehovah, to pay for their sins.  
  
 13‘Thereafter, stand the Levites in front of Jehovah and in front of Aaron and his sons, and offer them to Jehovah as a gift… 14Separate the Levites from among the sons of IsraEl as Mine!  
  
 15‘Then the Levites must go to the Tent where they are to work, and you must purify them and present them there before Jehovah, 16for they’ll have been given to Me as a gift from the children of IsraEl.... I’ve taken them as Mine in place of all the firstborn sons of IsraEl that open a womb.  
  
 17‘For, all the firstborn among the children of IsraEl (both the men and the animals) became Mine on the day that I struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt… Yes, that’s when I made them holy to Myself.  
  
 18‘But now, I’m taking the Levites instead of the first-born of the children of IsraEl, 19and I’m presenting them as a gift to Aaron and his sons to serve the children of IsraEl at the Tent. There they must make the payments for the sins of the children of IsraEl, so none of the sons of IsraEl will have to approach the holy things.’  
  
  
[Editor note: The story resumes here.]  
  
  
20Well, Moses, Aaron, and the entire gathering of the children of IsraEl did everything that the Lord had commanded Moses concerning the Levites. 21The Levites purified themselves and washed their clothes... Then Aaron presented them as a gift before Jehovah, and [he sacrificed] the payments for their sins in order to purify them.  
  
22Thereafter, the Levites entered the Tent to serve before Aaron and his sons, just as the Lord had instructed Moses.  
  
23Then the Lord spoke to Moses and said:  
  
 24‘This is the rule for the Levites:  
  
 ‘Those who are 25 years old and older must enter to serve at the Tent of Proofs. 25But when they reach 50 years old, they may no longer serve or work there.  
  
 26‘They may supervise their brothers that serve at the Tent of Proofs, but they may not work there anymore.  
  
 ‘Give the Levites these instructions.’