

CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE- PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

[Adapted from Bethel Bible-Presbyterian
Church, 10 Downing St. Oakleigh, Vic., 3166]

DHW BIBLE CLASS LESSON 5 LEVITICUS CHAPTERS 8, 9 & 10

INTRODUCTION

In chapters 1 to 7, God prescribed the five basic sacrificial offerings (and consecration) (7:37) for the purification of the people. Chapters 8 to 10 describe the application of these sacrificial offerings. Chapter 8 narrates the ordination of Aaron and his sons to the priesthood. Chapter 9 describes how Aaron carried out his first duty and responsibility as the high priest in behalf of the people of Israel. Chapter 10 relates the sad incident of how Aaron's sons breached the laws of God and were struck dead -- the fire "went out of the LORD, and devoured them" (10:2).

The heart of the book of Leviticus revolves around the concept of holiness. As born-again children, we need to know how we can be holy as He is holy, how we ought to behave and do the things that are most pleasing and God-honouring in His sight.

Before Aaron could serve God and the people of God, he must be consecrated and he must get right with God first. A servant of God must get right with God and be an example for others to follow before he can serve and lead others. A servant who does not do the work of God in the way prescribed in His Word will be removed from office.

These two principles are spelt out in this study.

OUTLINE

- A. The Public Ordination of Aaron and His Sons to the High Priesthood of Israel (8:1-36).
1. The LORD commanded Moses to carry out the ordination of Aaron and his sons (v.1).
 2. Moses made initial preparation (v.2).
 - a. He gathered Aaron and his sons.
 - b. He took the sacred garments, the anointing oil and a bullock for the sin offering and two rams and a basket of unleavened cakes (v.2).
 3. Moses gathered the people at the entrance of the tabernacle (v.3-5).
 4. Moses prepared Aaron and his sons (v.6-9).
 - a. He washed Aaron and his sons.
 - b. He put the high priest sacred garments on Aaron.
 5. Moses anointed the tabernacle (v.10-11).
 6. Moses sanctified Aaron and his sons (v.12-17).
 - a. He anointed Aaron with the anointing oil.
 - b. He put the sacred priestly garments on Aaron's sons.
 - c. He offered the bullock of the sin offering.

7. Moses offered the first ram for the burnt offering in behalf of Aaron and his sons (v.18-21).
 8. Moses offered the second ram for the peace offering in behalf of Aaron and his sons (v.22-30).
 - a. The ram of consecration.
 - b. Aaron and his sons performed the wave offering.
 9. Moses gave final instructions (v.31-36).
 - a. Aaron and his sons to boil the flesh of the peace offerings and partake of the meat within the tabernacle.
 - b. Aaron and his sons confined themselves in the tabernacle for seven days.
- B. Aaron Performed His First Duty as the High Priest by Offering Sacrifices in Behalf of the People (9:2-24).
1. Moses called Aaron, his sons and the elders of Israel (v.1).
 2. Moses instructed Aaron (v.2-4).
 - a. Aaron to offer a sin offering and a burnt offering for himself.
 - b. Aaron to call the people to offer:
 - a sin offering
 - a burnt offering
 - a peace offering
 - a grain offering.
3. The congregation obeyed and gathered before the tabernacle (v.5-6).
 4. Aaron obeyed Moses by offering the sacrifices for himself first (v.7-14).
 - a. Moses commanded Aaron to offer the sin offering and the burnt offering for himself.
 - b. Aaron obeyed.
 - He offered the sin offering.
 - His sons assisted him.
 - Then he offered the burnt offering.
 - His sons assisted him.
 5. Aaron offered the sacrificial offerings in behalf of the Israelites (v.15-21).
 - a. He offered the sin offering.
 - b. He offered the burnt offering.
 - c. He offered the grain offering.
 - d. He offered the peace offerings assisted by his sons.
 - e. Aaron took the breast and the right shoulder for a wave offering before the LORD.
 6. The glory of the LORD appeared before the people (v.22-24).
 - a. Aaron blessed the people after making the offerings.
 - b. Moses and Aaron entered the tabernacle and came out to bless the people.
 - c. Fire came out from before the LORD and consume upon the altar.

- d. The people saw, shouted and prostrated on the ground.
- C. The Judgment of Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron (10:1-7).
1. Nadab and Abihu disobeyed the LORD in offering "strange fire" (v.1).
 2. The LORD punished them by death (v.2).
 3. Moses warned Aaron of the meaning of the judgment.
 4. Aaron kept his peace.
 5. Moses commanded Aaron's cousins, Mishael and Elzaphan to bury their nephews outside the camp.
 6. Moses warned Aaron and his sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, not to mourn the death of Nadab and Abihu lest they be punished too.
 7. They obeyed Moses.
- D. The LORD commanded Aaron regarding some prohibitions and their duties (10:8-11).
1. The LORD commanded Aaron not to drink wine when they entered the tabernacle (v.8-9)
 2. Aaron must make a distinction between the holy and the unholy, the clean and the unclean (v.10).
 3. Aaron to teach the children of Israel the statutes of the LORD as given to Moses.
- E. Moses' Instructions to Aaron and his sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, about

eating the sacrificial meat (10:12-20).

1. Eat the priests' portion of the grain offering without leaven and in the holy place (v.12, 13).
2. The breast and the shoulder of the wave and heave offerings would be their portion to be eaten in a clean place (v.14, 15).
3. Eleazar and Ithamar erred by not eating the meat of the sin offering (v.16-20).
 - a. Moses found out and chided them.
 - b. Aaron defended his two sons and gave his reasons.
 - c. Moses was satisfied.

COMMENTARY

The Consecration of Aaron and his Sons

The LORD called Moses and instructed him to take Aaron and his sons to consecrate them and to gather the people at the entrance of the tabernacle to witness their consecration. Accordingly, Moses brought Aaron and his sons, Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. He washed them with water. Outward washing in the Bible is symbolic of an inward spiritual cleansing. David wrote, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity nor sworn deceitfully" (Psalm 24:3, 4).

Then Moses dressed Aaron with the garments of the high priest.¹ Aaron's

¹ These priestly robes are fully described in Exodus 28 and 39.

priestly robe singled out his office as the high priest, representing the 12 tribes before the LORD. These priestly robes helped the Israelites to identify the priests as people of authority and accord them the proper respect. Having clothed Aaron, Moses anointed the various items in the tabernacle and Aaron with the special oil² to sanctify them (8:11, 12) and dedicate them to God's service.

Having consecrated them, Moses officiated the offering of the sin offering in behalf of Aaron and his sons. The bullock of sin offering was brought and everything was done in accordance to what God had prescribed. The sin offering was a purification offering to atone for the sins of the worshipper. This illustrated that God could not be approached without the shedding of blood for the remission of the sins of the worshipper. There was no other way apart from what had been prescribed. Sins must be dealt with first before a person could draw near to God in worship.

Then Moses brought the first ram, which was for a burnt offering of a sweet aroma to the LORD and the other "the ram of consecration". The significance of this burnt offering was to indicate that Aaron and his sons sought reconciliation with God by offering up a ram in their place as ransom for their sins. The other ram of consecration was to indicate the dedication of themselves to God. Note that the tip of Aaron's right ear, the thumb of his right hand, and his great right toe were smeared with blood. Why the right side? The right side is the more important and favoured side of a person. The person must have consecrated ears

² The recipe of this special oil is given in Exodus 30:23ff.

to listen to God's Word; consecrated hands to do God's holy works; and consecrated feet to walk righteously before God. In the New Testament, Paul described it as dying to sin and living to righteousness.³

Moses led Aaron and his sons in the wave offering and burnt the offering on the altar. Moses himself took the breast for a wave offering and the meat was given to him as the priest who officiated in behalf of Aaron and his sons. The other part, the shoulder, was not mentioned. Moses offered it to the LORD. This intimated that both Moses and the LORD carried out the consecration. The remaining flesh was given to the priests. They must consume it in the tabernacle. The priests must not go out of the tabernacle for seven days, cutting themselves out of any social interaction for that period. On each of the seven days, a ram of consecration was offered (8:32).

The ordination of Aaron and his sons was by fiat—they were the choice of God. Observe that someone needed to officiate the ceremony. The person who performed the rituals was Moses. Moses was specially chosen by God to be the mediator between Him and Aaron and his sons. Today our Mediator is Christ Jesus, the Son of God, our Lord and Saviour. He is our sin offering, burnt offering and peace offering. We can confidently approach Him to worship Him, offer our praises, and place our petitions before Him knowing that we will obtain mercy and find grace in our times of need (Hebrews 4:16).

From the lengthy consecration and dedication service, we can draw the principle that God was the author of the

³ Paul discusses this in Romans 6:5ff).

priest's consecration and Moses was his instrument. The whole congregation was present at the ordination. There was no democratic choice. The people played the essential part of witnessing God's call. This is the pattern set for us to follow. God's work must be done in His way. Hence, in church government and the appointment of pastors, elders, deacons and other church leaders, the Bible-Presbyterian church is guided by this principle. The nomination of pastors, elders and deacons to the Session is the responsibility and decision of the current ruling board of Elders of which the serving Pastor is the moderator. The general body of the church will elect from those whom the board of Elders have nominated (approved) to serve in the church. They do so by casting their vote in a secret ballot.⁴

The order of the sacrificial offerings in the consecration of the priests is clear: the consecration, the sin offering, the burnt offering, followed by the peace offering. The theological doctrine is clearly spelt out: (1) consecration — a person desirous of coming to God, (2) he must purify himself by making a sin offering — purification by the blood and death of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God; (3) burnt offering — acknowledgment of the ransom paid by Christ Jesus; (4) peace offering — complete the reconciliation so that there is fellowship with God, accompanied by thanksgiving for His provisions.

The Consecration of the Congregation

Moses called Aaron, his sons, and the elders of Israel together. He specifically instructed Aaron to offer a sin offering and a burnt offering to the

LORD to make an atonement in behalf of the people. This was what the LORD commanded. The purpose was that the LORD could appear to them in His glory (9:4, 6, 24). The glory of God is His awesome holiness, majesty and power. If they carried out the sacrificial offerings as commanded, they would not be struck dead when God appear to them. Aaron obeyed and did as he was commanded. Note that Aaron had to offer a sin offering and a burnt offering for himself again (9:7). This teaches us the gravity of sin, and the universality and pervasiveness of sin in man. After the last offering (wave offering), Aaron lifted up his hand towards the people and blessed them (9:22). He “came down” (9:24b) implying that Aaron had to walk up to a higher ground to administer the various sacrificial offerings at the brazen altar. Then Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle and came out and blessed the people. The glory of the LORD appeared to all the people. Fire came out from before the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the fat on the brazen altar. This phenomenon struck the people with awe and fear. When they saw it, they “shouted” and fell prostrate on the ground (9:25). They gave a loud cry of joy and praise at the way God worked. That they responded by falling prostrate on the ground showed their total acknowledgment of the holiness and greatness of God. God deserves nothing less than the consecration and dedication of our whole being when we worship and serve Him.

The Judgment on Those Who Disobey

This chapter records a very sad and serious incident. Nadab and Abihu, two of Aaron's sons, offered “strange fire”

⁴ See Bethel BPC Constitution, Article 18, in particular, Section 18:6 & 18:7.

before the LORD. The nature of the “strange fire” was not mentioned. The text records that each of them took “*his* incense,” and put it on the fire before the LORD. They might have offered an incense which was not prescribed by God or they might have offered it at the wrong time.⁵ Nadab and Abihu were struck dead instantly! The consequence of disobeying God is death. Sin is a serious thing in the eyes of God. The fact that we do sin but are not struck dead does not mean that God has changed His attitude towards sin and the sinner. Rather, God has been merciful. The judgment on Nadab and Abihu tells us that God takes a very serious view of sin. Sin cannot be tolerated. We should learn that we deserve death when we sin but God in His mercy forgives us when we repent.⁶

God forbade Aaron and his other two sons to join in the customary rites of mourning for Nadab and Abihu. If they were to disobey, they would also be struck dead and God’s wrath would be upon the whole congregation (10:6). Aaron and his other two sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, must be seen as identifying themselves entirely with God’s viewpoint. There must be no hint that they condone Nadab’s and Abihu’s sin. If they were to join in the traditional custom of mourning, they might, in their grief, blame God for their deaths.⁷

The LORD spoke to Aaron. This was the only record of a direct communication between the LORD and Aaron. At all other times, the LORD spoke through Moses. Aaron was

assured that, despite the sins of his two sons, God had retained him as His high priest to act as a mediator between Him and the people. God told Aaron to abstain from drinking alcohol (10:8, 9). Why? The answer is in the next verse. The priest’s job was to make decisions between holy and common things, between the clean and unclean, and to teach the people the laws of God. If the priest made a mistake in these matters, it might provoke God’s judgment and lead to death. In order to avoid making such mistakes, they had to abstain from alcohol.⁸

Another incident that was related to the sin of disobedience happened to Eleazar and Ithamar. Moses was angry that they did not eat the meat of one of the sin offering, namely, a goat (9:15). They had not followed the rules of the second offering. They had burnt the meat instead of eating it (10:16-18). Aaron explained to Moses that they were afraid that if they had eaten it and it was not right, they might be struck dead. They feared God and were extra careful not to sin against Him in view of what had happened to Nadab and Abihu. Aaron explained that in all the confusion of that festive day, they were not sure whether it was all right to eat it. He asked Moses the question to confirm it. When Moses heard it, he was satisfied. This suggests that God was more gracious to those who made mistakes because they feared Him than those who carelessly and imprudently offended Him, as in the case of Nadab and Abihu.⁹

⁵ There was a proper incense for use at the altar (Exodus 37:29); and there was the proper time to offer the incense (Exodus 30:7-9).

⁶ Jesus Christ commanded the woman taken in adultery not to sin again (John 8:11).

⁷ Wenham, 157.

⁸ Ibid., 159.

⁹ Ibid., 160.

PRACTICAL VALUE

These three chapters demonstrate the universality and pervasiveness of sin—it affects man who had to be cleansed, it affects the things touched by man, and it affects even the garments he wore. But thankfully, the sin can be cleansed. In the Old Testament, God had prescribed the way to atone for one’s sin. In the New Testament, since the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, the remission of sins has been dealt with once and for all through the blood and death of the Lord Jesus Christ. We need to acknowledge Him and receive Him into our hearts by faith.

God’s work must be done in God’s way in accordance to His Word. As church leaders and members of the body of Christ in a local church, we must always remember this principle and apply it to our worship and our activities.

And leaders will face a greater judgment when they sin against God — to whom is given much, much will be required.

DAILY READINGS & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Daily Readings

Monday: Leviticus 8:1-17; Ephesians 5:26; Colossians 3:12.

Tuesday: Leviticus 8:18-35; Romans 12:1; Galatians 2:20.

Wednesday: Leviticus 9:1-14; Hebrews 9:11-15.

Thursday: Leviticus 9:15-24; Romans 5:1-2; 1 John 1:3.

Friday: Leviticus 10:1-20; John 4:24; Philippians 2:12; Acts 20:27.

Discussion Questions

1. What offering was offered first? Why was it placed before the burnt offering?

2. Why did the priests have to put on special garments?

3. Why do you think the tip of the right ear, the right thumb and the great right toe of Aaron were smeared with blood?

4. How is the universality and pervasiveness of sin shown in chapter 8?

7. How would you describe the spiritual health of the people of Israel at this juncture (9:23, 24)?

5. What must Aaron first do before he could make offerings in behalf of the people? What is the lesson behind this?

8. What is the "glory of God"?

6. In what way does this chapter signify the turning point of God's people?

9. How does verse 3 apply adversely to Nadab and Abihu?

10. What do you understand from verse 3?

11. Why were Aaron and his remaining sons forbidden to mourn for Nadab and Abihu?

12. What do you think are the most important lessons in this chapter?

TEACHING LESSON

The Ordination of Aaron and his sons

1. What principle can we draw from the ordination of Aaron?
 - a. He was called to serve the LORD.
 - b. His sins needed to be atoned for by the offering of the sin offering.
 - c. Then he offered the burnt offering as an expression of his gratitude for sins atoned and his dedication wholly to the LORD.
 - d. Observe that his right ear, right thumb and his right big toe were smeared with blood. This tells us that he must have consecrated ears to listen to God's Word, consecrated hands to do God's holy works, and consecrated feet to walk righteously before God.
 - e. His priestly clothes were meant to show his nature of office, responsibilities and duties rather than to bring attention to himself.
 - f. Principles drawn:
 - Before any person is allowed to serve in the Church of Christ, he must first be a Christian. His sins must be atoned for by the blood of the Lamb of God.
 - Then he needs to consecrate himself wholly unto the Lord, offering himself as a living sacrifice.
 - He must be governed by the Word of God - to obey Him, do His work and walk uprightly before Him.
 - **Application in the Church context:** Pastor, Elder,

Deacon, leaders of the various ministries in the church and teachers of the Word.

The Consecration of the Congregation

2. Aaron then performed the sin offering, the burnt offering, the peace offering and the grain offering in behalf of the congregation.
 - a. the sin offering to atone for the sins of the people.
 - b. the burnt offering for the consecration of the people.
 - c. the peace offering for fellowship with God.
 - d. the grain offering as an expression of their gratitude to God for His blessings.
 - e. **Application:** The pastor of the church or any leader of a ministry of the church should always (1) intercede for the sins of ignorance of the members, (2) encourage them to dedicate themselves to the LORD, (3) to maintain a close fellowship with the Lord and (4) to thank the Lord for the blessings that He has bestowed upon them.

The Judgment of Those Who Disobey

3. The disobedience of Nadab and Abihu.
 - a. They offered strange fire. They did not serve the Lord in the way prescribed.
 - b. The judgment of the Lord came upon them—they were struck dead.

- c. Was God harsh?
- d. Aaron and his two other sons were not allowed to mourn for their deaths.
- e. Principle: God's servants must serve God in His way. There is no other way.
 - The necessity to know the Word.
 - God takes a serious view of our carelessness or deliberate rebellious action.
 - We are to honour and exalt God for His ways are always righteous.
 - Christian leaders have a grave responsibility of removing any church leader from serving in the church if he or she persists in serving in a way that is not in accordance with God's way.

The Responsibility and Duty of Aaron and his sons to teach the Law of God to the People (10:8ff)

4. They must abstain from alcohol so that they might be sober at all times and be able to discern right from wrong, clean from unclean, holy from unholy.
 - a. They must teach the Law of God to the people.
 - b. Application: Leaders of the church should place a high premium on the teaching of the Word. To hear and to obey.