

Lesson Twenty: *A Proper Priesthood*
Leviticus 8

Themes:

Leviticus: God's people must be holy because He is holy.

Leviticus 1-10: Sinful men can only approach a holy God through His appointed mediations.

(1-7) The mediation of sacrifice: a holy people must have sacrifices to remove their sins.

(8-10) The mediation of the priesthood: a holy people must have an obedient mediator.

I. **The Aaronic Priesthood**

a. The priesthood of Israel:

b. *Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples...and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation* (Ex 19:5-6).

i. The Old Testament evangelistic paradigm:

1. A chosen, redeemed, and adopted people (Gen 12:1-3; Ex 20:2; 19:4)

2. A peculiar people: *Holy to the LORD* (Ex 28:36)

a. The law (Ex 20) and God's presence (Ex 40:34)

3. The mediators of God's presence to the nations (Deut 4:5-8)

ii. Christ and the priesthood of all believers:

1. *You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light* (I Peter 2:9).

a. Christ: our royal ancestor

b. Christians serve as Christ's ambassadors (Matt 28:19-20).

c. The Aaronic priesthood:

d. *Then bring near to yourself Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the sons of Israel, to minister as priest to Me-- Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons* (Ex 28:1).

i. Called by God:

1. An *appointed* office

ii. Their mediating function:

1. Conveyed the blessing of God to the people (Num 6:23-27)

2. Represented the people to God (Lev 16:15, 21)

iii. The guardians of Israel's holiness:

1. Qualifications (Lev 21:1-23): general priests and the high priest

a. Personal life

b. Marriage

c. Physical fitness

} emphasizes the *priority* and *holiness* of God

2. Purification (Lev 8:6):

a. *Water*: symbolized cleansing and purification from sin

b. *The washing was intended to symbolize cleansing of the heart for the duties that were so intimately related to the purity of the nation before God* (Feinberg).

i. Emphasizes the need for purity before God

3. Sanctification (Lev 8:7-12):

a. *Garments*: symbolized the distinctiveness of the priests

b. *Oil*: symbolized the Holy Spirit's cleansing and empowerment

c. *Anoint*: the noun (*masiah*) points to "Christ", the Anointed One

i. The priests are set apart.

4. Ordination (Lev 8:22, 33):
 - a. *Ordain*: to fill the hands
 - i. Symbolized their consecration to divine service
 - ii. Symbolized the Lord's grace and blessing upon those who serve Him, despite their being ill-suited for the task
5. Consecration (Lev 8:23-24):
 - a. *Blood*: symbolized their need for atonement
 - b. *Ear, hand, and foot*:
 - i. The priests are *fully* dedicated to God's service (cf. 15).
 - ii. *The ear, because the priest must at all times hearken to the voice of God; the hand, because he must execute God's commands...the foot, because he must walk rightly and holy* (Oehler).
 1. Emphasizes the need for obedience to God

II. The Priesthood of Christ

- a. *For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself* (Heb 7:26-27).
 - i. The shadow of the priesthood is fully and finally realized in Jesus Christ.
- b. Called by God:
 - i. *So also Christ did not glorify Himself so as to become a high priest, but He who said to Him, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you"* (Heb 5:5).
- c. Blameless:
 - i. *Having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation, being designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek* (Heb 5:9-10).
- d. The perfect Mediator:
 - i. *For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all* (I Tim 2:5-6a).
- e. The guardian of holiness:
 - i. Purification:
 1. *After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him* (Matt 3:16).
 - ii. Sanctification:
 1. *For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth* (John 17:19).
 2. *The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted* (Is 61:1).
 - a. Christ's fulfillment of the priestly vestments: see excerpt from, *Images of the Savior from the Pentateuch*, by Nathan Pitchford
 - iii. Ordination:
 1. *Therefore it says, "When He ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives, and He gave gifts to men"* (Eph 4:8).
 - iv. Consecration:
 1. *My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work* (John 4:34).
 - v. Administration:
 1. Sacrifices (Heb 10:11-12), Incense (Heb 5:7; 7:25), Divine Presence (John 17:6, 24; Rev 21:1-4).