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Day 35 – February 4

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## **Establishment of a Nation (1525 – 1400 BCE)**

### ***The Levites Chosen for Service***

### ***Offerings from the Tribes***

**Readings: *Numbers 3:1-13; 7:1-89; 8:1-22***

### ***Reflections:***

- We should be glad we live in grace, experiencing the extreme mercy of God and are no longer in the time when his justice was revealed. “Unauthorized fire?” You die! “Anyone approaches the tabernacle out of turn...” you die! This not only reveals the justice of God but the extreme nature of his mercy. It shows that in judgment no one can stand. But in mercy, everyone is completely safe and completely embraced.
- The firstborn represented giving your first to God as an act of faith. Giving God the first and best of what he gives us is a symbol of us trusting him with everything. God chose the Levites, not the firstborn to take care of the Tabernacle. There are probably two different issues going on. God wants everyone and everything to be given to him, not just the Levites. The firstborn is simply symbolic of this. The issue with the Levites was that they were the smallest and the weakest of the tribes. Again, it is a constant reminder that the smallest and the weakest are first in God’s order.
- The Levites are not chosen because somehow Aaron was morally perfect. He and his sons had as many issues as anyone. It was just that once again God chose the least likely, the small and least significant to be the closest to him. Aaron did not even faithfully support Moses without some issues coming up. Yet, God still chose him and worked through him and his descendants.
- Levites are washed in water. Again these early symbols point towards baptism. They also have hands laid on them in their commissioning. This is a symbol of empowerment or conferring power or authority. The practice of laying hands on people when praying of them to receive the Spirit will be something done in the first church (see Acts 8:18; 1 Timothy 5:22; Hebrews 6:2). All Christ-followers will be washed (baptized) and experience the laying on of hands. In other words, we all become Priests.
- There is much to be said for the age range for those serving as priests. Those who are 25 to 50 do the primary work of the Tabernacle and those that turn 50 then drop back into

a support role. Many organizations are led by those over fifty or older and as a result the organizations often get stuck in the past.

- The offerings from the twelve tribes are like the twelve days of Christmas. "On the first day of the tabernacle, the first tribe brought for me...some fancy dishes and a sacrifice." Fa la la la la!
- In the end, the Tabernacle is all outfitted. It was like a house warming party. All of this symbolism, all of these pictures, object lessons and representations of spiritual things lead to the central most important aspect of the tabernacle and its role: "When Moses entered the Tent of Meeting to speak with the Lord, he heard the voice speaking to him from between the two cherubim (where mercy triumphs over law and judgment) above the atonement cover on the ark of the covenant law. In this way the Lord spoke to him." (Number 7:89) All of this ornate and rich imagery all points towards intimate friendship with God. All God ultimately wants is friendship and people who share his heart.