

After all the details of chapters 1-7,  
you might be hoping for another sermon to put the whole picture together!

Well, that’s exactly what God thought you would need!  
So he gave us Leviticus chapter 8!

In Leviticus 8 you get to see how all the offerings fit together.

Leviticus is all about two things:

- 1) how you can come before God through the offerings, and
- 2) how you should live before God – in holiness.

Or, you might say that Leviticus is all about justification and sanctification.

Chapters 1-7 lay out the various offerings that God commanded.

Now we hear about how the priest was ordained.

The offerings were important to God –  
and so was the mediator who offered them.

Israel’s priesthood was to be hereditary.

Given that the promises of God revolved around the promised Seed,  
the Son who would come and deliver his people,  
it was fitting that the priesthood would pass from father to son.

### **Introduction (v1-4)**

*The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>2</sup> “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. <sup>3</sup> And assemble all the congregation at the entrance of the tent of meeting.” <sup>4</sup> And Moses did as the LORD commanded him, and the congregation was assembled at the entrance of the tent of meeting.*

Our text is punctuated seven times with the refrain,  
“as the LORD commanded Moses.”

In Exodus 28-29 we hear how God commanded the priest’s garments to be made,  
and the ritual that was to be followed in the consecration of the priests.

Leviticus 8 tells us that Moses obeyed God.

Just as Exodus 40 demonstrates that Moses did in fact build the tabernacle  
according to God’s design,  
so Leviticus 8 demonstrates that Moses consecrated Aaron and his sons  
according to God’s command.

First, Moses gathers the whole assembly at the tent of meeting.

The congregation of Israel will witness the consecration of those who will represent them  
in the offerings of the altar – who will deal with sin,  
and bring them near to God.

There are two parts to the consecration:

- 1) preparing the priests
- 2) the various offerings related to their consecration

### **1. The Preparation of the Priests (v5-13)**

The first part of the service consists of preparing the priests.

First they must be washed (8:6).

#### **a. Washing (v5-6)**

<sup>5</sup> And Moses said to the congregation, “This is the thing that the LORD has commanded to be done.” <sup>6</sup> And Moses brought Aaron and his sons and washed them with water.

In one sense, this is rather self-explanatory.

The priests must be cleansed.

Throughout their priestly ministry they will have to wash their hands and feet

“when they come near the altar...so that they may not die” (Ex 30:20).

Here, however, the washing seems to be more thorough.

Only at the ordination of the priest,

and for the high priest on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:4)

was a more thorough washing required.

But in another sense, it is important to note that this washing is a *public* washing.

This wasn’t just something to be done *in advance*.

This is part of the whole ritual of priestly consecration.

And yes – you should be hearing echoes of Peter in John 13 when he says

“don’t just wash my feet, Lord, wash all of me!”

And Jesus replies that Peter has already been cleansed –

he just needs to have his feet washed.

Jesus is saying that in your baptism you have been cleansed –

though, as he says immediately thereafter, “not every one of you” –

since he knew who was to betray him.

Your baptism is your priestly consecration –

or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ

have put on Christ?!

#### **b. Clothing (v7-9)**

<sup>7</sup> 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.<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>8</sup> And he placed the breastpiece on him, and in the breastpiece he put the Urim and the Thummim. <sup>9</sup> And he set the turban on his head, and on the turban, in front, he set the golden plate, the holy crown, as the LORD commanded Moses.

Second, the priest was clothed (8:7-9)—here it describes Aaron’s clothes:

His undergarment was a tunic (extended to the knees), tied with a sash.

Above that he wore a tricolor robe (woven in one piece)

adorned with pomegranates and gold bells (Ex. 28).

Then came the ephod (a shoulder garment which covered breast and back to the waist)

And finally the breastpiece (held in place by two shoulder pieces—like collars)

—containing twelve stones, one for each of the twelve tribes of Israel.

And on his head, the high priest wore a turban,

which contained a plate reading, “Holiness to the LORD.”

The priestly garments reflected the glory of the Lord.

A holy priest must be clean—he must also be dressed in holy garments.

You should hear echoes of Colossians 3 here —

putting on Christ and his holy garments!

### **c. Anointing (v10-13)**

<sup>10</sup> Then Moses took the anointing oil and anointed the tabernacle and all that was in it, and consecrated them. <sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> And he poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron's head and anointed him to consecrate him. <sup>13</sup> 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.

And so next, the priest was anointed.

The oil of anointing is described in Exodus 30:22-25.

It consisted of olive oil mixed with myrrh, cinnamon, cane, and cassia.

This holy anointing oil was to be sprinkled on the tabernacle,

on the altar, and on the high priest.

The tabernacle was holy, because it was the dwelling place of God.

The altar was holy, because it was the place where the holy sacrifices were offered.

And the high priest was holy,

because he was the mediator between God and his people.

The outward things of the Levitical priesthood were designed as patterns  
of the inward things that should characterize the people of God.

Our problem is that we all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

And our priests were no better than the rest of us!

This is highlighted by the rebellion of *Aaron* back in Exodus 32-34 –  
when Aaron made a golden calf, in defiance of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Commandment!  
That same Aaron is now being consecrated as high priest!

It's not because he was the most holy person in the congregation.  
It was because God called him.  
His holiness comes from God – not from himself!

Aaron “was singled out as having been chosen by the Lord.”  
Only the high priest was anointed with oil.  
The special oil of anointing was reserved for the high priest.

The New Testament connects the consecration of the priests with baptism.  
You see this first in the baptism of Jesus –  
where Jesus is washed with water by John (who himself was a priest!) –  
and then Jesus offered himself as the atoning sacrifice –  
the sin offering, the burnt offering, and the peace offering!

Which then leads to *our* consecration as a holy priesthood in him.

Hebrews 10:22,  
in the context of teaching that the new covenant brings a new priesthood,  
calls us to “draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith,  
with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience  
and our bodies washed with pure water.”  
We are consecrated as priests in Jesus Christ,  
and just as the OT priests entered their service through water and blood,  
so also the NT priesthood (all of us) enter our service  
through water and blood as well  
–the water of baptism and the blood of Jesus Christ.

## **2. The Offerings (v14-32)**

The various offerings then take up the main part of the ritual of consecration.

There is a bull for the sin offering  
(given that Aaron had made a “golden *calf*” it is perhaps fitting  
that there is a *bull* for the sin offering!)

Then there is a ram for the burnt offering – or ascension offering.

Then there is another ram for the ordination offering –  
which most closely resembles the peace offering,  
except the only worshipers are the priests!

### **a. The Sin Offering for the Priest (v14-17)**

**i. Blood to Purify the Altar and Make Atonement for It (v14-16)**

*<sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> And he<sup>lb</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> 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.*

Normally, the burnt offering is the *foundation* for all other offerings.

But what do you do when no one is worthy to offer a burnt offering!

How can you ascend the hill of the LORD,

when there is no one who is worthy to enter his presence?!

But God provides a way when there is no way!

And so Moses brings the bull of the sin offering –

and Aaron and his sons lay their hands on the head of the bull of the sin offering.

As we have seen, laying hands on the head of the animal sets it apart

to be my representative.

In the case of the sin offering, the animal takes my sin upon itself.

The blood of the *sin offering* is placed on the altar – purifying the altar –  
consecrating the altar to make atonement for it.

The altar itself must be consecrated – set apart for the holy work that it must do.

The altar is the place where the LORD's food offerings will be made.

This is where the burnt offerings will ascend in the smoke in our place.

So before you offer *anything* on this altar,

it must be purified with blood

(Hebrews 9:22 says that *almost everything* was purified with blood in the OT!).

The priests must be purified before they can offer sacrifices for others.

Likewise the altar must bear the sign of the blood of the covenant

before it is fit for the work of atonement.

That's why the sin offering cannot be burned on the altar:

**ii. Burned Outside the Camp (v17)**

*<sup>17</sup> 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.*

How do you imagine this moment?

“Hang on, guys, I’ll be back in an hour...”

And then Moses and a few helpers carry an entire bull (cut up in pieces) –

out of the camp (that would take a little while to walk!).  
Undoubtedly they already had a good bonfire going!  
But quite possibly Moses simply *sent* the bull to be burned...  
It would still be true that *he* burned it with fire outside the camp –  
so long as the people who did it were under his orders!

But as we saw before,  
the sin offering for a priest – or a sin offering for the whole community –  
must be burned *outside the camp*.

And so Hebrews 13:11-12 points out that Jesus suffered outside the camp  
because he was the *sin offering* –  
“in order to sanctify the people through his own blood.”

What can wash away my sin?  
“nothing but the blood of Jesus!”

#### **b. The Ascension (Burnt) Offering (v18-21)**

<sup>18</sup> Then he presented the ram of the burnt offering, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the ram. <sup>19</sup> And he killed it, and Moses threw the blood against the sides of the altar. <sup>20</sup> He cut the ram into pieces, and Moses burned the head and the pieces and the fat. <sup>21</sup> 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.

With the altar consecrated – and the sin of the priests atoned for –  
now the priests may ascend the hill of the LORD.

And so Aaron and his sons lay their hands on the head of the ram,  
and Aaron killed the ram, and Moses threw its blood against the sides of the altar.

Again, Moses serves as the “priest” – and burns the whole ram on the altar.  
“an ascension offering with a pleasing aroma, an offering by fire to the LORD”

As we have seen, the burnt offering – or ascension offering –  
is where the whole animal ascends in the fire as a pleasing aroma to God.

Since this is only focused on the consecration of the priests,  
the point here is that the *priests* are saying to God,  
“We are here to worship to you –  
we are here to ascend to your holy place.”

(As we’ll see, they have to do this for *seven days* for themselves –  
before they can enter their priestly service on the *eighth day* –

when they can start to do this for *others*!

**c. The Ordination (Peace) Offering (v22-32)**

**i. Blood on the Right Ear, Thumb, and Big Toe (v22-24)**

*<sup>22</sup> Then he presented the other ram, the ram of ordination, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the ram. <sup>23</sup> 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. <sup>24</sup> 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.*

Verses 22-32 then turn to the ordination offering –  
“the ram of ordination.”

This is – in effect – a peace offering.

But the reason why it is not *called* a peace offering  
is because the peace offering was where all Israel could partake.  
But in this case, only the priests can partake –  
(after all, they are not yet worthy – they have not yet been consecrated –  
to intercede for others).

And so it is called “the ram of ordination” –  
a “peace offering for the priests.”

But also, there is this curious ritual of putting some of the blood  
on the right ear lobe, the right thumb, and the right big toe  
of Aaron and his sons.

And then the rest of the blood gets thrown against the sides of the altar.

What is going on?!

Watch the blood.

The blood of the sin offering is put on the horns of the altar to purify the altar,  
and is then poured out at the base of the altar  
to consecrate it and make atonement for it.

The blood of the burnt offering is thrown against the sides of the altar.  
All of it goes directly to God.

The blood of the ordination offering is placed on Aaron and his sons,  
and then is thrown against the sides of the altar.

The blood of the sin offering consecrates the altar  
(and the sin offering itself is burned outside the camp).  
The blood of the burnt offering is entirely for God  
(just like the animal itself).

The blood of the ordination offering consecrates the priests  
(just like they will partake of a portion of the ordination offering).

And the symbolism is pretty straightforward:

It is placed on Aaron's right ear, so that he might *hear* the Word of the LORD.

It is placed on his right thumb, so that he might *do* the Word of the LORD.

It is placed on his right big toe, so that he might *walk* in the ways of the LORD.

The rest of the blood is thrown against the altar –  
because this connects Aaron and the altar.  
The same blood that is upon *you* is upon the altar!

Look over at Hebrews 9:

<sup>11</sup> But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) <sup>12</sup> he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. <sup>13</sup> For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, <sup>14</sup> how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our<sup>[g]</sup> conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

The same blood that has consecrated the heavenly things –  
has also consecrated *you*.  
The blood of Christ has purified the heavenly altar!  
Why does the heavenly altar need purification?!  
Isn't the heavenly altar already pure?!!!

We misunderstand the meaning of "pure"!

The purification of the altar  
does not mean that there is anything inherently *wrong* with the altar!  
But if an altar is about to be used for sacrifice –  
if an altar is going to become a place where God and man can meet –  
then that altar needs to be consecrated – set apart – purified –  
for that purpose!

And so Hebrews 9:23 says,

"Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites  
but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these."

"But as it is (v26) he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin  
by the sacrifice of himself."

## **ii. Fat, Liver, and Kidneys – and Right Thigh – with Unleavened Bread**



### **as Wave Offering (v25-28)**

*<sup>25</sup> 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, <sup>26</sup> 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. <sup>27</sup> 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. <sup>28</sup> 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.*

The next part of the ordination offering follows the pattern of the peace offering –  
with the “wave offering” of unleavened bread, the fat, the liver, and the kidneys,  
and the right thigh of the ram –  
all of which are burned in the fire.

Ordinarily the wave offering of the right thigh and the bread belonged to the priest.  
Usually it was just the fat, the liver, and the kidneys that were burned in the fire.  
But in this case, there was no priest!  
Moses is functioning as “priest” – but he does not claim *this* as his portion.  
By burning it in the fire, he asserts that *God himself* is ordaining Aaron.

This was not *Moses*’s decision.  
This is the will of the LORD.

### **iii. Moses’ Portion – the Breast (v29)**

*<sup>29</sup> 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.*

But Moses acknowledges that he also plays a part.  
He *is* the LORD’s instrument in consecrating Aaron and his sons –  
and so Moses accepts the breast of the ram as his portion –  
*as the LORD commanded Moses.*  
(Remember, all of this is laid out in Exodus 29).

### **iv. Anointing Oil and Blood to Consecrate Aaron and His Garments (v30)**

*<sup>30</sup> 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.*

Only now does Moses take the anointing oil and blood from the altar,  
and sprinkle it on Aaron and his garments – and his sons and their garments. (v30)

Think about this!

These beautiful – costly – glorious garments that were made for Aaron and his sons  
are stained with blood and oil on their first day on the job!

Not by accident – but on purpose!!!

You can only imagine what Oholiab – the embroiderer – must have been thinking...

Except... if Oholiab understood the purpose of what he had made,  
he would have been weeping with tears of *joy*!

He would not have seen stains from carelessness or misuse.  
He would have seen the blood from the altar.  
He would have seen the holy anointing oil.

And he would have seen, by faith, the work of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit  
woven together into the fabric of his own craftsmanship!

**v. Aaron and His Sons Partake of the Ordination Offering (v31-32)**

<sup>31</sup> *And Moses said to Aaron and his sons, “Boil the flesh at the entrance of the tent of meeting, and there eat it and the bread that is in the basket of ordination offerings, as I commanded, saying, ‘Aaron and his sons shall eat it.’* <sup>32</sup> *And what remains of the flesh and the bread you shall burn up with fire.*

Finally, Aaron and his sons are to boil the meat at the entrance of the tent of meeting –  
where they will partake of the meat – and the bread of the ordination offerings.

We have peace with God!  
God has opened a way for humanity to enter his presence.  
He has brought us to his banqueting table.  
We are home.

But even in this joyful moment of *shalom* –  
there is a warning (v32):  
“and what remains of the flesh and the bread you shall burn up with fire.”

God is holy.  
You cannot treat him and his ways lightly.  
When you have eaten your fill –  
do not take the leftovers home;  
do not leave any for tomorrow.  
Burn the rest in the fire.

The LORD is holy.  
Do not treat the LORD’s holy things as though they were common!

The NT is really clear that the OT rituals are no longer in force.

But the principles remain valuable for us.

Do not treat the LORD's holy things – and especially his holy *people!* –  
as common.

### **3. Seven Days of Ordination – and the Importance of the Eighth Day (v33-36)**

<sup>33</sup> *And you shall not go outside the entrance of the tent of meeting for seven days, until the days of your ordination are completed, for it will take seven days to ordain you.* <sup>34</sup> *As has been done today, the LORD has commanded to be done to make atonement for you.* <sup>35</sup> *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.* <sup>36</sup> *And Aaron and his sons did all the things that the LORD commanded by Moses.*

Then in verse 33 we hear that Aaron and his sons must remain in the tent of meeting for seven days.

It may be that Moses is saying that they need to do the same ritual each day for seven days (v35 says, “performing what the LORD has charged, so that you do not die, for so I have been commanded” – and this ritual is the only thing that the LORD commanded!)

Why does it take seven days to make atonement?

Because this creation has fallen short.

God created the heavens and the earth in six days –  
and on the seventh day, God rested from all his work.

God established the Sabbath day as a day for man to *enter* God's rest.

All the other rhythms of life are based on the natural patterns of creation:  
the year and its seasons are based on how the earth goes around the sun;  
the month and its phases are patterned after the moon;  
the day is based on the alternation of light and darkness.

But the week?

The seven-day week is based *not* on the natural patterns of creation –  
but based on the pattern of the Creator Himself!  
God made us after his own image and likeness.  
And as he made all things in six days – and rested on the seventh day –  
so he created us to be like him –  
that we might work for six days and rest on the seventh!

But this creation has fallen short.

There is no way back into the Garden of Eden.

The cherub with a flaming sword guards the way.  
And now his likeness stands guard at the holy place –  
preventing Aaron and his sons from entering into the Most Holy Place!

And so Aaron and his sons must spend *seven days* – six days plus one –  
as the representatives of Adam,  
waiting outside the Most Holy Place.

What are they waiting for?  
The eighth day.  
There must be a day *beyond* the seventh day.  
In the Ten Commandments,  
the seventh day reminds us of Creation (Ex 20) –  
and the seventh day reminds us that we were slaves in Egypt (Dt 5);  
but that means that the seventh day always points beyond itself to another day!

And then we realize that God was doing this all through the scriptures.  
He gave Abraham the sign of circumcision – to be performed on the eighth day –  
because entrance into God's covenant is always an "eighth day" thing.  
The priests can only enter their priestly service on the eighth day.  
The unclean will be cleansed and restored to the community on the eighth day.  
The main days of worship and partaking of peace offerings  
will be first or eighth day feasts (the first day of Passover –  
the day of Pentecost is  $7 \times 7 + 1$  – the 50<sup>th</sup> day! –  
and the Feast of booths has sacred assemblies on the 1<sup>st</sup> day and the 8<sup>th</sup> day

The way to ascend the hill of the LORD  
is when God begins a *new creation*.

And that is what God has done in Jesus – *and in you*.  
As Paul says, "if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation."  
The new creation has come in Christ –  
and so those who have been united to Christ by faith,  
now share in that new reality!

A few months ago, Aaron had led a rebellion against God's law.  
He had made a golden calf – in direct defiance against the LORD.  
Now, Aaron is being anointed as high priest –  
so that he might lead a sinful people *back* to God.

God does not require that you have a spotless record in order to come to him.  
He cleanses, purifies, and consecrates you *so that* you might come to him!