

“Our LORD & Ordination of Priests”

Leviticus 8 & 9

February 25, 2018

Leviticus 8:1-36 (ESV)

¹ **The LORD spoke to Moses**, saying,

² “Take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments and the anointing oil and the bull of the sin offering and the two rams and the basket of unleavened bread.

³ And assemble all the congregation at the entrance of the tent of meeting.”

⁴ And Moses did as the LORD commanded him, and the congregation was assembled at the entrance of the tent of meeting.

⁵ And Moses said to the congregation, **“This is the thing that the LORD has commanded to be done.”**

⁶ And Moses brought Aaron and his sons and washed them with water.

⁷ And he put the coat on him and tied the sash around his waist and clothed him with the robe and put the ephod on him and tied the skillfully woven band of the ephod around him, binding it to him with the band.

⁸ And he placed the breastpiece on him, and in the breastpiece he put the Urim and the Thummim.

⁹ And he set the turban on his head, and on the turban, in front, he set the golden plate, the holy crown, as the LORD commanded Moses.

¹⁰ Then Moses took the anointing oil and anointed the tabernacle and all that was in it, and consecrated them.

¹¹ And he sprinkled some of it on the altar seven times, and anointed the altar and all its utensils and the basin and its stand, to consecrate them.

¹² And he poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron’s head and anointed him to consecrate him.

¹³ And Moses brought Aaron’s sons and clothed them with coats and tied sashes around their waists and bound caps on them, as the LORD commanded Moses.

¹⁴ Then he brought the bull of the sin offering, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the bull of the sin offering.

¹⁵ And he killed it, and Moses took the blood, and with his finger put it on the horns of the altar around it and purified the altar and poured out the blood at the base of the altar and consecrated it to make atonement for it.

¹⁶ And he took all the fat that was on the entrails and the long lobe of the liver and the two kidneys with their fat, and Moses burned them on the altar.

¹⁷ But the bull and its skin and its flesh and its dung he burned up with fire outside the camp, as the LORD commanded Moses.

¹⁸ Then he presented the ram of the burnt offering, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the ram.

¹⁹ And he killed it, and Moses threw the blood against the sides of the altar.

²⁰ He cut the ram into pieces, and Moses burned the head and the pieces and the fat.

²¹ He washed the entrails and the legs with water, and Moses burned the whole ram on the altar. It was a burnt offering with a pleasing aroma, a food offering for the LORD, as the LORD

commanded Moses.

²² Then he presented the other ram, the ram of ordination, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the ram.

²³ And he killed it, and Moses took some of its blood and put it on the lobe of Aaron's right ear and on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot.

²⁴ Then he presented Aaron's sons, and Moses put some of the blood on the lobes of their right ears and on the thumbs of their right hands and on the big toes of their right feet. And Moses threw the blood against the sides of the altar.

²⁵ Then he took the fat and the fat tail and all the fat that was on the entrails and the long lobe of the liver and the two kidneys with their fat and the right thigh,

²⁶ and out of the basket of unleavened bread that was before the LORD he took one unleavened loaf and one loaf of bread with oil and one wafer and placed them on the pieces of fat and on the right thigh.

²⁷ And he put all these in the hands of Aaron and in the hands of his sons and waved them as a wave offering before the LORD.

²⁸ Then Moses took them from their hands and burned them on the altar with the burnt offering.

This was an ordination offering with a pleasing aroma, a food offering to the LORD.

²⁹ And Moses took the breast and waved it for a wave offering before the LORD. It was Moses' portion of the ram of ordination, as the LORD commanded Moses.

³⁰ Then Moses took some of the anointing oil and of the blood that was on the altar and sprinkled it on Aaron and his garments, and also on his sons and his sons' garments. So he consecrated Aaron and his garments, and his sons and his sons' garments with him.

³¹ And Moses said to Aaron and his sons, "Boil the flesh at the entrance of the tent of meeting, and there eat it and the bread that is in the basket of ordination offerings, as I commanded, saying, 'Aaron and his sons shall eat it.'

³² And what remains of the flesh and the bread you shall burn up with fire.

³³ And you shall not go outside the entrance of the tent of meeting for seven days, until the days of your ordination are completed, for it will take seven days to ordain you.

³⁴ As has been done today, the LORD has commanded to be done to make atonement for you.

³⁵ At the entrance of the tent of meeting you shall remain day and night for seven days, performing what the LORD has charged, so that you do not die, for so I have been commanded."

³⁶ And Aaron and his sons did all the things that the LORD commanded by Moses.

Leviticus 9:1-24 (ESV)

¹ On the eighth day Moses called Aaron and his sons and the elders of Israel,

² and he said to Aaron, "Take for yourself a bull calf for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering, both without blemish, and offer them before the LORD.

³ And say to the people of Israel, "Take a male goat for a sin offering, and a calf and a lamb, both a year old without blemish, for a burnt offering,

⁴ and an ox and a ram for peace offerings, to sacrifice before the LORD, and a grain offering mixed with oil, for today the LORD will appear to you."

⁵ And they brought what Moses commanded in front of the tent of meeting, and all the congregation drew near and stood before the LORD.

⁶ And Moses said, “This is the thing that the LORD commanded you to do, that the **glory** of the LORD may appear to you.”

⁷ Then Moses said to Aaron, “Draw near to the altar and offer your sin offering and your burnt offering and make atonement for yourself and for the people, and bring the offering of the people and make atonement for them, as the LORD has commanded.”

⁸ So Aaron drew near to the altar and killed the calf of the sin offering, which was for himself.

⁹ And the sons of Aaron presented the blood to him, and he dipped his finger in the blood and put it on the horns of the altar and poured out the blood at the base of the altar.

¹⁰ But the fat and the kidneys and the long lobe of the liver from the sin offering he burned on the altar, as the LORD commanded Moses.

¹¹ The flesh and the skin he burned up with fire outside the camp.

¹² Then he killed the burnt offering, and Aaron’s sons handed him the blood, and he threw it against the sides of the altar.

¹³ And they handed the burnt offering to him, piece by piece, and the 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 presented the people’s offering and took the goat of the sin offering that was for the people and killed it and offered it as a sin offering, like the first one.

¹⁶ And he presented the burnt offering and offered it according to the rule.

¹⁷ And he presented the grain offering, took a handful of it, and burned it on the altar, besides the burnt offering of the morning.

¹⁸ Then he killed the ox and the ram, the sacrifice of peace offerings for the people. And Aaron’s sons handed him the blood, and he threw it against the sides of the altar.

¹⁹ But the fat pieces of the ox and of the ram, the fat tail and that which covers the entrails and the kidneys and the long lobe of the liver—

²⁰ they put the fat pieces on the breasts, and he burned the fat pieces on the altar,

²¹ but the breasts and the right thigh Aaron waved for a wave offering before the LORD, as Moses commanded.

²² **Then Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them, and he came down from offering the sin offering and the burnt offering and the peace offerings.**

²³ **And Moses and Aaron went into the tent of meeting, and when they came out they**

blessed the people, and 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 pieces of fat on the altar, and when all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces.**

Are You Ready to Serve?.

Leviticus 8:1-36

Main Idea: God calls all His people to serve Him, and we respond by publicly committing ourselves to serve, consecrating ourselves for service, living pure lives befitting servants of God, and walking in fellowship with Him as we serve.

- I. **Make a Public Declaration to Serve.**
- II. **Commit to a Position of Service.**
- III. **Be Consecrated to Serve.**
- IV. **Seek Purification for Service.**
- V. **Demonstrate Dedication to Serve.**
- VI. **Enjoy Communion with God in Serving.**

June 6, 1982, is a date I will always remember. On that evening my home church ordained me to the gospel ministry. I had begun pastoring a church, and that church requested that my home church ordain me. I was examined by a group of men who were mature in their faith and in ministry. They found me fit for ministry leadership, though certainly still with flaws, and they recommended that the members of the church ordain me. My home church is where God saved me and called me to preach. The people in that church body had led me to faith in Jesus, nurtured my young faith, lived as examples of how to follow Jesus, and gave me my first opportunities to preach and teach. The time of worship in which they laid hands on me, prayed for me, and dedicated me and my service to God was unforgettable. My father was the first to lay hands on me. He prayed over me by quoting [Micah 6:8](#)—*“He has told you what is good and what it is the Lord requires of you: to act justly, to love faithfulness, and to walk humbly with your God.”* A man in the church who, I knew, shared his faith regularly, laid his hands on me and quoted [Romans 10:15](#)—*“How beautiful are the feet of those who announce the gospel.”* Then he said to me, *“I pray that your feet will always be beautiful.”* After church leaders and others laid their hands on me and prayed, the pastor offered a dedicatory prayer, and he presented to me a Bible as a gift I will always cherish.

Many churches plan special worship services to ordain and install pastors and deacons. The purposes of such times of worship are to pray for and dedicate to God those who will serve as pastors and deacons. **The first 7 chapters of Leviticus address the various sacrifices God commanded His people to offer. The sacrificial system was God’s means to atone for sin so His people could continue fellowship with Him. The leaders of that sacrificial system were the priests.**

Priests are prominent throughout the book of Leviticus. In chapters 8–10 the priests are the focal theme. Chapter 8 describes their ordination for service, chapter 9 the inauguration of their service, and chapter 10 the contamination of their service.

As we apply Leviticus 8 to the contemporary church, it is essential that we understand two facts about priesthood in the age of the new covenant.

A. First, in Christ, God has eliminated the need for mediation by a human priest.

We no longer need a person between us and God to serve as a mediator. The New Testament teaches that **everyone who has Jesus as Savior has immediate access to the presence of God (Heb 4:16)**. **First Timothy 2:5** says, *“For there is one God and one mediator between God and humanity, Christ Jesus.”* The book of Hebrews twice calls Jesus *“the mediator of a new covenant” (9:15; 12:24)*, and it says that *Jesus has made the old covenant priesthood obsolete*. The New Testament teaches that the church is to have leaders. They are called elders, pastors, or overseers. They have priestly roles in the church like teaching God’s Word, giving oversight, and shepherding the spiritual growth of the flock. However, they do not have a mediatorial role. **We have one mediator, Jesus.**

B. Second, the New Testament teaches that all followers of Jesus are priests in that:

- a. We all have direct access to God...
- b. We all speak to people about God, and...
- c. We all speak to God about people.

Those are priestly functions.

- [Hebrews 13:15](#) refers to followers of Jesus offering sacrifices of praise.
- [Revelation 1:5-6](#) says Jesus *“has set us free from our sins by His blood, and made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father.”*
- The apostle Peter was addressing followers of Jesus when he wrote, *“You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His possession, so that you may proclaim the praises of the One who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Pet 2:9)*.
- God’s Word says that followers of Jesus are priests, and we do the work of priests—we live holy lives and proclaim the praises of God.
- All who know Christ are called to serve.
- As priests, we represent God before the world through our witness and ministry, and...
- We represent people to God in prayer.
- Are we ready to serve?
- What do we do to be ready?

Make a Public Declaration to Serve

In [Leviticus 8:3](#) God told Moses, “Assemble the whole community at the entrance to the tent of meeting.” [Verses 6](#), 13, and 24 state that Moses “presented” Aaron and his sons. The whole congregation witnessed the ordination of the priests for service. [Verses 26-29](#) describe a “presentation offering.” That offering was a formal way of presenting Aaron and his sons to God and the people publicly as part of ordaining them for service. **The ceremony described in Leviticus 8 is the fulfillment and a more detailed description of God’s command to Moses to ordain Aaron and his sons in [Exodus 40:12-15](#).**

Moses’ public presentation of Aaron and his sons to ordain them to serve as priests also included laying hands on them. Moses’ ceremonial laying on of hands was extensive. He washed them ([v. 6](#)), he put the priestly garments on them ([vv. 7-9, 13](#)), and he placed some of the blood from the ordination offering on them ([vv. 23-24](#)). **This ceremony serves as the basis for the practice of laying hands on those whom a church ordains for special roles in serving God.**

The practice of laying hands on someone has a long history. It appears first here in [Leviticus 8](#) (plus the brief allusion in [Exod 40:13-14](#)).

Moses laid his hands on Joshua his successor to commission him for leadership ([Num 27:18-23](#)). In the New Testament the nascent church chose seven men to serve tables for the purpose of healing strained relationships in the church. **After they chose those seven men, they dedicated them to serve in that role by means of a ceremony that included the apostles praying for them and laying their hands on them ([Acts 6:6](#)).** In the church in Antioch the Holy Spirit told the church to set apart Paul and Barnabas for their first missionary journey. **To dedicate them to that task, they prayed for the men and laid their hands on them ([Acts 13:1-3](#)).** Timothy was a young pastor in the early church, and **twice the New Testament refers to leaders in the church laying hands on Timothy ([1 Tim 4:14](#); [2 Tim 1:6](#)).** Hence, the contemporary practice of laying hands on someone being ordained for spiritual leadership is rooted in a significant biblical tradition.

Of course, such a practice is part of a public presentation. **When people sense God is calling them to serve in some way, they share it with the church. Then the church becomes one of God’s means of guiding them, mentoring them, encouraging them, and training them.**

When people apply for admission to a seminary to prepare for some kind of ministry, many seminaries require a recommendation from their church. We do not decide independently of the church about God’s call to us to serve Him. The church confirms it; it is a public matter. Whether someone is called to vocational ministry or not, all followers of Jesus are called to ministry of some kind. We serve God in the open so everybody knows we represent Jesus. As Allen Ross has written, “Such commitments are always to be public, witnessed by the whole assembly, so

that they can confirm that the call is from God” (*Holiness to the Lord*, 214). We make a public declaration to serve.

Commit to a Position of Service

Verses 5-9 of Leviticus 8 describe the priestly garments Moses placed on Aaron. Those garments are described in greater detail in Exodus 28. They were made of the finest material. The excellence of the clothes reflected the importance of the work of the priest. It also matched the glory and beauty of the tabernacle, which in turn corresponded to the glory and beauty of God.

The turban was made of linen, with a plate of pure gold across the front with the words “Holy to the Lord” (Exod 28:36). That phrase indicated that the priest’s service was different from any other service. It was holy, just like the tabernacle and the sacrifices were holy.

The robe was made of blue cloth. At the bottom of the robe were pomegranates made of yarn alternating with small golden bells. So when the high priest moved, people heard the sound of the bells. That served a practical purpose on the Day of Atonement when the high priest went into the most holy place. He was the only human allowed in that room, so if he fell ill or had a heart attack no one would be there to see it and perhaps no one would know. However, as long as those outside heard the sound of the bells they knew the high priest must be OK because he was still moving.

The robe also had a sash made of blue, purple, and scarlet threads, and an ephod was also made of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet threads. **The colors were important because those were also the colors of the tabernacle’s curtains and veils, so the priest matched the tabernacle. The colors showed that the priest and the tabernacle went together.** As we say, his “colors were clear.” The priest belonged to the service of the tabernacle. The ephod was a long vest-like cloth that hung over the blue robe all the way down to the thighs, and in the chest area was a breastpiece made of threads in the same colors. **Twelve gemstones were on the breast piece, representing the 12 tribes of Israel. That symbolized that the priest served on behalf of all the tribes, all the people of Israel.**

The priest had special clothes because he had a special role to play. He had unique clothes for the same reason doctors wear white coats and soldiers wear uniforms. Their garments convey a message about their roles. When we see a military uniform, we know the person wearing it has a special way of serving. We also see stripes, pins, medals, and ribbons on the uniform, and we know they carry a message about the service of the one wearing the uniform. They’re symbolic, just like the various parts of the high priest’s robe were symbolic. The parts of the robe indicate that Aaron had a distinguished role.

God also has a special place of service for every follower of Jesus in the New Testament church. We’re a kingdom of priests. All of us serve. The New Testament also describes the church as a body. We are all members of the body, and all the members must function in order for the body to be healthy. In 1 Corinthians 12:4-30 Paul argued at length that every

member in the body is necessary and important. Each has a role to play in the church. Are you ready to serve?

Be Consecrated to Serve

[Leviticus 8:10-13](#) describes how Moses anointed Aaron and all the parts of the tabernacle with oil. Anointing someone with oil was a common practice in the ancient Near East. People often traveled on foot, and sometimes they walked all day. There were no hotels, so if they came upon a tent or camp near the end of the day, they would seek shelter from the people in the camp. If the people in the camp wanted to make the guests feel welcome, they would anoint them with oil. The oil would feel cool, and it would smell good. In [Psalm 23](#) the psalmist wrote that God welcomed him into His presence and cared for him. He said to the Lord, “You anoint my head with oil. ([v. 5](#))”

When God commanded Moses to anoint the tabernacle, He was symbolizing pouring out His blessing on that place. When He commanded Moses to anoint Aaron, He was symbolizing pouring out His blessing on Aaron. Anointing with oil came to symbolize not only God’s blessing but also God’s bestowal of spiritual power and position.

Kings were anointed, and the Old Testament prophets preached about the coming Savior as the *meshiach*, the Messiah, which means “the anointed one.” The Greek word for “anointed one” is *christos*, or Christ. Jesus quoted the messianic prophecy in [Isaiah 61:1](#).

He said it referred to Him, and He said, “The Spirit of the Lord is on Me, because He has anointed Me to preach good news to the poor” ([Luke 4:18](#)). [Second Corinthians 1:21-22](#) says that God “has anointed us . . . and given us the Spirit.” [First John 2:20](#) says to Christians, “You have an anointing from the Holy One.”

Anointing is a symbol that refers to God blessing us with position and power.

These days numerous writers produce books with the message that in order to succeed in life we should think positively, learn certain relationship and leadership techniques, or discover the hidden potential within us. Many of those books have some good ideas, but they don’t prescribe the one thing we need more than anything else if we are ever to live successfully and serve God effectively. **We need God’s anointing—His blessing and power. That is His consecration to serve Him. Are you ready to serve?**

Seek Purification for Service

In order for old covenant priests to be ready to serve God, they had to be cleansed from sin. The washing mentioned in [Leviticus 8:6](#) was symbolic of cleansing. [Verses 14-17](#) describe the sacrifice of a bull as a sin offering, and [verses 18-21](#) describe the sacrifice of a ram as a

second offering. Old Testament priests sinned. If they were to be in the presence of God and ready to serve God, their sin had to be forgiven and cleansed.

That is a fundamental difference between the high priest in the Old Testament and Jesus the eternal high priest. Jesus is the only person who has ever lived on the earth without sinning, Hebrews 7:26-27 says that Jesus is our high priest, and it refers to Jesus as,

holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. He doesn't need to offer sacrifices every day, as high priests do—first for their own sins.

Jesus has no need to offer sacrifices for His own sin because He never sinned. Hebrews 4:15 calls Jesus our high priest, and it says that He was “tested in every way as we are, yet without sin.” Jesus was always clean morally and spiritually, so He was always ready to serve God.

Unlike Jesus, we, like the old covenant priests, have sinned. To be ready to serve God we must confess our sin and allow God to forgive us and cleanse us. Why? God requires us to be clean in order to serve Him.

Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver bowls, but also those of wood and clay, some for honorable use, some for dishonorable. So if anyone purifies himself from anything dishonorable, he will be a special instrument, set apart, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work. (2 Tim 2:20-21)

God wants clean vessels to carry His living water to thirsty people. We are useful to Him when we are pure. **Praise His name, He is always ready to make us pure by His forgiveness and cleansing!** First John 1:9 says, *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

What God requires, God provides.

God illustrated His requirement when He commanded His priests to offer sacrifices for their sin before they began to serve Him. We must seek purification for service. Are you ready to serve?

Demonstrate Dedication to Serve

Leviticus 8:22-29 describes the ordination offering. That was a special offering to dedicate the priests for service. Verse 23 says that Moses put some of the blood of the sacrifice on Aaron's extremities—his ear, thumb, and toe. That represented the fact that all of Aaron was being dedicated to serve God.

As we would say, *he was dedicated to God “from head to toe.”* Frances Havergal wrote words expressing that message in his song “Take My Life, and Let It Be.”

Take my life, and let it be consecrated, Lord, to Thee.

Take my moments and my days; let them flow in ceaseless praise. Take my hands, and let them move at the impulse of Thy love. Take my feet, and let them be swift and beautiful for Thee.

Take my voice, and let me sing always, only, for my King.

Take my lips, and let them be filled with messages from Thee. Take my silver and my gold; not a mite would I withhold.

Take my intellect, and use every power as Thou shalt choose.

We dedicate every part of ourselves to God. That's what Moses symbolized by touching the ear, thumb, and toe—complete dedication to God during ordination.

The Hebrew word translated “ordination” literally means “to fill the hand.”

Filling the hand meant that someone was placing in the hands of the priests what they needed to serve as priests, giving them the tools of their trade. If we're in a ceremony in which people are dedicating us to God, when they give us tools, we should get the message—the position for which we are being ordained will involve work.

As someone has said:

“Every great vision eventually degenerates into hard work.” When we have a grand vision to serve God, eventually we're going to have to work.

In order to become members in the church where I serve, we are all required to sign a covenant. Among other things, that covenant states that we will serve God in some way in the church. *We do not intend to be a church that is filled with attenders. God calls every Christian to serve, He gives us gifts to serve, and He gives us pastors and teachers to equip us to serve. [Galatians 5:13](#) says, “Serve one another.”*

To be obedient, we must serve.

If you are not serving somewhere, find a place and start serving. Don't be like the guy I heard about who applied for a job. His prospective boss called his former boss and asked him, “Is he a steady employee?” The former boss said, “Steady? He was so steady that he was virtually motionless.” Unfortunately, many followers of Jesus are just like that. Dedicate yourself to serve.

Enjoy Communion with God in Serving

[Verse 31](#) describes an ordination meal that the priests ate at the entrance of the tent of meeting. They were in the tabernacle precincts, and that space represented the presence of God. Therefore, they were eating in the presence of God. **Eating with someone symbolized fellowship, friendship. So the meal in the tabernacle area represented their communion with God.**

They were at peace with God. Are you? Do you have a relationship with God through Jesus? Are you in close fellowship with Him? Are you serving Him as He commands? We are “a royal priesthood” ([1 Pet. 2:9](#)), and priests serve.

My cousin Beverly and I are the same age. Beverly was not a Christian during our growing up years or during young adulthood. After she was married and about the time her husband left her, everything began to change. Several years ago, she wrote this:

Mae was my boss, but from the beginning I could tell there was something special about her. As time went by I realized that special thing was she was a Christian. . . . When you work with someone day after day you develop a relationship and ours became close, like mother and daughter. . . . Every Monday we would ask what the other had done that weekend. Her answer was always about something they had done at church. . . . My hunger to hear about God was growing, the seed had been planted. . . . I knew something was missing in my life and I started thinking maybe it was God. . . . Over the next couple of months my son and I attended Sunday School. . . . I was still holding back and not putting my trust in God. . . . Mae was always there to answer my questions and give me verses to read. And then on Easter weekend it happened.

She described how she put her faith in Jesus as her Savior, and then she continued:

The peace I found that day can only be discovered when you let God totally into your life and accept him as your Savior and believe in the Scriptures. . . . The Bible I read from is the one [Mae] gave me as a gift so many months ago when I was searching for answers to make order out of chaos.

To my cousin Beverly, Mae served a priestly role. She lived a godly life before her, she spoke God’s Word to her, and she brought her to God. She served, and God gave her power and blessed her. Are you ready to serve?

Reflect and Discuss

1. According to God’s Word, all followers of Jesus are priests. How is your role similar to that of an Old Testament priest?
2. Compare and contrast the roles of church leaders to the roles of Levitical priests.
3. What can we learn about the setting apart of church leaders from [Leviticus 8](#)?
4. Why should a follower of Jesus make a public declaration to serve?
5. What is the church’s role as it relates to a person’s calling?
6. What did the anointing with oil symbolize in the Old and New Testaments?
7. What do we need more than anything else if we are to live successfully and serve God effectively?
8. How did the priests enjoy communion with God? How can you enjoy communion with God?
9. Why do we need purification before service? How do we seek purification?
10. Are you ready to serve? What do you need to do to be ready?

Powerful Worship.

Leviticus 9:1-24

Main Idea: By His grace God meets with us when we gather with His people to worship Him, and He powerfully works in our lives as we worship through Jesus and in submission to His Word.

- I. **Powerful Worship Follows Preparation for God's Presence.**
- II. **Powerful Worship Includes Submission to God's Word.**
 - A. We submit to God's Word by the act of worship.
 - B. We submit to God's Word by the way we worship.
 - C. We submit to God's Word by a life of worship.
- III. **Powerful Worship Requires God's Mediation.**
- IV. **Powerful Worship Results from God's Visitation.**

What is the most memorable, powerful worship experience of your life? When I was a teenager, in a worship service in the church where I grew up, I felt deeply convicted of my sin and separation from God. I was intensely drawn by God to salvation in Christ. I had felt that before, but in that worship service I yielded my stubborn will and put my trust in Christ and was saved. That was a powerful worship experience. About four years later, in a worship service in the same place, God powerfully impressed on me that the way I express love to my parents and sister reflects whether I love and obey God. I had never realized that. It was simple, but it was also powerful because it changed a lot about my life.

Another time, I was on a mission trip to the island of Dominica. All week I went door-to-door sharing the gospel and inviting people to the services at night in which I preached. We also witnessed to people all day in two clinics we provided, and we shared Christ with children through Vacation Bible School. On the final night I was to preach, the church was packed. There was no air conditioning, so the windows were open. People stood outside at the windows to hear. We had a speaker set up outside that amplified the preaching into the street, and people stopped out there to listen. I preached the gospel and invited people to put their faith in Christ, and God visited that place. People started coming to profess faith in Christ. They came from inside the building and outside the building and down the aisle to tell counselors that they wanted Jesus. The invitation went on for a long time, and when it was over I think they counted over 90 people who professed faith in Jesus that night. That was a powerful, memorable worship experience.

What are your most powerful worship experiences? I hesitate to use the word "powerful," because that word is so overused and misused in describing worship—"That was powerful music!" or "He's a powerful preacher." But **when I use the word "powerful" I'm not referring to man's power but to God's power.**

Leviticus 9 describes a manifestation of God's power.

It happened in worship at the tabernacle. Often our most memorable worship times occur when we experience something for the first time—when we first put our faith in Christ, when we first surrender our whole life to do God’s will, or when we first worship in a place that we prayed for, worked for, and dedicated to God.

The worship experience described in Leviticus 9 was a first for the people of God—the first time they worshiped in the tabernacle.

Chapters 8–10 are about the priests who administered the sacrificial system in the tabernacle. Chapter 8 describes their ordination for service, chapter 9 the inauguration of their service, and chapter 10 the contamination of their service by sin.

In this section we will look at the inaugural worship service for the tabernacle that God had commanded to be built during Israel’s wilderness wandering. God had told them to build the tabernacle; they obeyed and built it. God had told them to consecrate Aaron and his sons as priests, and they did that. God had told them what sacrifices to offer and how to offer them.

Now, the time of preparation was over and the time of worship had arrived, and if any worship experience could be described as powerful, this one was powerful. It was ordained by God, blessed by God, and visited by God.

God can use it to teach us something about powerful worship.

Powerful Worship Follows Preparation for God’s Presence

In the case of the worship described in Leviticus 9, preparations had been extensive.

The people had erected the tabernacle according to God’s specifications. The people had set apart Aaron and his sons as priests according to God’s command, and chapter 8 describes the **consecration ceremony for the priests that lasted seven days.**

Those were the preparations in the recent past, but other experiences had prepared them for this time of worship too. **They had seen God deliver them from slavery in Egypt by a succession of ten astounding miracles, they had seen God part the Red Sea and provide food and water for them where there was no food and water, they had experienced God’s awesome presence at Mount Sinai, they had received God’s law from Moses, they had seen God’s judgment against their idolatry, and they had heard God invite them into His presence through the sacrificial system.** All of those experiences prepared them for this time of worship.

How do we prepare for worship? Sometimes we prepare for worship by staying up late Saturday night, waking up Sunday morning and reading the comics, checking email and a few websites, watching that episode of Duck Dynasty that we recorded, and then arguing on the way to church about whose fault it is that we’re late. Then half our time at church we fume about the argument, and we leave saying, “I didn’t really get much

out of church today.” It doesn’t occur to us that we weren’t ready to receive anything from God.

Powerful public worship is so often preceded by powerful private worship.

We are more ready to worship with others when we have worshiped alone.

God has used private worship times in my life in a wonderful way. However, when I worship with the people of God it is as if the volume has been turned up in my spirit. It’s exciting! Private worship has prepared me for public worship. Why don’t we spend some time in prayer before worship asking God to use the worship time to do His work in us? We should ask Him to speak to us during the time of worship, and we should ask Him to form us into the image of Jesus. We should ask Him to help us exalt Him in worship and to protect us from ourselves—our self-consciousness (“What are people thinking about me?”), our critical spirit (“The pastor is stumbling a bit today, and the sopranos in the choir were flat”), and our propensity to be distracted by everything and everyone except God. When we seek God in prayer like that before worship, it’s amazing the difference it makes.
Powerful worship follows preparation for God’s presence.

Powerful Worship Includes Submission to God’s Word

The worship experience described in [Leviticus 9](#) was according to what God had commanded. In the first seven chapters of Leviticus God commanded five types of sacrifices—the burnt offering, the grain offering, the fellowship offering, the sin offering, and the restitution offering. During the inauguration of public worship described in [Leviticus 9](#), God’s people obeyed His commands. They offered all of the commanded sacrifices, except for the restitution offering, which was never a public offering since its purpose was to make restitution for personal sin. So God’s people in worship submitted to what God said regarding worship.

Note three [\(3\) ways worship relates to submission to God’s Word.](#)

1. We Submit to God’s Word by the Act of Worship

Throughout God’s Word, worship is the way God’s people relate to God. The patriarchs worshiped. The Israelites left Egypt, went into the wilderness, and worshiped. God told His people to build the tabernacle and later the temple for worship. The prophets called God’s people to right worship instead of empty ritual. The psalmists exhorted God’s people to worship. [Psalm 96](#) says,

*Ascribe to Yahweh the glory of His name; bring an offering and enter His courts.
Worship the Lord in the splendor of His holiness. ([vv. 8-9](#))*

Worship was the pattern of the church in the New Testament. Jesus said that God the Father is seeking people to worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:23). In heaven God's will is done perfectly, and **heaven is a place of worship.** Jesus told us to pray, "[God], 'Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven'" (**Matt 6:10**), and in heaven, God's people offer worship to Him continually. **Revelation 4** says that in heaven, "Day and night they never stop, saying: Holy, holy, holy, Lord God, the Almighty, who was, who is, and who is coming." (**v. 8**). When I taught a class that prepared people for potential membership in our church, I told them, "If you're not going to gather with God's people for worship every Sunday you are in town, then please don't join." **Nothing is clearer, more fundamental, and more imperative in God's Word than God's people gathering to give worship and praise to God. We submit to God's Word by the act of worship.**

2. We Submit to God's Word by the Way We Worship

Leviticus 9 describes God's people worshipping in the way God had told them to worship—at the tabernacle He had designed, with the sacrifices He had commanded, and led by the priests He had selected. **We too worship God in the way He tells us to worship in His Word. His Word tells us to sing praise to Him, so we sing praise to Him. His Word tells us to be contrite in His presence, so we humble ourselves and confess our sin to Him. His Word tells us to pray, so we pray. His Word tells us to express love to our brothers and sisters in Christ, so we do that. His Word tells us to read and preach the Scriptures in our gatherings, so we do that too. His Word tells us not to offer gifts in worship if our brother has something against us, so we reconcile with one another and then offer our gifts in worship.**

The act of worship is not merely observing rituals in a specified order. Worship is not merely attendance at a building where worship is scheduled. Worship is not watching what the people on the podium do. Worship is the people of God submitting to what God has told us to do—gather with His people to express heartfelt praise to Him, speak to Him in prayer, bring gifts to Him, confess sin to Him, express love to Him and His people, and listen to what He says to us in His Word. God's Word does not tell us to critique what others do in worship, but to worship. We are not spectators, we are participants.

The almighty, holy, sovereign God meets with us in worship. He has told us to gather to worship Him, and He has told us what to do in worship.

3. We Submit to God's Word by a Life of Worship

The book of Leviticus describes numerous rituals. Leviticus also describes every area of life as holy and under God's rule—how we relate to family and neighbors, how we work, what we eat, how we worship. **All of life is worship because it all relates to God, and we follow the lifestyle He has prescribed.** Rituals don't have to be meaningless...

God intended the rituals He gave to be invitations into His presence and ways of connecting with Him. But when worship becomes merely ritual without connecting with God and without making a difference in the way we live, that ritual is meaningless.

The Old Testament prophets repeatedly preached against ritualistic religion that observed the forms and followed the traditions but was not part of a life of seeking and pleasing God in everything. The prophet Micah asked what kind of worship pleases God.

What should I bring before the Lord when I come to bow before God on high? Should I come before Him with burnt offerings, with year-old calves? Would the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams or with ten thousand streams of oil? Should I give my firstborn for my transgression, the child of my body for my own sin? Mankind, He has told you what is good and what it is the Lord requires of you: to act justly, to love faithfulness, and to walk humbly with your God. (Mic 6:6-8)

Micah was asking about right worship. He asked whether observing the rituals would please the Lord. If merely offering a sacrifice is not enough, maybe God would be pleased with *lots* of sacrifices—“thousands of rams” or “ten thousand streams of oil.” But if quantity does not please God, maybe it’s quality He wants, so Micah suggested that perhaps God would be pleased if he offered his firstborn child. After his rhetorical speculation, **Micah stated the kind of worship that pleases God—worship that’s part of a life of walking with God through everything and obeying His commands to do justice and show mercy. That’s a life of worship.**

If we come into the presence of God, experience His presence, and hear and heed His Word, how can our lives go unchanged? How is it possible to be visited by and touched by the almighty God of the universe and not be changed? We are *always* changed by powerful worship.

We submit to God’s Word by the fact of worship, by the way we worship, and by a life of worship.

Powerful Worship Requires God’s Mediation

Over the years I have taught and preached through an interpreter many times. I once spent a week in Vietnam, lecturing on parts of the Old Testament. I do not know any Vietnamese, and before I made the trip a missionary told me that Vietnamese is an inflectional language; if I used the right word with the wrong inflection, I could say something entirely different from what I intended. Hence, they told me not to attempt to communicate in Vietnamese at all. I couldn’t resist trying, so in the course of five days I think I mastered the pronunciation of the Vietnamese word for “Thank you.” Obviously, in order to lecture all week to people who spoke Vietnamese,

I needed help. So I spoke through an interpreter. He took my words and translated them so that they were understandable. He was my mediator.

In the old covenant the Israelites also had mediators in worship. They were the priests. Leviticus 9 describes the inauguration of the worship God had commanded in the tabernacle, and the priests offered the sacrifices and announced God's blessing. The people approached God through the priests. The requirement for priests as mediators carried an essential message. God has decreed that people cannot come into His presence in the same way we come into the presence of other people.

Just like the Vietnamese speak a different language so I needed help, **God is different from us so we need help in approaching Him.** The difference between us and God is not just a matter of degree, as if we are good and He is considerably better. No. **He is other, separate from us. We are finite, He is infinite. We are weak, His power has no limits. We are ignorant, He is all-knowing. We are earthly, He is heavenly. We are contaminated by sin, but no sin will ever be in His holy presence.** In fact, no sin has ever been in His presence except for that moment when He took *our* sin on Himself on the cross to atone for our sin so that we can come into His holy presence.

When Jesus shed His blood on the cross for our sins, He inaugurated the new covenant, and in the new covenant He is both our sacrifice and our high priest. He, God the Son Himself, has now superseded the old covenant sacrifices and the old covenant mediatorial priesthood. He became the perfect and final sacrifice for sin. Moreover, just as God required old covenant believers to approach Him through the mediation of priests, God also requires new covenant believers to approach Him through a priest. However, now Jesus is the only mediator.

First Timothy 2:5 says there is ***“one mediator between God and humanity, Christ Jesus.”*** We offer our worship through that Mediator.

Hebrews 13:15 says of Jesus, ***“Through Him let us continually offer up to God a sacrifice of praise.”***

Christ Jesus takes the place of the old covenant priests, but He does not merely replace them. The writer of Hebrews wrote, ***“He is the mediator of a better covenant”*** (**8:6**; cf. **7:22**). **The new covenant is better, and He is a better high priest.** Old covenant priests were sinners, so they had to offer sacrifices for their own sin, as they did in **Leviticus 9**.

But **Hebrews 7:26-27** says that Jesus is

holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. He doesn't need to offer sacrifices every day, as high priests do—first for their own sins, then for those of the people. He did this once for all when He offered Himself.

Old covenant priests offered sacrifices for Israel; **Hebrews 5:9** says Jesus is ***“the source of eternal salvation for all who obey Him.”*** Old covenant priests served for a while and died. **Hebrews 7:24** says that Jesus ***“remains forever, He holds His priesthood permanently”*** (cf. **6:20**).

Old covenant priests offered the blood of bulls and goats, but [Hebrews 9:14](#) says that Jesus **“offered Himself without blemish to God.”**

Old covenant priests served in a holy place made with hands, but [Hebrews 9:24](#) says that Jesus entered “into heaven itself, so that He might now appear in the presence of God for us.”

Old covenant priests had to offer sacrifices repeatedly to atone for sin, but [Hebrews 9:26](#) says that Jesus offered Himself “one time.”

Jesus is not merely the new high priest; He is the better high priest, the perfect and eternal high priest. In fact, the old covenant priesthood existed to prepare us for Jesus’ high priestly role by teaching that true worship requires God’s mediator.

Powerful Worship Results from God’s Visitation

[Leviticus 9:23](#) says, *“The glory of the Lord appeared to all the people,”* and [verse 24](#) says, *“Fire came from the Lord and consumed the burnt offering and the fat portions on the altar. And when all the people saw it, they shouted and fell facedown on the ground.”*

- They shouted presumably in celebration.
- They fell on their faces in contrition because they realized that they were in the presence of almighty God. Sometimes
- Christians debate vigorously whether worship should be more celebrative or more meditative. Why can’t it be both? Both were expressed in the powerful worship service in [Leviticus 9](#).
 1. But people who like to celebrate in worship often are not very comfortable with silence or contemplation.
 2. On the other hand, people who like more meditative worship are bothered easily by expressions of celebration.
 3. Must we demand of God that our response to Him should be only what is most comfortable to us?

“They shouted and fell facedown.”

God manifested His presence. He visited His people. That’s powerful worship—not the power of man but the power of God that’s expressed when we invite Him to worship and He shows up and does in us what only He can do. When He comes, He can convict us, break us, forgive us, restore us, call us, transform us, direct us, empower us, save us, and sanctify us.

As a pastor, I usually work with other worship leaders to begin the planning process for a worship service months in advance. We plan the content of each worship service based on the content of God’s Word that we will read on that day. Then we plan more specifically as the day

gets closer. We talk about it, pray about it, and put a plan on paper. However, the experience of worship is always better than the plan.

Worship is more than the sum of its parts. That's because nobody can plan or program what God does.

“In the second song, God is going to call Suzy to salvation, and during the prayer time God is going to convict Harry about how he's been treating his wife.” It doesn't work that way...

God does what He wants to do when He wants to do it. But when God visits us He does what no person can do. Only God can send fire from His presence and light the altar.

A lot of people today think that a great time of worship is defined by great music. God commands us to use music to praise Him, but in the worship described in Leviticus 9 the people produced no music. God was present, and that was enough.

A lot of people think that a great time of worship is defined by great communication by the preacher. But powerful worship is the result of God's presence, not man's.

A few years ago someone invited me to a special worship service. He said he was excited about the meeting because a particular preacher was going to be speaking. He thought I would want to go too when he told me the name of the preacher. I replied sarcastically, “I heard God's going to be there too.” I was trying to make a point—**I want to be more interested in meeting with God in worship than listening to any man.** Does it exalt God when we want to attend worship more because a preacher we like will be there? **Powerful worship is not the result of what man does; it is the result of what God does.**

When I was in college I preached in a small church in north Alabama on a Sunday morning. I remember thinking beforehand what a great sermon it was going to be. I was so proud of the way I had written it. Somehow, however, as I was preaching, it just fell apart. I said hardly anything I had intended to say, and what I said seemed virtually incoherent. After I preached, as the congregation was singing the closing song, I went to the front pew and asked God to forgive me for doing such a horrible job of serving Him and for being so full of myself to think that I could preach a great sermon. I prayed with my eyes closed during that time of singing, and when it was over and I looked up, the pastor began introducing six people who had come to him during that song and told him they had decided in that service to put their faith in Jesus and be saved. I learned a lesson that day about what a man can do and what God can do.

No matter how pitifully a man may lead worship, if God shows up in power that's all that matters. If God doesn't show up in power, no matter how wonderfully man may lead worship, it won't matter. Powerful worship results from God's visitation.

Do we seek and experience God's presence every time we worship? When I have asked people about their most powerful and memorable worship experiences, often they have referred to what they experienced in a retreat setting or around a campfire with a group of believers. They rarely refer to a Sunday morning worship service in the church where they are members, though they have gathered there for worship hundreds of times. Before **Robert Webber** died in 2007, he was a professor at Wheaton College and wrote over 40 books on the subject of worship. He once wrote this striking statement:

Worship is the weakest area of evangelical Christianity. We are strongest in the areas of evangelism, teaching, and fellowship. . . . But depth in the area of worship is badly lacking. We hardly know where to begin. (Webber, *Worship: Old and New*, 198)

Webber's assessment of the depth of our thinking regarding worship is bleak. Yet, many of us have observed the shallowness of evangelicals' thinking about worship. I have talked with Christians who seemed to consider themselves authorities on the subject of worship, but the more they talked the more it was clear that they were authorities only on the subject of what they like.

Most of our conversations about worship are not about worship at all but about music. And our conversations about music almost inevitably devolve into a recital of our preferences or the kind of music that achieves a desired effect—like excitement or contemplation, the feeling of relevance or the feeling of transcendence.

Most of evangelicals' comments about music or worship do not focus on what the Bible says, though we claim the Bible is primarily on our side. Leviticus 9 is just one chapter in the Bible, but even at this early stage in the history of God's revelation a theology of worship is beginning to emerge. Powerful worship involves our spiritual preparation, submission to God's Word, mediation to God through Jesus, and a visitation by God.

Let us prepare our hearts to meet God in worship. Let us submit to His Word and put our faith in the only Mediator, Jesus. Let us ask Him to show His glory to us in worship.

Reflect and Discuss

1. Describe your most powerful worship experiences.
2. How did the people of Israel prepare to worship God?
3. How had God prepared the people of Israel for worship?
4. How do you prepare yourself for worship? What are some changes you would like to make in your preparation?
5. What are the three ways worship relates to submission to God's Word?
6. Are you a spectator or a participator in worship services? What can you do each week to ensure you are a participator?
7. How did the old covenant priesthood prepare us for Jesus' high priestly role?

8. Both celebrative and meditative worship were expressed by the people in [Leviticus 9](#). Which do you typically prefer, and how can you incorporate the other?
9. According to [Micah 6:6-8](#), what type of worship pleases God? Does your worship please God? How can you know?
10. What do you require in order to experience a great time of worship? Are your requirements in the Bible, or are they your own? Are they present in [Leviticus 9](#)?

- Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Leviticus.

The inauguration of the priesthood and sacrificial system ([chaps. 8-10](#))

These chapters, along with [24:10-23](#), contain the only purely narrative portions of Leviticus (cf. [comments](#) on [1:1](#)). In order to approach God, a Jewish worshiper needed not only an offering ([chaps. 1-7](#)) but also the mediation of a priest (cf. [Heb. 5:1-4](#)). Thus **the institution of the priesthood to conduct the sacrificial ritual was the next step in implementing Israel's communion with the holy God.** God had already ordained a hereditary priesthood through Aaron and his descendants ([Ex. 29:9](#)).

1. THE ORDINATION OF AARON AND HIS SONS ([CHAP. 8](#))

[Leviticus 8](#) is a narrative *description* which fulfilled and presupposed a knowledge of the Mosaic *prescription* recorded in [Exodus 29](#); hence there is a close parallel between these two chapters.

a. The preparation for the ordination service ([8:1-4](#))

8:1-4. The formula of divine revelation (the LORD said to Moses) not only marks the beginning of a new section but also indicates Moses' continuing role as the covenant mediator ([chaps. 8-10](#)). **Moses** received a twofold divine command: (a) **Bring Aaron and his sons** along with the accoutrements needed for the ordination ([8:2](#)), **and** (b) **gather the entire assembly** (probably a body of elders representing all Israel; cf. [9:1](#)) **at the entrance** (forecourt or enclosure) of the tabernacle ([8:3](#)).

Moses' obedience (he did as the LORD commanded) sets the normal literary pattern of command-obedience repeated throughout these chapters (except in [10:1-3](#)).

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b. The investiture of Aaron with the clothing of the high priest ([8:5-9](#))

[8:5-9](#). **Moses first washed Aaron and his sons... with water** probably at the bronze basin or laver (cf. [Ex. 30:17-21](#)), and then clothed **Aaron** with the garments of the high priest. **The high priestly garments were a uniform calling attention to Aaron's mediatorial function or office rather than to his individual personality** ([Ex. 28:1-39](#); [29:5-6](#); [39:1-26](#) explain the high priest's clothing).

c. The anointing of Aaron and the tabernacle with oil ([8:10-12](#))

[8:10-11](#). **Moses consecrated the tabernacle and everything in it**, and also **the altar** of burnt offering and **the bronze basin** by sprinkling them with **the anointing oil** (cf. [Ex. 30:26-29](#); [40:9-11](#)). **The recipe for the anointing oil, and the prohibition against its secular use, were given in Exodus 30:22-25, 31-33.**

[8:12](#). Moses then **poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron's head... to consecrate him** (cf. [Ex. 29:7](#); [30:30](#); [40:13](#)). **The purpose of these anointings was to set apart the tabernacle** ([Lev. 8:10](#)), the various articles of sacred furniture (vv. 10-11), and the priest who ministered in the sanctuary ([v. 12](#)) as most holy to the Lord (cf. [Ex. 30:29](#)).

d. The investiture of Aaron's sons with priestly clothing ([8:13](#))

[8:13](#). In accordance with the Lord's command, **Moses** also put the priestly garments (cf. [Ex. 28:40-43](#); [29:8-9](#)) on each of **Aaron's four sons** ([Lev. 10:1, 6](#); cf. [Ex. 6:23](#)).

e. The offering of sacrifices for the consecration of the priest ([8:14-29](#))

Moses then performed the sacrificial tasks prescribed for the priest ([chaps. 1-7](#)) while Aaron and his sons assumed the role of ordinary Israelites bringing their sacrifices. Both this narrative ([8:14-29](#)) and the prescription in [Exodus 29:10-34](#) list the sacrifices in their procedural order (cf. [comments](#) on [6:8-7:38](#)).

[8:14-17](#). **The bull for the sin offering was presented first** (cf. [Ex. 29:10-14](#)), **and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on its head.** **Since Aaron was not yet ordained to represent Israel in a mediatorial priestly function, this sin offering must have been on behalf of Aaron and his sons, rather than the people of Israel.** Also the basic purpose of this sin offering was **to purify the altar** by consecrating **it to make atonement for it.** The ritual of this sin offering generally follows that established in [Leviticus 4:3-12](#) except that here the blood was smeared on **the horns of the altar** of burnt offering rather than on the altar of incense ([4:6-7](#)). As usual, with a sin offering for a priest, the remaining **hide, carcass, and offal** were **burned up outside the camp.**

[8:18-21](#). Moses next offered **the ram for the burnt offering** (cf. [Ex. 29:15-18](#)) according to the prescribed ritual ([Lev. 1:10-13](#)), except that **Moses apparently performed all the stages of the ritual other than the laying on of hands.**

8:22-29. The final offering in the sequence was a fellowship offering called the ram for the ordination (cf. Ex. 29:19-28). The ritual generally corresponds with that prescribed for the fellowship offering (Lev. 3:6-11; 7:28-34).

The most obvious difference, of course, was the use of the blood by **Moses** in smearing **some of the ram's blood on the lobe of Aaron's right ear, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot**, and likewise on **Aaron's sons**. **Moses** also **sprinkled** some of this **blood** on **Aaron** and his **sons** and their clothes ([8:30](#)).

A unique procedure occurred when **Moses** placed **the fat** of the ram with its **right thigh... in the hands of Aaron and his sons** ([vv. 25-27](#)). This seemed to symbolize in the eyes of all the people the sanctity of the office to which the priests had been appointed. On top of this **wave offering** which was burned **on the altar** ([v. 28](#)) was placed **a cake of bread, and one made with oil, and a wafer taken from the basket of bread made without yeast** which had been prepared for this occasion ([v. 26](#)). **The breast** of the **ram**, which was **Moses' share** of the offering as the officiating priest, was **waved... before the LORD** and apparently retained by **Moses** for food (cf. [Ex. 29:26](#)).

f. The consecration of Aaron and his sons with anointing oil and sacrificial blood ([8:30](#))

[8:30](#). This consecration by **Moses** was prescribed in [Exodus 29:20-21](#) (cf. [Lev. 8:23-24](#)).

g. The seven-day ordination confinement of Aaron and his sons ([8:31-36](#))

[8:31-32](#). **Moses** instructed **Aaron and his sons** to **eat** the rest of the ram of ordination, along with the remainder of **the bread from the basket of ordination offerings** and then to **burn up the leftovers**.

[8:33-35](#). Aaron and his sons were required to stay in the forecourt of **the Tent of Meeting day and night for seven days** to complete their **days of... ordination**.

[8:36](#). **The chapter is summarized with a statement of the obedience of Aaron and his sons to everything the LORD commanded through Moses.**

THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE PUBLIC SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM ([CHAP. 9](#))

This description of the formal inauguration of the whole Israelite sacrificial system resembles the prescription for the Day of Atonement ritual since on both occasions sacrifices were brought for both the priests and the people. However, here the people's fellowship offerings replaced the scapegoat ceremony, making this a feast instead of a fast.

a. The prescription for the offerings for Aaron and the people ([9:1-4](#))

9:1-4. With the ordination of Aaron and his sons completed, he was instructed to commence his priestly duties of offering sacrifice, first for himself and then for the people (cf. [Heb. 9:7](#)).

The 8th day clearly refers to the day after the 7 days of Aaron's ordination confinement ([8:33-35](#)). According to the Jewish talmudic tradition, the preceding week of priestly ordination began on the 23rd day of the 12th month so that this 8th day of the ordination ceremonies was identical with the 1st day of the 1st month mentioned in [Exodus 40:2, 17](#) when the tabernacle was erected. **So Aaron immediately began his priestly duties by offering the first of the sacrifices of the tribal leaders on 12 consecutive days** ([Num. 7:10-88](#); cf. Bernard J. Bamberger, "Leviticus," in *The Torah: A Modern Commentary*, 3:65-6). In spite of the initial offerings on behalf of Aaron and his sons ([Lev. 8:14-29](#)) and their subsequent daily sin offerings during the 7 days of confinement ([Ex. 29:35-37](#)), it was still necessary for Aaron to present for himself both a **sin offering** and a **burnt offering** ([Lev. 9:2](#)). **The people (represented by the elders) were to present animals for "sin," "burnt," grain, and fellowship offerings (vv. 3-4).**

The whole sacrificial system was placed in its theological context in the reason given by Moses for these offerings: *For today the LORD will appear to you* (cf. [v. 6](#)). **God instituted sacrifice so that His Chosen People might, in spite of their innate sinfulness, have access through atonement to Him as the holy God, and that He might dwell among them and be their God** (cf. the significant passage, [Ex. 29:42-46](#)).

b. The preparation for the offerings ([9:5-7](#))

9:5-7. After instructing the entire assembly (apparently synonymous with "the elders" of [v. 1](#)), Moses delegated his priestly functions to Aaron by inviting him to begin the sacrifices (Come to the altar and sacrifice).

c. The description of Aaron's offerings ([9:8-14](#))

[9:8-14](#). Assisted by **his sons** (who assumed the role of ordinary worshipers so far as the sacrificial ritual was concerned), **Aaron** offered a **calf as a sin offering for himself**. Since Aaron had sinned previously by making a golden calf ([Ex. 32](#)), **it is ironic that he now offered as his first sin offering a calf as if to atone for that sin**. The ritual described follows that prescribed in [Leviticus 4:3-12](#) except that the blood was smeared again (cf. [8:15](#)) on **the horns of the altar** of burnt offering instead of on the altar of incense. Likewise, Aaron offered his own **burnt offering** (cf. [8:18-21](#)).

d. The description of the offerings for the people ([9:15-22](#))

[9:15-22](#). By offering a **goat for the people's sin offering** ([v. 15](#)), a calf and a lamb (cf. [v. 3](#)) for their **burnt offering** ([v. 16](#)) with a **grain offering** ([v. 17](#)), and **the cow and the ram** for their **fellowship offering** ([v. 18](#)), Aaron offered virtually all the kinds of sacrificial animals (except birds which were concessions for poor people) that were presentable under the sacrificial system. Aaron's benediction on the people at the completion of the sacrifices ([v. 22](#)) is linked in Jewish tradition with that in [Numbers 6:24-26](#).

e. The appearance of the divine glory ([9:23-24](#))

[9:23-24](#). After Moses and Aaron... went into the Tent of Meeting (whether for Moses to instruct Aaron, or for Moses to identify him in the eyes of the people as the one to serve in the sanctuary, or for them to commune with God) and **came out to bless the people... the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people.**

Thus the designed purpose of sacrificial approach to God (cf. vv. 4, 6) was accomplished.

This visible and glorious manifestation of the Lord's presence, along with the supernatural fire that fully consumed the already partially burned sacrifices on the altar, indicated His approval of the sacrifices.

- Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty.

The Mediator

[Leviticus 8:1-36](#)

WE ARE ACCUSTOMED TO THE NOTION OF ARBITRATION and mediation in our world because conflict is commonplace between nations, businesses, and individuals. The National Mediation Board (NMB), established by the 1934 amendment to the Railway Labor Act of 1926, provided the first government agency for resolving labor and management disputes in public transportation. Since then the profession of mediation has blossomed into elaborate specializations: divorce mediation, employment disputes, neighborhood mediation, and government disputes over trade. One principle of mediation is the

assumption that the mediator is an independent individual whose goal is to achieve a mutually satisfying outcome between two aggrieved parties. If we think of Israel's priest as a literal mediator in the modern sense, we will get the wrong impression. **The chief role of priestly mediation was not between two aggrieved persons but with only one offended party. God alone had the right to be offended by the disobedience of his people Israel.** God was faithful to his people, but they were not loyal to him. The people had no legitimate grievance to bring against their God.

Also, **the priestly mediator was not a dispassionate observer of the dispute. He himself was part of the problem. He too was a sinner and required a resolution to his own offense against God before he could represent the Israelite individual or the nation before the Lord.** Moreover, **the priestly mediator did not seek compromise or enter into negotiations so as to nudge God one way or the other. It was not a two-way street. There were no negotiations to be sorted out.**

The Lord demanded the only means of resolving the dispute. As we say today, it was his way or the highway.

At first blush some may think that the Lord is cruelly stringent in his demands for strict compliance. "Doesn't God bend, even a little?" we might ask. We must remember, however, that the whole order of worship was a provision, not a ploy of entrapment. In that way we can consider that the tabernacle, its sacrifices, and its priests were God's gracious "bending" toward sinful men and women. For apart from this provision, they would have faced the consequences of unforgiven sins.

So that Israel might come to the Lord in worship, there was the necessity of a qualified mediator to represent them before the Lord. Thus, **the Lord after providing the authorized sacrifices in Leviticus 1-7 established an authorized priesthood to carry out the sacrifices properly.**

Leviticus 8 describes the inauguration of Aaron, Moses' brother, as the father of the priestly family. The Lord prescribed an ordination service that was conducted in the presence of all Israel (in fulfillment of **Exodus 29**). The ritual ordination entailed a whole week. Repeatedly the text says, "as the LORD commanded Moses," underscoring the divine origin of Moses' instructions (**vv. 9, 13, 17, 21, 29; cf. v. 5**).

Ministers don't call themselves into Christian service. The gifts of a minister are gifts endowed by the Spirit. Beware of the person who calls himself to a ministry.

From our passage we see the necessary demands on priest and people for their acceptance by God.

The message of the ordination service of the Hebrew priests serves as a picture of the nation as a whole that ministered to the world of nations. It also speaks to the priestly role of the church as the people of God today and, most important, to the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ who intercedes on our behalf as Christians.

Although most Christians are not ordained members of the clergy, the depiction of Aaron and his sons is especially important to every Christian. The Bible characterizes Christians as priests, drawing on the imagery of the priesthood in Israel. The church bulletin of Grace Lutheran Church in Destin, Florida, lists the church's various ministers by personal name, which is typical of most churches, but distinguishes the church by beginning with this general identification: "Ministers: *All God's People.*" Each person among the people of God is gifted and empowered by the Holy Spirit to minister to the church and to the nations.

Israel as a nation collectively was appointed by God to function as "a kingdom of priests" to the nations (Exodus 19:5, 6). The church, too, is called upon to be a witness of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the nations (1 Peter 2:5, 9; cf. Romans 15:16).

Also, we will learn the superior character of the Lord Jesus' priestly role in our behalf versus that of the temporary Jewish priesthood ([Hebrews 7:11-28](#)).

The Preparations for Ordination (vv. 1-9)

The aphorism "Clothes make the man" could be a title for the opening verses, which describe the vestments received by the priestly family. Moses, however, was not a fashion designer. The articles of clothing worn by Aaron and his sons not only distinguished them as priests but also symbolically communicated important spiritual lessons. **A constant feature of instructions for proper worship involved appropriate preparations that indicated the spiritual preparations of those who supervised and participated in the worship of God. For today's Christian we can rest at ease that God himself through his Son has made the way open for us to worship the Lord. At the same time, the call to purity is still a legitimate expectation for Christians today.** The Apostle Paul says in [2 Corinthians](#), *"Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God"* ([7:1](#)). We too must undergo spiritual preparation for worship before we enter into his presence through prayer and praise. Our passage is a reminder that as Christians we must give more attention to our spiritual readiness when we worship the Lord. The Apostle Paul spoke of those who received the Lord's Table in "an unworthy manner" ([1 Corinthians 11:27-31](#)), which resulted in sickness and death for some of the offenders. Worship is a serious matter that must be viewed as a grave risk for the careless.

Community ceremony ([vv. 3, 4](#)). Therefore the ceremony of robing Aaron and carrying out the ordination sacrifices were public rituals ([vv. 3, 4](#)) from which Israel was to learn about God and the role of the priestly mediator.

The goal of the ceremony was not to flatter Aaron but to teach the community about God's holiness. So it is with those in the service of Christ today. The spiritual gifts that the Lord provides his people are not for the indulgence of the recipient but are designed to strengthen the people of God ([Ephesians 4:12](#)).

Cleansing (v. 6). **Aaron first underwent a ceremonial washing, indicating the moral purity required of a priest.** In Levitical law ceremonial purity was emblematic of personal moral purity (cf. [1 Peter 3:21](#)). Aaron could not approach the holy God unless he himself was spiritually prepared. This corresponds to the symbolism of an unblemished animal that the priest alone could offer up (e.g., [Leviticus 1:9; 8:21](#)).

Clothes for Aaron the high priest (vv. 7-9). The distinctive priestly vestments bestowed on Aaron and his sons gave them "glory" and "beauty" in the eyes of the people ([Exodus 28:2, 40](#)). We are accustomed today to the formal dress of the military services whose uniforms, medals, and ribbons symbolically convey valor in the service of our country. The Navy Cross, for example, is given for heroism, second only in distinction to the Congressional Medal of Honor. The ribbon of the Navy Cross is navy blue in color with a center stripe of white, the latter representing the purity of selflessness. The dress of the priestly family conveyed important meaning and attracted the respect of the people for what the vestments signified. All priests wore a "coat" ([v. 7](#)) made of fine linen, but Aaron's coat possessed distinctive embroidery ([Exodus 28:4, 39; 39:27](#)).

Some vestments were worn exclusively by the high priest, Aaron. These included five special items.

First, a "robe" ([v. 7](#)) made of blue cloth possessed an opening at the top so that the priest slipped the garment over his head. Around the bottom hem of the robe were alternating decorative pomegranates made of blue, purple, and scarlet yarns and small golden bells ([Exodus 28:31-34](#)). Not only did the priest attract attention visually, but his physical activities also created accompanying sounds of tinkling bells. The bells had the practical purpose of preserving the high priest's life when he ministered in the restricted area known as the Most Holy Place on the sacred Day of Atonement. At his entrance and exit the bells assured the people that he had fulfilled his duty and had not been struck dead before the Lord ([Exodus 28:35](#)). The high priest had an embroidered "sash" ([v. 7](#)) of blue, purple, and scarlet yarns that tied the coat at the waist ([Exodus 28:39; 39:29](#)). The colors of the garments matched the colored threads of the tabernacle's curtains and veil ([Exodus 26:1, 31](#)). The tabernacle as the place where the high priest ministered explains the correspondence between the two in appearance. Have you seen mother-daughter pictures in which the mother and daughter dress identically? One impression this gives is that the parent and child belong together; the child belongs to the mother and not another. Likewise, the high priest's distinctive apparel showed he belonged to God in the Tent of Meeting.

Second, the "ephod" ([v. 7](#)) was a sleeveless garment, made also of fine twisted linen and woven of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet yarns ([Exodus 28:6-35](#)). The gold thread gave a brilliant luster to Aaron's appearance. A waistband made as part of the ephod was of the same material ([Exodus 28:8; 39:5](#)). It probably was worn at the shoulders, extending down to the waist or possibly below to the thigh. Two gold shoulder pieces for attaching the garment possessed two onyx stones set in gold filigree; each stone was engraved with six names of the tribes of Israel ([Exodus 28:9](#)). Additionally, there were two golden rope-like chains connected to the settings.

Third, attached to the ephod at the shoulders by a blue cord looped through golden rings was a breastpiece ([v. 8](#)) made of the same colored yarns as the ephod. On the front of the breastpiece were twelve gemstones in four rows of three, each stone engraved with the name of a tribe

([Exodus 28:29](#)). It was made in a perfect square of about nine inches and folded over to double its thickness. Consequently, the breastpiece formed a pouch in which was placed the fourth distinctive feature of Aaron's apparel. The pouch of the breastpiece contained two sacred dice, the Urim and Thummim. These two stones were instrumental in discerning the will of God ([Exodus 28:30](#); [Numbers 27:21](#)), and thus the breastpiece was called "the breastpiece of judgment" ([Exodus 28:29, 30](#)). The sacred Urim and Thummim are particularly mysterious to us, because the Bible does not specify how the stones were used. Among the most prominent theories is that the stones were cast like lots. They were marked with the words equivalent to our English terms *yes* and *no* (cf. [1 Samuel 14:41](#)). Therefore the stones were useful in answering only "yes/no" kinds of questions. **Since the breastpiece showed forth the inscribed names of the twelve tribes, the high priest bore the names of the tribes over his heart, and whenever the high priest came into God's presence they were present too ([Exodus 28:15, 29, 30](#)). In the same way, the Lord Jesus, the perfect High Priest, bears our names in the presence of the Father ([Hebrews 6:19, 20](#); cf. [Matthew 19:28](#)).**

A fourth garment unique to Aaron was his headwear. It was a linen turban ([v. 9](#)) on which at the forehead was tied a "plate" of pure gold by a blue cord ([Exodus 28:36](#); [39:30](#)). The plate possessed the engraving "Holy to the LORD," which meant that Aaron continually mediated in behalf of Israel whenever he came before the Lord, bearing "any guilt" and securing acceptance for God's people ([Exodus 28:36-38](#)).

The brightly colored, dazzling garb of the high priest communicated the holiness and majesty of God. It was a constant reminder of the distinctive role that the priest was called upon to fulfill on behalf of the nation. By the mediator's vestments, Aaron symbolically brought the people into the presence of God each time he performed the rites of sacrifice. **The qualifications of the priestly intercession of our Lord Jesus Christ, however, did not include a dress code. His was not merely a symbolic gesture of reconciliation ([Hebrews 4:14](#); [6:20](#)). Rather, in his very person Jesus as the very image of God ([Hebrews 1:3](#)) was the perfect conciliator between God and humanity—"the man Christ Jesus"—who perfectly performed the eternal sacrifice on behalf of all those who place their faith in him ([1 Timothy 2:5, 6](#)). Our Lord Jesus reigns in the presence of God his Father ([Acts 2:33, 36](#); [Hebrews 9:24](#); [1 Peter 3:22](#); cf. [Acts 7:55](#)). Because Christians are "in Christ," the Apostle Paul could speak of our dwelling-place as "in the heavenly places" ([Ephesians 2:6](#); cf. [Philippians 3:20](#)). **We have been clothed in Christ** ([Galatians 3:27](#)).**

The Ordination Ceremony (vv. 10-36)

After distinguishing Aaron and his son as the solely authorized mediators, Moses prepared the tabernacle and the priests for administering the first sacrifices. **The ordination ceremony involved symbolic cleansing of the place and the persons involved in carrying out the sacrifices.** The place was the tabernacle with its furnishings and the altar where sacrifices would occur. The persons who underwent the ceremonial consecration were Aaron and his sons. In other words **all the persons, items, and places important to administering the sacrifices of worship were sanctified.** Nothing was left to chance. All must be made holy for the sacrifice to

be acceptable to the Holy One of Israel. Otherwise, the offering would be desecrated by the impurities of the procedure. The ceremony events of anointing with oil, animal sacrifice, and the smearing of blood converged on the final consecration of Aaron and his sons ([v. 30](#)). In our day we are familiar with decontamination technologies, such as fumigation and antimicrobial products, that make a polluted site once again inhabitable for human life. But in Israel's case the blood does not literally cleanse; rather it symbolizes the spiritual cleansing that can only be accomplished by the spilling of blood, that is, at the cost of a life. As a public ritual it made understandable to the people that the Lord was holy and that the priests were the sole designates who were adequately cleansed to serve before the Lord. **This ritual picture showed the necessity of spiritual cleansing as preparatory for authentic worship in the presence of the Lord.**

***Consecrating the tabernacle and the priests* (vv. 10-13). The Lord had already assigned Moses the task of anointing the place of worship and the priests ([Exodus 30:22-33; 40:9-16](#)). Now Moses carefully carried out the assignment in the ordination service (cf. [Exodus 37:29](#)).**

The anointing oil was made up of an exclusive formula. It could not be utilized for any other purpose, nor was any other formula to be used for the anointing rite. This reminds me of my high school days when I worked for a fruit juice stand named Orange Julius. By its name you can guess that it specialized in an orange beverage that had a special concoction of ingredients that distinguished it from any other orange drink. There was a "special powder" that made the key difference in the sweet, foamy drink. The mother company sold the powder to authorized franchise owners. Supposedly only a few people in the company knew the formula, but that did not stop us kids from speculating, and some even attempted to duplicate it. The anointing oil followed a divine recipe made up of measured portions of fragrant spices (myrrh, cinnamon, cane, and cassia) that were mixed in about four quarts of olive oil ([Exodus 30:22-25](#)). This mixture was designated "a holy anointing oil" ([Exodus 30:25](#)), not because of inherently sacred ingredients but because the oil was uniquely related to the holy worship of God.

The term "anoint" in our passage indicates a smearing of the oil on the surface of the tabernacle and its furniture. The text highlights "the altar" and its sevenfold anointing ([v. 11](#)). The altar was the location where the priests daily made sacrifice to atone for the sins of the people. The procedure varied with persons. Moses "poured" oil over the head of Aaron, resulting in the oil bathing his face and shoulders ([Exodus 29:7; Leviticus 21:10](#)). The act of pouring was reminiscent of the ministry of the priests who poured oil for the rites of the grain offering and the cleansing of lepers ([Leviticus 2:1, 6; 14:15, 26](#)). The blood of sacrificial animals was also poured out ([Leviticus 8:15; 9:9](#)). All was done for the effect of consecrating the place and the person of mediation. To consecrate one and not the other would be of no benefit. Both must be cleansed. This was true of our Lord Jesus who was the sanctified offering and at the same time the official who entered into the holy throne room of Heaven, bringing his precious blood before God his Father ([Hebrews 7:26; 9:11, 12](#)).

***The significance of the anointing oil was its symbolic association with the Spirit of God ([1 Samuel 16:13; Isaiah 61:1](#)). Priests, kings, and prophets received the Spirit, and in many cases they were simply known as "the anointed." The oil represented the power of the Spirit* that**

enabled the priests to carry out their duties. The Spirit's presence distinguished the priests from regular members of the congregation. **The same significance is attached to the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the individual Christian and the Christian church as a whole today. John's first letter tells us that Christians "have been anointed by the Holy One" as their distinguishing mark (1 John 2:20; cf. 2:27). This anointing is a spiritual anointing that comes with the presence of the Spirit in the life of each believer and is secured by the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 1:21, 22).** This anointing is provided for all believers, not just those who are clergy. All Christians are enabled by the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit to be witnesses for Christ and to serve as the conduit of intercession for the nations.

Especially important was the anticipation of the messianic king who as God's Anointed One would bring to pass the establishment of God's kingdom. For this reason the early church referred to Jesus as "anointed" ([Acts 10:38](#)). **Jesus himself in the synagogue at Nazareth quoted Isaiah's prophecy, referring it to himself: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news" (Luke 4:18). The Lord bore the responsibility of interceding for the world through the revelation and salvation that he uniquely presented to the nations. We, as his emissaries, are called upon to do the same. We are his designated witnesses for the spiritual kingdom that is offered today through the preaching of the gospel.**

Consecration offerings ([vv. 14-30](#)). With the altar prepared with anointing oil, Moses could now offer up animal sacrifices. The *first* was a bull for the sin offering in behalf of Aaron and his sons ([vv. 14-17](#); cf. [Exodus 29:10-14](#); [Leviticus 4:3](#)). By placing their hands upon the head of the animal, the priests depicted the transfer of their sin to the substitute victim. Although the priests were dressed in holy garments and the high priest had received the oil of consecration, Aaron and his sons had not yet received atonement for their sins. There remained the need to deal with their own sin before they could step into the role of mediation for the sin of the people. Because they were in a leadership position, the proper offering was the costly male bull. The blood from the animal made atonement first for the altar as the instrument of atonement made in the Tent of Meeting. **Blood was necessary for the cleansing of the altar and for cleansing the priests who conducted worship. The colorful finery of their dress and the fragrant perfume of the anointing oil could not redress sin (Hebrews 9:22).** Only the death of a substitute victim could do that, for as Paul said, "the wages of sin is death" ([Romans 6:23](#)). This requirement of death was fully satisfied on our behalf by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ ([Colossians 1:20](#)) who gave himself as a sin offering ([2 Corinthians 5:21](#)).

The *second* animal sacrifice was a ram for the burnt offering ([vv. 18-21](#); [Exodus 29:15-19](#)). As in the former case, the priests placed their hands upon the head of the animal, and the blood of the animal was applied to the altar. Two differences in the procedure from that of the bull offering were the removal of the bull's hide and entrails to outside the camp where they were burned up and the washing of the ram's legs and entrails, which were then wholly consumed on the altar. This followed the pattern of the purpose of the burnt offering that was wholly burned up as a sign of complete dedication to the Lord.

The *third* animal was another ram, here designated "the ram of ordination" ([vv. 22-30](#); [Exodus 29:27-31](#)). With blood from the slaughtered beast, Moses applied some to the lobe of Aaron's

right ear, the thumb of his right hand, and the big toe of his right foot. Aaron's sons received the same rite ([vv. 23, 24](#)). Moses "threw" blood against the sides of the altar ([v. 24](#)). The symbolic significance of these acts pertained to the roles of the priests and the altar as the functionaries and the place for atonement. **The physical extremities of the ear, hand, and foot were smeared with blood so as to represent their complete cleansing. There was also a connection between the body part and the priests' distinctive role as mediators. The ear indicated the confessions of the people that the priests heard, the hand was involved in the handling and the preparations of the holy offerings, and the foot signified the holy environs in which they served.** The central place for their activities was the brazen altar that received the blood for cleansing.

Next, Aaron and his sons presented a *wave offering* that consisted of a combination of portions of the ram offering and a grain offering ([vv. 25-29](#)). Moses' role was the preparation of the wave offering. He took the fat of the entrails and the right thigh of the ram. The fat of animal offerings was devoted to the Lord exclusively, forbidden for human consumption ([Leviticus 7:23-25; 17:6](#)). The objective of the prohibition was so no person could benefit from the sacrifice. On top of the animal portions he placed three grain products—a loaf of bread, a second loaf made with oil, and a thin wafer. All three were prepared without yeast in accordance with the typical practice of regular grain offerings ([Leviticus 2:11](#)). Yeast was a prohibited item since it represented a corrupting influence and thus was unacceptable as an offering burned on the altar before the Lord ([Leviticus 6:17](#); cf. [1 Corinthians 5:6-8](#)). Moses placed the animal and grain portions in the hands of Aaron and his sons, who waved them as a gesture of presentation to God. After that Moses took back the offerings from Aaron and placed them on top of the burnt offering (the first ram) that remained burning on the fires of the altar. Moses, as the officiating priest, received the breast of the ram of ordination as his portion, which he presented to the Lord as his own wave offering. Last, Moses took anointing oil and blood from the altar and sprinkled them on the priests and their clothes. Thus, the priests were speckled with the mixture of oil and blood, a sight that signified the cleansing of the mediators. **At the completion of the ritual, Moses had "consecrated" the priests, thus designating them holy in the eyes of God and the people. The people could now have confidence in the holy and pure condition of the priests, who were essential to their acceptance before the Lord. We who have the Lord Jesus as our perfect Mediator can have perfect confidence that we have total acceptance with God (Ephesians 3:12).**

Ordination meal ([vv. 31, 32](#)). **The last phase of the ordination service was the ordination meal eaten by Aaron and his sons. The meal consisted of cooked meat and baked goods from the ordination offerings.** Cooking the meat at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting meant the people could witness the consumption of the meal. The priests' participation in the eating of the sacred offerings symbolized their fellowship with the Lord by virtue of partaking in the holy sacrifices offered up to him. What they did not consume was burned up that same day so that the food would not spoil and to show that no one else was qualified to eat the ordination meal.

Seven days ([vv. 33-36](#)). **The ordination service lasted seven days. The procedure outlined above was practiced each of the seven days. The numerical symbolism of "seven" indicated that the ordination ritual was complete. It was imperative that the priests remain in the holy precincts during the whole week or they would suffer the deadly judgment of God.**

Since the process of ordination involved only holy elements, the priests could not leave the sacred grounds, which would subject them to ritual impurity. Although the priests received reward and recognition for their status in the community, they undertook a heavy responsibility that involved the risk of life and death. Those who lead the community of God today enjoy the blessing of ministry but also the burden of ministry (1 Timothy 3:1-7; 4:14-16; 5:22; 2 Timothy 1:6). Church leaders, whether they are ordained members or laypeople who undertake leadership roles, face accountability before God and before the church.

The Glory of the Lord

[Leviticus 9:1-24](#)

IF YOU ARE A DEVOTEE OF THE OLD CROONER FRANK SINATRA, you know the 1960s hit song "Get Me to the Church on Time" by Lerner and Loewe. The first two verses read:

I'm gettin' married in the morning
Ding-dong the bells are gonna chime
We'll have a whopper, pull out the stopper
Get me to the church on time
I've got to get there in the morning
Spruced up and lookin' in my prime
Girls come and kiss me, say that you'll miss me
Get me to the church on time.

For all the pomp and ceremony planned for a wedding, the necessary essentials are really only these three: the presence of the bride, the groom, and the minister. Without the appearance of them, there is no point in all the preparations. The guests may enjoy the music and the beautiful flowers and eat the bridal cake. But there is no marriage, only a wedding party. Up to this place in Leviticus, all that has gone before was preparatory for this central event—the appearance of God among his people. The sacrifices delineated, the priests ordained, and the cleansing of the sanctuary and of the people made it possible for the Lord to accept the worship of his people. The presence of God was often described as the appearance of the glory of the Lord. The purpose of this inaugural worship was "... that the glory of the LORD may appear to you [the people]" (v. 6), and the outcome was just that: "the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people" (v. 23).

*These two passages are the only two places in the book of Leviticus that include the word "glory."
By this sign of the fiery glory of the Lord, the people could know that the Lord was present and
that he had received their worship.*

Worship meant communion between God and his people. This is why we as the people of God gather for worship—to behold the glory of the Lord and to know his acceptance of our worship.

The purpose of the tabernacle and the sacrifices was to safeguard the relationship initiated by the Lord with the Israelites. We will discover through the exposition of this first occurrence of worship in the Tent of Meeting that we too as Christians enjoy the glory of the Lord and have full assurance of his approval of us and our offering of worship.

Ministers lead the congregation in worship, approach God through the atoning blood, and bring God's word of blessing to the people.

Worship leads to the congregation's assurance that the Lord is among them and receives them.

The Call to Worship (vv. 1-6)

Moses, as the chief mediator between God and Israel, followed the Lord's directions by calling for Aaron, his sons, and the representative elders of the people to prepare for the first formal act of worship in the Tent of Meeting. Although Moses and Aaron played crucial roles in the worship service, it must never be forgotten that the Lord himself gave these directions to Moses (v. 6). Worship begins with God's instructions, not with the ideas of men and women. When we come before the Lord in the proper way, we will have acceptance. When we come according to human devices, we put at risk the assurance of acceptance.

*** *The inaugural service (y. 1).* The service began on the "eighth day," that is, the day following the seven days of priestly ordination ([Leviticus 8:33](#); [Exodus 29:35](#)). All the events of the first communal service occurred on this one day. The significance of "the eighth day" in Israelite law was its ceremonial role as a day of giving to the Lord. For example, the firstborn of oxen and sheep remained with their mother for seven days and then were fit for offering to the Lord on the eighth day ([Leviticus 22:27](#); [Exodus 22:30](#)). The sign of the covenant was circumcision of the male children born to the Hebrew people. On the eighth day this rite was performed ([Leviticus 12:3](#)). The eighth day was also a day of purging an unclean Israelite from his pollution after a seven-day period of isolation ([Leviticus 14:8-10, 23](#)). It is striking that the traditional Christian day set aside for worship has been the first day of the week, that is, the eighth day following a seven-day segment of time ([Acts 20:7](#); [1 Corinthians 16:2](#)). It was the day of our Lord's resurrection ([Luke 24:1-3](#)), the initiation of the new creation that displaced the old seven-day creation. ***

Offerings for Aaron the priest (v. 2). The offerings for Aaron as the officiating priest consisted of "a bull calf for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering" (cf. [Leviticus 4:3](#); [8:2](#), [18](#); [16:3](#)). The sin offering was for cleansing from impurities and the burnt offering for atonement. According to the sacrificial regulations of chapters 1-7, the sin offering was required of all worshippers, but the burnt offering was a voluntary offering. **The necessity of offering these animals for Aaron before he could perform his duties underscored the limitations of Aaron and his sons (cf. [Hebrews 5:3](#)). Although consecrated to the service of the Lord, they were persons who still had impurities and committed sins. The ordination service, which lasted for seven days, included their ritual cleansing, but it was not a once-for-all purging (contrast [Hebrews 7:27](#)).**

Purging from sin was a daily requirement. The priests must be purged of their sins and forgiven before they could adequately intervene on behalf of the people. God did not tolerate anyone less than a consecrated and forgiven clergy. If the high priest sinned against the Lord, the people suffered the guilt of the priest too, unless the priest was purged of his sin. For this reason the elders must have been especially concerned about the spiritual status of the high priest. We too must have blameless clergy whose lives match their leadership role ([Titus 1:6, 7](#)).

It is a fruitless endeavor for an unregenerate minister to lead a church.

Offerings for the people (vv. 3-5). Although Moses spoke directly to Aaron, he did not speak directly to the people concerning their offerings. He commanded Aaron to provide instructions for the offerings to the people. From the start of the ceremony Aaron functioned as a mediator, here as the go-between of Moses and the people. The reason for turning to Aaron was to elevate the high priest in the eyes of the people. Aaron and his household were the priestly order. There would not be a Mosaic order of priests. The service was the public act of worship. The offerings for the people included animal sacrifices and a grain offering. All of the regular five offerings were given except the guilt offering, which involved restitution and was a private ceremony. An explanation for the offerings follows: "for today the LORD will appear to you" ([v. 4b](#)). This remark assumed that the people well understood that communion with God required the implementation of sacrifices. The Hebrew word translated "appear" (from *ra'ah*), in [verse 4](#) occurs four times in our passage, three times describing the appearance of "the glory of the LORD" ([vv. 6](#), [23](#), [24](#)). An "appearance" of the glory of the Lord was a visible manifestation of God's presence. Theophany, which means the outward show of God, involved a visible light or fire. The best known to Bible students is the burning bush in which God appeared to Moses in the desert ([Exodus 3:2](#)). What our passage echoes, however, is the blazing appearance of God at Sinai when he revealed his law to Moses. The tent was in effect a portable Sinai. The Apostle John described the incarnation of Jesus in similar imagery ([John 1:14](#)). Our Lord embodied the presence of the glory of the Lord and thus was a tabernacle.

Sometimes the Christian community overlooks the importance of sacrifice when coming to the Lord in worship. We do not witness the slaughter of animals today in our worship services, but our worship is predicated on the blood sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no acceptance and there is no worship without spiritual cleansing and the forgiveness of sin afforded by the

death of the Lord Jesus. It is only by God's acceptance of us through Christ's atonement that we can share in the glory of the Lord ([John 17:22-24](#)).

Purpose of worship ([v. 6](#)). The purpose of the sacrifices was to prepare for the coming of "the glory of the LORD," which occurred in dramatic fashion at the end of the ritual offerings ([vv. 6, 23, 24](#)). The fire of the Lord broke forth from the Tent of Meeting and consumed the smoldering animal portions that had remained upon the altar. Levitical law required the priests to maintain the fires on the altar perpetually ([Leviticus 6:12, 13](#)). Our passage shows that the altar's fires came initially from God himself ([Leviticus 9:24](#)). The expression "the glory of the LORD" was a technical expression for the "manifest presence" of God among his covenant people, Israel. In essence the glory of the Lord was equivalent to the person and name of the Lord. Where his glory appears, he is present. The glory was something that could be seen by the human eye and inhabited a visible cloud ([Exodus 16:10](#)). God's "glory" was associated with a fiery display of blazing majesty. At Sinai the Lord appeared before the people and spoke from the flaming mountain ([Exodus 24:17](#); [Deuteronomy 5:24](#)). Also, the Lord's "glory" was manifested in a cloud that filled the Tent of Meeting at the completion of its construction ([Exodus 40:34, 35](#)). When the Lord spoke through his prophet Moses at the Tent of Meeting, the Lord made visible his glory to the congregation ([Numbers 14:10](#)). By the visible coming of the glory, the people knew that the Lord had taken up residence in the Tent of Meeting.

The Lord's disclosure of himself to his people, however, had its fullest expression in the person of Jesus Christ. By his human incarnation, the glory of God became known to those who believed ([John 1:14](#); [Hebrews 1:3](#)), and especially through Jesus' death and resurrection the glory of the Lord became manifest ([Romans 6:4](#); [Hebrews 2:9](#)). But whereas the majesty of God's glory in Old Testament times often instilled fear in those who witnessed his awesome power and heard his thunderous voice, the Lord Jesus came in humble trappings and preached the grace and truth of the kingdom. Our sure hope in the glory to come sustains us in our present sufferings ([2 Corinthians 4:17](#); [1 Peter 5:10](#)). The presence of the Spirit among us as we worship assures us of both present and future acceptance with God (cf. [2 Corinthians 6:16](#) with [Leviticus 26:12](#)).

The Cleansing of the Priests ([vv. 7-14](#))

After the planning and gathering of the elements for worship, the priests first underwent ritual cleansing—a sin offering followed by a burnt offering. The order of the offerings is significant. The sin offering made the worshipper's gifts acceptable for the service of the Lord. Our sin must be dealt with before we can offer ourselves and our gifts to the Lord.

Sin offering for cleansing ([vv. 7-11](#)). The offerings were to remove sin from the priests and cleanse the altar where they were to function ([v. 7](#)). The death of the animal was a strong reminder of the costly suffering of an innocent life on account of the priest's sinfulness. Aaron in accordance with the normal regulations for the sin offering ([Leviticus 4:3-12](#)) presented a bull calf for himself ([v. 8](#)). He applied its blood to the altar's four protruding horns at the corners of the altar. He next poured the blood at the base of the altar, signifying that the blood of the victim belonged to God ([v. 9](#)). The power of life was in the blood, and thus the blood belonged exclusively to God since he is Creator of life ([Leviticus 17:11, 14](#)). The belief that divine prerogative determines life and death has shaped Western civilization's view of *all* life as sacred.

Aaron burned up on the altar the fat, the kidneys, and the lobe of the liver; the flesh and hide he carried outside the camp, where he burned them up in a designated clean place ([vv. 10, 11](#)). This would have been the first recorded time in the passage that Aaron left the confines of the tabernacle after his seven-day ritual of ordination. Completely reducing the animal to ashes showed that the priest was not to benefit from the meat or the hide. Aaron was guilty of uncleanness, and the animal victim was wholly sacrificed as a complete substitute for him.

Burnt offering for atonement ([vv. 12-14](#)). The second animal was the ram for the burnt offering that was cut into pieces. The message of the burnt offering was the person's total dedication to the Lord and the forgiveness of sin. The high priest himself slaughtered the animal because it was an offering made on his behalf. His sons as before presented to him the blood. But with this burnt offering he cast the blood against the sides of the altar rather than pouring it out at the base ([v. 12](#)). This casting of the blood was in accordance with the normal procedure for the burnt offering ([Leviticus 1:5, 11](#)). It was also the case in Aaron's ordination service, except that the ritual included Moses tossing blood on Aaron's clothing ([Leviticus 8:19, 24](#)). The priests gave him the animal's butchered pieces including the ram's head for incineration on the altar ([v. 13](#)). What remained were the entrails and the legs. These Aaron washed with water to remove any debris, making them suitable for an offering ([v. 14](#)). These in turn were burned up with the burnt offering. As in the sin offering offered first, the animal was fully incinerated, but in this case at the altar.

The Cleansing of the People ([vv. 15-21](#))

Sin and burnt offerings ([vv. 15, 16](#)). Only after the cleansing of Aaron could the offerings be presented on behalf of the people. For the people a goat for the sin offering was called for in accordance with the typical sin offering for an individual person ([Leviticus 4:27, 28](#)). A major difference, however, was that the sin offering for the layperson was a female goat, but for a leader of the community a male animal was required ([Leviticus 4:22, 23](#)). That the people offered a male goat showed that the male victim was to be a representative of all the people, including the community's elders. The burnt offering for the people included a calf and a lamb, both male yearlings ([v. 3](#)), which Aaron presented according to the regular procedure for burnt offerings.

Grain and peace offerings ([vv. 17-21](#)). Additional offerings of grain and peace sacrifices followed, both of which were part of the regular sacrifice system ([Leviticus 2, 3](#)). Both of these offerings were voluntary gifts as signs of commitment and thanksgiving to God. The grain offering consisted of fine flour over which was poured oil and was sprinkled with incense ([Leviticus 2:1](#)). Aaron took a handful of flour as a memorial portion ([Leviticus 2:2](#)), which he placed on top of the morning's burnt offering (the daily offering, [Exodus 29:38-40](#)) and burned it up on the altar ([v. 17](#)). Last, he took the animals for the peace offering, slaughtering the ox and ram. As in the former cases, the blood of the victims was thrown against the sides of the altar ([v. 18](#)). These two offerings provided the daily livelihood of the priests. The baked goods belonged to the officiating priest and the other priests. Also, select portions of the peace offerings could be consumed by the priests, but there were specific prescriptions for when and where the eating could occur. Failure to fulfill the proper etiquette meant excommunication from the community ([Leviticus 7:9-21](#)). The fat and blood of the peace offerings could not be eaten by anyone, priest

or not; they belonged to God exclusively. The sons of Aaron placed the fat portions on the animal's breasts on the altar, and Aaron burned them up, but the breasts and the right thigh Aaron took and presented as a wave offering ([vv. 19-21](#)). By the priests eating the grain and peace offerings, the ritual showed that the Lord accepted the offerings. Again, because of the public nature of this inaugural worship service, the priests performed the duties that otherwise were the customary role of the individual layperson ([Leviticus 7:30](#)).

The Worship of God (vv. 22-24)

Priestly blessing of the people ([vv. 22, 23a](#)). Worship resulted in a blessing for the congregation. Aaron invoked a blessing with uplifted hands, perhaps worded similar to the traditional priestly blessing:

The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. ([Numbers 6:24-26](#))

The posture of uplifted hands in prayer indicated that the Lord was the recipient of the supplications offered by the person praying. The psalmist declared, "Let my prayer be counted as incense before you, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice!" ([141:2](#); also [1 Kings 8:22](#); [Psalm 28:2](#)). This important feature of public blessing is a standard element in the church service to this day. The meaning of "blessing" in the Bible may include material prosperity but always implies spiritual and general welfare. The Lord promised the congregation material favor for obedience to the law of the Lord (e.g., [Deuteronomy 28:1-14](#)). As the priests ministered before the Lord, they had the duty of invoking blessings on the people ([Deuteronomy 10:8; 21:5](#)). Moses joined Aaron in the tent and upon exiting shared in proclaiming another blessing. Why the two men were in the tent is unstated, but it is consistent with the tenor of the service that they were praying in behalf of the congregation. That the two joined in the blessing showed the solidarity of the great prophet Moses and the high priest Aaron ([v. 23a](#)). This demonstrated to the people the approval of Moses on the proceedings. Today, through the ministry of reconciliation based on the blood of Christ, Christians receive and declare the peace that Christ affords those who entrust themselves to the Lord ([2 Corinthians 5:18-20](#); [Colossians 1:20](#)). This peace is not material fortune but *spiritual* prosperity in the church's present service to Christ. When we worship the Lord, we receive the blessing of God's presence, and we depart the worship service with the joy and comfort of knowing that God's favor rests upon us.

The glory of God ([vv. 23b, 24a](#)). After the blessing was proclaimed by Aaron and Moses, the Lord responded to the people's worship, dramatically showing his power and majesty. The glory of God "appeared" ([v. 23b](#)) to the people as a blazing fire that originated from the tent, presumably from the Most Holy Place where God resided. The fire consumed the smoldering offering and fat on the altar in a fiery blast (cf. [Leviticus 6:9](#)). The purpose of the inaugural worship ([v. 6](#)) was fulfilled by the appearance of God, proving to the people that the Lord indeed resided among them. This remarkable sight recalled the theophany of God at Mount Sinai where the glory of the Lord "was like a devouring fire" ([Exodus 24:17](#); cf. [2 Chronicles 7:3](#); [Ezekiel 1:27, 28](#)). The God of the mountain had become the God of the tent in their very midst. A similar occurrence at the inaugural service in Solomon's temple reflects the same purpose ([2 Chronicles](#)

[7:1](#)). God's residence was in the newly built temple. But there the fire that consumed the offerings came down from Heaven itself!

The worship of the congregation at Sinai was rooted in the blood offerings provided. The efficacy of the blood's atonement that purged and reconciled the people ensured that the Lord was present according to his promise: "There [at the Tent of Meeting] I will meet with the people of Israel, and it shall be sanctified by my glory" ([Exodus 29:43](#)). Now the people had full confidence in the adequacy of Aaron's priesthood. God had accepted the mediation of Aaron and the offerings of the congregation. For us as Christians we have a more secure acceptance with God since his presence in our lives and in the Universal Church are guaranteed by the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ. The writer to the Hebrews affirmed that the sacrifice and mediatory role of Jesus was perfectly offered and perfectly accepted by the Father ([7:22—8:2](#); [9:11, 12](#)). "But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified" ([Hebrews 10:12-14](#)). The mystery of God's regal majesty and awesome authority are sometimes lost today in our worship. Although the fire of God's glory is not seen by the naked eye today until the Lord bodily returns, the eye of faith affirms the presence of God in Christ who is ever present with his people. When we meet to worship, we meet in the name of the Lord, based on the atoning sacrifice of Christ alone. There is no basis for acceptance apart from the reality of God offering himself in Christ as the purging and reconciling offering for our sins. For this reason all peoples from all different ethnicities, languages, and cultures have a common place at the foot of the cross. There is simply no rhyme or reason to a segregated worship in the local body of a church. To exclude someone from a worship service based on such extrinsic criteria as economic standing, racial features, or cultural background flies in the face of the meaning of God's gracious provision for sinners whereby he unifies his people in his very person. The embodiment of God's presence among his people is in the body and person of our Lord Jesus Christ, not in any physical building, social stratum, or creedal statement.

The response of the congregation ([v. 24b](#)). Such gracious actions resulted in the spontaneous praises of the people at the spectacular confirmation of God's presence in their midst. Their response was both vocal and visible. At the sight of God's glory, they shouted, and they humbly bent down (to their knees?) upon their faces. A similar response occurred at the temple inauguration service, at which the people declared, "For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever" ([2 Chronicles 7:3](#)). There may be a series of sound plays in the Hebrew language that accentuates the theology of the passage. When the Lord "appeared" (*wayye'ra'*) and the people "saw" (*wayyar'*) the blazing fire, the congregation "shouted" (*wayyaronnu*). The worship of God resulted in both praise and humility. There was joyful acclamation but also hushed silence. This is the appropriate reaction of those who have witnessed the glory of the Lord. Whether we are in public worship or private devotions, our response to God must be characterized by prudent praise. We must worship enthusiastically and wholeheartedly, but informed by our knowledge of the awe-inspiring God we serve ([Psalm 33:1](#); [Habakkuk 2:20](#)). *Casual* dress in public worship is the trend in our times, but we must not mistakenly think that we are free to treat *casually* God's demands for authentic worship.

John Stott in his book *The Incomparable Christ* concludes with a story that the late Donald Coogan, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, told.

There was a sculptor once, so they say, who sculpted a statue of our Lord. And people came from great distances to see it—Christ in all his strength and tenderness. They would walk all around the statue, trying to grasp its splendor, looking at it now from this angle, now from that. Yet still its grandeur eluded them, until they consulted the sculptor himself. He would invariably reply "There is only one angle from which this statue can be truly seen. *You must kneel.*"

- Preaching the Word – Leviticus: Holy God, Holy People.

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The Pursuit of Holiness (Leviticus) - Lesson 5

By [Glen Pemberton](#)

Lev 8-9, 21-22

Background Information for the Teacher

Objectives:

1. The student will distinguish the difference between Israel's high priest, priests, and Levites.
2. The student will discuss the role of ritual in ancient Israel, his/her own personal life, and in the life of the church.
3. The student will discern that the call to priestly ministry demands holiness in his/her personal life.

Preparation:

1. A Bible for each Student.
2. A chalk board or marker board.
3. Copies of Student Handout #5 ("Priests, Rituals, and Me?")

Theme:

Moses carries out God's specific instructions for the ordination of priests (Exod 28-29) in Leviticus 8-9. Those who enter this text enter a strange and distant world of elaborate and somewhat mysterious rituals. Or do they? Rituals are, in fact, important for every culture and community. After a brief introduction to the "staff" positions of the tabernacle (Levites, Priests, and High Priest), this lesson focuses on the rituals described in Leviticus 8-9. While the rituals seem strange to us, two purposes of these actions are clear. First, these rituals functioned to ordain Aaron and his sons to the priesthood. Our world and church uses rituals (albeit different ones) in similar ways to that of ancient Israel. Second, these rituals served to consecrate (make holy) Aaron and his sons. This action establishes a key principle: Those who would minister to or on behalf of others must first be holy themselves. Leviticus 21-22 reinforces this idea with special instructions for the holiness of the priests and high priest. This lesson, like many in the series, poses a special challenge for the teacher; some students may view instruction about priests and rituals to be totally irrelevant to modern Christian life. The challenge is to demonstrate to such students the surprising ways in which this material is directly relevant and needed for faithful Christian life.

Lesson Plan for Conducting the Class

Introduction

1. Welcome visitors and make any necessary announcements.
2. Spend time taking prayer requests and leading the class in prayer.

Learning Experiences

- I. Review and set the stage for today's study.
 - A. Turn to Exodus 28. God's plans for the tabernacle (Exod 25-31) included a working staff to maintain the tent and carry out various functions associated with God's presence among his people.
 1. Exodus 28-29 sets forth who is to be ordained to service as a priest. (WKSH ? Instruction for the Ordination of Priests)

- a. Read [Exod 28:1-3](#). **Q.** Who are to serve the Lord as priests? **A.** Aaron (as high priest) and his sons (as priests).
 - b. This is somewhat puzzling in view of [Exod 19:6](#) (reread if necessary). **Q.** According to [Exod 19:6](#), what is the task or role of the entire nation of Israel? **A.** Priests. A priestly kingdom.
 - c. This seems contradictory. **Q.** Is the entire nation priests or only Aaron and his sons? **A.** Yes, to both. The term priest is a functional word.
 - i. The nation of Israel is to be a priest to the rest of the world.
 - ii. Aaron and his sons are to be priests for the nation of Israel.
2. Exodus 28-29 also presents detailed instructions for how to ordain Aaron and his sons to their roles of service. For example, Read [Exod 28:40-43](#) and [29:31-35](#).
- B. We will return to these rather odd rituals of ordination in just a moment. For a few minutes, we need to pause to address a related issue (the identity and role of the Levites).
1. This lesson focuses on the ordination of the high priest (Aaron) and the priests (Aaron's sons) as presented in Leviticus 8-9.
 2. **Q.** Can anyone name the other group or "staff position" associated with the tabernacle? **A.** The Levites.
 3. Who were the Levites?
 - a. The Levites were one of the twelve tribes (or family groups) of Israel ([Gen 35:22-26](#)).
 - i. This family distinguished itself in two ways:
 1. Read [Exod 2:1f](#). **Q.** Who were both members of the family of Levi? **A.** Moses and Aaron.
 2. Thus, the high priest (Aaron) and priests (Aaron's sons) were members of the family of Levi (i.e., they were Levites) but not all Levites were priests. (WKS? Draw the following diagram on the board and explain the relationships.)

3. Read [Exod 32:25-29](#).

- a. Q. What did the Levites do at the crisis at Sinai? A. They rallied to the Lord and Moses and attacked those who were rebelling against the Lord.
- b. Q. What happens as a result of this action? What announcement does Moses make? A. Because of their commitment, the Levites have been set apart (ordained) for the Lord's service.

ii. Consequently, the Levites were given to Aaron and his sons as special assistants in the Tabernacle. Read [Num 3:5-9](#) (cf. [Num 8:14-19](#) for a second rationale for taking the family of Levi.)

4. Despite the title of the book of Leviticus (literally, "pertaining to the Levites), Leviticus only mentions the Levites (specifically) in one short text (25:32-34). Our understanding of the duties of the Levites comes from the book of Numbers.

- a. The Levites were responsible for guard duty at the tent.
- b. The Levites were responsible for the transportation of the holy tent and its furnishings ([Num 4:1-33](#)) Levites Priests High Priest
- c. The Levites were not permitted to perform the duties of Aaron (the high priest) or his sons (the priests), nor were they permitted to enter the holy places of the tabernacle.

C. Now let's return to Leviticus 8-9.

II. The instructions regarding the ordination of Aaron and his sons to the priesthood in Exod 28-29 are carried out by Moses in Lev 8-9. (WKSH ? Moses Carries Out the Instructions)

A. Read [Lev 8:1-13](#), [22-24](#), [31-36](#). This is a very different world than 21st century America!

- 1. We, for the most part, are not used to elaborate rituals and clothing in religious settings.
- 2. We certainly are not familiar with the practice of blood rituals.

3. These things, however, were a common part of all ancient Near Eastern religions. Such rituals would not have seemed odd to Israel, but packed with meaning and significance.

B. Thankfully, despite our difference from this culture, the text does make two purposes of the various rituals fairly clear.

1. These rituals functioned to ordain Aaron and his sons to their respective roles as priests. Read 8:22,28,33(WKSH ? The rituals ordained Aaron and his sons)

a. **Q.** Can you think of any rituals in modern America whereby we ordain people to certain roles or tasks? **A.** Most political offices include some type of ritual, e.g., oaths of office, speeches, and parades. Graduation ceremonies are also filled with rituals, e.g., the music (Pomp and Circumstance), the valedictorian address, the presentation of diplomas, the moving of the tassel, and tossing hats into the air.

b. **Q.** Can you think of other events in which rituals play an important role? **A.** One good example is the common wedding ceremony that includes such rituals as the wearing of white, exchange of rings, a unity candle, and other symbolic actions. (If time permits the teacher might discuss the meaning of each of these rituals.)

c. Perhaps our world is really not that different from Israel. Rituals are important for us, just as they were for Israel. Only the culture and the specific rituals differ.

d. **Q.** Why do we have such rituals? Why are they important? **A.** (Allow time for discussion.) At the very least, rituals make a public proclamation, confirm, or initiate a person's role or position.

e. The priesthood of Aaron and his sons was new for Israel. Thus, the solemn rituals of ordination were terrifically important to establish their position.

f. In a few minutes, if time permits, we want to identify and discuss the important rituals we continue to practice in the church today.

2. These rituals also functioned to consecrate Aaron and his sons. Read 8:12,30 WKSH

- a. **Q.** What does it mean to consecrate something or someone? **A.** Consecrate has the basic idea of "to make holy." In fact, the Hebrew term (qds) translated "consecrate" (NIV, NRSV, NASV) or "sanctify" (KJV) is derived from the Hebrew term (qds) that is translated "holy" (So the ERV translates verse 12 "he made Aaron holy").
- b. **Q.** What is the significance of consecrating Aaron and his sons? Why must they be consecrated before they take positions as priests? **A.** Before a priest can present offerings on behalf of other people, he must first be holy himself. WKSH
 - i. This point is emphasized in the events of the eighth day of ordination.
 1. First, Aaron presents sacrifices on behalf of himself and his sons (Read [Lev9:8,12](#)).
 2. Then, and only then, Aaron presented sacrifices on behalf of others (Read [Lev9:15-17](#))
 - ii. Later, Lev 21-22 spells out some especially rigorous guidelines for the priests.
 1. Read [Lev 21:1-5](#).
 - a. **Q.** To whom are these commands given? **A.** The priests (alone).
 - b. **Q.** Why must they conform to a higher standard? **A.** Read [Lev 21:6](#). They have a special role and come especially close to God's dwelling place in the tent ? therefore, they must be especially holy.
 2. Read [Lev 21:10-11](#)
 - a. **Q.** To whom is this command given? **A.** The high priest (alone).
 - b. **Q.** What is the command? How does it differ from that given to other priests? **A.** He cannot defile himself (by going close to a dead body) for even his near kin.

- c. **Q.** Why? **A.** Read Lev 21:12. He must not pollute God's tent. His special role demands special holiness.
 - d. Ultimately, these special demands insured the safety of the priest (Lev22:9, if they pollute God's tent they will die) and the presence of God among his people (cf. Lev 21:12;16:32-34)
- C. When the rituals of ordination are complete, Aaron assumes his duties and God confirms Aaron's new role in a dramatic fashion. Read [Lev 9:22-24](#).

Applications

(Discuss one or more of the following topics. Open space in the WKSH has been provided for the student to take some notes from the discussion.)

- I. Before Aaron or his sons could assume their responsibilities as priests they first had to be consecrated. Then, Aaron and his sons were held to an especially high standard of holiness.
 - A. **Q.** What contemporary relevance does this order (consecration then service) have? **A.** A person (Aaron, his sons, any of us) or group (Israel or the church) cannot function effectively as God's priests to the world if we ourselves are not consecrated? holy.
 - B. **Q.** Does the especially high standard of holiness have any significance for us today? **A.** Yes! Read [I Peter 2:9-10](#)
 - 1. **Q.** What does Peter call all Christians? **A.** A royal priesthood and a holy nation!
 - 2. Notice, immediately after this proclamation Peter calls the royal priesthood to a high standard of conduct. Read I Peter 2:10-12 (or through verse 21 if time permits)
 - 3. **Q.** Because of our call to be priests, what does God expect or demand of us? **A.** (Allow time for discussion on the ideas in I Peter 2:10-21)
 - C. (Optional) **Q.** Do you think that there are certain roles in the church of which God demands greater holiness? **A.** Responses will likely vary. Some will argue that there is

a single standard. Others will point out such texts as I Timothy 3 (on Elders and Deacons) and [Titus 1:5-9](#) (on Elders) as evidence that roles of leadership in the Lord's church demand greater spiritual maturity. Generally speaking, the instructions regarding Elders (and deacons) are a good parallel to those of the priests. Those who lead God's people must be sanctified and live in such a way to lead by example.

II. What about rituals in the churches of Christ?

- A. **Q.** What rituals do we practice in the church? (A definition of ritual may be necessary: A ritual is any action that carries a symbolic meaning far beyond itself). **A.** (Allow time for discussion.) Possible responses may include the Lord's supper, baptism, the laying on of hands, and anointing the sick with oil. Briefly discuss the significance of each of these actions.
- B. **Q.** Why do you think God instructed us to keep certain rituals? **A.** (Allow time for discussion.) The proper performance of a ritual is meaningful for all those involved; it may remind, proclaim, confirm, encourage, and more ? all at the same moment in time.

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“A Lesson On Reverence”

(Leviticus 8-10)

by Danny Hodges

Chapter Eight Read 8:1-14, 18, 22-24 vv.23-24 The things we hear, what we do with our hands, and where we go with our feet can pollute us, so we need the blood to cleanse us. Jesus washing the disciples' feet, and Peter wanting Jesus to wash his whole body. Jesus said that he who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet, implying that walking in the world can get us dirty and in need of a fresh cleansing in the area where the dirt is. Read 8:30, 33-36 Chapter Nine Read all of chapter 9 v.24 There is joy, but there is also reverence. See Hebrews 12:18-29. The blood of Abel cried out for vengeance, the blood of Jesus forgiveness. We should overflow with joy, but we must not lose our sense of reverence and awe. I Peter 2:5 You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ...9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness and into his wonderful light. The sons of Aaron represent the whole body of believers in Christ, a

priestly - 2 - Calvary Chapel St. Petersburg | calvarystp.org * Did they light their censors from somewhere other than the altar? * Were they inebriated? (See 10:8-9) - How many foolish acts have been committed as a result of an intoxicating substance! * We are not told exactly what made this fire unauthorized. The truth is it could have been any number of things. The point is that it was unauthorized. They knew better. Nadab and Abihu lost their sense of reverence for the Lord, and it cost them their lives. • Reverence: To regard with fear mingled with respect and affection (1828 Noah Webster American Dictionary of the English Language). 10:3-7 Even in ordinary cases, restrictions were placed upon Aaron and his sons regarding outward signs of mourning. But exceptions were made in the case of closest kin, especially the death of a son, or a brother (See Lev.21:1-2). In this case, however, permission could not be given. Aaron and his two remaining sons were not to show public expressions of grief, because to do so would be a contradiction between their actions and their priestly position. 10:8-9 This is the reason for the possibility that they were intoxicated when they approached the Lord. 10:10-20 The law didn't allow Aaron to express his grief in the usual ways, but it didn't forbid him to fast, and fasting was his way of showing his grief for the loss of his two sons. He & his remaining sons no doubt had no appetite anyway after such a tragic loss. LESSONS 1. There is a sin unto death. - See Joshua 7 (Achan); II Sam.6:6-8; I John 5:16-17; I Cor.11:26-32; Acts 5:1-11. - Note: Why did Nadab and Abihu have to die, while King David was allowed to live after his sins of adultery and murder? Some might charge God with showing favoritism toward David, but this cannot be true. I personally believe that God is teaching a different lesson in each incident. In the case of Nadab and Abihu, it is a lesson in reverence. In David's case, it is a lesson in grace & mercy. See Romans 4:4-8. 2. God does not show favoritism. - Rom.2:11; Gal.2:6; Eph.6:9 - Priestly robes and privileges do not allow one to violate God's holiness. 3. The greater the honor bestowed, the more strict the judgment - James 3:1...we who teach will be judged more strictly. - See Luke 12:47-48 4. Obedience is better than sacrifice. - See I Sam.15:20-22 5. After times of great glory, beware of potential for great defeat. - Jericho and Ai, Elijah after Carmel - 3 - Calvary Chapel St. Petersburg | calvarystp.org 6. Stupid is as stupid does - Nadab and Abihu had a legacy of great spiritual experiences. Not only had they seen all the miracles God and done in bringing the nation out of Egypt, they heard the voice of God, witnessed the fire, lightning & thunder at Mount Sinai. They had also gone up with Moses, Aaron, and the seventy elders for a special meeting with God on Mount Sinai (Exodus 24:1-2), where they saw the God of Israel . . . so they saw God, and they ate and drank (Exodus 24:9-11). Despite these tremendous privileges, they made a stupid & foolish decision. CHALLENGES 1. Not developing an attitude against God for his actions. - Refer to II Sam.6:6-8a 2. Inappropriate public remorse in response to God's judgment against rebellion. - David's public remorse at the death of Absalom (II Sam.18:24-19:7). 3. Standing with ordained leaders against rebellion. - See Num.16:1-3, 8-10, 16-18, 35-41; Exodus 32:25-29; II Cor.2: 6 The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient for him. - Situations at CCSP where the body has not been unified in disciplinary actions taken against certain individuals CONCLUSION I Peter 1: 14 As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. 15 But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; 16 for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."17 Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear.

Leviticus Chapter 8

In the last few lessons, we saw God through Moses, training Aaron and his sons in the way all of the offerings were to be made. At the time this was done, the head of each house operated as the priest of his family. Someone may ask, why the family of Aaron was chosen to be the priestly family? The first born son of each family was God's. God worked out a system where each first born son could be purchased back from God by paying the silver shekel of the temple. When Moses came down the mountain with the 10 Commandments, Moses told them all that were on God's side to come to him.

The tribe of Levi came to Moses. At that moment, God decided the priestly tribe would be the tribe of Levi. From the tribe of Levi, God chose Aaron and his sons to be the first high priest and priests to carry on the work in the tabernacle. In the last few lessons, we have seen the things Aaron and his sons were instructed on. Notice, that they were not instructed on how to make a living, or how to conduct worldly lives. They were taught the works of God. Ministers today being taught for the ministry should be taught more Bible and less finance and psychology. Enough said, now we will get on with the lesson.

Verses 1-36: Aaron and his sons were consecrated before they ministered to the Lord. The consecration of Aaron and his sons had been ordered long before (see notes on Exodus 29:1-28). But is here described with all the ceremonial details as it was done after the tabernacle was completed and the regulations for the various sacrifices enacted.

Leviticus 8:1 "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,"

The following section or paragraph, relating to the consecration of Aaron and his sons, was delivered, according to Jarchi, seven days before the setting up of the tabernacle. But to me it seems to have been delivered after the setting it up, since it was out of the tabernacle that the Lord said all those things recorded in the preceding chapters. And after he had given out the laws concerning sacrifices. Then he renewed the order for the consecration of Aaron and his sons, that they might offer them.

"Saying": As follows.

If we will notice in all this, Moses was God's earthly agent at this time. In fact, we will see Moses in the next few verses acting in the position of God's ordained high

priest, in the ordination of Aaron and his sons. Remember, the training these separated men had, was in the ways of God.

Leviticus 8:2 "Take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments, and the anointing oil, and a bullock for the sin offering, and two rams, and a basket of unleavened bread;"

“The garments” (see notes on Exodus 28:1-43).

“The anointing oil”: Oil was used for ceremonial anointing (8:12, 30).

“Sin offering” (see notes on 4:1 – 5:13, especially 4:3-12).

God gives Moses specific instructions on exactly what he will need in the ordination services. Moses and Aaron must have everything needed ready for the services. In the gathering of the proper materials for this ordination, I see that before a person is ordained of God to be a minister, much preparation is necessary. A person must carefully weigh the cost before beginning. The call of God is without repentance, so we must be sure before we decide to embark on this road.

Leviticus 8:3 "And gather thou all the congregation together unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation."

That is, the heads of the tribes and the elders of the people, as Aben Ezra interprets it. For the whole body of the people, and every individual of them, could not be got together.

"Unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation": Taking this for the whole court itself, as it sometimes is. Though no doubt on this occasion as great a number was convened as well could be admitted into the court, or about it. To be spectators and witnesses of the solemn investiture of Aaron and his sons with the priestly office.

This is not to be done privately. This should be an event for all the congregation to witness. You remember, Jesus was baptized in the river Jordan where many had come to be baptized. The congregation must be aware of who God had ordained to lead them, before they would follow his instructions. It is wonderful to be a leader, but the people have to be willing to follow, before you can lead them.

Leviticus 8:4 "And Moses did as the LORD commanded him; and the assembly was gathered together unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation."

He convened Aaron and his sons, and the heads of the people, at the door of the tabernacle, and came himself. And brought with him the garments, the oil, and sacrifices, even everything necessary for the consecration.

"And the assembly was gathered together unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation": And this was, according to the Targum of Jonathan, on the twenty third day of the month Adar or February. But it rather seems to be later, some time in the beginning of Nisan or March, and before the Passover began (see Num. 9:1).

Notice in all of this, that Moses does exactly as God has instructed him. These are gathered at the entrance, you will note.

Leviticus 8:5 "And Moses said unto the congregation, This [is] the thing which the LORD commanded to be done."

Having convened them, he opened to them the reason of their being called together, which was not done of himself, but by divine direction.

"This is the thing which the Lord commanded to be done": Namely, what follows, concerning the consecration of Aaron and his sons to be priests. And the investiture of them with that office, attended with various rites and ceremonies to be performed, of which they were to be witnesses.

You may remember from the Exodus teaching, that the people feared God greatly, and they had asked Moses to talk to God for them. They were used to hearing from God through Moses. Then it must be Moses to tell them that a new day has dawned, and now they will have new instructions on how to approach holy God. Moses reminds them that this is not instructions from himself, but from the LORD through him.

Leviticus 8:6 "And Moses brought Aaron and his sons, and washed them with water."

Presenting their bodies a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1), Aaron and his sons were officially anointed and appointed to their priesthood. By comparison, Jesus needed no preliminary sacrifices, as He had no sin.

This washing them with water is very similar to baptism. This is washing the ways of the world off of them. This removing the earth from Aaron and his sons was the first step to being ordained of God to do the work He has called them to do. Notice at the beginning of Jesus ministry, even though He had no sin, the ceremonial washing (baptism), was performed. We Christians must be washed in the blood of the Lamb of God (Jesus), before we can put on our robe of righteousness. Even in becoming a Christian, the heart must be prepared (we must repent of our sins). Then we are baptized (buried with Christ, and rise to new life in Him). Then, we are ready to witness for Him.

Leviticus 8:7 "And he put upon him the coat, and girded him with the girdle, and clothed him with the robe, and put the ephod upon him, and he girded him with the curious girdle of the ephod, and bound [it] unto him therewith."

To the laver which was in the court of the tabernacle.

"And washed them with water": To show that they should be clean that bear the vessels of the Lord, and offer the sacrifices of the people. All that are in public office in the house of God ought to have both clean hands and a pure heart. To hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience, and to be of a pure and holy conversation. And indeed, all that are made kings and priests to God, as all the saints are, they are washed from their sins in the blood of Jesus (Rev. 1:5).

At the baptism of Jesus, we saw the Dove descend upon Him. Jesus already was full of the Spirit of God within His flesh before baptism, but now He was clothed with the Spirit, as well. God the Father confirmed Jesus' ordination when the voice came from heaven and said

Matthew 3:17 "And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

This coat, put on the priest, was his robe of authority from God. It also was his covering. This robe was of fine white linen, which symbolizes righteousness. This is the same type of white linen that the Christians will wear in heaven (washed in the blood of the Lamb). The girdle was a sash made to hold this robe tight to the body of the priest. The ephod was like a vest that went over the robe. The vest had two onyx stones at the shoulders with the twelve tribes of Israel engraved on them. The priest carried the people on his shoulders. Underneath the onyx stones was a pocket of Gold which held the stones. Gold symbolizes God. This shows me that this tribe was on the high priest's shoulder, but God was there also to undergird and strengthen the high priest for this great task.

This ephod, or vest, was held together with golden chains. So much gold here tells me that the strength of the high priest was in God. On this ephod was the breast plate a span wide and a span long which held 12 stones which represented the 12 tribes of Israel. This tells me that all 12 tribes were not just on the shoulders of the high priest, but on his heart, as well. These stones were also, mounted in Gold. We Christians must be set in Jesus also. The Israelites must be stayed on God (this is what the mounted in gold shows), for the priest to help them. There was a pouch on this ephod between the vest and the heart of the high priest. God would speak through the Urim and the Thummim to the people.

I believe God spoke to the people through the heart of the high priest. I also believe for a minister to be effective in bringing the message of God to the people, God must press into the heart of the minister and speak through the heart of the minister. Even Jesus said He spoke the words of the Father.

John 14:10 "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works."

I believe in the garment of the high priest; God is showing us that first you must be called to be a minister of God's Word. The next step is to study the Bible and prepare yourself to handle God's Word correctly. The washing shows the putting off of the world and everything of it. Then the ordination begins. God gives the minister the white linen garment of righteousness. A minister must be separated from the world and must live a separated life. They also must be righteous in God's sight. They must be willing to take the whole congregation on their shoulders with the help of God. They must keep the congregation on their heart. The minister must draw strength from God to hold this congregation together. The minister must decide from the beginning, that the message must be God's message that God has placed on the heart of the minister. No ministry based on any other system can ever work. This is God's plan, not man's. One of the most important things in the ministry is to be endowed with power from on High through the baptism (dedication), in the Holy Spirit of God. The power of the minister and his message is when God speaks to the people through them.

Luke 12:11-12 "And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and [unto] magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say:" "For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say."

I will say one more time, that to minister is a call of God, not a vocation.

Leviticus Chapter 9

Verses 1-24: This chapter relates the inauguration of the tabernacle service. Aaron first offered a "young calf for a sin offering" and "a ram for a burnt offering" for himself. He had already been washed, clothed, and anointed for service. Thus, it might seem surprising that he is so soon to offer up a sin offering. Yet this is a reminder of our need of daily cleansing from sin due to its defilement. The "young calf" was unique; for no other person at any time was such a sacrifice needed. It is possible that

the connection is with his preparing a golden calf (in Exodus chapter 32). The burnt offering symbolized his need for consecration wholly to God. For the people in addition to a sin offering and a burnt offering, there were to be presented a “meat” [grain] “offering” and “a sacrifice of peace offerings”. The “grain offering” symbolized the consecration to God of the fruit of one’s labor. It indicated that all of their toil or activities should be dedicated to God. And the “peace offerings” conveyed the concept of fellowship and communion with God.

Leviticus 9:1 " And it came to pass on the eighth day, [that] Moses called Aaron and his sons, and the elders of Israel;"

When the seven days of consecration were ended, as Ben Gersom. The day following them, so soon was Aaron called to the execution of his office. And so, both the Targum of Jonathan and Jarchi make it to be the eighth day of the consecration. Or the day after the anointing of Aaron and his sons, and which they both say was the beginning. Or first day of Nisan, the day the tabernacle was erected by Moses. But that seems to have been set up before the consecration. Rather this was, as Aben Ezra says, the eighth day of the month Nisan or March, and was the eighth day of the consecration. Which began at the first day, on which day the tabernacle was set up (Exodus 40:2).

"That Moses, called Aaron and his sons, and the elders of Israel": Aaron and his sons to enter upon their office, by offering sacrifices for themselves, and for the people, and the elders to be witnesses thereof.

The number 8, throughout the Bible, means new beginnings. Just as a son was circumcised on the eighth day of life, we find that Aaron was completely consecrated for the priesthood on the 8th day. Aaron was in his days of consecration 7 days and now on the eighth day, he will take on the office of high priest. From the eighth day on, Aaron will be carrying on the office of high priest in the tabernacle. At first, Moses will still be advising Aaron of God's will, but Aaron will be handling the offerings as high priest. The elders of Israel were called, so they would realize it was God's will for Aaron and his sons to take care of the people's needs toward God in the tabernacle. Jesus rose from the dead on the first day of the week. Grace is a new beginning in Christ. An Old Testament account which strongly speaks of new beginnings, is the account of Noah, his wife, his 3 sons, and their wives. These 8 would start over again to populate the earth. I think all of this leaves no doubt that 8 means new beginnings.

Leviticus 9:2 "And he said unto Aaron, Take thee a young calf for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering, without blemish, and offer [them] before the LORD."

In the presence of the people of Israel.

"Take thee a young calf for a sin offering": One not exceeding a year old (as in Lev. 9:3). But this was not for the sin of making the golden calf only, to which the Jewish writers restrain it. But for all other sins of his, which it was necessary should be expiated before he offered sacrifices for the sins of others.

"And a ram for a burnt offering": Being a strong and innocent creature, was a proper emblem of Christ, the Lamb of God that takes away, by his sacrifice, the sins of men.

"Without blemish": This character belongs, as Aben Ezra observes, both to the calf and ram, which were both to be without spot. And so, proper types of Christ the Lamb without spot and blemish, free both from original and actual sin.

"And offer them before the Lord": On the altar of burnt offering, which stood in the court of the tabernacle near where Jehovah was. To whom every sacrifice for sin was to be offered, being committed against him, and whose justice must be satisfied for it.

The biggest difference here, is that Aaron will be the one to offer the animal, not Moses. Because Aaron is not fully trained in all of this, Moses will direct the next several offerings. We notice in this the guiding hand of Moses, but the actual killing and offering is done by Aaron.

Leviticus 9:3 "And unto the children of Israel thou shalt speak, saying, Take ye a kid of the goats for a sin offering; and a calf and a lamb, [both] of the first year, without blemish, for a burnt offering;"

That is, Aaron should speak to them, for being now high priest, Moses had no more to do with the sacrifices of the people. But it was incumbent on Aaron to call upon them to bring them to him such as the Lord by this law required of them.

"Saying, take ye a kid of the goats for a sin offering": This creature fitly represented Christ as made sin, and an offering for sin, instead of his people.

"And a calf, and a lamb": Both of them, as before observed, were proper emblems of Christ in his strength and innocence. Sometimes called the fatted calf, and frequently the Lamb of God (Luke 15:23; John 1:29).

"Both of the first year, without blemish, for a burnt offering": Denoting the tenderness of Christ, his spotless purity, and painful sufferings.

Leviticus 9:4 "Also a bullock and a ram for peace offerings, to sacrifice before the LORD; and a meat offering mingled with oil: for today the LORD will appear unto you."

An offering being made for the atonement of sin, and the gift of a whole burnt offering accepted by the Lord upon that. Peace offerings were to be sacrificed thereupon. One part of which belonged to the Lord, as the fat and the blood; another part to the priest, as the shoulder and the breast. And the rest to the owners to make a feast with, expressive of the peace and joy which arise from the expiation and atonement of sin. By the great sacrifice of Christ, in commemoration of which a feast is kept by the Lord's people.

"And a meat offering mingled with oil": With oil olive; each of these offerings are treated of in the preceding chapters, where an account is given of them, and the mystery of them explained.

"For today the Lord will appear unto you": Or "And today", as in (Lev. 9:6) so Noldius. For this is not observed as a reason why the sacrifices were to be offered, but as a promise of the divine appearance, as an encouragement thereunto. And may have special respect to some visible splendor and luster of the divine glory more than ordinary. And particularly to the fire that should come out from before the Lord, and consume the sacrifice (Lev. 9:24). And so, Ben Gersom interprets it. And this being on the eighth day of the consecration of the priests, may lead our thoughts to the day when our great High Priest rose from the dead, the day after the seventh. Or the Jewish Sabbath, even on the eighth day, or first day of the week, on which he made frequent appearances to his disciples (see Mark 16:9).

This coming and bringing these offerings to the door of the tabernacle by the people, is saying they have accepted Aaron as the high priest. Up until this time, you remember, they would only listen to Moses. You remember from previous lessons, that the high priest was to offer for himself first, so that God would allow him to offer for the people. The high priest's sins must be offered for, before he would be worthy to offer for the people. Ministers must be clean in the sight of God, before they can minister the things of God to the people. In some churches in recent days, we have seen ministers with sins in their lives trying to minister to the people. God calls this the blind leading the blind. Let us read the reference Scripture and see what happens when the blind lead the blind.

Matthew 15:14 "Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."

We will not get back into the meaning of each of these offerings here, as we have thoroughly covered them in a previous lesson. I believe in the statement (I will appear before you), has to do with God wanting us to seek contact with Him. The Scripture says where 2 or 3 gather in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

Matthew 18:20 "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

Leviticus 9:5 "And they brought [that] which Moses commanded before the tabernacle of the congregation: and all the congregation drew near and stood before the LORD."

That is, Aaron and his sons, and all the children of Israel, as the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it. All the above sacrifices they brought into the court of the tabernacle to be offered up.

"And all the congregation drew near, and stood before the Lord": That is, the elders of Israel, who were called together (Lev. 9:1). The heads of the tribes who represented the people. As many as well could be admitted into the court no doubt was to be spectators of Aaron and his sons officiating first in their new office. And to see their own sacrifices offered. And they stood over against where was the symbol of the divine Presence. And the Targum of Jonathan says, they stood with a perfect heart. And no doubt but they were heartily sincere and upright in their sacrifices, as they had been in their donations toward the building the tabernacle, and providing things belonging to it. And they stood with all humility, reverence, and devotion.

In our society today, we hear people (who claim to be Christians), saying that they do not need to go to church. This is a trick of the devil. The Scriptures tell us to gather in the LORD's name.

Hebrews 10:25 "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some [is]; but exhorting [one another]: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."

We must all stand before the LORD on judgement day. It would be much better, if we stand before Him now, so that He will claim us as His own then. We see in the Scripture above that not just a few came, but the entire congregation.

Habakkuk 2:20 "But the LORD [is] in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him."

Leviticus 9:6 "And Moses said, This [is] the thing which the LORD commanded that ye should do: and the glory of the LORD shall appear unto you."

Namely, what they had done, bring the creatures and things for sacrifice they had.

"And the glory of the Lord shall appear unto you": Either Christ, the brightness of his Father's glory, in a human form, as a presage of his future incarnation, as he frequently did. Or some more than ordinary refulgence of glory breaking out of the

Holy of Holies. Where God had now taken up his dwelling between the cherubim. Or, as Aben Ezra explains it, the fire that should go out from him, and consume the sacrifice. Which would be a demonstration of his presence with them, and of his acceptance of the sacrifice.

We sing a chorus at our church which says (I want to see Jesus). How can we see God?

Matthew 5:8 "Blessed [are] the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

Glory in the verse above, means splendor. This will perhaps, be the Shekinah glory of God. When we appear before the LORD, we must be pure in our heart. Even though we Christians are forgiven, we should still have a repentant heart.

Leviticus 9:7 "And Moses said unto Aaron, Go unto the altar, and offer thy sin offering, and thy burnt offering, and make an atonement for thyself, and for the people: and offer the offering of the people, and make an atonement for them; as the LORD commanded."

This is only observed to show, that as Aaron did not take upon him this office of himself. But was called unto it, and invested with it, by the appointment of God. So, neither did he enter upon it but through the call of God by Moses, in the sight of the congregation.

"Go unto the altar, and offer thy sin offering, and thy burnt offering": The young calf and ram.

"And make an atonement for thyself and for the people": First for himself, and then for the people. For, as Aben Ezra says, a man cannot atone for another until he is pure from all sin. Which is a character only to be found in Christ, our great High Priest. And so, a proper person to atone for and take away the sins of others. Hence the priests under the law, with their sacrifices, could never take away sin really, only typically. And this shows the imperfection of the Levitical priesthood, that the priests of that order were obliged to offer first for their own sins. This our high priest, of another order, needed not to do (see Heb. 7:27).

"And offer the offering of the people, and make atonement for them": Typical of the true and full atonement made by Christ, when he offered himself without spot to God.

"As the Lord commanded": Aaron to do, and as he commanded Christ, his Son and our surety. The antitype of Aaron (John 10:18).

We went into great detail in the first few lessons in Leviticus about how these offerings opened the way to the Father. If you will, these sacrifices and offerings

reconciled them to God. Jesus, who is our sacrifice and offering, opened the way to the Father for us. The curtain to the holy of holies tore from the top to the bottom when Jesus' body died on the cross. This tearing of the curtain was not of man's doing. It was opened by Jesus for all who will believe.

Matthew 27:51 "And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;"

Atonement, above, means to cover or cancel. In the case of the offerings Aaron made, it covered; in the case where Jesus offered Himself, it cancelled the sin.

Leviticus 9:8 "Aaron therefore went unto the altar, and slew the calf of the sin offering, which [was] for himself."

Of burnt offering, freely and cheerfully, at the direction and introduction of Moses. Who acted in this affair in the name of the Lord.

"And slew the calf of the sin offering, which was for himself": Which was to be offered first, as it was proper it should, that, atonement being made for his sins, his after burnt offering might be accepted with God. And he be fit to offer the sacrifices of the people. The calf he slew on the north side of the altar, where all the sin offerings and burnt offerings were slain (see Lev. 1:11).

We see from this that Aaron gave his offering first, so that he would be worthy of making the other offerings for the people.

Leviticus 9:9 "And the sons of Aaron brought the blood unto him: and he dipped his finger in the blood, and put [it] upon the horns of the altar, and poured out the blood at the bottom of the altar:"

The blood of the calf of the sin offering, which they had received in a basin when it was slain.

"And he dipped his finger in the blood, and put it upon the horns of the altar. The four horns of it, as Moses had done at his consecration, which was an example to him (Lev. 8:15). This was typical of the blood of Christ, to which persons may have recourse from the four quarters of the world for atonement and pardon.

"And poured out the blood at the bottom of the altar": What remained after he had put what was proper on the horns of it.

The only thing we need to remember here, is that the horns show power or strength. The strength lies in the blood of Jesus.

Leviticus 9:10 "But the fat, and the kidneys, and the caul above the liver of the sin offering, he burnt upon the altar; as the LORD commanded Moses."

The Septuagint version is, "he offered them".

"As the Lord commanded Moses (see Lev. 4:8).

We remember from previous lessons that the fat, blood, and inward parts all belong to God. They are burned as a sweet savor to God.

Leviticus 9:11 "And the flesh and the hide he burnt with fire without the camp."

With common fire, for the fire from the Lord came only upon the altar. Which perhaps may be the reason of this expression being used when anything was burnt without the camp, and not on the altar (see Exodus 29:14). Jarchi observes, that we do not find a sin offering burnt without the camp but this. Which is a great mistake (see Lev. 4:11).

The one important thing to remember here is that this flesh is symbolic of Jesus body which was offered outside the city wall.

Leviticus 9:12 "And he slew the burnt offering; and Aaron's sons presented unto him the blood, which he sprinkled round about upon the altar."

The ram, which was for himself also. This he slew at the north side of the altar (Lev. 1:11).

"And Aaron's sons presented unto him the blood": Which they had received into a basin, when it was slain.

"Which he sprinkled round about upon the altar": As he had seen Moses do before him (Lev. 8:19).

We dealt with these offerings in great detail in the first few lessons of this study. If you cannot remember the significance, go back and review those lessons. Aaron, even though he was to be high priest, had sinned and needed forgiveness, just as his sons did, and just as the congregation did. Aaron is a shadow of the great High Priest, Jesus Christ our Savior. The difference in Aaron and the person of Jesus which he shadowed, was that Jesus had no sin to be forgiven for.

Leviticus 9:13 "And they presented the burnt offering unto him, with the pieces thereof, and the head: and he burnt [them] upon the altar."

After it was cut in pieces, as the ram of the burnt offering was by Moses (Lev. 8:20). And so it was done to this, as appears by what follows.

"With the pieces thereof, and the head, and he burnt them upon the altar": The Septuagint version is, "he put them on the altar".

Leviticus 9:14 "And he did wash the inwards and the legs, and burnt [them] upon the burnt offering on the altar."

As Moses also had done (Lev. 8:21).

"And burnt them upon the burnt offering on the altar": Upon the pieces, and the head, before mentioned. Said to be burnt, or "after" the burnt offering, after they were burnt. The Septuagint version is as before.

I would just like to bring one thing to your remembrance here. The washing was because God would not accept an unclean offering. Aaron did as he had been instructed.