

# Leviticus 8: Biblical Reading and Reflections

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Date: 04 April 2020

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[ 0 : 00 ]     The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 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.

And assemble all the congregation at the entrance of the tent of meeting. And Moses did as the Lord commanded him, and the congregation was assembled at the entrance of the tent of meeting. And Moses said to the congregation, This is the thing that the Lord has commanded to be done.

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

And he placed the breastpiece on him, and in the breastpiece he put the urim and the thummim. And he set the turban on his head, and on the turban in front he set the gold plate, the holy crown, as the Lord commanded Moses.

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

[ 1 : 13 ]     And he poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron's head, and anointed him to consecrate him. 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.

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. 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.

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. 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.

Then he presented the ram of the burnt offering. And Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the ram. And he killed it. And Moses threw the blood against the sides of the altar.

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

[ 2 : 32 ]     Then he presented the other ram, the ram of ordination. And Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the ram. 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.

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.

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. 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.

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. 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. 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.

[ 3 : 48 ] 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.

And Moses said to Aaron and his sons, As has been done today, the Lord has commanded to be done to make atonement for you.

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.

And Aaron and his sons did all the things that the Lord commanded by Moses. The first seven chapters of Leviticus are laws concerning the sacrifices. And in chapter 8 we reach some narrative, and it's concerning the consecration of Aaron, his sons, the tabernacle, and its furniture.

It's a narrative that corresponds to the instructions of Exodus chapter 29, where Moses was first told to consecrate Aaron and his sons. Now back in Exodus, there are various creational seven-day patterns to be observed in the establishment of the tabernacle.

[ 5 : 17 ] And this culminates in the appointment of Aaron and his sons, and the appointment of the daily sacrifices. And here there are similar patterns to be observed, although they correspond more to the way that the fall at Sinai with the golden calf follows after the seven-day creational pattern of chapters 25 to 31.

In Leviticus 8 to 9, there is the consecration of Aaron and his sons, followed by the rest of the completed establishment of Aaron and the tabernacle. This is then followed by a fall story, though with the sin of Nadab and Abihu.

In Genesis chapter 3, the fall is followed by judgment upon the animal, the serpent, then judgment upon the woman concerning her womb, judgment upon the man concerning the sweat of his brow and his work on the earth, and then the making of coverings for them.

And here we see something very similar. There's the establishment of a new humanity within the garden setting, then there is the fall, Nadab and Abihu. That is followed by laws concerning animals, unclean and clean animals, and their relationship with the dirt.

Then there are laws concerning childbirth, connecting with the judgment upon the woman. And then there are laws concerning skin disease and bodily emissions, connected with the judgment upon the sweat of the brow and the flesh, connected with death.

[ 6 : 34 ] This is then followed by the day of coverings. God gave coverings to Adam and Eve in the garden. God gives coverings to his people on the day of atonement. The day of atonement is the day of coverings.

It's the more literal way of translating it. The text then is playing out a very familiar pattern, one that we've seen before. The ritual for the consecration of Aaron and his sons begins with washing and dressing.

And this is something that's taken up in the New Testament, connecting our appointment through baptism to the house of God with the appointment of the priests in the Old Testament. We can draw near having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water, in Hebrews 10.

Or in Galatians chapter 3, as many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ, dressed themselves with Christ. We are priests in a new temple.

The washing with water is followed by dressing, and they put on the garments that are appointed to them in chapter 28 of Exodus. There are three sacrifices that are stipulated for this particular ordination rite.

[ 7 : 41 ] There's the sin or purification offering. That's concerning purification or expiation. It's a blood rite, particularly. There's the whole burnt offering or ascension offering. The point of that one is that it all goes up to God's presence, and that's a dedication-type sacrifice.

Then it's followed by the ram of consecration. The ram of consecration is a rather unusual sacrifice. It's one that connects most closely with the logic of the peace offering.

And the peace offering is about communion. So if you put all the sacrifices together, there is a logic to them. It begins with the trespass offering, which gives restitution for crimes done, things taken from God that do not belong to us, boundaries crossed, that sort of thing.

That is followed by the purification offering. The purification offering relates to the expiation or purification of sin, and it's a particular blood rite.

It's cleansing things. And then following that, there's the dedication offering, or the ascension offering, where the person in the symbolic substitute of the animal is dedicated wholly to God.

[ 8 : 46 ] With the ascension offering, you often have tribute given with that. It can be an offering of some grain or some grain product, or it can be connected with a drink offering.

And that's about giving a gift or tribute to the Lord. You can think about the offering that Cain gave. That was a sort of gift or tribute offering, but it was not the right way to begin. It was not the right way to approach God.

Then that's followed by a peace offering. And the peace offering is about communion. It's about having fellowship with God and eating a meal with him, essentially. After Aaron and his sons have been washed and dressed, they are anointed for their priestly service.

And that anointing is not just upon Aaron and his sons, it's also upon the elements of the tabernacle. It's a consecration of the priests, but it's also a consecration of the tabernacle itself.

This is then followed by the sacrifices. The rite for the offering here is slightly different from the regular rite. So the blood seems to be placed on the bronze altar in the courtyard, rather than on the altar of the incense in the holy place, as we see for the typical rite for the sin offering for the high priest in Leviticus chapter 4.

[ 9 : 54 ] Because the priest is not yet a minister in the holy place, he can't defile it. So the blood isn't taken in there. That doesn't need to be cleansed because it hasn't been defiled yet. It's just been established. It's just been consecrated.

And the priest has not entered into it. And as a result, it's just the external altar. The realm in which he has operated at this point is one who has been to that point of the status of a commoner within the land.

There are two rams. There's the ram of the burnt offering and there's the ram of consecration. And Aaron and his sons put their hands upon both of these animals. But unlike in most sacrifices, the person who's doing the sacrifice doesn't do the killing.

The whole burnt offering or the ascension offering comes first. And the logic of it, you've purified the realm that has been defiled by the priest and the congregation. And now you can dedicate the priest.

And that dedication occurs in the ascension of the animal as his substitute and representative. The bull represents the high priest or represents the whole congregation. And after that, once that has been done, the path is cleared for the peace offering.

[ 11 : 01 ] And the peace offering here is the ram of consecration, which plays a very similar role. The consecration ram is a sort of initial peace offering for the priests. Aaron and his sons eat part of the ram of consecration.

But Moses receives the priest portion. We should note that Moses is performing all of these things as the priest relative to Aaron and his sons, who are not acting as priests yet.

That will come in the next chapter when they sacrifice on behalf of the congregation. Blood is placed on both the priest and the altar. The four corners of the human body, the four horns, as it were, of the human body, and then the different parts of the altar.

In placing the blood on these parts of the body and in the wave offering, there is the dedication of the person and their service to the Lord. And so the ordination rite includes these elements to really set up the fundamental fellowship that the priest will have with the Lord as his servants.

Their hands are filled with various elements of their service, which they present as a wave offering towards the Lord. The filling of the hands of the priests is that part of the rite that really stands for the whole thing in some ways.

[ 12 : 11 ] Ordination could be spoken of as the filling of the hands. And so this particular part of the rite seems to have an especial importance in terms of the logic of the whole. It's where the service of the priests is really offered to the Lord at this particular point, perhaps.

In the previous chapter, in Leviticus chapter 7, verses 29 to 34, there's the law of the wave offering of the breast and the thigh. And the breast is a wave offering that is then given to the priest, while the thigh is a contribution to the priest that's given more directly.

The wave offering here of the breast is given to Moses because he plays the role of the officiating priest, whereas the thigh is for Aaron and his sons. The consecration takes seven days and it works up towards the eighth day.

Why the eighth day? Animals couldn't be sacrificed until the eighth day, circumcision happened on the eighth day. The eighth day is also the day when we move from God's week of creation to the week of man's activity within the creation.

Man's work starts on the eighth day and so it seems fitting here that the work of the priest begins on the eighth day. In addition to the transition from the work of God as it were in establishing these things to the work of man as priest, there is another transition here.

[ 13 : 26 ] There's the transition from Moses to Aaron. There's a sevenfold use of the expression as the Lord commanded within this chapter but there's a transition at the very end from Moses to Aaron.

And Aaron and his sons did all the things that the Lord commanded by Moses. There's a shift there from Moses' work where he is doing all that the Lord commanded to Aaron doing everything that God commanded through Moses.

And in the next chapter we see that more fully as Aaron officiates as priest and acts on behalf of Israel. A question to consider. What do you think is the difference between the parts of the bull for the sin offering burnt outside of the camp in verse 17 and the parts that were burnt on the brazen altar?

Why the different locations for burning?■■■■■