

Leviticus 8-10

Introduction

What started as a one-off message from Exodus to help us understand how to use the Law lawfully has turned into a bit of a series through Leviticus. We spent the last couple times in the first seven chapters looking at the sacrifices that would be offered in the tabernacle. Here in chapter 8, we return to the actual story. We'll do a quick recap, but first let's talk about our approach.

I. Our approach in this section

- A. There's a lot of weird stuff in this section
 - a. Example: why the ram's blood on the right ear lobe, right thumb, and right big toe (8:24)?
 - b. We won't spend a lot of time talking about details like this. You guys actually have access to some really good theological libraries in this part of the state. (I know because I borrow from a bunch of them through ILL). As you read through these sections and see the weird stuff, it's helpful to have a few commentaries on hand to help you think through what's going on.
- B. My goal is to provide a framework within which to examine the details.
 - a. Chapter divisions can break up sections too much sometimes, so I want to help us get the flow of what's going on in this whole section.
 - b. Beyond that, I want us to ask our questions of this passage to understand how it can help us under the New Covenant.
 - b.i. What does this show us about our hearts?
 - b.ii. How does this foreshadow the New Covenant?
 - b.iii. How does this help us better understand our need?
 - b.iv. How does this help us better understand what Christ accomplished?

II. The flow

- A. Chapter 8
 - a. The story so far...
 - a.i. God heard the groanings of his people in Egypt and brought them out with great signs and wonders.
 - a.ii. He saved them from the Egyptians and brought them to Sinai, where he made them his people with a covenant.

- a.iii. Moses went up the mountain to meet with God, because the people were terrified when they heard God's voice.
- a.iv. He gave Moses instructions about how to build the tabernacle, how to make the holy instruments for the tabernacle, how to make the garments for the priests, and how to consecrate Aaron and his sons. All of this was to make provision for the people to worship God and fellowship with him.
- a.v. But then the people rebelled before Moses even got down from the mountain, and God nearly destroyed them and started over with Moses.
- a.vi. Moses interceded for the people, and God not only relented, but he renewed the covenant with them.
- a.vii. The people built the tabernacle according to the instructions which Moses received from God, and God made his presence dwell among the people in the tabernacle.
- a.viii. God then provides them a system of sacrifices to atone for the people, to pay for their sins, to provide for the priests, and to allow the people to fellowship with God and express their praise and their gratitude to him.
- a.ix. Now, finally, we're ready to get started with this thing! Moses is finally consecrating Aaron and his sons to minister to the people before the LORD and to bridge the gap between God and his people.

b. Key verses

- b.i. 8:1-2 – “Take Aaron and his sons and the garments and the anointing oil and the bull of the sin offering and the two rams and the basket of unleavened bread.”

- b.i.1. **What garments, anointing oil, etc?**

- b.i.2. This goes back to Exodus 28-29. When Moses was on the mountain, God gave him instructions to establish worship in the tabernacle, including consecrating priests.

- b.i.2.a. Chapter 28 is all about the priest's garments. There's a LOT in this chapter! I'm going to invoke Hebrews 9:5 – “Of these things we cannot now speak in detail.”

- b.i.2.b. Chapter 29 describes how to consecrate the priests.

- b.i.3. This passage goes step-by-step all the way through what God commanded. They do everything right.

- b.ii. 8:4 – “And Moses did as the LORD commanded him...”

- b.iii. 8:5 – “And Moses said to the congregation, ‘This is the thing the LORD has commanded to be done.’”

- b.iii.1. Moses is teaching the people how to live within the covenant. We'll see this pattern continue throughout this section.

- b.iv. 8:14-17 – We'll come back to this idea next time, but for now, just notice: what's the atonement for?

b.v. 8:36 – “And Aaron and his sons did all the things that the LORD commanded Moses.”

b.v.1. We’re continuing the trend from after the incident at Sinai. Not just Moses, but the people too are doing what God commands.

b.v.2. Fear of punishment can bring results...for a time.

B. Chapter 9

a. Following the instructions actually ended in chapter 8.

a.i. Exodus 29:37 prescribes seven days of offerings, and 8:35-36 says they did what was prescribed for seven days.

a.ii. It’s worth reading the rest of Exodus 29

a.ii.1. You kind of get the impression that the seven days is something of a practice run to give the new priests familiarity with their duties.

a.ii.2. This is the point at which God says he will meet with the people there at the entrance to the tent of meeting. **This becomes important soon...**

b. Moses adds some extra sacrifices for the eighth day.

b.i. Aaron makes offerings for himself and his sons, and the people also make an offering.

b.i.1. Which offerings do you see here? (all of them, basically).

b.i.2. We could get lost in the weeds here a bit, but I think the gist is Moses is preparing the people to meet with God

b.i.2.a. Sin offering – unintentional/ignorant sins

b.i.2.b. Burnt offering – general acceptance before God

b.i.2.c. Grain offering – acknowledging the priests’ service in bringing the people to God

b.i.2.d. Peace offering – celebration!

b.ii. I think this is a big party! Aaron and his sons have actually done everything they were supposed to, so God is about to fulfill his promise to make his presence dwell with the people.

c. Once again, we see Aaron do everything properly. He offers each different sacrifice according to the instructions we just went through in chapters 1-7.

d. God accepted their offerings and came among his people (vv. 22-24)! Awesome!

C. Chapter 10

a. Disaster!

a.i. Unauthorized (strange) fire

a.i.1. We don't know what this means. Was it the wrong incense mixture? Or coals from outside the tabernacle? Or...?

a.i.2. What we do know is that God forbade whatever it is back in Exodus 30:9. They knew better, but they did it anyway.

a.i.2.a. Perhaps they got caught up in the moment of celebration

a.i.2.b. This is a sobering reminder for those bringing people to God...

a.i.2.b.i. I think this applies to all believers as we make disciples. Are we bringing people to Christ in the way that he provided? Or are we adding to it or taking them down another path?

a.i.3. A word of warning: I saw one (well-respected) commentator who believed they were killed because they did things that were not commanded. "There is nothing in the detailed prescriptions of sacrifice which stated that anyone except the high priest should place incense upon a censer of coals and present it to God." **This idea comes from certain reformed traditions and has a name: the regulative principle of worship.** It's garbage. The problem is not innovation, but violation. God did not specify only the high priest, nor did he prohibit their service. In fact he does allow Aaron *and his sons* to minister at the altar in the Holy Place (Ex. 28:43). The problem is that they did what was actually forbidden and thereby violated the holiness of God.

a.i.3.a. Note: Moses is violating this principle in this chapter, because God did not command these sacrifices on this day.

a.ii. The priests became holy for touching the sin offering (6:27), and so they too were burned up like the offering had been.

a.ii.1. Holy isn't always a good thing.

b. The aftermath

b.i. There are bodies to clean up and positions to fill.

b.i.1. The priests' job is to instruct the people about holiness

b.i.1.a. This comes into play a lot in Jeremiah and Ezekiel

b.i.1.b. This actually becomes the lead-in to the next section

b.i.2. Why does Moses forbid mourning?

b.i.2.a. Perhaps to recognize the righteousness of God in this

b.i.2.b. We don't really know. God does not instruct Moses in this

b.i.2.b.i. Note: All over the place to this point we see, "As the LORD commanded Moses." This is absent here.

b.ii. The replacements

b.ii.1. Aaron's other two sons fill the spots left by their brothers and listen to Moses' instructions (v. 7)

b.ii.2. But not completely (v. 16)

b.ii.2.a. This goat of the sin offering is supposed to be eaten as well as the two that they did (cf. 6:26)

b.ii.2.b. Who is angry here?

b.ii.2.b.i. Moses is the one who is angry. God does not punish them for this

b.ii.2.c. Why doesn't God consume Aaron's other two sons? Two reasons

b.ii.2.c.i. God is not heartless. There is responsibility here, but even in this, God is gracious and compassionate. **God does not delight in the death of the wicked.**

b.ii.2.c.ii. Aaron recognizes something here that Moses did not. **Sacrifices do not take away sin; they provide a temporary cover.** Aaron did two things right, but it did not mitigate God's punishment when they got one wrong. So what's the point of doing it right now?

b.ii.2.c.iii. Moses recognizes this and relents. **He recognizes that they are dependent on God's mercy, not on doing the sacrifices correctly.**

b.ii.2.c.iv. The point of these sacrifices is not to take away sin in any ultimate sense. They do not impart righteousness. It is to instruct the people about how to approach God (cf. vv. 10-11).

III. What can we take away from this?

- A. A common takeaway from this passage: We need to keep the worship of God holy (or he'll get you!)
 - a. What do you think of that?
 - b. Remember the last part of the chapter?
 - b.i. Moses was angry
 - b.ii. God was not
 - c. The point of the sacrifices is not to keep the worship holy, per se. Worship methods are not the end in themselves.
 - d. The point is to come to God properly. How do we do that today?
- B. Maybe better: We need to treat what is holy as holy. We'll develop this idea more later in future lessons. For now, let's read James 4:6-10
 - a. We'll see God exalting the people again after this next time.
- C. Our questions:
 - a. What does this show us about our hearts?
 - a.i. We are prone to treat God in a profane way. As ordinary.
 - b. How does this foreshadow the New Covenant?
 - b.i. God provides the only way to him, and if we ignore that, we have no other hope (See Hebrews 10:19-31)
 - c. How does this help us better understand our need?
 - c.i. Our need is not merely to obey. Our need is for God's mercy to make us holy enough to be in his presence.
 - d. How does this help us better understand what Christ accomplished?
 - d.i. See the distance between God and his people under the Old Covenant?
 - d.ii. Jesus has entered for us to bring us to God.