

Monday, February 11, 2019—Leviticus 8-10

The process of being set aside for God's purposes was one of great honor. Aaron and his sons would lead the people in obeying God and walking in holiness. To be ordained, Moses put the blood of sacrificial animals and the anointing oil on their body and their clothing (8:1-36). This foreshadowed the blood of Christ and the anointing of the Spirit. Everyone who comes to Christ in faith finds forgiveness through His blood and empowering through the presence of His Spirit. As a result, every believer is a priest who can lead others into faith, holiness, and obedience.

This process of representing the people began in Leviticus 9 as Aaron presented the sacrifices on behalf of the people (9:15). He first made atonement for himself then brought sacrifice for the people. Priests then and now know they are completely at the mercy of God for their forgiveness and usefulness. To forget this is to repeat the sin of Nadab and Abihu, who acted in arrogance (10:1-2), wanting to worship by their own standards, and God killed them. The closer one comes to God the more one should grow in his respect for the holiness of God.

God called the priests to teach the people His laws (10:10-11), things they were continuing to learn themselves (10:12-20). Similarly, Jesus called His disciples to make disciples, baptizing them and teaching them to obey everything He had commanded. Thank God for making His disciples priests in His Kingdom. Pray for a growing respect for His holiness and growing effectiveness in making disciples who grow in respect for Him.

Sunday, February 10, 2019—Leviticus 5-7

God wants to be in an intimate relationship with His people. He doesn't want them simply to acknowledge His existence. He is not satisfied with their faithful obedience. He wants them to walk closely with Him, having sin confessed and atoned for. He has made them for His pleasure and His glory. Obedience and intimacy are His design.

Sin gets in the way of that plan, so God gave His people the pathway to remove sin and walk in holiness. When they sinned against Him, they were to bring a sin offering. The death of an innocent animal covered over that sin and brought His forgiveness (5:10, 13). Some sins were more intentional and required a guilt offering (6:1-7). With all sin, God commanded the people first to confess their sin. If restitution was required, they provided that. In every case, they brought an offering, and God forgave. He wanted restoration because this is why He made them.

The sacrifice became a representative of the people. “The animal give as a sin offering is most holy and must be slaughtered in the LORD’s presence at the place where the burnt offerings are slaughtered” (6:25). The people had become unholy, but the animal, who had done nothing, became holy because they presented the animal to God. The animal was set aside for a specific purpose and, thus, became holy. What the people had lost, their holiness, was being restored by a holy act and an innocent animal.

Praise God for the holiness Jesus brings. Walk in holiness today.

Saturday, February 9, 2019—Leviticus 1-4

God wanted His people to be holy. He designed His people to be holy, but they needed instruction and accountability in order to walk and grow in that holiness. God set aside the Levites to lead the way into holiness, so the book of Leviticus bears their name.

With every interaction with Yahweh, the people needed the priests to be the bridge to His holiness. They brought with them an offering to communicate a message and to be the substitute or representatives for themselves. The whole burnt offering, for example, could be a bull, from the flock, or a bird. Its offering expressed total consecration, provided atonement (1:4) and was pleasing to God (1:9,13,17). The death of an animal and the spilling of blood illustrated the absolute seriousness of holiness to God and the destructiveness of sin.

The grain offering communicated devotion to God. The grain offering had no yeast, to represent the peoples’ call and desire to be without sin, and was burned, but not

completely like the burnt offering. The remaining grain and oil provided sustenance for the priests, Levites, and their families (2:3). Their devotion, thus, blessed God and man.

The peace offering (3:1-17) expressed the peoples' need for peace with God and the removal of guilt. They laid their hands on the heads of the offering to symbolize the transfer of guilt. When the people knew of a specific, unintentional sin, they offered a sin offering (4:1-35). The shed blood represented the covering of their sin and their forgiveness.

Praise God for the forgiving work of Jesus. Pray for holiness.

Friday, February 8, 2019—Exodus 38-40

Americans are emphatic about their “personal space.” When someone wants to speak to them, they expect a comfortable amount of distance between speaker and listener, even if the conversation happens at lower volumes. Europeans differ from their American counterparts and can make their American acquaintances and friends uncomfortable by getting too close too often in formal and informal settings.

God made clear He wanted a relationship with Israel. He set them free from Egypt and called them His holy nation and treasured possession. He resided with them in the Tabernacle and led them from place to place. The details for the Tabernacle, however, made clear their relationship with Him had regulations. The priests were the only ones allowed inside the tent, and the tent itself had a courtyard surrounding it (38:9-20). Coming to Him was necessary, but they came to Him on His conditions. The curtains of the courtyard were a visible reminder of the holiness required to be His people.

The clothing of the priests (39:1-31) was another visible reminder of the necessity of being separated from the world to be a part of God's family and mission. They wore the names of the tribes (39:6, 14) on their clothing, representing the entire nation as they served before Yahweh. This detailed work prepared the people for Jesus, the coming Messiah, who would be the Great High Priest. He would fulfill all the regulations for holiness and be the Way for all to come into the presence of God.

Thank God for Jesus and His holiness. Pray for His power to fill you and bring Him glory (40:34-38).

Thursday, February 7, 2019—Exodus 35-37

God's character does not change. What He expected in the beginning is what He continues to expect today. When He called Israel to be His treasured possession, He wanted them to live in a way that demonstrated their uniqueness in order to bring Him glory. Jesus gave the same expectation, calling His followers to be salt and light.

God said the observation of the Sabbath was non-negotiable for His covenant people (35:1-3). They had agreed to this covenant, so their lives were to demonstrate how they trusted Him. Giving to the construction of the tabernacle was voluntary (35:5,21). Whether donating items, labor, or skills (36:3), God wanted His people to find their unique way to serve Him. Worship was mandatory. Every person would find a unique way to do that.

God gave specific instruction on constructing the tabernacle. The curtains and posts (36:8-38) were a living picture God's knitting together each body and soul, its skeleton and flesh. The tabernacle would house His presence, mirroring the soul's ability to do the same. Paul later likened the church to a body—each member contributing to the health and function of the whole—with Jesus as the Head.

In Exodus 37, God gave instruction for the ark, table, lampstand, and incense altar. He was preparing the people for Jesus. The way to the ark (His presence) was through the room containing the incense (way), the lampstand (truth), and the bread (life). Give praise to God for His desire that we worship Him and giving us Jesus so we could do so in fullness.

Wednesday, February 6, 2019—Exodus 32-34

In the most significant moments of God's work in life, the enemy is often working hard himself to keep pace. As Exodus 31 closes, the text notes God gave Moses two stone tablets with God's testimony inscribed by God's own finger. At the same time,

the people of God were creating a golden calf so they could worship at the base of the mountains (32:1-4).

Without proper leadership and discipleship, people will wander into heresy and disobedience—much of the time believing they are being authentic before God and faithful to His call. God had clearly said to make no idols (Exodus 20:4-6), yet they had seen idols in Egypt their entire lives. He told Moses He would wipe out the nation for their disobedience and make Moses himself great (32:10), but Moses pleaded for the people based on God’s covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Moses couldn’t let selfishness override the promises and plan of God for all peoples.

Moses was angry. Aaron was deceitful, and the people were a mess. The Levites cleansed the nation, and Moses prayed for God’s restorative work, and God promised to lead them. They would face the consequences of their sin, but they were not banished from His presence and provision.

To lead well, Moses spent time in the presence of God (33:1-11), speaking to God as a man speaks to his friend. Moses pleaded for God’s continual presence to give them direction and distinction (33:15-16, 34:9). God told Moses their simply task was to obey Him (34:11).

Pray for a life of faithful obedience.

Tuesday, February 5, 2019—Exodus 28-31

When college recruiters ask a high school student to consider becoming a student-athlete at their college, the uniforms for that particular sport are a common point of discussion. The possibilities of looking good on television, social media, and in print are often persuasive.

God knew the power of appearance. The priests who would lead worship at His unique tabernacle were to look different as well. They were set apart from the common man, and their special clothing would “lend dignity to his work” (28:3). The instructions for the ephod, chest piece, and additional clothing (28:6-43) helped an imperfect man perform a godly calling, representing Israel and glorifying God.

The clothing was only one part of the preparation process. To dedicate the men, there had to be death. Aaron and his sons placed their hands on a bull and two rams, symbolically transferring their sin to these sacrifices. The blood of one of the rams was on the priests and their clothing to symbolize the covering work of the blood. The call of God and the blood of sacrifice made these men fit for service.

The tabernacle would smell like nowhere else on earth. The anointing and daily incense were of a unique recipe. “Never make this incense for yourself. It is reserved for the LORD, and you must treat it as holy” (30:37). In addition, the people were to observe the Sabbath day, a sign of their covenant with God (31:17).

Pray for a life which demonstrates the uniqueness of God.