

Numbers 18

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- [0 : 00] Numbers 18. If you remember, Numbers 16 details for us Korah's rebellion. Now that's important because Korah is of the tribe of Levi. Korah was a Levite, remember that?
- And Korah's rebellion was Korah a Levite who had some access to the tabernacle, some access to helping and aiding the priest, but wanted more than that.
- He aspired to have the position of a priest because he began to say, Are Moses and Aaron the only ones who are holy? Are not all of God's people holy?
- Does not God speak to every one of us? And Korah rebelled against his rightful privileged position. Korah's rebellion brought along with it also other people who were not of the tribe of Levi and was kind of using his own pride as an excuse to bring others in.
- We saw God's judgment upon that rebellion. And if you remember, during that rebellion, the one thing that kind of stopped God's wrath or stayed his further vengeance upon the people at the end of chapter 16 was when Moses cried out to Aaron for Aaron to go get the censer and the firepan and to bring the offering.
- [1 : 15] And Aaron comes out there and it says that he took his stand between the living and the dead. He was interceding on behalf of the people. So we see Aaron's faithfulness in chapter 16, even after Korah's rebellion.
- We see his faithfulness in what he is called to do, and that is interceding for God's people because the priest was to be the one who would stand before God on behalf of people and stand before people on behalf of God.
- So he was faithful there. When we get to number 17, we see the further rebellion of God's people. We see them continuing to push back and to push back. And we see their revolts even a little bit more, saying that, well, we're all equal.
- So God wants to pretty much signify he has chosen Aaron. So we have the rods, Aaron's rod who buds. Remember, not only does it bud, it sprouts and there's blossoms and there's ripe almonds on this rod.
- So beyond a shadow of a doubt, we see that God is saying, this is the man I have chosen. Now, the great question at the end of number 17 is in the last two verses of number 17, where the people cry out, then the sons of Israel spoke to Moses saying, behold, we perish.
- [2 : 27] We are all dying. We are all dying. Everyone who comes near, who comes near to the tabernacle of the Lord must die. Are we to perish completely? So here's the cry of the people.
- The people have understood, okay? Korah has sought to lead others to say, oh, we're all equal. Everybody in the place is equal. We're all on common ground. And God had intended that to happen. But man's sin had kept that from happening.
- And therefore, they were appointed priests. So God did not just throw the door wide open and say, whoever wants to run into my presence can run into my presence. By the way, these things matter in scripture. Because God is showing us, right?
- Man's sin dictates his access to a holy God. And we see this. So because of the nation's sin, now not everyone is just free to run into the presence of God, into the holy of holies.

And to run into the presence of God and offer a sacrifice of atonement. Man is dependent upon someone else. Korah sought to bypass that and say, well, God loves us all so much, everybody can come into his presence.

[3 : 29] Let's just bring that down to today's time. And let's make an application here. Since God is love, we can come however we want to, right? No, that's exactly false. Because Jesus says there is but one way.

And that way is through him. There is but one way, right? It's very narrow. And it is man's sin which has led to that very narrow way. Now, so we see this here.

That after Korah's rebellion, the people come to the understanding that Aaron is the man they have chosen. But even then, they're not really focused on Aaron. They're focused on themselves. Because they say, we thought we could come to God.

And now God is in our midst. His tabernacle is there. The Shekinah glory is there. And they really were so self-focused. They said, but since we're not allowed to be near him, God has not chosen us. We're all going to die. In our sinfulness, we're going to die in his presence.

And that's what they're crying out at the end of Numbers 17. God answers that cry in Numbers 18. And what we see in Numbers 18 is really this thing that we've said was a theme.

[4 : 31] That every time man sins, there's a greater responsibility added to man. Every time man or the nation revolts, there are more restrictions placed upon them. And we see this kind of increase continuing to go on.

But Numbers 18 gives us the divinely prescribed order that God has for his people. So I've had a title tonight. It's kind of a long title, but stay with me, okay? It's the divinely prescribed order to preserve and maintain his people.

It's the divinely prescribed order that God has so ordained that it would preserve and maintain his people, even in their sinfulness, so that they would not die because he was present among them.

So here it is in Numbers 18. We read it in its entirety. So the Lord said to Aaron, You and your sons and your father's household with you shall bear the guilt in connection with the sanctuary, and you and your sons with you shall bear the guilt in connection with your priesthood.

But bring with you also your brothers, the tribe of Levi, the tribe of your father, that they may be joined with you and serve you while you and your sons with you are before the tent of meeting.

[5 : 44] And they shall thus attend to your obligations and the obligation of all the tent, but they shall not come near to the furnishings of the sanctuary and the altar, or both they and you will die.

They shall be joined with you and attend to the obligations of the tent of meeting for all the service of the tent, but an outsider may not come near you. So you shall attend to the obligations of the sanctuary and the obligations of the altar, so that there will no longer be wrath on the sons of Israel.

Behold, I myself have taken your fellow Levites from among the sons of Israel, and they are a gift to you, dedicated to the Lord, to perform the service for the tent of meeting. But you and your sons with you shall attend to your priesthood for everything concerning the altar and inside the veil, and you are to perform service.

I am giving you the priesthood as a bestowed service, but the outsider who comes near shall be put to death. Then the Lord spoke to Aaron, Now behold, I myself have given you charge of my offerings, even all the holy gifts of the sons of Israel.

I have given them to you as a portion and to your sons as a perpetual allotment. This shall be yours from the most holy gifts reserved from the fire. Every offering of theirs, every grain offering and every sin offering and every guilt offering, which they shall render to me, shall be most holy for you and for your sons.

[6 : 56] As for the most holy gifts, you shall eat it. Every male shall eat it. It shall be holy to you. This also is yours, the offering of their gift, even all their wave offering. And the sons of Israel, or of the sons of Israel, I have given them to you and to your sons and daughters with you as a perpetual allotment.

Every one of your household who is clean may eat it. All the best of the fresh oil and all the best of the fresh wine and of the grain and the first fruits and of those which they give to the Lord, I give them to you.

The first ripe fruits of all that is in their land, which they bring to the Lord, shall be yours. Every one of your household who is clean may eat it. Every devoted thing in Israel shall be yours.

Every first issue of the womb of all flesh, whether man or animal, which they offer to the Lord, shall be yours. Nevertheless, the firstborn of man you shall surely redeem, and the firstborn of unclean animals you shall redeem.

As to their redemption price from a month old, you shall redeem them by your valuation, five shekels and silver, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, which is twenty gross. But the firstborn of an ox, or the firstborn of a sheep, or the firstborn of a goat, you shall not redeem.

[7 : 59] They are holy. You shall sprinkle their blood on the altar, and shall offer up their fat and smoke, as an offering by fire, for a soothing aroma to the Lord. Their meat shall be yours. It shall be yours, like the breast of a wave offering, and like the right thigh.

All the offerings of the holy gifts, which the sons of Israel offer to the Lord, I have given to you, and your sons, and your daughters with you, as a perpetual allotment, is an everlasting covenant of salt, before the Lord to you, and your descendants with you.

Then the Lord said to Aaron, You shall have no inheritance in the land, nor own any portion among them. I am your portion, and your inheritance among the sons of Israel. To the sons of Levi, behold, I have given all the tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service, which they perform, the service of the tent of meeting.

The sons of Israel shall not come near the tent of meeting again, or they will bear sin and die. Only the Levites shall perform the service of the tent of meeting, and they shall bear their iniquity.

It is a perpetual statute throughout your generations. And among the sons of Israel, they shall have no inheritance for the tithe of the sons of Israel, which they offer as an offering to the Lord.

[9 : 06] I have given to the Levites for an inheritance. Therefore, I have said concerning them, they shall have no inheritance among the sons of Israel. Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, Moreover, you shall speak to the Levites and say to them, When you take from the sons of Israel the tithe, which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then you shall present an offering from it to the Lord, a tithe of the tithe.

Your offering shall be reckoned to you as the grain from the threshing floor, or the full produce from the wine vat. So you shall also present an offering to the Lord from your tithes, which you received from the sons of Israel.

And from it you shall give the Lord's offering to Aaron the priest. Out of all your gifts, you shall present every offering due to the Lord from all the best of them, the sacred part from them. You shall say to them, When you have offered from it the best of it, then the rest shall be reckoned to the Levites as the product of the threshing floor and as the product of the wine vat.

You may eat it anywhere, you and your households, for it is your compensation in return for your service in the tent of meeting. You will bear no sin by reason of it when you have offered the best of it, but you shall not profane the sacred gifts of the sons of Israel, or you will die.

Numbers 18. I want you to see tonight how God answers the cry at the end of Numbers 17 that we will all die, we will all die because God is in our presence.

[10 : 31] Because the reality is this, man in his sin cannot reside in the presence of God in his holiness. Yet God is dwelling among his people. He is manifesting his glory in his presence among his people.

And he has provided a way for that to happen. He has provided a way for that to work. And he has a divinely prescribed order in order that his people may shine his glory to the world in which they live in.

And this divinely prescribed order was one that was already dictated to them. But here he says it again because remember, actually by the time we get to Numbers chapter 20, we have already moved across 38 years of wilderness wanderings.

Okay, so we don't know if this is given to us when they're at Kadesh Barnea before they traverse in the wilderness for 38 years, or if this is in the midst of it. We don't know the time.

But God is retelling a lot of these things, much like the book of Deuteronomy, which we will get to very quickly. The book of Deuteronomy literally means the second law. And the reason we have a second telling of the law is because it's Moses giving it to the new generation.

[11 : 43] Here God is reminding the younger generation, those that will enter into the promised land. He has an order for his people to exist while he lives among them.

And it is dependent upon the priest and the Levites. Okay, and with this order comes these four things. Number one, we see there is an exalted position.

There is an exalted position. Much of the opposition that has taken place in the last couple of chapters, when the people fail to go into the promised land at Kadesh Barnea, they begin to rebel and revolt.

And their rebellion is truly and honestly against the Lord their God who has brought them here. But their anger is directed at two men in particular, and that is Moses and Aaron.

And they are rebelling and revolting against God and lashing out against Moses and Aaron because we as mankind love to blame others.

[12 : 46] That's just the reality. And we love to put that blame and that responsibility on someone else. So much of their rebellion is directed towards these two. And God has reminded them that these two, Moses serves as a very unique position, and Aaron is in a very prominent position.

Now, there would be no descendants of Moses that would fill his shoes. Okay? Moses tells us in the book of Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy chapter 18, that there would be one like unto him that God would raise up.

And we see that when we get to the book of Deuteronomy, that Moses is speaking of Christ, who is coming like unto Moses. He would actually be a better Moses. And we've seen that in the book of Hebrews.

But Aaron is one that Aaron and his sons would be this perpetual priesthood. That this is the order that God has dictated. So here God takes chapter 18, and he exalts the position of Aaron.

And he exalts him very quickly and very clearly in this. It says, Then the Lord said to Aaron. Now, up to this point, every time God spoke, he was either speaking to the nation, or he was giving divine instructions to Moses.

[14:00] He would always say, Then the Lord said to Moses, and Moses would go tell Aaron. Or then the Lord would say to Moses, and Moses would go tell the people. Then the Lord would say to Moses, and Moses would deliver that.

Moses was the in-between, right? Moses was the mediator. He was going into the tent of mediator. He was hearing a word from the Lord, and he was giving that. Now look at this exaltation of Aaron.

Because now it's not just Moses. Later on in the chapter, when we get to the end of chapter 18, the Lord says to Moses again. But here, the Lord says to Aaron. Now that's important.

Because that tells us that Aaron is in a position of relationship. That the Lord God, capital L, capital O, capital R, capital D, Yahweh, the covenant God, is in such a relationship with Aaron because of the position Aaron holds that he is speaking to him.

Now, keep in mind, God made this great declaration after the revolt, of the rebellion, of going into the promised land. He said, every male from 20 years old and upward would perish in the wilderness except Joshua and Caleb.

[15:10] Now, when he said that, we said that there were four people who were faithful in the land at that time. Joshua, Caleb, Moses, and Aaron. But God made this declaration that the only two that would still be alive were Joshua and Caleb.

Now, up to this point, we haven't had Moses and Aaron's rebellion yet. Okay? We haven't had their sin. God knew it because nothing takes God by surprise.

We'll see it very quickly whenever God is speaking to them and Moses strikes the rock. I can't wait till we get there because everybody's like, well, what did he do different? Why? He shouldn't have... I mean, all he did was the same thing he did before, right?

But, you know, just kind of a foretaste. The rock is a picture of Christ and he struck the rock and water came out and the second time God told him to talk to the rock and he didn't. He struck it. He got mad. He struck it. What he was doing was striking Christ again.

Christ was stricken once and ever since then we call out to him and he provides all we need, right? The rock is a type or a picture of Christ. He's only stricken once. He's only smitten once. You don't have to be crucified again.

[16:10] He doesn't have to be crucified again. He doesn't have to pay the price again. And what all Moses had to do was call out and that would be provided. But Moses said, no, we got to do it again. So in his anger, he hid it and God says, okay, for that rebellion, you won't enter into the promised land and neither will Aaron.

But up to this point, neither one of them have went there, right? So he's still considered one of the faithful and God is not honoring the man Aaron. He's honoring the position of the priesthood. Understand that, okay?

He's exalting the position. The priest would be the one who would hear a word from the Lord. And he is the one who is now standing between... We begin to see this transition now going that now it's not just the man Moses.

Now it is the priest who is hearing from God and interceding on behalf of the people. And he is getting this word and God exalts this because he says to Aaron, this is what should happen.

And God is... Now we live in a day and time where we think, okay, well this is... You know, God speaks to me all the time. Well, let us not take that lightly. Okay?

[17 : 09] We're on this side of the cross, we say. We have the promise of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. We are sealed until the day of redemption. We have Christ making his tabernacle within us.

And it is nothing short of miraculous that we can hear a word from God at any given moment. But the nation here was dependent upon one man to come and tell them what God was saying.

And God here says, right now I'm talking to Aaron. That's astounding. Because he exalts him. Even now, we understand that if we hear a word from God and God is speaking to us, that is an exaltation of our position.

Think about this. The creator of all the universe. The sustainer of all life. Speaks to us. Talks to us.

And that immediately raises us up to a higher position because we can hear a word from him. So we see the exalted position.

[18 : 15] This exalted position is not one just saying, see, Aaron's above everybody else. Look how good Aaron is. This exalted position brings with it the second thing, and that is an extended penalty.

Because with a higher position comes more responsibility. Scripture says, the one who has been entrusted with much will have much expected of them. Those who have been put in a great position will have more expected of them.

Now, here we begin to see where God begins to add to because of the sins of the people. The sins of the people are like, well, why does Aaron deserve to be up there in such a privileged position? Why does Aaron just get to be all high and mighty and everything take it easy?

And why does he get to be up here and I'm way down here and it looks so easy? God's going to show them that even though Aaron is exalted, Aaron is also carrying a greater weight than the average man. Because the position God has called him to is not a position of ease.

It is a position of servant, humbled leadership. And in that position, he's going to carry more responsibility because this is what he says. You and your sons will bear the iniquity of the tabernacle.

[19 : 22] You know essentially what that means? Moses, if someone defiles, not Moses, Aaron, if someone defiles this place, you will die for it. If someone who is not fit comes before this altar, Aaron, you and your sons will die for it.

What just happened in number 16? 250 men were consumed but Aaron was spared. Now what's God saying? If it happens again, Aaron, that's your responsibility.

They will die and you will die. You will bear the iniquity of the tabernacle and you and your sons will bear the iniquity of the priesthood because here's what comes with this greater position that God is putting him in.

It is a greater responsibility to bear the responsibility for the sins of the people and to bear the responsibility of the sins for himself. He would be one who would maintain the holiness of God's existence among the people because if that place was defiled, if it was desecrated, then the people would all perish.

So God is saying, the man I'm putting there to make sure that doesn't happen is Aaron and his sons. Here's the extended penalty.

[20 : 52] No longer will I just lash out to those who come near Aaron. It is you who are to maintain the holiness of this place among them so that they are not judged.

So let's bring that down to our application because we don't say, well, what difference does that matter to us? Then go to the book of Hebrews. We have a great high priest who is Jesus Christ, right, who maintains the sanctuary which is not made with hands but the sanctuary that is in heaven.

And the reason the Bible tells us in the book of Hebrews we can come boldly before the throne through the blood of the Lamb is that through Jesus Christ we will not defile the presence of God because he has bore the iniquity of us.

Right? He has made it possible for us to live in our sinful humanity in the presence of God's holiness perfection. And he maintains that and that's exactly what Aaron is doing here.

Aaron is now maintaining the possibility because if Aaron and his sons were removed it would not be possible for sinful people to live in the presence of a holy God.

[22 : 06] But because they were there bearing the iniquity because they were there carrying the responsibility because they were there the ones interceding not only for their sins but also for the sins of all the nation.

Now the nation did not have to say we will die we will all surely die we're going to perish because we're in the presence of the tabernacle. God says no you won't because one inside the tabernacle is standing in your place.

There is but one who can go into the holy of holies and he will bear the iniquity he will bear the iniquity for you and for himself. And here's this great responsibility he has.

Aaron's responsibility is to ensure that God's people can live in his presence. And the presence of God is the very thing that distinguishes his people from everybody else.

Now when you look at Aaron you're like I don't know if I want that position right? now it looks a little bit different because I don't know if I want to be that man. I don't know if I want to be that person who is responsible to make sure that they are living in God's presence.

[23 : 28] But that's his responsibility. That's what's been added to him because of the sin of the nation. Now we go to the third thing and we see the employed partners because there's this beautiful concept of scripture and I've been often reminded of it as I read scripture and I see it over and over again and I think that we need to be constantly mindful of this because I know we can look at these Old Testament truths and say oh well that was back in that day but we need to understand this too okay this same application that we believe in the priesthood of the believers right?

we believe in the priesthood of the believers or we should okay 1 Peter says priesthood of the believers which means if we are believers in Jesus Christ if we accept that Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior and we have surrendered our life to him and he is absolutely ours and we are sealed until the day of redemption for that glory and we are his people then we are his priest and as priest we are the people we are the people who ensure that the rest of mankind can live in the presence of God's manifest glory do you want to know why I believe that things get terrible in the book of Revelation?

you want to know why I believe that? it's because I think when the church is raptured the people who are standing in the gap for the rest of the world are immediately removed and then the full vengeance of God's judgment falls upon man's sin because the priesthood of the church is no longer there making it possible for the rest of the world to stand in the presence of God's manifest glory you say well what is God's manifest glory?

the Bible tells us the heavens declare his glory all of creation sings it says that the trees clap their hands that the stars proclaim his greatness the moving of the spirit upon the world to bring conviction of sin and righteousness and lawlessness and all these things right?

who are the people who stand in the gap? that is the believers that is the priesthood right? that's their responsibility now here's what the beautiful thing we see because that's a hard thing to do the beautiful thing is there are employed partners because God never calls an individual to labor alone God never calls an individual to labor alone he always puts others around that individual and he always puts them around them to labor with them and here we see that Aaron has been given greater responsibility his descendants have been given greater responsibility and God follows this up and says and take with you also your brothers from the tribe of Levi right?

[26 : 00] take your kinsmen from the tribe of Levi God says I have taken the Levites out of the nation of Israel they are my people and I'm giving them to you okay? and I'm going to give them to you Aaron as a gift this is what God says God says the Levites are my gift to you and it's a great gift because what God is saying is Aaron your work is great but I'm not going to call you to do it all God doesn't call every one of us to do it all he doesn't call any one of us to do it all he puts people beside us to help us do that and this is what he says he says Aaron you have to attend to the altar to the offerings and to the Holy of Holies but all the other details all the minuscule things have you ever thought about what was going on around the tabernacle have you ever really just stopped and thought about all the offerings that were being brought somebody's got to do something with all those hides right?

all the animals being skinned I mean you got over a million people any given moment somebody can sin and any given moment they have to bring you a lamb or a goat or an ox I mean that's a big hide right?

what are you going to do with a hide? what are you going to do with the things that are consumed on there? and some of them you just take the blood and spring on it somebody's got to butcher these animals I mean just reality I'm not trying to be gross or anything I'm just trying to be real I mean this isn't like a pleasant place there's a lot of work going on around the tabernacle it is a place of labor right?

it is a lot of work to ensure that what God's standards have been set are being met among his people and what God says is Aaron you alone and your sons alone can offer it on the altar you alone and your sons alone can bring the blood into the holy of holies you alone and your sons alone can do these things but there are a lot of other things that have to be done when we move somebody's got to take it down when we move somebody's got to move so what I'm doing is I'm going to give you somebody to labor beside you now this is good because here's the reality that every one of us need to put into practice God calls us to unique ministries each and every one of us but he has not called any one of us to do everything he's called us in the new testament we refer to them as the one another passages he's called us to depend upon one another who can labor among us and another great principle is that work in the movement of God among his people will never move forward on the backs of one individual never will it will never move forward on the backs of one person can't do it you know that you cannot find and this is not any kind of this is just a reality okay when you open up the new testament every church you read about in the new testament had a plurality is the word that had multiple leaders every one of them that when

Paul left a church he set up multiple leaders because he knew we labor among one another there were pastors that were teachers pastors slash teachers those the pastors right and then there were all those other things Ephesians 4 really says every one of them that's kind of laid out there but there was the teaching pastor which pastor and teachers went office usually and then there's the other things but God I mean that's what deacons came out right Acts chapter 6 that's why we have deacons deacons are just about the equivalent of the Levites here that we find in Numbers 18 because they were to be the servants along beside Aaron and he tells Aaron they're going to serve with you before the tabernacle not in the tabernacle but to serve with you and that's the deacon body is to serve with the pastor and they're to serve alongside and we see this over and over again all these principles we see in scripture that God has employed partners for each and every one of us in the labor he's called us to do our responsibility is to find out where he is calling us to serve and to take joy in that service if I'm called to be a

[30 : 10] Levite I want to be the best Levite I can be if God's called me to be one of the descendants of Aaron I want to be one of the best descendants of Aaron I can be whatever it is he's called me to do I want to be the best at it and we see this here that he's employed people that Aaron doesn't have to do it alone now the fourth thing really takes up the bulk of the rest of this chapter most of the chapters on this fourth thing and that is the expected provisions the expected provisions because here Aaron is getting greater responsibility Aaron and his sons are getting greater responsibility and the Levites are being called to greater responsibility the Levites probably were in a humbled responsibility because you know they've just seen Korah and the ground opened up swallowed them whole and they heard them screaming out right so now they understand we're called to serve we're not called to be we're not going to step over our servanthood we're going to serve and we're going to do but here's the reality every one of them were full time right they were full time Aaron and his sons were full time and the Levites were full time as a matter of fact we know they're full time because God says they would have no inheritance in the land now I know the Levites get 48 cities and I know they get to pasture lands around those 48 cities which is okay which means you know they had animals and I but they didn't have any land right they didn't have this is your area in the promised land this is your area in the promised land they had these cities that were scattered among them and the reason there were so many cities scattered among them is because they were to serve the Levites were to serve the nation before God in his presence in each of the locales of the cities there and we see here that what they were employed to do was a full time service and God said this is what you can expect as your provisions he tells

Aaron I have given you the offerings right and his sons Aaron and his sons were to eat of the holy offerings offered by fire and then his sons and his daughters and anyone in his family that was clean could eat of the free will offerings as a matter of fact he told Aaron he said I'm going to give you meat right even from the sin offering once you offer the blood if it was an ox or a goat or a sheep and it was a sin offering the only thing he offered was the blood and he told Aaron he said you can have the rest of the meat he had the first fruits he had the first grain he had the first wine the best of the wine all these things he said I'm going to provide these to you to the Levites a tithe the tithe that was expected from the nation of Israel was to go to they would tithe of their income they would tithe of their first fruits and they would tithe of the best of their land those all went to the Levites that would be those 48 cities where they were at but the

Levites this is when God speaks to Moses God reminds Moses to tell the Levites that they were to tithe the tithe right so if the! I believe it was Warren Wiersbe who said in his commentary on this that he had met pastors and this just confounds me this completely blows my mind away by the way that he had actually met pastors who didn't think they needed to pay a tithe or they didn't need to give an offering to the church because they said their offering had been sanctified through the offering plate I guess and that just blows my mind away how any leader could do that but here we see there's a biblical request and biblical responsibility for this whereas Moses reminds those who were living off of it to also pay a tithe as well that each one of them were to be those who gave so God said this is how I'm going to provide for you I'm employing you in full time service I'm expecting much of you but I'm going to provide to you this way now stay with me this their provisions fully relied upon

God's promise that he would multiply his blessings upon the nation and not only did their provisions rely upon the fact that God was going to bless the nation they also relied on the fact that the nation would walk in obedience and give part of that blessing back they were totally dependent upon those they were serving now we don't have to go very far in the nation of Israel's history to see this is the order this is the divinely prescribed order God sets up I have one appointed who's going to stand in the gap I have put around him a multitude to serve with him therefore you my people can live in confidence that you will not die because there is someone bearing your sin and his sin before me and my expectation is that you will provide for them that was what

God had called the nation of Israel to do we don't have to travel very far down the nation of Israel's history path to see when they fail to do that what happens do you remember the book of Judges told you in the book of Judges there's a phrase that's repeated five times the book of Judges is much like the book of Nehemiah it is a downward spiral and there's a phrase that's repeated five times at the end of the book of Judges I believe it starts either in Judges 16 or 17 and after that first appearance we see it five times and that phrase is and in those days there was no king in Israel and every man did what was right in his own eyes do you remember how the book of Judges ends such a tragic ending and the tragedy in the book of I mean there's a civil war within a nation and they almost kill as a matter of fact they get so close to annihilating one of the tribes that there were only 600 men from that tribe left and there weren't enough women to give to them as wives so they end up kidnapping and we use this term loosely they said we're not going to voluntarily give our daughters because we said

[36 : 25] I mean it's tragic and it all started when a Levite was traveling and someone took advantage of his concubine and he got back home she had died and I don't want to spare all the details I don't want to give all the gory details but he made it very well known among the nation someone had done something to this concubine and started a civil war you know what tragedy that is that Levite should have never been traveling the reason he was traveling was because he was looking for work the reason he was looking for work is because God's people weren't bringing their tithing anymore they broke the order the book of Nehemiah it's great the book of

Nehemiah is great it's God's leader and national rebuild he's a political leader he's not a religious leader Nehemiah is Nehemiah has one great problem going on inside the temple that they built it would be called Ezra's temple he looks and there are no servants of the temple he goes there he sets up the order he goes back he has to report back to the king and he comes back everything's in disarray they're not worshipping right they're not doing anything right Jerusalem is falling apart and he looks up and he says where are the Levites and the Levites said we had to go find work because nobody was bringing their tithes into the storehouses and the nation is just spiraling down see God had had a very clear divinely prescribed order and said if you walk in when you step out of this order judgment comes and we see him prescribing this order for the nation here in numbers 18 as he has a divinely prescribed order to maintain and to preserve his people in his holy presence numbers 18 thank you brother for your!

so Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.