

Adult Bible Class

The Book of Leviticus - Lesson #5

Leviticus Chapter 8 - The Priests & Tabernacle Are Consecrated for Service

Now beginning in chapter 8, it is time to consecrate the priests and begin the actual sacrifices in the Tabernacle. A new thing is about to take place! This ceremony was commanded and explained in Exodus 29, but now it will actually take place. The priests will be anointed and consecrated and the sacrificial system of Israel will begin!

Leviticus 8:1 (NKJV) And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: **2** "Take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments, the anointing oil, a bull as the sin offering, two rams, and a basket of unleavened bread; **3** and gather all the congregation together at the door of the tabernacle of meeting." . . .

6 Then Moses brought Aaron and his sons and washed them with water. **7** And he put the tunic on him, girded him with the sash, clothed him with the robe, and put the ephod on him . . . [continues with the rest of the garments of the priest]

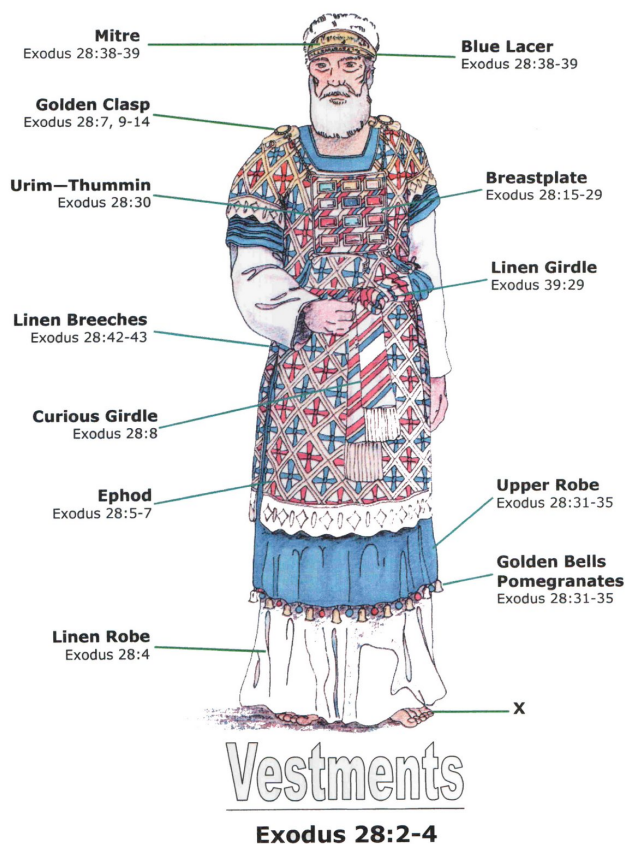
10 Also Moses took the anointing oil, and anointed the tabernacle and all that *was* in it, and consecrated them. **11** He sprinkled some of it on the altar seven times, anointed the altar and all its utensils, and the laver and its base, to consecrate them. **12** And he poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron's head and anointed him, to consecrate him.

Oil is used to anoint the Tabernacle and all that is in it, and Aaron to consecrate him to the service of the Lord. The word *consecrate* means "to set apart for a holy purpose."

13 Then Moses brought Aaron's sons and put tunics on them . . .

14 And he brought the bull for the sin offering. Then Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the bull for the sin offering, **15** and Moses killed *it*. Then he took the blood, and put *some* on the horns of the altar all around with his finger, and purified the altar. And he poured the blood at the base of the altar, and consecrated it, to make atonement for it. **16** Then he took all the fat that *was* on the entrails . . . and Moses burned *them* [pieces of fat] on the altar. **17** But the bull, its hide, its flesh, and its offal, he burned with fire outside the camp, as the Lord had commanded Moses.

Even though the first offering mentioned in Leviticus 1 was the burnt offering, in actual practice, it was *the sin offering* that was offered first when these offerings were put into practice



(Leviticus 8). We, as Christians, need the sin offering of Jesus to take care of our faults, failures, sins, and mistakes that we commit on our Christian journey. We should claim the sin offering that God has provided for us. If an inanimate object like the altar needed the blood to be holy, how much more do we need Jesus' blood *to cleanse us daily* so we can be acceptable to Him.

Next, they offered the burnt offering, signifying surrender and devotion to God:

Leviticus 8:18 Then he brought the ram as the burnt offering. And Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the ram, **19** and Moses killed *it*. Then he sprinkled the blood all around on the altar. **20** And he cut the ram into pieces; and Moses burned the head, the pieces, and the fat. **21** Then he washed the entrails and the legs in water. And Moses burned the whole ram on the altar. It was a burnt sacrifice for a sweet aroma, an offering made by fire to the Lord, as the Lord had commanded Moses.

The burnt offering was one of the “sweet aroma” offerings (those offerings not picturing sin), accepted by the Lord on the brazen altar. The fact that the sacrifice was given wholly on the altar to God represents total surrender of one's will to God.

22 And he brought the second ram, the ram of consecration. Then Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the ram, **23** and Moses killed *it*. Also he took *some* of its blood and put it on the tip of Aaron's right ear, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot. **24** Then he brought Aaron's sons. And Moses put *some* of the blood on the tips of their right ears, on the thumbs of their right hands, and on the big toes of their right feet. And Moses sprinkled the blood all around on the altar.

This ram was special for this event of ordaining the priests. The act of putting the blood on the right ear, the right hand thumb, and the big toe of the right foot sounds a little strange at first, but it is highly symbolic. These were the priests - those who would be the spiritual mediators for Israel. They had a tremendous responsibility to *hear correctly* from the Lord, to *work correctly* for the Lord, and to *walk correctly* for the Lord. The blood was needed to cleanse their ways and make them fit to serve. Since most people are right handed, the fact that it was the right ear, right hand thumb, and right big toe signifies that they were consecrating their strength and their best to the Lord.

25 Then he took the fat . . . **26** and from the basket of unleavened bread that was before the Lord he took one unleavened cake, a cake of bread *anointed with oil*, and one wafer, and put *them* on the fat and on the right thigh; **27** and he put all *these* in Aaron's hands and in his sons' hands, and waved them *as a wave offering* before the Lord. **28** Then Moses took them from their hands and burned *them* on the altar, on the burnt offering. They were consecration offerings for a sweet aroma. That was an offering made by fire to the Lord . . .

These offerings of consecration for this special occasion of dedicating the priests to service were placed on top of the burnt offering. The burnt offering is the base for all the other offerings. Loving God fervently and giving our will to Him for His service is the foundation for everything we do.

30 Then Moses took some of the anointing oil and some of the blood which was on the altar, and sprinkled *it* on Aaron, on his garments, on his sons, and on the garments of his sons with him; and he consecrated Aaron, his garments, his sons, and the garments of his sons with him.

Those who were to serve as priests needed *the blood to cleanse from sin*. They also needed *the oil, representing the Spirit and anointing of God*. To be clean and to be anointed with the Spirit of God makes one useful in God's work. Even their garments were anointed with oil and sprinkled with the blood. Everything about them was consecrated.

Leviticus 8:31 And Moses said to Aaron and his sons, "Boil the flesh at the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and eat it there with the bread that *is* in the basket of consecration offerings, as I commanded, saying, 'Aaron and his sons shall eat it.' . . . **33** And you shall not go outside the door of the tabernacle of meeting for seven days, until the days of your consecration are ended . . . **35** Therefore you shall stay *at* the door of the tabernacle of meeting day and night for seven days, and keep the charge of the Lord, so that you may not die; for so I have been commanded." **36** So Aaron and his sons did all the things that the Lord had commanded by the hand of Moses.

The priests' portion of the ram of consecration and the bread was going to be their food for the next seven days. Each day, a new offering was made on behalf of the priests (Exodus 29:35-36). Each day they would eat of the sacrifice, taking in the sacrifices into their being. After seven days, they would be well established in their duties as priests. Hopefully, they would have in their heart what the Psalmist said:

Psalms 84:1 How lovely *is* Your tabernacle, O Lord of hosts!
2 My soul longs, yes, even faints
For the courts of the Lord;
My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.

The priests completed the week-long ceremony of ordination and consecration to their role as priests of Israel. During the week, the priests offered sin offerings and burnt offerings for themselves as well as offerings of consecration for this special occasion. They stayed within the tabernacle for the entire week.

After seven days of consecration, the priests were ready for a new beginning and a new work in the Tabernacle.

Leviticus Chapter 9 - The Priestly Ministry Begins

Leviticus 9:1 (NKJV) It came to pass on the eighth day that Moses called Aaron and his sons and the elders of Israel. **2** And he said to Aaron, "Take for yourself a young bull as a sin offering and a ram as a burnt offering, without blemish, and offer *them* before the Lord. **3** And to the children of Israel you shall speak, saying, 'Take a kid of the goats as a sin offering, and a calf and a lamb, *both* of the first year, without blemish, as a burnt offering, **4** also a bull and a ram as peace offerings, to sacrifice before the Lord, and a grain offering mixed with oil; for today the Lord will appear to you."

5 So they brought what Moses commanded before the tabernacle of meeting. And all the congregation drew near and stood before the Lord. **6** Then Moses said, "This *is* the thing which the Lord commanded you to do, and the glory of the Lord will appear to you." **7** And Moses said to Aaron, "Go to the altar, offer your sin offering and your burnt offering, and make atonement for yourself and for the people. Offer the offering of the people, and make atonement for them, as the Lord commanded."

8 Aaron therefore went to the altar and killed the calf of the sin offering, which was for himself. **9** Then the sons of Aaron brought the blood to him. And he dipped his finger in the blood, put *it* on the horns of the altar, and poured the blood at the base of the altar. **10** But the fat . . . he burned on the altar, as the Lord had commanded Moses. **11** The flesh and the hide he burned with fire outside the camp.

Leviticus 9:12 And he killed the burnt offering; and Aaron's sons presented to him the blood, which he sprinkled all around on the altar. **13** Then they presented the burnt offering to him, with its pieces and head, and he burned *them* on the altar. **14** And he washed the entrails and the legs, and burned *them* with the burnt offering on the altar.

15 Then he brought the people's offering, and took the goat, which was the sin offering for the people, and killed it and offered it for sin, like the first one. **16** And he brought the burnt offering and offered it according to the prescribed manner. **17** Then he brought the grain offering, took a handful of it, and burned *it* on the altar, besides the burnt sacrifice of the morning.

18 He also killed the bull and the ram as sacrifices of peace offerings, which were for the people. And Aaron's sons presented to him the blood, which he sprinkled all around on the altar, **19** and the fat from the bull and the ram . . . Then he burned the fat on the altar; **21** but the breasts and the right thigh Aaron waved as a wave offering before the Lord, as Moses had commanded.

22 Then Aaron lifted his hand toward the people, blessed them, and came down from offering the sin offering, the burnt offering, and peace offerings. **23** And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of meeting, and came out and blessed the people. Then the glory of the Lord appeared to all the people, **24** and fire came out from before the Lord and consumed the burnt offering and the fat on the altar. When all the people saw *it*, they shouted and fell on their faces.

This was the beginning of the worship of God in the Tabernacle of God. Moses was very careful that Aaron and his sons did everything according to the command of God. As we read the above passage of Scripture, we see the burnt offering, grain offering, peace offering, and sin offerings working together. These offerings speak to us of dedication and devotion to both God and to man. They speak of having sin taken out of the way so that fellowship with God and man can continue.

Because of their diligence and obedience, because of their careful attention to detail, God was pleased with them. The fire of God consumed the sacrifice. When the people saw this miraculous manifestation of God, *"they shouted and fell on their faces."*

The people were promised that the glory of the Lord would appear to them. He did appear to them and the divine fire of God miraculously consumed the sacrifice.

There are two reasons why the fire of God is present. One is that God is pleased with the offerings of His people. This happened in Judges 6:21 with Gideon's offering, in 1 Kings 18:38 with Elijah's offering on Mt. Carmel before the prophets of Baal, in 2 Chronicles 7:1 when Solomon was dedicating the Temple, and in 1 Chronicles 21:26 when David bought the threshing floor of Ornan (Araunah) and offered sacrifice there for his sin (this property became the place where the Temple was built, the Temple Mount).

However, another reason the fire falls is that God is very displeased and the fire falls in judgment upon them. This happened in Numbers 11:1 when the children of Israel complained and in Numbers 16:35 during the rebellion of Korah. In 2 Kings 1:10 & 12, Elijah also called down fire from heaven to prove that he was a man of God.

For the obedient child of God, the fire of God is a wonderful thing - something to shout about! In the New Testament, the fire appeared on the Day of Pentecost:

Acts 2:1 (KJV) And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

The presence of the fire indicates God's acceptance and pleasure, and can also indicate something new taking place. In the New Testament, the baptism of the Holy Ghost was a new thing on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2). In our text in Leviticus, the beginning of worship in the Tabernacle was a new thing. Later in Israel's history, Solomon's Temple was a new thing. The fire fell to inaugurate all of these events.

When Jesus returns, fire will again inaugurate a new thing - a new heaven and a new earth.

Leviticus Chapter 10 - A Glorious Occasion Ruined by Disobedience

After the fire fell in Leviticus 9 showing that God *was pleased with their obedience*, we read in chapter 10 about the disobedience of two men - and the fire falls again, *not in acceptance, but in judgment*:

Leviticus 10:1 (NKJV) Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them. **2** So fire went out from the Lord and devoured them, and they died before the Lord.

It is somewhat of a mystery exactly what happened here during the inauguration of the Tabernacle. We know that the God of heaven was provoked to anger, so what these two priests did was flagrantly disobedient to God's command. Nadab and Abihu (two of Aaron's sons) took it upon themselves to offer incense in a way that was against the order of the Tabernacle and commandment of God. Some good advice for Nadab and Abihu is this: when the fire of God is falling in the house of God, it's time to line up to God's order and purpose. When the fire is falling, it's not a good idea to challenge the order of God and redirect that fire to judge disobedience. We want the fire to fall, but we want it to fall because of God's pleasure.

These two sons of Aaron had experienced great things in God. They saw first-hand all the miracles that God did when he brought Israel out of Egypt. They heard the voice of God at Mount Sinai and saw the fire, lightning, and smoke on the mountain and felt the mountain quake. These boys went up with Moses and their father, Aaron, and the seventy elders for a special meeting with God on Mount Sinai (Exodus 24:9-11) where *"they saw the God of Israel."* In addition, they had just finished seven days of ordination into the priesthood.

In spite of all this, Nadab and Abihu offered *"profane fire"* or *"strange fire"* (KJV) in the Tabernacle. We have only a general idea of their sin. We *do know* that the fire was not the prescribed fire from the brazen altar, but it was from some other

source. The fire in the brazen altar was sacred because it was kindled by God Himself - this was the fire that was supposed to be used.

These two sons of Aaron sinned with fire, and God saw that they died by fire. But why did God deal so harshly with them?

The ceremony of the Tabernacle is filled with types and pictures of Jesus Christ and God's New Testament plan of salvation. The ceremony is there for all time, not only for those Israelites in that ancient day, but to be a picture and example to those who would read God's Word in the future (New Testament believers). The type or picture could not be altered or irreverently handled. What the priests were to accomplish in the Tabernacle was a picture for all time. These men took God's solemn commandment and treated it as something that could easily be altered or changed on a whim. God showed with a great example of His wrath how serious this whole thing was. What is important to God should be important to His servants.

These men died immediately and Scripture says they had no children (Numbers 3:4), so their names were now blotted out with no future.

Leviticus 10:3 And Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the Lord spoke, saying:

'By those who come near Me
I must be regarded as holy;
And before all the people
I must be glorified."

So Aaron held his peace.

4 Then Moses called Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Uzziel the uncle of Aaron, and said to them, "Come near, carry your brethren from before the sanctuary out of the camp." **5** So they went near and carried them by their tunics out of the camp, as Moses had said.

A little before this, the sin offering was sent "*outside the camp*," showing that sin separates and sin cannot be tolerated. The bodies of these two sinful men were also taken "out of the camp." Notice that their tunics were not burned - those priestly garments that were put on them at the consecration ceremony. Only their bodies were burned. God was very selective in destroying only them (not their holy garments). The office of priest would endure, though these two men would not continue.

It should have been the sin offering that was taken outside the camp to be burned for Nadab and Abihu. Instead it was these men themselves.

6 And Moses said to Aaron, and to Eleazar and Ithamar, his sons, "Do not uncover your heads nor tear your clothes, lest you die, and wrath come upon all the people. But let your brethren, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning which the Lord has kindled. **7** You shall not go out from the door of the tabernacle of meeting, lest you die, for the anointing oil of the Lord is upon you." And they did according to the word of Moses.

The work of the Lord was so great that Aaron and his sons who remained were not allowed to grieve nor tend to the bodies. They were not allowed to leave the Tabernacle to take some time off. God showed through this that His plan is the most important thing in the whole world. No doubt this example caused fear and

respect to fall upon the remaining sons of Aaron, and the future duties of the priests were done with extreme care and attention. The call to the service of God took precedence over every other earthly duty or desire.

In the New Testament, the fires of Pentecost fell on the infant church in Acts 2. A short time later in Acts 5, Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Ghost and were struck dead in a similar example of the seriousness of God toward His work and His Word.

Romans 11:22 Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God . . .

The fire of God appeared twelve times in the Old Testament. Six of those times exhibited God's acceptance and pleasure over the obedience of His people (Leviticus 9:24, Judges 6:21, 1 Kings 18:38, 1 Chronicles 21:26, 2 Chronicles 7:1, 1 Kings 18:38); but six of those times showed God's wrath, displeasure and judgment (Leviticus 10:1, Numbers 11:1, Numbers 16:35, Job 1:16, and 2 Kings 1:10 and 12).

Conduct Prescribed for Priests

Leviticus 10:8 (NKJV) Then the Lord spoke to Aaron, saying: **9** "Do not drink wine or intoxicating drink, you, nor your sons with you, when you go into the tabernacle of meeting, lest you die. *It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations, 10 that you may distinguish between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean, 11 and that you may teach the children of Israel all the statutes* which the Lord has spoken to them by the hand of Moses."

The priests were forbidden to drink liquor (not even wine) in their service in the Tabernacle. They were to have a clear head with clear thinking so they could "*distinguish between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean.*"

Similarly, New Testament believers whose bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost are told:

Ephesians 5:18 (NLT) Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit

Let's continue in chapter 10:

Leviticus 10:12 And Moses spoke to Aaron, and to Eleazar and Ithamar, his sons who were left: "Take the grain offering that remains of the offerings made by fire to the Lord... **13** You shall eat it in a holy place, because it is your due and your sons' due, of the sacrifices made by fire to the Lord... **15** The thigh of the heave offering and the breast of the wave offering they shall bring with the offerings of fat made by fire, to offer *as a wave offering* before the Lord. And it shall be yours and your sons' with you, by a statute forever, as the Lord has commanded."

A part of the meat from the peace offerings was "waved before the Lord" or "heaved up before the Lord" before it was given to the priests for their food. This "wave offering" or "heave offering" wasn't another offering, but it was a part of the peace offering. This may seem a little strange, but if we think about it, we wave our hands in the air before the Lord to worship Him and approach Him. We think of God being above us, or in Heaven. Waving something before Him is a sound, biblical concept. Paul told Timothy, "*I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands . . .*" (1 Timothy 2:8).

Leviticus 10:16 Then Moses made careful inquiry about the goat of the sin offering, and there it was —burned up. And he was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, the sons of Aaron *who were left*, saying, **17** “Why have you not eaten the sin offering in a holy place, since it *is* most holy, and God has given it to you to bear the guilt of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the Lord? **18** See! Its blood was not brought inside the *holy place*; indeed you should have eaten it in a holy *place*, as I commanded.”

In a previous lesson we studied the sin offering. We learned that there are two types of sin offerings for two categories of people: 1) the priests and the congregation, and 2) the rulers and the common people. The sacrifice for group one was to be taken outside the camp and burned. The blood for this sacrifice was taken inside the Tabernacle tent and sprinkled in front of the veil.

The sacrifice for the second group was not to be taken outside the camp and burned nor was its blood taken into the Holy Place. The meat was to be eaten by the priests, and Moses here gives the meaning: “*God has given it to you to bear the guilt of the congregation.*”

This “bearing the guilt of the congregation” is an act of the priests. By eating the sacrifice that had symbolically “become sin,” they were, in a sense, taking away the guilt of the people and bearing it themselves. It is a picture of Jesus Christ who is both high priest and sacrifice. Moses was angry with the sons of Aaron who did not do their solemn duty as priests.

19 And Aaron said to Moses, “Look, this day they have offered their sin offering and their burnt offering before the Lord, and such things have befallen me! *If* I had eaten the sin offering today, would it have been accepted in the sight of the Lord?” **20** So when Moses heard *that*, he was content.

This day that started out so incredibly with the fire of God consuming the sacrifices had turned into a horrible day with the death of two of Aaron’s sons. The law of God was clear - the priests should have eaten the sin offering, mediating fellowship between God and men.

However, Aaron was deeply afflicted with grief. It was almost more than a human could bear. Moses pointed out the error and then said no more. He let it go.