

Numbers 8

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[0 : 00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word. Numbers chapter number 8. So when we were ending chapter 7, that pastor shared with his last, and always the service he preaches before he goes off on a trip, I'm usually, sometimes I sit there and I'll say I'm really glad he covered number 7 before he left.

That was a long chapter, and it was difficult, it was repetitive, but we learned of the sacrificial people. They're moving out of Mount Sinai, and they said we need some things as we're building the tabernacle, and so they brought wagons, and they all brought what was asked of them, and we just saw people that wanted to please the Lord, and so they gave, and they gave to see the work of the Lord done.

And so we learned that kind of profile of that group of people in chapter number 7, and then in chapter number 8 we get the two things. First on the first voice, first four verses is a lamp, and then the rest of the chapter talks about a group of people called the Levites.

And we're going to talk about Levites some of the night and remind us of where he was at before he put his boxing gloves on, and where he was at before he recognized how we should live the life that God had given him to live.

And he is a cruel fellow, and we'll be glad to be reminded of him. But before I get into that, I'd like to ask you, how many of you are the designated prayer person at your family events?

[1 : 18] If there's Thanksgiving and it's time to come, they look to you to be the one to pray. How many of you are like that? On my dad's side, it's like that. My cousins call me the man of the cloth, and when it comes time to pray, and then maybe you've had this before, you just say a prayer, and then somebody comes up to you and they give you a hug and say, that was a beautiful prayer.

I really like what you said about the turkey legs, and I just think that was just poetic what you said. And we pray often as we should, so we don't often think about it. But maybe when people who don't pray, they hear it, it just seems so odd to them.

And so you are that set-aside person in the family that represents Christianity and Christ. And people know that we need that. Different religions know that.

In my time in India, we showed this Brahmin man. We did not shoot him. A camera recorded him doing things. But as the Brahmin, he was telling us that once every 500 days, his family was over this certain temple, and that he was designated as a Brahmin to be the highest office there of the religious caste of people.

I got a picture here in Thailand. The oldest son, or maybe all the sons, but at a certain time in their life, they will be a monk for a year. And you could see things like this.

[2 : 33] When we went there some years ago, I didn't take this picture, but we saw this in places. It doesn't mean if you're a mummy, you get preferred seating. It means that if you're a monk, you get to sit there.

So if you're a monk and there's somebody sitting down, they will get up and let you have their seat. Because people feel like that's needed. God is so far away and that we can't come to him. So we need a designated group of people.

You know, in the New Testament, we have no separation. We're called priests. We are now able to go to God. And we don't see this division among them, but we know we need something to gain our access to them.

And as we learn about the Levites, we see what they spent their lives doing. We see how they were a replacement for the oldest child being born. And they were wholly given to God, which is what every one of you, when you hear me speak about the Levites tonight, you ought to say, that is me and that's how I should be given to God.

It's not an A or a B. It isn't I'm going to be a chapter 7 where I give to the tabernacle, or I'm going to be a chapter number 8 where I give myself to the work of the Lord. That this is speaking about you as a New Testament believer, that we get to be involved in this priestly work of bringing an offering of faith unto God, which is made possible by planning the word in people, which springs up in them.

[3 : 49] And so let's jump into this. So as I said, they're leaving Sinai. They got the U-Haul wagons all loaded up with everything. Everybody's got a wagon except for one group, and they're going to have to carry things on their shoulders.

And we learn about that later as they didn't follow the rules that were given there for them. But the main thing I want you to see tonight is we just read the account of a big giving from the leaders of a congregation in number 7.

We have just read now about the consecration of the Levites. But between the one and the other, the inspired penman, Moses here, by the Holy Spirit, pauses in order to remind us of the light that would shine in the sanctuary in the wilderness.

Between the giving and the living, we're reminded of the purpose of the giving and the living, which we will find when thou lightest the lights. Let's talk about these Levite people for a little bit.

Separated in the God. Numbers chapter number 1 said God chose them. Numbers 2, they said this isn't Moses' doing. They didn't have a hunger games among the tribes and said now let's see which one of you are going to be the one set apart.

[4 : 55] You won't get any land, but your work will be different. They didn't do it like that. God chose them and by His grace said I'm going to allow you to serve me and God does the choosing there for that. And they're set aside.

In verse number 11 it says they're set aside unto the work of the Lord that they may execute the service of the Lord. And they're in the place of the oldest child. And God gives them to Aaron.

They are His assistants. You belong to me. Aaron belongs to me. And I'm going to give you over to Aaron the priest here so that you can help execute. Life in church work then and tabernacle work then was much more physically demanding than what is around here.

Work around here is usually more physically demanding for Robert than me because he can pick up heavy things and I can hold the door. But I wouldn't have made it very long. That's why they said from about 25 you'll get started, 30 things will pick up.

But by the time you're 50 you can minister because you never retire from ministering to people but you retire from the work because you can't carry the animal sacrifices and do the things that are happening there.

[5 : 55] And so from 25 to 50 years of age they will do that. And God shows His love for them. He says at the age of 50 keep ministering. Help the younger guys. Help the guy 25 to 30 figure out what he's doing.

But I don't want you carrying that heavy load anymore. I want you to take it easy and preserve your life here so you can minister and help there. But then we get down and we're reminded here that inside of the word Levites is the word Levi.

And you may remember it wasn't that long ago that I had the opportunity to go through that portion of the scripture and there in Genesis chapter 49 and we spoke about Jacob and I had about a third of the congregation up here representing somebody and we were walking through Joseph and who he was and we were talking about the different people and we got to that Levi character and you think surely after what happens in this chapter he's going to disappear from the face of the Bible.

We're not going to hear about him. He does not build a very good resume. Genesis, it says in verse 5 of Genesis 49 it says Simeon and Levi are brethren instruments of cruelty are in their habitations.

O my soul, come not thou into their secret unto her assembly. Mine honor be not thou united for in their anger they slew a man and their self-will they dig down a wall.

[7:13] And so what they're saying here this is Jacob speaking about his son. He's going around and he's saying this is my son let me tell you about him and he gets the Levi and Simeon and he says these are instruments of cruelty.

They have yielded their lives over to hurt people and to harm people. That doesn't look pretty good that doesn't look good on a resume. When I was in college I saw this place and they kept saying they were hiring.

So I went in and I said I would like a job what do you do? They say it was called manpower and I said I don't understand what that is I've never seen that before and so I went in and they said we're a hiring agency we hire people and I said I think I could do that let me help you let's hire people together give me a job.

I didn't understand they were going to help connect me to a job but I thought I was going to get a job there but they said what have you done? Well I said not much of anything I'm 18 years of age they'll say well you need a resume well I'll say I know it you need to give me a job so that I can have some experience to get a better job and you'll never see me again but on your resume this doesn't look good so we're going to have this tabernacle and all these people are going to give sacrificially and then we're going to have a group of people that are going to take care of and serve it so who are we going to take?

How about Levi's family? How about the habitates? How about the guy who's instruments of cruelty? How about we get his offspring to do it? That isn't going to work for us but the God of heaven does that the God of holiness says no way possible but the God of grace says it's going to be who I choose to use I'm excited about that we know Sergei is excited about that and I think a few more people in here might be excited about that as well angry and self-willed there's an immeasurable distance between him and a holy God a chasm which no human power could bridge a holy God could do nothing with his self-will fierceness but a God of grace changes Levi and begins to use him you know I don't like to speak ill of other churches but often times churches like to talk about how they care for those that are down and out or those that have a reputation or they've come from that and I think that's wonderful because that's clearly taught in the Bible but sometimes I don't think they go far enough because just because people that might have a testimony like Sergei has they're not the only bad people in this world they're not the only people need of redemption that every one of us in here regardless of your story was a person who was down and out you were a person who needed to hit rock bottom and maybe you were cooking meth or maybe you were just trying to be moral and try to work your way into pleasing God and not listening to him and repenting but you are a bad person so even though we may not look like him we come in here we are a group of misfits that are saved by the grace of God who know that about ourselves and so when we see Levi in here you say that's me that really is me that I should not get to serve the God of heaven but I do and then it says the assembly and the habitation

[10:05] God would invite Levi into it how could God assemble with Levi who had killed all those people in Shechem Jacob says I'm not going to go into Levi's habitation I wasn't part of his secret I didn't know about what him and my other son were doing I had no part in that so how would God be part of the habitation of Levi and part of that God said I can't but he said Levi you can come be part of my habitation you can come be part of my secret I will invite you in to what I am doing what I am doing and we see that grace shines in Levi's calm and that holiness shines in Levi's cleansing here is the grace of God I can use your life and then we see the holiness of God and he says but I am going to work in your life and I am going to cleanse you he shaved himself and those of us that have a beard understand how humiliating that is no they would shave themselves there they would wash themselves a sacrifice would be made the water with the blood would be sprinkled upon him he says you know

God can't use me like this and he said I have no plans of using you like that I have a bigger plan in store for you I plan to redeem you and to change you and to transform your life and we see that that was and could be no allowance of anything that belonged to Levi no sanction of any of his ways yet there was the most perfect display of God's grace what was being said by the sacrifice was being offered and the shaving of the body and the cleansing it was to say the way that you're coming in you can't bring any of that you can't bring any of that devising way any of that cruel way any of that mischievous way don't bring that into the ministry none of that qualifies you to do that they often joke and say preachers make good car salesmen you know that somehow the traits that make us good preachers make us good car salesmen well the real traits that make us the children of God don't transfer in the selling cars or in anything else he could not bring those fallen traits into his new work he said I'm going to cleanse you completely and I'm going to equip you and so you say

I'm not qualified to do that type of work because I'm like this none of us are we every one of us came to God he says I have to cleanse you because in and of yourself you're not qualified to serve me you can't do anything but I have to start with a blank canvas and work here in your life and we see the grace that shines through God calling him and God would not be included in Levi's secret but he invites him in and the secret here is that God uses people like us we should not bring these vestiges of our nature into the work of the Lord and then how does God go about qualifying them to do the work it says four times in this chapter that they did as the Lord had commanded them the last time we see Aaron making things out of gold he's building a calf and direct disobedience to God now he's getting ready to serve the Lord of heaven and how does he do that it's obedience to the word how did Levi get to the point how did his children get to the point that they could serve them it was obedience to God's word in this case via Moses

Moses God says go tell Aaron can you imagine what Aaron must have felt there when Moses says I have a word from the Lord and he says he still wants to talk to me after all that I've done but it's obedience to the word of God how do you want to be used to the Lord how do you want to be used in his service it's not complicated is that we find the success by obedience to the word of God take it in wherever you go into your workplace in the morrow just be here to the word of God and by doing so you place yourself in a place of ministry that God can use you and then we go from these instruments of cruelty and now he is going to use his hands in life to serve the Lord which ought to remind you of a passage in Romans how we once had our instruments were given over to the flesh and the cruelty now they're yielded over to God just like Levi here God would bring these instruments and he would bring him into the tabernacle to be occupied with the holy instruments and vessels that were there aren't you glad that God doesn't run a background check when he asks you to serve him that no charges come against you and register if Levi did a background check if he went to a place they would say call the police they say smile and call the police that's what his background would check but God doesn't run one and if he does he says that's fine that's who I'm used to working with that's what I want to do and so he doesn't do that there to him and God turned things just like in the life of Paul

God took his life and he turned it around and we should be motivated to give our lives every one of us ought to be motivated in here to giving our lives to the king of kings serving Luke would you come up here how long does it take you Luke normally to make \$20 you're not going to make it tonight so don't get too excited okay this illustration will be better with \$100 but I haven't seen one of those in a while since I was married I haven't seen one of those alright and so here's \$20 Luke and so what would you be willing to sing the special for \$20 oh wow okay I don't know what to do with that alright he would sing a special he would sing a special for \$20 how many of you would not sing a special for \$20 alright many people wouldn't alright and so let's say this is a \$200 bill which would make it worth \$0 there's no \$200 bills but let's say this is \$100 here this is pretty valuable isn't it that's what it represents a good amount of work for you right so you would do some amazing things you would do some things to get it done right okay how willing are you to give up \$100 if I give it to you on a scale of 1 to 10 zero oh wow appreciate that that's why I got a teenager alright honest here because \$100 is hard to get isn't it in your work it varies it may be 5 hours 10 hours a good day it may be less or whatever but it takes time because it represents something but Luke if I gave this to you and I told you in your backyard you had stacks and stacks of cash

[16 : 02] I'm talking you haven't even counted it you ever watch DuckTales you ever watch DuckTales okay you ever see he would jump off his diving board into little gold coins everywhere you don't understand what I'm saying anybody over 30 doesn't understand what I'm saying David Dubois thank you very much alright with the DuckTales reference you just have unbelievable amounts of money so now that you have unbelievable amounts of money how hard is it that you give me that \$20 pretty easy isn't it so as you're seated think about this don't get excited buddy alright think about this you received eternal life in your backyard you have thousands and thousands and thousands of years your death is gone we're going to serve Jesus forever so how is it so hard for us to hand over 80 years how is it hard to hold over 80 years of our life when he's given us tens of thousands upon millions of millions because it doesn't mean much anymore it isn't giving 80 out of 100 it isn't giving 20 out of 80 it is giving 80 out of multiplied billions upon billions of years so why are you waiting to serve the Lord why would you hold back another year why would you hold back another day it doesn't mean anything you have a whole yard full of these years just give it away and the Levites did that and they're giving and they're living and then in four verses very by God's grace he puts this there for us and he reminds us of something let me show you here in verses one through four in this exact obedience to the word of God there was a pose last time so why do they talk about the lamp of all the furniture that could be talked about first Corinthians 10 we learn that it's an example given to us here and that we're supposed to see this and learn something of all the things that could be spoken about why was it a lamp that was spoken about between tremendous giving and whole radical living in God why take four verses and talk about a lamp and I believe with all my heart we see here that the reason it is is our giving nor our sacrifice is about us but it's about revealing the light of Christ in this dark world hey you guys I just gave a lot of money and all of you now that are giving your life before you think this is a big deal let me shed light on why we're doing this why is there a tabernacle let's turn the lights on and what do we see we see the holy of holies what do we see we see where a sacrifice is made we see the gospel we see a way to be reconciled unto God we see God intervening we see God being personal we see God not making us chase after him and wonder if he knows we're here but we see God saying I know you and I care about you and I've made a way that we can be reconciled and it's right there in four verses and it sheds light on our living and giving and it brings incredible value to it and we get so excited so if you were to take this truth and you were to put New Testament clothes on it what would it look like it would look like

Matthew 5 16 Tim if you'll pull that up Matthew 5 16 tells us how we should we live our lives here being a light unto this world and that's what we're here doing by making Jesus Christ known let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your father which is in heaven which is that's the the putting it on they build a tabernacle the lamps are there there's no windows there but in the wilderness and the dark dark wilderness with no post there with no light post in this tabernacle it shines brightly there's a light in the darkness because some people have been have met here with God Philippians 2 14 says do all things without murmuring disputing they may be blameless and harmless the sons of God without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation among whom you shine as lights in the world holding forth the word of life that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain neither labored in vain yea and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith I joy and rejoice with you all that that is the life that is shined we give and we serve to make Christ known the true spiritual work exalts Christ period the true spiritual work exalts Christ the reason they gave to give the tabernacle the reason that they would live and give their whole lives to the tabernacle is because it made much of God it made much of God's redeeming work in this world any true spiritual work that will be done in this community or on the mission field will be done when it exalts

Christ the lamp sits between our understanding of giving and living because we're reminded what is the center of all the actions and Satan tries so hard to redirect life he used a damsel in Acts chapter number 16 and she comes out and she speaks good of Paul here but what she's really trying to do is try to distract the light and Paul and Silas says it's not about us it's about God Paul and Silas knew the lamp or spotlight should not shine on them and they chose to live for the master's sake rather than be exalted at their own expense in Acts 3 11 and 12 as a lame man which was healed held Peter and John and all the people ran together unto them the porch that is called Solomon's greatly wondering and when Peter saw it he answered unto the people you men of Israel why marvel at this or why look you so earnestly on us as though by our own power or holiness we have made this man work said don't shine the lights on us guys we may be living and giving for our Lord but shine it on Jesus he's the one that deserves it so why do we get begrudging in our giving and why do we hold back in our living is because we we think the light is about us we think it's about him and we forget how wonderful it is that we serve the shed light on the most wonderful thing and all of the world you know I wouldn't make it through a sermon without bringing up that I just had a daughter a week and a half ago but as

I'm spending and giving and collecting things that I didn't even know we needed and filling up our house with baby gadgets and I can't believe how many more baby gadgets they've had in the last six years I can't even believe that's alive we didn't have some of the gadgets that we have the day six years ago how did my parents take care of me without some of these things and so as I'm getting these things and I'm and we're spending and not wanting to do that and my wife is just sleepless at night and we sit there at night and we have a little lamp beside our bed and so I'm tired and my wife is tired but before we go to bed she turns the light on I'm holding my daughter and the light's shining on it and I say no matter how much I've spent no matter how much nights we will lose sleepless it's worth it when we're serving the God of heaven and you're giving and you're wondering and you're serving and does it make any sense you don't why are we building a tabernacle out in the wilderness that would be a legitimate question why are we sending money to the other side of the world why are we printing literature why are we going out and do all those things look at where the light's shining look at Jesus Christ look at the message we're involved in and be encouraged by it and say it's worth it for

Matt and Julie to give their lives a going to northern Africa and to be far away from their family and it's worth you having some discomfort at your work when you stand for the things of Christ because if you look at where the lamp is shining upon the candlestick and what it lights up it's a wonderful wonderful thing that we get to be involved in this message was recorded at vision Baptist church in Alfred Georgia for more information log on to www.visionbaptist.com where you can find our service times location contact information and more audio and video recordings