

Lesson 2 – 8 May 2011

The Holy Priests—Mediation

Lesson Scope: [Leviticus 8-10](#)

Lesson Focus

In the previous lesson we saw that man needed a blood sacrifice to cover sin. Someone needed to perform this atoning work. Even though Job served as priest for his family, he understood the rift between God and man and he cried out for a Daysman to stand between and lay a hand on them both. Jesus was fully divine and fully in His humanity, He was perfectly sinless. He was both the priest and the sacrifice. He fully meets our need for a mediator.

Until Christ came, the Law, "was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator" (Galatians 3:19). By types and shadows, the Law taught that holiness was essential for man to approach the Holy God. The elaborate rituals for cleansing and consecrating the priests, the design and glory of the priests, garments, and the special rules for the priests' daily lives all emphasized holiness.

Sinful man cannot approach God except through a mediator. Under the Levitical system God provided access to Himself through the priests. The Levitical priesthood foreshadowed many aspects of the work of Christ. Yet in His person and in the scope of His work, He was far greater than any other man could be.

We do not compare the church leaders to the priests. In the typology of this lesson, Christ is our High Priest. The church is a kingdom of priests. All in the church are consecrated to the work of helping men find God. Psalm 133 is a beautiful picture of a church in united, consecrated, Spirit-filled service.

Lesson Aim: To see the spiritual significance of the priestly office.

Theme Verse: [1 John 2:1](#). "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

Lesson Text:

Called by God

Leviticus 8:1-4

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, ²Take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments, and the anointing oil, and a bullock for the sin offering, and two rams, and a basket of unleavened bread; ³And gather thou all the congregation together unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. ⁴And Moses did as the LORD commanded him; and the assembly was gathered together unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

Consecrated to God

Leviticus 8:5-13

And Moses said unto the congregation, This *is* the thing which the LORD commanded to be done. ⁶And Moses brought Aaron and his sons, and washed them with water. ⁷And he put upon him the coat, and girded him with the girdle, and clothed him with the robe, and put the ephod upon him, and he girded him with the curious girdle of the ephod, and bound *it* unto him therewith. ⁸And he put the breastplate upon him: also he put in the breastplate the Urim and the Thummin. ⁹And he put the mitre upon his head; also upon the mitre, *even* upon his forefront, did he put the golden plate, the holy crown; as the LORD commanded Moses. ¹⁰And Moses took the anointing oil, and anointed the tabernacle and all that *was* therein, and sanctified them. ¹¹And he sprinkled thereof upon the altar seven times, and anointed the altar and all his vessels, both the laver and his foot, to sanctify them. ¹²And he poured of the anointing oil upon Aaron's head, and anointed him, to sanctify him. ¹³And Moses brought Aaron's sons, and put coats upon them, and girded them with girdles, and put bonnets upon them; as the LORD commanded Moses.

Confirmed by God

Leviticus 9:5

And they brought *that* which Moses commanded before the tabernacle of the congregation: and all the congregation drew near and stood before the LORD.

Leviticus 9:8-9

Aaron therefore went unto the altar, and slew the calf of the sin offering, which *was* for himself. ⁹And the sons of Aaron brought the blood unto him: and he dipped his finger in the blood, and put *it* upon the horns of the altar, and poured out the blood at the bottom of the altar:

Leviticus 9:15-16

And he brought the people's offering, and took the goat, which *was* the sin offering for the people, and slew it, and offered it for sin, as the first. ¹⁶And he brought the burnt offering, and offered it according to the manner.

Leviticus 9:22-24

And Aaron lifted up his hand toward the people, and blessed them, and came down from offering of the sin offering, and the burnt offering, and peace offerings. ²³And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation, and came out, and blessed the people: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the people. ²⁴And there came a fire out from before the LORD, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat: *which* when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces.

Questions for Study

Called by God

1. Why did Aaron need to be chosen by God?
2. How did God publicly testify to Christ's office as High Priest?

Consecrated to God

3. What did the high priest's garments signify about Aaron's consecration?
4. What in the high priest's service pointed to Christ's ministry as prophet, priest, and king?
5. Why is cleansing necessary for serving the Lord?
6. As Christians what resources help us to offer consecrated service to God?

Confirmed by God

7. What was necessary for human priests before their service began? How is Christ's priesthood superior?
8. What blessings result from mediation by God's divine plan?

Analyzing the Passage

This passage emphasizes two important types. Aaron, as the high priest, typifies Christ. This is why God dealt so severely with challenges to Aaron's authority. Aaron's extended family represents the priesthood of New Testament believers. As a kingdom of priests, we represent God to men and help men find God.

For New Testament believers this is a lesson of contrasts. The Old Testament priests were made holy by washing (Leviticus 8:6), anointing (Leviticus 8:1-12), and offering of a sacrifice (Leviticus 9:8-9). Jesus needed

no purification, because He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" (Hebrews 7:26). The mediation of Old Testament priests was accomplished by offering animal sacrifices. The daily repetition emphasized the incompleteness of their work and the need for a perfect sacrifice. In contrast, Jesus is both our priest and our sacrifice. His sacrifice is the only, all-sufficient, eternal mediation between God and man. As Mediator of the New Covenant, Jesus is the surety that its promises will never fail (Hebrews 7:22), because He liveth to make intercession for us (Hebrews 7:25). The eternal intercession of Christ may not be compared to the continual offerings of the Old Testament. The provision of Christ is finished; God is fully satisfied.

In contrast to Christ's eternal priesthood, the Levitical priests were subject to death. The names of the tribes of Israel were carried both on the high priest's shoulders and on his chest. This speaks of him bearing the needs of the people to God. He also carried a burden for them in his own heart.

Principles and Applications Called by God

1. God established and directed the priestly office (Leviticus 8:1-5). "And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, today have I begotten thee. As he saith also in another place. Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec" (Hebrews 5:4-6). Jesus Christ alone qualifies as the Good Shepherd of the sheep. "To him the porter [God] openeth (see John 10:1-18). All others are thieves and robbers.

2. The whole congregation witnessed the priestly charge (Leviticus 8:3-4). Jesus was lifted up from the earth so that He might draw all men unto Him (John 12:32). The title at His crucifixion was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin for all to read. The veil of the temple rent in two at His death. God had openly confirmed the life and ministry of Christ by miracles. He continued to confirm the testimony of the apostles by sending the Holy Spirit and by miracles. Evidence of God's anointing of Jesus with power abounded, so that Paul could say to Agrippa, "This thing was not done in a corner" (Acts 26:26).

Consecrated to God

3. Cleansing precedes all acceptable service (Leviticus 8:5-6). Men whom God calls to work for Him feel sinful, weak, incompetent, and unworthy of

the task. Isaiah's lips needed to be purged (Isaiah 6:7). Joshua, the high priest, needed clean garments (Zechariah 3:3-4). This cleansing not only enables us to serve God effectively but also prevents our affinity with the filth of the world. One brother was fascinated by the Budweiser cavalcade as he passed out tracts. He even told his family about it all when he returned home. As we reach out to the lost, we must be the holy priests of God, uncontaminated by their sin.

4. The work of the high priest was to bear the people to God (Leviticus 8:7-8). Think of the needs of humanity! Think of one man bearing them all! "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows" (Isaiah 53:4). "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses (Matthew 8:17), "Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation For the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted" (Hebrews 2:17-18).

5. The high priest's garments represented his consecration the priestly office (8:7-9). Gold connotes divinity, blue suggests heavenliness, purple symbolizes royalty, fine linen typifies righteousness, and scarlet signifies redemption. The revelation of God's will by Urim and Thummin represented the work of the prophet. Together, these pointed forward to Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King. "He shall be a priest upon his throne" (Zechariah 6:13).

6. The anointing of the high priest sanctified him for his work (Leviticus 8:10-12). Oil symbolized the Holy Spirit. By this anointing the high priest was set apart and empowered for his service. Aaron's anointing is described in Psalm 133:2. Aaron was sanctified in body, life, and service. Jesus was anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows (Hebrews 1:9). Jesus was anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power (Acts 10:38). Since Pentecost, all of God's people have been anointed by His Holy Spirit, even the servants and handmaidens. Every born-again person should be able to explain the plan of salvation and lead a soul to Christ. Every soul saved from sin should have the joy of the Lord and the fruit of the Spirit in his life. The zeal of the Lord should be among us from the least to the greatest. Tiers of commitment do not belong in our churches.

Confirmed by God

7. The high priest needed to first sacrifice for his own sins before he could atone for the people (Leviticus 9:8-9, 15-16). This sacrifice preserved his life when he went in before God. Sin must be dealt with prior to serving.

Sin must be dealt with before we can worship and observe the ordinances. Water baptism will not wash away sin. Communion brings damnation if sin is present.

8. The faithful high priest's work brought God's blessing upon the people (Leviticus 9:22-24). How fitting it was that Jesus departed from His disciples while blessing them. "And it came to pass while he blessed them he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy" (Luke 24:51-52) How fitting it is that the great Book of Hebrews describing our better High Priest, should close with a benediction blessing us through His work! "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen" (Hebrews 13:20-21).

Important Teachings

1. God established and directed the priestly office. (Leviticus 8:1-5).
2. The whole congregation witnessed the priestly charge. (Leviticus 8:3-4).
3. Cleansing precedes all acceptable service. (Leviticus 8:5-6).
4. The work of the high priest was to bear the people to God. (Leviticus 8:7-8).
5. The high priest's garments represented his consecration to the priestly office. (Leviticus 8:7-9).
6. The anointing of the high priest sanctified him for his work. (Leviticus 8:10-12).
7. The high priest needed to first sacrifice for his own sins before he could atone for the people. (Leviticus 9:8-9, 15-16).
8. The faithful high priest's work brought God's blessing upon the people. (Leviticus 9:22-24).

Answers to Questions

1. Why did Aaron need to be chosen by God?

To approach God as a high priest without proper authorization would be presumptuous. Such an act would have no mediatorial value. In His teaching on the Good Shepherd, Jesus describes such persons as thieves and robbers. The porter (God) does not open to them. Illustrations of those who offered out of due order are Saul and Uzziah.

2. How did God publicly testify to Christ's office as High Priest?

At Christ's baptism and transfiguration a voice from heaven approved Him. Christ was lifted up as a sacrifice for all to see. His blood was shed and seen by many witnesses. The title at His crucifixion was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin for all to read. The veil in the temple was rent in two. Miracles also confirmed the testimony of the disciples concerning Christ's resurrection. Christ's ascension and the sending of the Holy Spirit confirmed God's acceptance of His sacrifice.

3. What did the high priest's garments signify about Aaron's consecration?

The gold signified service to deity. Blue revealed a heavenly interest in his work. Scarlet represented the atonement by blood sacrifices. Fine linen typified holiness as he presented himself before God. The names of the tribes of Israel in the ephod and breastplate represented his ministry to the people, both as a personal work in meeting their needs and also presenting their needs to God.

4. What in the high priest's service pointed to Christ's ministry as prophet, priest, and king?

The revelation of God's will by the Urim and Thummin pointed to Christ's work as Prophet. The service of the tabernacle pointed to Christ as Priest. The holy crown pointed to His kingship.

5. Why is cleansing necessary for serving the Lord?

We serve a holy God. God requires that his servant be holy. To approach God in sin brings judgment and damnation. The world around us is unholy, as we minister to others we may be contaminated by the sins of the world. We must constantly allow the Spirit and the Word to purge our thoughts and lives so that we may serve the Lord with His approval.

6. As Christians, what resources help us to offer consecrated service to God?

Our own lives must be cleansed from sin, and we must possess the righteousness of Christ. We must be anointed by the Holy Spirit with power to resist sin, discern the devil's temptation, and witness to others. We need the Holy Spirit to illuminate the Word to us.

7. What was necessary for human priests before their service began? How is Christ's priesthood superior?

A sin offering needed to be offered on their behalf. Christ needed no sacrifice for Himself; He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.

8. What blessings result from mediation by God's divine plan?

God's wrath toward us and our sin is appeased. We are in favor with God. God's glory is revealed to people, and the world sees God's glory among them.

Summarizing the Lesson

"By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body Of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Hebrews 10:10-11).

The Levitical priesthood foreshadowed many aspects of the work of Christ. Yet in His person and in the scope of His work, He was far greater than any other man could be.

We do not compare the church leaders to the priests. In the typology of this lesson, Christ is our High Priest. The church is a kingdom of priests. All in the church are consecrated to the work of helping men find God. Psalm 133 is a beautiful picture of a church in united, consecrated, Spirit-filled service.

Research Guide

1. Study chapters 3-10 in the Book of Hebrews.
2. See entries related to the priesthood in a Bible dictionary.