

A Holy Priesthood  
Leviticus 8:1-10:20  
Leviticus series #7  
June 12, 2022

### Intro: Living in God's Presence

- Recap Exodus from Egypt, covenant ceremony, dwell together
- Problem: God's holiness too intense

**Jay Sklar** When Israelites engaged in public worship, they came before the very presence of their holy King in his holy palace. But this presented an immediate problem, for the Lord's holiness destroys impurity and sinfulness in the same way that light destroys darkness. How, then, could impure and sinful Israelites come safely before him? Through the work of holy priestly mediators. By having the ordination ceremony take place before all the Israelites (v. 3), the Lord made clear to them that they needed ritually holy people to act as their representatives before him. And by providing such mediators, the Lord assured the Israelites that he desired them to enter his presence and enjoy covenant fellowship with him.

- 3-part solution: 1) sacrifices, 2) holy living, 3) priesthood

*Priests are an interesting concept. Virtually every religion, every civilization, back into antiquity*

- Basic idea is a go-between people and a god | Biblical priests start with Adam:

### Adam, the First Priest

**Genesis 2** <sup>15</sup> The Lord God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to work it and watch over it.

- Work (worship) = *obdah*, Watch (guard) = *shamer* | same words used in Numbers 3

### Priestly Duties

- Safeguard sacred space
- Mediate and extend God's glory (*Extend God's glory to all creation*)
- Instruct and care for the people

*\*Adam's priestly failure: did not guard sacred space, defined right and wrong, did not instruct Eve*

*\*\*No more dwelling together, no more sacred space, no more priesthood (officially)*

*\*\*\*When God rescued Israel, it's as if starting creation over: new dwelling place, new priesthood*

### A Nation of Priests

**Exodus 19** <sup>4</sup>You have seen what I did to the Egyptians and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. <sup>5</sup>Now if you will carefully listen to me and keep my covenant, you will be my own possession out of all the peoples, although the whole earth is mine, <sup>6</sup>and you will be my kingdom of priests and my holy nation.

- A whole entire nation who will guard what is sacred, mediate God's glory, and teach!

## Seven Day Ceremony

**Leviticus 8**<sup>33</sup> Do not go outside the entrance to the tent of meeting for seven days, until the time your days of ordination are completed, because it will take seven days to ordain you.<sup>34</sup> The Lord commanded what has been done today in order to make atonement for you.<sup>35</sup> You must remain at the entrance to the tent of meeting day and night for seven days and keep the Lord's charge so that you will not die, for this is what I was commanded.

## Meaningful Rituals

1. Gather supplies | 8:1-4a
2. Washing and dressing | 8:4b-9 (uniforms communicate authority)
3. Anointing with oil | 8:10-13 (oil is a symbol of God's Spirit)
4. Purification offering | 8:14-17 (these priests are themselves sinners)
5. Burnt offering | 8:18-21 (wholly devoted to God and this role)
6. Ordination offering | 8:22-29 (type of fellowship offering)
7. Final consecration and eating | 8:30-36

\*Some of the rituals, clothes are strange to us but that's cultural | moving tassels, tapping a sword on shoulders, throwing rice at a bride, pinning stripes on a soldier

## Strange to Us

**Leviticus 8**<sup>22</sup> Next he presented the second ram, the ram of ordination, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the ram.<sup>23</sup> Moses slaughtered it, took some of its blood, and put it on Aaron's right earlobe, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot.<sup>24</sup> Moses also presented Aaron's sons and put some of the blood on their right earlobes, on the thumbs of their right hands, and on the big toes of their right feet. Then Moses splattered the blood on all sides of the altar.

- Hearing, serving, walking about? Extremities or places of vulnerability? Nobody knows

## Worship Begins

**Leviticus 9**<sup>1</sup> On the eighth day Moses summoned Aaron, his sons, and the elders of Israel.<sup>2</sup> He said to Aaron, "Take a young bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering, both without blemish, and present them before the Lord..."<sup>22</sup> Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them. He came down after sacrificing the sin offering, the burnt offering, and the fellowship offering.<sup>23</sup> Moses and Aaron then entered the tent of meeting. When they came out, they blessed the people, and the glory of the Lord appeared to all the people.<sup>24</sup> 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.

- YES! They did it, they went into God's presence! Dwelling together!
- Lots of sacrifices start happening!!
- OK, so let's keep this going! Put in the priesthood and Aaron's sons
- Oh no...remember Adam's failure?

## Priestly Failure

**Leviticus 10**<sup>1</sup> Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu each took his own firepan, put fire in it, placed incense on it, and presented unauthorized fire before the Lord, which he had not commanded them to do.<sup>2</sup> Then fire came from the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord.<sup>3</sup> Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the Lord has spoken: I will demonstrate my holiness, to those who are near me, and I will reveal my glory, before all the people." And Aaron remained silent.

- Two more sons: Eleazar and Ithamar
  - If something happens to them, that's it...no more priesthood
- Extra stringent instructions: cut your hair short, no tears in clothing, no drinking wine or beer before you serve

## Teach the People

**Leviticus 10**<sup>10</sup> You must distinguish between the holy and the common, and the clean and the unclean,<sup>11</sup> and teach the Israelites all the statutes that the Lord has given to them through Moses.

- Then a final tense situation. On their first ever sacrifice, Moses thinks they didn't follow proper protocol (didn't eat the sin offering but burned it).
- Aaron, their dad, intervenes "look, I can't eat today, I lost my sons, so I had them burn it"
- Moses accepts it, and so ends the drama of the first worship service
- Kind of a letdown. So much hope and expectation, so much yes! And then: disappointment
  - Like being at the 1 yard line with the opportunity to win a Super Bowl

Big idea: Whether you realize it or not, you need a priest

- God has created humanity in such a way that we long for (need) a priest
  - Starting with Adam: 1 Cor. 15 *In Adam, all die...*
  - We're all connected to him in a representative/mediatorial way
- I believe that longing is baked into the fabric of our beings as humans
  - It's why we turn to so many priest-like figures! **Fears, desires**
    - Desire power or fear societal change: Political Priests
    - Desire self-worth or fear no identity: Self-Help Priest
    - Desire beauty or fear being ignored/rejected: Tik Tok Priests
    - Desire money: Financial Priests on CNBC or Fox Business
    - Desire sexual pleasure: Porn Priest
- Problems: 1) false priests leading to worship a false god, or 2) flawed priests who are unable to truly usher us into God's presence
  - We can't get to God, we can't satisfy our hearts | We need the right priest!

## Big idea: Jesus is the ultimate priest

- He is the new tabernacle, sacred where God and man meet
- He instructs the people, and cares for the weak and vulnerable
- As the priest, he presides over one final sacrifice to bring us fully into God's presence
  - Note: He not only presides, he is the sacrifice
- Now, he sits in heaven and mediates and expands God's glory to the ends of the earth...

...through us, those who have been brought near by the blood of the covenant

Big idea: Whether you realize it or not, you are a priest

- I'm speaking here to Christians who have trusted in Jesus as High Priest
- Saved into: family, kingdom...a priesthood
- Sacrifice order (ch 9): purification > burnt/devotion > fellowship > ordination
  - This is the life of a believer!

### **God's Redeemed Priests**

**1 Peter 2** <sup>9</sup> But 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.

- With love and respect to our Catholic friends and family, this is why Protestants reject the idea of an earthly priesthood | 1 Tim. 3 (only one mediator), 1 Pet 2 (we're all priests), Rom 12 (all of you offer sacrifices to God)
- You have access to God directly through Jesus. He's the high priest, but we're all priests

### **Living as Priests**

- Where are you following false, impotent priests?
- Are you drawing near to God through Jesus? (sacrifices of prayer and praise 1 pet 2.9)
- Are you guarding that which is holy and sacred? (e.g. sabbath day, marriage bed,
- Are you extending the glory of God?

**Charles Spurgeon** Oh, the dignity which Christ has put upon the poorest believer! What a high office, and, consequently, what a solemn responsibility is ours.