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## Lesson 11 – The Levites

- 1) When Jacob blessed his children, what curse like blessing did he give to his son Levi?

**Genesis 49:5-7** Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their \_\_\_\_\_. O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their selfwill they digged down a wall. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.

One entire tribe of Israel was set apart for the service of the sanctuary. As we recall the last words spoken to Levi by his father Jacob as he lay on his deathbed, we might wonder that his descendants were chosen for that sacred work. When Jacob remembered the sins of Levi, he pronounced almost a curse instead of a blessing upon his son and closed it with these words: **“I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel.”**

- 2) What amazing thing does God do for us?

**Nehemiah 13:2** Because they met not the children of Israel with bread and with water, but hired Balaam against them, that he should curse them: howbeit our God turned the curse into a \_\_\_\_\_.

- 3) What does Isaiah tell us?

**Isaiah 1:18** Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as \_\_\_\_\_; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as \_\_\_\_\_.

The impulsive nature which, under the control of Satan, drives a man to commit desperate crimes, is not removed when he is converted. That same impetuosity, consecrated and under the control of Christ, makes him a valiant warrior for the Lord. Saul, the desperate persecutor, when converted, became Paul, the leading apostle.

- 4) What did Levi do right that put them in good standing with Moses and God while the Children of Israel were dancing around the golden calf?

**Exodus 32:26** Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the LORD'S side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of \_\_\_\_\_ gathered themselves together unto him.

**Exodus 32:27** And he said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his \_\_\_\_\_.

**Exodus 32:28** And the children of Levi did according to the word of \_\_\_\_\_: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men.

- 5) What was the eventual result of their decision to stand with God and Moses?

**Deuteronomy 33:8** And of Levi he said, Let thy \_\_\_\_\_ and thy \_\_\_\_\_ be with thy holy one, whom thou didst prove at Massah, and with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah;



**Deuteronomy 33:9** Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children: for they have observed thy word, and kept thy \_\_\_\_\_.

**Exodus 33:10** They shall teach Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy \_\_\_\_\_: they shall put incense before thee, and whole burnt sacrifice upon thine altar.

The fearless character which, under the control of Satan, led Levi to murder the Shechemites, when controlled by the grace of God, enabled his descendants to take their stand boldly on the Lord's side when the mass of Israel went into idolatry. God then turned the curse into a blessing; He said because they had observed His law and kept His covenant, they should **"teach Jacob His judgments and Israel His law."**

6) What was the tribe of Levi's land inheritance among the Children of Israel?

**Numbers 18:20** And the LORD spake unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no \_\_\_\_\_ in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them: I am thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel.

*Numbers 35:1-8 And the LORD spake unto Moses in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho, saying, Command the children of Israel, that they give unto the Levites of the inheritance of their possession cities to dwell in; and ye shall give also unto the Levites suburbs for the cities round about them. And the cities shall they have to dwell in; and the suburbs of them shall be for their cattle, and for their goods, and for all their beasts. And the suburbs of the cities, which ye shall give unto the Levites, shall reach from the wall of the city and outward a thousand cubits round about. And ye shall measure from without the city on the east side two thousand cubits, and on the south side two thousand cubits, and on the west side two thousand cubits, and on the north side two thousand cubits; and the city shall be in the midst: this shall be to them the suburbs of the cities. And among the cities which ye shall give unto the Levites there shall be six cities for refuge, which ye shall appoint for the manslayer, that he may flee thither: and to them ye shall add forty and two cities. So all the cities which ye shall give to the Levites shall be forty and eight cities: them shall ye give with their suburbs. And the cities which ye shall give shall be of the possession of the children of Israel: from them that have many ye shall give many; but from them that have few ye shall give few: every one shall give of his cities unto the Levites according to his inheritance which he inheriteth.*

In order that their influence for good might be more widely felt throughout Israel, the Lord, instead of giving them one portion of the land for their inheritance, as He had given the other tribes, appointed as their portion forty-eight cities scattered among all the tribes. Truly they were divided among Jacob and scattered in Israel, but the curse was turned into a blessing. Our God is **"the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever."** **Hebrews 13:8**

7) What will God do with a nation that turns from their wicked way?

**Jeremiah 18:7-9** At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, \_\_\_\_\_ from their evil, I will \_\_\_\_\_ of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to \_\_\_\_\_ and to \_\_\_\_\_ it;



When He pronounces evil against a nation or an individual because of their wickedness, if they turn from their wrong-doing, God says He **“will repent of the evil”** He **“thought to do unto them,”** and as in the case of Levi, a blessing will come instead of the curse.

***Read Numbers 8:9-14 And thou shalt bring the Levites before the tabernacle of the congregation: and thou shalt gather the whole assembly of the children of Israel together: And thou shalt bring the Levites before the LORD: and the children of Israel shall put their hands upon the Levites: And Aaron shall offer the Levites before the LORD for an offering of the children of Israel, that they may execute the service of the LORD. And the Levites shall lay their hands upon the heads of the bullocks: and thou shalt offer the one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering, unto the LORD, to make an atonement for the Levites. And thou shalt set the Levites before Aaron, and before his sons, and offer them for an offering unto the LORD. Thus shalt thou separate the Levites from among the children of Israel: and the Levites shall be mine.***

The term “Levite” was applied to all the priests, but only the descendants of Aaron were to hold the sacred office. The remainder of the tribe was to do the service of the sanctuary under the direction of the priests. They were not allowed to officiate at the altar of burnt-offering, nor to burn incense, nor to do any of the priest’s work within the veil. The Levites were to serve, or minister to, the priests; but the priests were to minister for the people before the Lord.

The Levites were chosen by the Lord instead of the first born of Israel. While journeying in the wilderness, they carried all that pertained to the tabernacle; but although they bore the sacred furniture, they were never permitted even to look upon it. After the temple was built, the Levites were assigned the work of waiting on the priests in the sanctuary service. They prepared the showbread, often led the singing, collected the tithe, and did a large amount of work in connection with the service of the Lord. In the time of David, the Levites began to serve in the sanctuary at the age of twenty-five. At fifty years of age, they were to **“return from the warfare of the service.”** They were not discharged; they still had oversight of the work but were not expected to perform arduous duties. The work of the Levites was largely confined to the court, and thus typified the work of the gospel ministry of the present day.

Think about all the things that happen at church that the pastor doesn’t do. How important is music in worship? How important is the caretaker's work? How important are the parts that no one sees? These are the unsung heroes in God’s great movement.

***Can you see God turn curses into blessings? \_\_\_\_\_***

***Are you interested in standing with God? \_\_\_\_\_***

***Will you now ask Him now to help you do this? \_\_\_\_\_***