

Immerse Day 52 :: April 13

How many times have we seen Jesus show up in the Old Testament so far? As Isaac's ram, Israel's lamb, the scapegoat, and on and on. Today, it isn't an animal but an entire tribe that foreshadows Jesus' sacrifice for us.

At the Passover, God claimed all firstborn sons as belonging to Him. He took those of the Egyptians, but left those of the Israelites, whose homes were marked with a lamb's blood on their doorposts. But since then, we have seen again and again God's claim on the firstborn son. Today, once again, God claims the firstborn sons of Israel. But in their place this time, God calls Israel to offer the tribe of Levi. These people will be given to God as substitutes for all of the firstborn sons in Israel. They will become His servants, now and forever, and will serve in the temple.

Specifically, they will care for the tabernacle and everything involved in it. This includes putting it up, taking it down, and hauling it all the way to the Promised Land. Little did they know that this trip to the Promised Land would extend by about 40 years soon. By families, they were assigned different parts of the Tabernacle (poles, curtains, altars) to care for, but altogether, the Levites would be dedicated to God, they would be His, and they would be holy. They would not own land like the rest. They would have different rules from the rest. They would be Different, Separate, Holy.

Interestingly, there were 273 more firstborn sons than there were Levites. So these were bought with silver, given to God's representatives, the Levites.

This substitution of the Levites for the firstborn is important. We have become accustomed to skimming through a lot of these texts. After all, what do I care about a bunch of names and numbers? How can these readings help me to grow? I hope you read carefully today, because if you did, you had the chance to see Jesus in action. You see, Jesus, like the Levites before Him, would be given as a substitute for God's children, us. He would be taken, separated, and used for God's purposes in our place. Specifically, He would die on the cross as a substitute for us, dying not for anything He did wrong, but for the things we do wrong. He would take our place, and so we would be free, just as the firstborn sons of Israel were free.

How many times have we seen Jesus show up in the Old Testament so far? Once more.