

Sunday, February 11, 2018—Leviticus 8-10

The people of God were learning day after day how to follow Him in preparation for living in the Promised Land. Part of that daily relationship was interacting with Yahweh at the Tabernacle, the tent which housed His presence. From the 12 tribes of Israel, God had chosen the tribe of Levi to oversee the never-ending functions at the Tabernacle and the sons of Aaron specifically to be priests for the people.

The tribe of Levi had not done something spectacular to earn this designation. He had chosen them by His grace and wisdom, so their obligation, like that of all the other tribes, was to obey and to flourish in their God-given assignment. As Moses prepared Aaron and his sons for their duties, He offered sacrifices on their behalf and applied blood to their bodies to illustrate to all the nation that the sons of Aaron needed atonement like everyone else. These priests were to be the connection between God and man, and their ability to do so was based solely on the grace of Yahweh.

Moses gave them their charge. “You must distinguish between the holy and the common, and the clean and the unclean, and teach the Israelites all the statutes that the LORD has given to them through Moses” (10:10-11). In their death Nadab and Abihu illustrated the danger of disobedience, yet Aaron and Moses illustrated the ability to compromise on practice without compromising truth.

Thank God for those who led you to faith in Christ. Pray for a life of personal priesthood that helps others know Christ and follow Him well.

Saturday, February 10, 2018—Leviticus 5-7

“When someone sins in any of these ways . . .,” Moses said (5:1). He did not say “if” but “when.” God knew the limitations of the people and the power of sin. He knew the ways they had stumbled in the brief time they had been free from captivity. Sin was a reality, so God was making a way for them to restore the relationship sin would damage. His grace was on display from the beginning, giving His people an opportunity to repent rather than immediately casting them away from Him forever. God even provided ways for the poorest of poor to atone for their guilt.

In Leviticus 6, God said the sin committed against another human required action to restore the relationship on earth as well as the relationship in heaven. The sinner was to make restitution to the one he offended and bring a sin offering to the tabernacle. The process was a continual reminder of the pervasive destruction of sin.

When sinful people offered something to holy God, their offerings became holy (6:17). That which was set apart by flawed creatures to honor a holy God became a symbol of His holiness. Only God can accomplish this kind of transformation. Of some of the offerings the priests were able to take and eat. In John 6, Jesus said those who took His flesh and blood would have life. From the beginning, God was preparing the way for Jesus.

Thank God for forgiveness and holiness through Jesus.

Friday, February 9, 2018—Leviticus 1-4

Leviticus is the least favorite book of many Bible readers because of its technical content. The pages discuss what can be offered to Yahweh for atonement and praise, and they detail how the animals are to be sacrificed and washed or what amount of grain and drink are proper. The information can seem foreign, confusing, and irrelevant.

Leviticus continued what Yahweh began in Exodus. He wanted His people to be holy, set apart for His glory and use. He had begun giving the Law in Exodus but continued this in detail in Leviticus. A nation had never walked with Yahweh, so they had to know how to deal with sin. They had to learn how to worship and serve. Above all things, for modern readers, Leviticus points to Jesus. He is the fulfillment of the holiness code. What Leviticus demanded He provided.

For example, Leviticus 1 says the people were to provide a spotless male from the herd or flock. This innocent one with no visible flaws took the place of the guilty. From the beginning, Leviticus points to Jesus. In Leviticus 2, the grain offering was to come with oil and frankincense and without yeast. Jesus called Himself the Bread of Life, had the anointing of the Spirit, and was without sin. Jesus fulfills the grain

offering's demands. In Leviticus 4, the sin offering was burned outside the camp (4:21). Jesus was crucified outside the city. Over and over, Leviticus anticipates Jesus.

Praise God for the holiness only Jesus provides.

Thursday, February 8, 2018—Exodus 38-40

The White House, the home of the President of the United States, is also known as the People's House. The voters are, in fact, the ones who cast the ballots that eventually put the leader in Washington, D.C. To have influence over the leader of the free world is a humbling privilege.

The tabernacle was Yahweh's house, but the people did not put Him there. He made Himself available to dwell there through His own plan, but He allowed the people to donate toward its construction and outfitting. This was to be the place where the glory of God resided, and the people had a part in it. Furthermore, they had men, the Levites, who stood as representatives at Yahweh's house. The priests wore a breastplate with the names of all 12 tribes inscribed on stones.

The key in the process was the phrase repeated in this section, “. . . just as the LORD commanded Moses.” This was God's design, and the people had no option but to obey. There was no discussion of design or preference. This was a matter of lordship from the beginning.

As a result of their obedience, the glory of Yahweh filled the tabernacle and prevented Moses' entrance (40:34-35). He showed up with power, and He continued to demonstrate that power through leading them by cloud and fire on the journey (40:36-38). While this was the end of Exodus, it was only the beginning of the journey. Likewise, our freedom from the slavery of sin through salvation is not the end but the beginning.

Wednesday, February 7, 2018—Exodus 35-37

Yahweh demonstrated with the plagues He was the God above all gods. There was no room for any other god in life. This is the reason for such a demanding standard for the Sabbath (35:1-3). If someone did not observe the Sabbath, he was not to be placed on probation or verbally reprimanded. He was to be executed. This seems at first glance to be excessive, yet God knew obedience to Him was a heart issue, and the slightest compromise in obedience and affection would encourage others to compromise even further and bring destruction to God's people and dishonor to His name. He demands complete obedience.

Moses then encouraged the people to give according to the condition of their heart. As they felt led, they donated goods for the tabernacle, and they used their God-given skills to help build it. Bezalel and Oholiab are mentioned by name, yet they did not do the work alone. The obedience and heart-felt contributions of the entire nation made the work possible and successful. God receives glory when the entire community works together to use their gifting in order to glorify His name.

As a result, many had a part in constructing the dwelling place of God. Some of the furnishings they would never see, but every time they gathered, they would know they had been a part. In contrast, those who were not motivated to give had no part in the legacy. Pray for a grateful heart that stirs you to use your gifts and skills.

Tuesday, February 6, 2018—Exodus 32-34

Impatience is a common human trait. The red light never turns green quickly enough, and the line at the grocery store is always too slow. Not surprisingly, the people who spent 400 years in slavery couldn't wait one month for their leader to return from a God-ordained retreat.

When the people believed Moses wasn't coming back, they approached Aaron about making a god who would lead them. They had grumbled about going back, yet now they were willing to go ahead. Instead of heeding God's command not to make an idol, Aaron's first suggestion was to melt their jewelry into a

graven image. Impatience can lead to hasty decisions which neither honor God nor benefit His people. Hasty decisions can lead to dubious explanations to avoid responsibility for sin (32:24).

In the chaos, Moses kept his head clear. He prayed with intentionality. He asked God to forgive the people not simply so the people would have forgiveness. He wanted God's reputation to remain intact. He could not endure the thought of God's people becoming a stain on God's name and glory. He also prayed for God's presence to go ahead of them. If they were not marked by Yahweh, what would make them any different from the peoples around them?

Ask God to teach you to pray with purpose, always seeking His glory as the reason for His moving and answering. Pray for patience to wait on Him and courage to act in the right time. Long for your life to exhibit clear evidence of having spent time with God.

Monday, February 5, 2018—Exodus 28-31

Children learn from watching. The examples from their family and friends set the stage for their shadowing, mimicking, and learning to perform on their own. They become and do what they have seen lived out.

God told the Hebrews He wanted them to be a kingdom of priests, so He had that daily role demonstrated by the tribe of Levi. Led by Aaron and his sons, the tribe was to dress differently and oversee the tabernacle. As priests, they showed the entire nation how to respond to the presence of God and bridge the gap between His presence and the world's.

God said, "Whenever he enters the sanctuary, Aaron is to carry the names of Israel's sons over his heart on the breastpiece for decisions, as a continual reminder before the LORD (28:29)." "[The gold medallion] will be on Aaron's forehead so that Aaron may bear the guilt connected with the holy offerings . . . that they may find acceptance with the LORD" (28:38).

To be acceptable before Yahweh, the priests needed new clothing and to be sprinkled by blood. They also offered bread and drink (29:1-46). The foreshadowing of Jesus is unmistakable. Jesus, the Lamb, sacrificed Himself. His body and blood are the covenant He described in the Last Supper. The arrival of the Spirit clothes all those believe in new garments of righteousness. The incense and Sabbaths of Exodus 30 and 31 point to the uniqueness of Jesus and the relationship into which He calls.

Thank God for the example of Jesus and power to live in Him.