



## A STUDY OF THE WHOLE BIBLE

### THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS

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#### INTRODUCING THE PRIESTHOOD (8:1–10:20)

##### The Place of the Passage

In the previous sections, Leviticus described the sacrifices of Old Testament worship. In the next section, we are introduced to the Old Testament priesthood. Without suitable priests to perform its rituals, the tabernacle would be like a machine with gears and pistons but no motion. The priests must keep the tabernacle operating. The next section of Leviticus describes the ordination of the first priests (8:1–30), the first worship service led by the priests (9:1–24), and the tragic results when priests add unauthorized rituals to Israel's worship (10:1–20). As there was only one atonement, yet it took five different sacrifices to express the richness of that atonement, so there is only one high priest, yet it will take several priests and many Levites (though the Levites are not ordained until Numbers 8:5–26) to capture the full duties of the single high priest.

##### The Big Picture

God's gift of atonement must be accomplished for us by a faithful priest.

##### Gospel Glimpses

**DRAWING NEAR.** Readers are often stunned that Nadab and Abihu died for their infraction. Actually, what should amaze us is that our Great High Priest mediates such a perfect atonement that we are able to approach such a holy God without fear of the same outcome! Confronting the presence of God is a life-or-death matter, and our sins deserve the fire of his just wrath. The people of Israel got it right when they "shouted and fell on their faces" (9:24)—resulting in God's benediction (not his condemnation) and in seeing his glory (rather than falling under his judgment).

##### Whole Bible Connections

**AARON.** The name "Aaron" occurs 347 times in the Hebrew Old Testament, indicating the importance of his ordination as Israel's high priest. For the next 1,500 years after Aaron's installation, the house of Aaron filled a vital role in Old Testament faith and worship. We encounter his name in the Psalms, the Old Testament history books, the Prophets, and the New Testament. The significant lessons on priesthood built around Aaron's heritage began with his ordination in the present passage.

**FAITH.** The Old Testament repeatedly emphasizes the importance of family lines. God made a promise to the family of Adam, the house of Noah, the household of Abraham, and so forth. In Leviticus 9, it is the house of Aaron that receives a special promise from God. Often at those points in Scripture where God makes a promise

to a household, however, there is a subsequent event that clarifies the requirement of faith. Though Adam had two sons, one (Cain) was judged. Though Noah had three sons, one (Ham) experienced God's curse. Though Abraham had two sons, one (Ishmael) was sent away. And in Leviticus 8–10, the priesthood was appointed to Aaron's house, yet Nadab and Abihu were judged while faithful Eleazar and Ithamar were blessed. This frequent Old Testament lesson is interpreted in the New Testament as showing the necessity of faith for those born into the community of God's promises (Romans 9–11).

### **Theological Soundings**

**FAITHFUL WORSHIP.** When societies experience revolution, the changes that take place are usually political. A new government system is put in place, or some times an older political system is restored. In the Bible, however, the various revolutions and reformations experienced by Israel are primarily about worship. Certainly there are political changes in Israel's history. But the Bible places special emphasis on the deformation and reformation of worship. The cornerstone of this theme is laid with the story of Nadab and Abihu and the Lord's explanation that worship must faithfully reflect his glory (10:3). The worship of God is not a realm for human innovation or experimentation.

**BENEDICTION.** The wording of the Aaronic benediction is not given until Numbers 6:24–26, but its location in the worship service is taught in Leviticus 9:22–23. It is because of the atoning sacrifice that the people receive the guarantee of blessing from God at the close of their worship in his house. In the New Testament, Jesus also lifted his hands to pronounce blessing on the disciples after his completion of the final atonement sacrifice (Luke 24:50), and the apostles closed their epistles with benedictions. The benediction is much more than a fancy way to say "the end" at the close of a worship service. It is a declaration of God's favor because of his atonement.

### **Glossary of Terms**

**TABERNACLE.** The tent where God dwelt on earth and communed with his people as Israel's divine king. Also referred to as the "tent of meeting" (Lev. 1:5). The temple in Jerusalem later replaced it.

**ORDINATION.** Official investment of religious authority upon a person. In the Old Testament, priests were ordained. Most modern Christian denominations require some form of ordination for those in ministry.

**Please answer the following questions:**

**Leviticus Chapter 8**

1. In preparation for the ordination of the priests what did Moses gather together at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting? (8:2-3)
2. Give the order in which Moses dressed Aaron. (8:6-8)
3. Moses anointed the tabernacle and everything in it. How many times did he sprinkle the altar and utensils? (8:11)
4. What clothing did Moses put on Aaron's sons? (8:13)
5. Whose hands were put on the bull for the sin offering? (8:14)
6. What part of the sin offering was burned outside the camp? (8:17)
7. What did Moses put in Aaron and his sons hands to wave before the Lord? (8:26)
8. Who received the breast that was waved from the ordination of the priests? (8:29)
9. How long were Aaron and his sons to stay at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting? (8:33)

## **Leviticus Chapter 9**

1. On the 8th day what did the priests offer? (9:2)
2. What were the Israelites to offer on the 8th day? (9:3-4)
3. After the offerings where did Moses and Aaron go? (9:23)
4. What happened when they came out? (9:23-24)
5. What did the people do when they saw it? (9:24)

## **Leviticus Chapter 10**

1. Who were Nadab and Abihu? (10:1)
2. What did they offer before the Lord? And how did they die? (10:1)
3. What was Aaron's reaction? (10:3)
4. Who were Mishael and Elzaphan? (10:4)

5. What were they summoned to do? (10:4)
  
6. What were the names of Aaron's remaining sons? (10:6)
  
7. What was Moses' advice to Aaron and his sons? (10:6-7)
  
8. If they did not follow Moses' advice what would happen? (10:6)
  
9. Who could mourn Aaron's sons? (10:7)
  
10. What could Aaron and his sons not drink lest they die and when? (10:8)
  
11. What were the priests to distinguish and teach? (10:10-11)
  
12. Who did Moses say was to eat the breast that was waved? Where? (10:14)
  
13. Why did Moses become angry with Eleazar and Ithamar? (10:16-17)
  
14. The goat could have been eaten in the sanctuary area since. (10:18)
  
15. What satisfied Moses? (10:19)