

Better

Intro:

Lev 10:1-3

This story is referred to 5 times in the OT - one of which begins our passage today...

God wanted His people to know how dangerous it was to worship Him wrongly...worship was a life or death affair

We have a tendency to see our worship as totally different than that of the OT

The God of the OT seems different, scarier, more dangerous

The story of numbers 3 is the story of a priesthood organized to guard the people from accidentally getting too close to God, from accidentally profaning Him while they were set up in the center of the camp

Their duties were exacting and specific and there was a high cost for getting it wrong

How are we supposed to read and relate to this today?

Transition:

God has not become more dangerous since Numbers 3...

In other words He hasn't changed

He is just as Holy, just as scary, just as dangerous - worship is just as life or death today as it was then...

And yet it is different - God hasn't changed but we have - this is what the Christ has done...

Numbers 3 is meant to remind us how big a deal it is for us to have access, to worship so freely and safely this Holy God

It is meant to reveal to us the true significance of so many of the things we take for granted

Things like singing, spending time together, praying constantly, worshipping everywhere

In other words, we need to see what they had and see how much more, how much better we have it now...here...in this place

Main Idea:

They had a high priest...you have a better one

They had a priesthood...you are a better one

They had a job...you have a better one

They had a ransom...you have a better one

Implication:

Rom 12:1-2

Your worship is no less serious than that of the levitical priesthood

Their entire existence was likened to a walking redeemed animal sacrifice...How much more is yours???

You might feel like a normal casual christian but you are not...

Application:

Heb 12:18-29

If these levites were to take their worship seriously...how much more should you?

You christian right now, right as you sit, are the holiest object here on planet earth and what you do with your body matters more than you can comprehend

What you say matters

What you do matters

What you watch, listen to, and partake in, matters

Don't ever trivialize your faith

Don't every make it casual

Don't ever take it for granted!!!

Articles for further study:

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/essay/the-priesthood-of-all-believers/>

Text:

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They had a high priest...you have a better one

Num. 3:1 ¶ **These are the generations of Aaron and Moses at the time when the LORD spoke with Moses on Mount Sinai.**

Num. 3:2 These are the names of the sons of Aaron: Nadab the firstborn, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.

Num. 3:3 These are the names of the sons of Aaron, the anointed priests, whom he ordained to serve as priests.

Num. 3:4 **But Nadab and Abihu died before the LORD when they offered unauthorized fire before the LORD in the wilderness of Sinai, and they had no children.** So Eleazar and Ithamar served as priests in the lifetime of Aaron their father.

heb 3:1-6; 4:14-5:10; 7:23-8:2; 9:1-14, 24-10:14, 19-25 (Israel had a high priest...we have a better one - and we, not some levitical priesthood, enter boldly into His service...)

They had a priesthood...you are a better one

Num. 3:5 ¶ And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

Num. 3:6 **“Bring the tribe of Levi near, and set them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister to him.**

Num. 3:7 **They shall keep guard over him and over the whole congregation** before the tent of meeting, as they minister at the tabernacle.

Num. 3:8 **They shall guard all the furnishings** of the tent of meeting, **and keep guard over the people** of Israel as they minister at the tabernacle.

Num. 3:9 **And you shall give the Levites to Aaron and his sons; they are wholly given to him from among the people of Israel.**

Num. 3:10 And you shall appoint Aaron and his sons, **and they shall guard their priesthood. But if any outsider comes near, he shall be put to death.”**

Num. 3:11 ¶ And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

Num. 3:12 **“Behold, I have taken the Levites from among the people of Israel instead of every firstborn who opens the womb among the people of Israel. The Levites shall be mine,**

Num. 3:13 **for all the firstborn are mine.** On the day that I struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, **I consecrated for my own all the firstborn in Israel, both of man and of beast. They shall be mine: I am the LORD.”**

ex 13:1-2, 11-16 (God took the firstborn of Egypt and killed them in place of Israel firstborn - it was a substitution - pictured imputed forgiveness...but before they could go very far...God chose the levites instead)

ex 32:25-29 (these were then taken as His - for His service - they took God's holiness more seriously...they served Him more closely...this does not point forward to the pastorate but to you...)

1 pet 2:4-10 (Israel had a priesthood...you are a better one...chosen set apart for holy service - a people not a priesthood for his own possession)

(1 cor 1:26-31 (chosen by God...not only for salvation but service...))

(jn 17:1-26 (set apart for holy service))

They had a job...you have a better one

Num. 3:14 ¶ And the LORD spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, saying,

Num. 3:15 **“List the sons of Levi, by fathers' houses and by clans; every male from a month old and upward you shall list.”**

Num. 3:16 So Moses listed them according to the word of the LORD, as he was commanded.

Num. 3:17 And these were the sons of Levi by their names: Gershon and Kohath and Merari.

Num. 3:18 And these are the names of the sons of Gershon by their clans: Libni and Shimei.

Num. 3:19 And the sons of Kohath by their clans: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel.

Num. 3:20 And the sons of Merari by their clans: Mahli and Mushi. These are the clans of the Levites, by their fathers' houses.

Num. 3:21 ¶ **To Gershon** belonged the clan of the Libnites and the clan of the Shimeites; these were the clans of the Gershonites.

Num. 3:22 Their listing according to the number of all the males from a month old and upward was 7,500.

Num. 3:23 The clans of the Gershonites were to camp behind the tabernacle on the west,

Num. 3:24 with Eliasaph, the son of Lael as chief of the fathers' house of the Gershonites.

Num. 3:25 **And the guard duty of the sons of Gershon in the tent of meeting involved the tabernacle, the tent with its covering, the screen for the entrance of the tent of meeting,**

Num. 3:26 **the hangings of the court, the screen for the door of the court that is around the tabernacle and the altar, and its cords—all the service connected with these.**

Num. 3:27 ¶ **To Kohath** belonged the clan of the Amramites and the clan of the Izharites and the clan of the Hebronites and the clan of the Uzzielites; these are the clans of the Kohathites.

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Num. 3:28 According to the number of all the males, from a month old and upward, there were 8,600, **keeping guard over the sanctuary.**

Num. 3:29 The clans of the sons of Kohath were to camp on the south side of the tabernacle,

Num. 3:30 with Elizaphan the son of Uzziel as chief of the fathers' house of the clans of the Kohathites.

Num. 3:31 **And their guard duty involved the ark, the table, the lampstand, the altars, the vessels of the sanctuary with which the priests minister, and the screen; all the service connected with these.**

Num. 3:32 And Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest was to be chief over the chiefs of the Levites, and to have oversight of those who kept guard over the sanctuary.

Num. 3:33 ¶ To Merari belonged the clan of the Mahlites and the clan of the Mushites: these are the clans of Merari.

Num. 3:34 Their listing according to the number of all the males from a month old and upward was **6,200.**

Num. 3:35 And the chief of the fathers' house of the clans of Merari was Zuriel the son of Abihail. They were to camp on the north side of the tabernacle.

Num. 3:36 **And the appointed guard duty of the sons of Merari involved the frames of the tabernacle, the bars, the pillars, the bases, and all their accessories; all the service connected with these;**

Num. 3:37 **also the pillars around the court, with their bases and pegs and cords.**

Num. 3:38 ¶ Those who were to camp before the tabernacle on the east, before the tent of meeting toward the sunrise, were Moses and Aaron and his sons, guarding the sanctuary itself, **to protect the people of Israel. And any outsider who came near was to be put to death.**

Num. 3:39 **All those listed among the Levites, whom Moses and Aaron listed at the commandment of the LORD, by clans, all the males from a month old and upward, were 22,000.**

*1 Tim 3:14-15 (they had to get their message right - to guard it from worldliness - not only for their salvation but for their sanctification- God had brought them out of Egypt but He still needed to bring Egypt out of them... they had a message to convey and they had to get it right...how much more should we?)
matt 28:18-20 (they had a job...you have a better one)*

They had a ransom...you have a better one

Num. 3:40 ¶ And the LORD said to Moses, **"List all the firstborn males of the people of Israel, from a month old and upward, taking the number of their names.**

Num. 3:41 **And you shall take the Levites for me—I am the LORD—instead of all the firstborn among the people of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the cattle of the people of Israel."**

Num. 3:42 So Moses listed all the firstborn among the people of Israel, as the LORD commanded him.

Num. 3:43 And all the firstborn males, according to the number of names, from a month old and upward as listed were 22,273.

Num. 3:44 ¶ And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

Num. 3:45 **"Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the people of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites instead of their cattle. The Levites shall be mine: I am the LORD.**

Num. 3:46 **And as the redemption price for the 273 of the firstborn of the people of Israel, over and above the number of the male Levites,**

Num. 3:47 **you shall take five shekels per head;** you shall take them according to the shekel of the sanctuary (the shekel of twenty gerahs),

Num. 3:48 and give the money to Aaron and his sons **as the redemption price for those who are over."**

Num. 3:49 **So Moses took the redemption money from those who were over and above those redeemed by the Levites.**

Num. 3:50 From the firstborn of the people of Israel he took the money, 1,365 shekels, by the shekel of the sanctuary.

Num. 3:51 And Moses gave the redemption money to Aaron and his sons, according to the word of the LORD, as the LORD commanded Moses.

*ex 30:11-16; 38:25-27 (they were to see themselves as a redeemed people, their tabernacle was literally set upon the redemption price - it was literally a temple of redemption...but there was a price and it was real)
1 pet 1:10-21 (they had a ransomed people and a ransomed priesthood...we are a better one, for we have a better one)
1 cor 6:19-20 (they were bought with a price...you were bought with a better one...so glorify God with your body?)
rom 12:1-2 (implication)
heb 12:18-29 (application)*