**Duties of Priests and Levites**

Michele asked rhetorically at dinner last night “Why would anyone want to be President?” She sees it as a thankless job with people always questioning the decisions that are made. She finds the title of queen to be much more suitable. No pesky elections to bother with or worries of impeachment, queens rule for life. And not a ceremonial queen like Queen Elizabeth, but a real honest to goodness queen who doesn’t defer to Parliament. I suppose I would have the title of prince consort which would be ok as long as the duties didn’t interfere with the sawmill operation. Her decrees would be final, no appeals to the Supreme Court. I think she would rule benevolently, just the occasional beheading as punishment for an unmuffled motorcycle (justified in my view). In short, she would have the dream job, unlimited authority without accountability. In our study of chapter 18 of Numbers, we see God bestowing numerous rights and privileges to Aaron and his sons as priests but also making them responsible for the integrity of the tabernacle and the priesthood.

The chapter begins with God speaking to Aaron (directly, not through Moses) telling him that he and his sons would bear the responsibility for offenses against the sanctuary and priesthood. They could not allow the tabernacle to be defiled nor could they allow the priesthood to be diminished. God made a provision for their fellow Levites to assist them in the tabernacle but made clear that their role would be limited while Aaron and his sons would bear the main responsibility.

Next God told Aaron that he would be responsible for administering the offerings that were presented to God. It is important to note that the offerings belonged first to God who would allow Aaron and his sons to receive their portion from God (see v. 11). All the first fruits brought to God would be given to them. All first born animals would be given to them as well although they had to pay a redemption price for first born sons and first born unclean male animals.

God then reminded Aaron that the Levites would have no share of the inheritance of the land in Canaan. To compensate for that, they would receive the tithes collected from the other 12 tribes. God then instructed Moses to say to the Levites that they in turn were to tithe back to God one tenth of what they received. It was to be the best and holiest part of what they received and would be given to the priesthood.

Notwithstanding my tongue in cheek assessment of the power of a monarch, accountability plays an important role in our lives, both secular and non secular. From **Civics Nation** *“Two of the most essential principles of democracy are accountability and transparency, without which democracy would be impossible. Accountability ensures that government officials are held accountable to the citizenry; transparency gives the public the right to access government information and requires that decisions and actions made by the government are open to public scrutiny.”* The slogan of **The Washington Post** is *“Democracy dies in darkness”.* AsChristians we are accountable to one another and church leaders are accountable to their congregations. More importantly, we are accountable to God. Matthew Henry observed that God established the priesthood as a buffer between Himself and the Israelites. He noted that the tabernacle being in their midst was a source of terror for them. We no longer have to rely on the priesthood as an intermediary, we can go straight to God and we have Jesus now making intercession on our behalf. As Christians, we enjoy great benefits now and forever. While grace abounds, God expects proper behavior of his children.