

Worship and Giving One's Life to God



SABBATH—OCTOBER 10

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Exodus 25:22; Numbers 7; Numbers 8; Zechariah 4:1–6; Zechariah 11–14; Revelation 4:2; Revelation 5; Revelation 11:4.

MEMORY VERSE: “You should each give what you have decided in your heart to give. You shouldn't [should not] give if you don't [do not] want to. You shouldn't [should not] give because you are forced to. God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:7, NlrV).

THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL are separated from our modern world through great periods of time and culture.¹ We do not really understand their world, as they would find it hard to understand ours.

But the Lord unites (joins) us all. He is the Lord, the One who created and saved Israel and us both. Whatever our culture, language, and history are, we worship the same God, no matter the differences in our lifestyles and languages. Really, the basic truths taught to them through their services and rituals are the same truths we are to learn today.

This week we will continue to follow our spiritual fathers and mothers on their journey of faith. We will examine more of the services and laws and commands God gave His people at that time. Among other things, we will study the dedication² of the altar of burnt offering and the menorah (lampstand) in the earthly sanctuary.³ We also will study the ordination⁴ of the Levites to their sacred calling of working with the priests in the sanctuary services⁵ in the wilderness.

1. culture—the way people live, dress, think, eat, and get along with one another.

2. dedication—the act of setting apart or giving something to God.

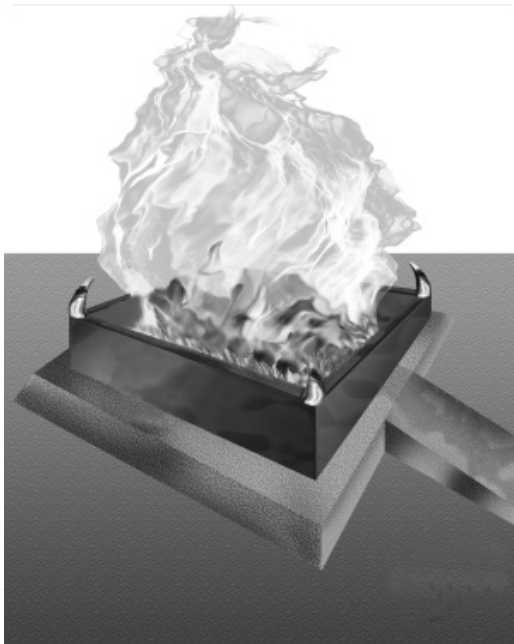
3. sanctuary—the home of God on earth in early Bible times. Here the high priest offered prayers and the blood of animals to God for the sins of the people of Israel.

4. ordination—the ceremony (special service) or act of prayer and laying hands on a person in which that person is set apart for special work for God.

5. sanctuary services—the offerings of animal blood given as a payment for sin. The animal blood was offered in place of the sinner's blood. This service represented Jesus' dying on the cross for our sins. After Jesus died, these services were not needed.

SUNDAY—OCTOBER 11**ALTAR DEDICATION (Numbers 7)**

In the wilderness sanctuary, the sacrifices⁶ centered on the altar of burnt offering. Built of acacia wood covered with bronze, the altar stood within the courtyard near the entrance to the two-room sanctuary. The golden altar before the veil of the Most Holy Place served only for the burning of incense.⁷



The altar of burnt offering was built of acacia and covered with bronze. It stood within the courtyard near the entrance to the two-roomed sanctuary.

What thoughts come to your

mind, as you read Numbers 7, about the offerings given during this holy service? What spiritual points can be used for ourselves today? For example, where do you find the Cross shown here?

The altar already had been made holy for seven days (Exodus 29:37). Now the princes (leaders of the full nation) brought offerings to celebrate the dedication of the altar over a period of 12 days. Each prince and his tribe had their special day. All the gifts were almost the same. Perhaps this was a way of showing that no matter who we are or our station in life, we all stand before God in the same position. We are all sinners needing grace.⁸

“Some wonder why God wanted so many sacrifices and chose the offering of so many bleeding victims in the Jewish worship services.

“Every dying victim was a type [example] of Christ. Each death was a lesson impressed on mind and heart in the most serious, holy service and explained clearly by the priests. Sacrifices were clearly planned by God Himself to teach this great and important truth: through the blood of Christ alone there is forgiveness of sins.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 1, page 107.

6. sacrifices—gifts and offerings given to God.

7. incense—sweet-smelling perfume given off by certain spices when burned. The smoke and the sweet smell of the incense represented the prayers of God’s people rising to Him in heaven.

8. grace—God’s gift of forgiveness and mercy that He freely gives us to take away our sins.



The death of every bleeding victim impressed the heart with how serious sin was and what Jesus would need to do to save us from it.

It is so easy to get hooked on the things of the world, is it not? What can you do each day to help remember how important the Cross is to you?

MONDAY—OCTOBER 12

WORSHIP TO GOD (Numbers 7:89)

As a symbol, the ark⁹ was in the center of Israelite worship. It symbolized (represented; showed) God's heavenly throne. "The Lord who rules over all . . . sits on his throne between the cherubim [angels]" (2 Samuel 6:2, NIV). In the Most Holy Room of the sanctuary, the glory of God shone over the cherubim, showing the Lord's presence. The Ten Commandments, under the cherubim throne, showed His will, the basis of the covenant (promise) between God and His peo-

ple. The Ten Commandments also showed the righteous (holy) basis for God's overall rule and government. The law gave the worshipers a better understanding of who God was, in addition to showing His will (plan) in His commandments (laws).



God's glory shown over the ark in the Most Holy Room of the sanctuary. His law was inside the ark.

Try to imagine what kind of an experience this would be in Exodus 25:22 and Numbers 7:89. How would you like to have that kind of close relationship with God? What makes you think that you would not be completely destroyed if you were to get too close to Him? Read Exodus 20:19.

In what sense can you today get even closer to the presence of God according to Hebrews 4:14–16? How has Jesus made this close relationship possible?

9. ark—a gold-covered box kept in the Most Holy Room of the sanctuary (God's house). Inside this box was God's law, the Ten Commandments.

Notice, too, how Moses had gone into the sanctuary to speak to the Lord. But the verses show that the Lord spoke to Moses instead. The point is, most of us know how to pray, most of us know how to speak to the Lord, to plead our case, to ask for this or that.

But communication¹⁰ is not just one way. In most relationships, each party will communicate (speak) with the other. Should it be any different between us and our God? Of course not.

The question for us, then, is, How open are we to hearing the voice of God when He is speaking to us?

What have your experiences in communicating (speaking) with God been like? How has the Lord communicated His will to you? How open are you to His voice? What things in your life might be keeping you from a fuller relationship with the Lord?

TUESDAY—OCTOBER 13

LIGHT IN THE SANCTUARY (Numbers 8:1–4)

Moses entered the sanctuary after the 12 days of dedicating the altar in the court. We may guess that it was dark inside the Holy Place. In that conversation, the Lord commanded that Aaron should light the seven lamps of the candlestick. The candlestick was known in Hebrew as the *menorah*, based on the Hebrew word

or, for “light” (Numbers 8:1–4).

The menorah (or candlestick) with its main pole and six branches (three on either side) was hammered from a single talent (unit of weight) of gold. It was in the form of an almond branch (Exodus 25:31–40). The oil lamps, resting atop each branch, were cared for by the priests two times a day—morning and evening (Exodus 30:7, 8). “‘Aaron must take care of the lamps in my sight from evening until morning *all the time*’ ” (Leviticus 24:3, NIV; emphasis added).



Aaron kept the lamps of the menorah burning day and night before the Lord.

How do Zechariah 4:1–6, 11–14; Revelation 4:2, 5; and Revelation 11:4 help us better understand the meaning of the menorah?

Zechariah’s vision suggests that the oil piped to the menorah lamps, helping them to burn bright, is God’s Spirit

10. communication—the many ways God speaks to us.

(Zechariah 4:5, 6). The Hebrew word for the almond (Jeremiah 1:11, 12) means “to watch” or “to wake.” The almond was named the “wake tree” or “watch tree” because it was the earliest tree “to waken” and bloom. John sees in his vision¹¹ of the heavenly sanctuary a menorah of seven lamps of fire burning before the throne. They are known as “seven Spirits of God.” This word-picture is John’s way of speaking about the Holy Spirit’s many kinds of work.

So, Israel in the wilderness felt encouraged by God’s presence both day and night in the first apartment and in the second too.

How has the Lord shown you that His presence is real in your own life? Go back over those times when you have clearly experienced God’s presence in a wonderful way. How can remembering these experiences help you stay strong in times that you feel yourself overcome with fear and darkness? Read Psalm 23.

WEDNESDAY—OCTOBER 14

DEDICATION OF THE LEVITES: PART 1 (Numbers 8:6–26)

Numbers 8:6–26 explains how the Levites are prepared and dedicated for their special work in the service of God. What points impress you about this service? What does this work teach us about

holiness, about sin, about being pure, and about dedication to God? What principles (rules) can we learn from this service for our lives today, no matter what part we play in the Lord’s work?

The families of the three groups of the Levites were encamped around the sanctuary. Because they counted more than 20,000 men (Numbers 3:39), it is clear that some parts of their dedication took place in a symbolic way. Symbolic in this sense means only certain ones, not all Levites, were directly involved.

There is a very interesting idea about the Levites. They were cleansed and shaven, and they offered a sin offering (Numbers 8:7, 8). Then they themselves were called an “offering” or a “‘wave offering’ ” (verse 11, NIV). This offering was not related to human sacrifice. But it gave the idea of dedication, of holiness, and of announcing that these Levites were going to be doing a work for Israel’s sake. They were doing for the people of Israel what they could not be doing for themselves.

Then Moses said “the children of Israel shall put their hands upon the Levites” (Numbers 8:10, KJV). This act symbolizes that these responsibilities have been passed on to the Levites. The Levite tribe as a whole was offered as living sacrifices to God. In turn, God gave them as a gift of this special ministry (work) in the sanctuary in place of the firstborn children of Israel.

11. vision—a special message from God that is seen in the mind or in a dream or in a trance to help a person know God’s will (plan).

With these principles in mind, how do we understand what Paul says in Romans 12:1? How can we be a “living sacrifice”? What does that mean in our daily life?

THURSDAY—OCTOBER 15

DEDICATION OF THE LEVITES: PART 2 (Numbers 8:16)

Notice how strong the Lord was about the special calling of the Levites in Numbers 8:16. They were “wholly given” to Him. The Hebrew language really means they are “given to Me.” This meaning shows just how serious the Levites’ work was.

What is meant in Numbers 8:19, KJV, by the wording that the Levites were to “make an atonement¹² for the children of Israel”? How do we understand this with the Cross in mind? Read also Romans 5:11 and Hebrews 9:25–28.

Bible experts do not agree on the exact meaning of the wording, “to make an atonement for the children of Israel.” Clearly, in this case, “to make atonement” does not mean dying for the sins of others. The verb “make atonement” has a broader meaning than what people understand it to mean. Its meaning could be found in the same verse that says the Levites

will save the people from the plague by doing their service for Israel. In their work of ministry, the Levites were helping protect the children of Israel from God’s punishment by inviting them to come “nigh [near] unto the sanctuary” (Numbers 8:19, KJV).

So, the Levites, like the priests themselves, were doing something for the people that they could not do themselves. In this way, they were said to “make an atonement” for the people.

There is nothing we do that can make any kind of atonement. But how can we, by faithfully doing our duties, work as the Levites for the people? What are you doing in your local church for the betterment of the church and its mission?¹³

FRIDAY—OCTOBER 16

ADDITIONAL STUDY: Study the history of the Jewish custom (practice) of “laying on hands”¹⁴ in Genesis 48:8, 9, 13, 14, 17–20; Numbers 27:18–23; Matthew 19:13–15; Acts 13:1–3. What seems to be important about it?

“To the Jew, this service was an important one. When a Jewish father blessed his children, he put his hands upon their heads. When an animal was marked for sacrifice, the hand of a priest was put upon the head of

12. atonement—cleansing payment for forgiveness of the people’s sins.

13. mission—the special duty (work) for Jesus that a church sends a person or a group out to do.

14. “laying on of hands”—when ministers (pastors) put their hands upon new ministers or Bible workers for special blessings and power to do God’s work.

the animal. And when the ministers [pastors] of the church of believers in Antioch put their hands upon Paul and Barnabas, they asked God to pour His blessing upon the chosen apostles¹⁵ to do their special work.

“At a later date, the service of ordination by the laying on of hands was greatly abused. People mistakenly believed this service would make a person who received such ordination qualified for any and all work done for God. But in the setting apart of these two apostles [Paul and Barnabas], there is no record showing that full authority [power] was given by just the act of laying on of hands.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, page 162.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ❶ In what way does the local pastor today work as a Levite? What can we do to support the pastor in this work?
- ❷ How does the act of giving influence¹⁶ our relationship with God? How is giving from our income an act of worship and of faith? Why is it so important for us not to hold back in giving part of our income?
- ❸ What is our understanding of what Jesus did on the cross for us that we could not do for ourselves? Why did Jesus have to die? Why is just changing our lives and obeying the law and loving others not enough to make us right with God?

15. apostles—the disciples (followers) of Jesus who preached and taught the gospel (the good news about Jesus) after Jesus rose from the dead and returned to heaven.

16. influence—to have power, or an effect, over persons or things.