

The Glory of the LORD

And the Appearance of the LORD on the Eighth Day

Leviticus 9:1 On the eighth day Moses called Aaron and his sons and the elders of Israel,

² and he said to Aaron, "Take for yourself a bull calf for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering, both without blemish, and offer them before the LORD.

³ And say to the people of Israel, 'Take a male goat for a sin offering, and a calf and a lamb, both a year old without blemish, for a burnt offering,

⁴ and an ox and a ram for peace offerings, to sacrifice before the LORD, and a grain offering mixed with oil, for today the LORD will appear to you.'"

⁵ And they brought what Moses commanded in front of the tent of meeting, and all the congregation drew near and stood before the LORD.

⁶ And Moses said, "This is the thing that the LORD commanded you to do, that the glory of the LORD may appear to you."

⁷ Then Moses said to Aaron, "Draw near to the altar and offer your sin offering and your burnt offering and make atonement for yourself and for the people, and bring the offering of the people and make atonement for them, as the LORD has commanded."

⁸ So Aaron drew near to the altar and killed the calf of the sin offering, which was for himself.

⁹ And the sons of Aaron presented the blood to him, and he dipped his finger in the blood and put it on the horns of the altar and poured out the blood at the base of the altar.

¹⁰ But the fat and the kidneys and the long lobe of the liver from the sin offering he burned on the altar, as the LORD commanded Moses.

¹¹ The flesh and the skin he burned up with fire outside the camp.

¹² Then he killed the burnt offering, and Aaron's sons handed him the blood, and he threw it against the sides of the altar.

¹³ And they handed the burnt offering to him, piece by piece, and the head, and he burned them on the altar.

¹⁴ And he washed the entrails and the legs and burned them with the burnt offering on the altar.

¹⁵ Then he presented the people's offering and took the goat of the sin offering that was for the people and killed it and offered it as a sin offering, like the first one.

¹⁶ And he presented the burnt offering and offered it according to the rule.

¹⁷ And he presented the grain offering, took a handful of it, and burned it on the altar, besides the burnt offering of the morning.

¹⁸ Then he killed the ox and the ram, the sacrifice of peace offerings for the people. And Aaron's sons handed him the blood, and he threw it against the sides of the altar.

¹⁹ But the fat pieces of the ox and of the ram, the fat tail and that which covers the entrails and the kidneys and the long lobe of the liver--

²⁰ they put the fat pieces on the breasts, and he burned the fat pieces on the altar,

²¹ but the breasts and the right thigh Aaron waved for a wave offering before the LORD, as Moses commanded.

²² Then Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them, and he came down from offering the sin offering and the burnt offering and the peace offerings.

²³ And Moses and Aaron went into the tent of meeting, and when they came out they blessed the people, and the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people.

²⁴ And fire came out from before the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the pieces of fat on the altar, and when all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces.

(Lev 9:1-24)

The Problem of God's Presence

The last chapter of Exodus is the climax of 40 chapters of incredible miracles and appearances of God. From the burning bush, to the pillars of cloud and fire, to the terrifying coming of God on Mt. Sinai, from the plagues of Egypt and the Passover, to the Red Sea Crossing, to the giving of the Ten Commandments and the instructions for the tabernacle, everything has been pointing towards a finale.

Chapter 40 begins, “On the first day of the first month you shall erect the tabernacle of the tent of meeting” (Ex 40:2). Whatever is going to happen, it will forever mark New Year's Day in the Jewish calendar. This will be that finale. It then goes on to detail seven formulas of things Moses is to do which parallel the seven days of creation.

<i>Genesis 1</i>		<i>Exodus 40</i>
INTRO Formula	In the beginning God created	Moses did according to all the LORD commanded
Formula 1	Space (separate light darkness)	Frame and covering (separation) (FORMS)
Formula 2	Sky and Sea (separation)	MOST HOLY: 10 cs, poles, mercy seat, Ark, veil, screen (separation)
Formula 3	Land: vegetation, fruit, food	Holy: Table, bread (FILLS)
Formula 4	Space Filled: Sun, moon, stars	Lampstand, table, light
Formula 5	Sky Filled: Birds	Altar, burned incense (smoke rises)
Formula 6	Land Filled: Beasts, crawlings, Man	Veil, outside altar, burnt offering
Formula 7	REST	Laver, put water in it, washed

Then, on this same day, “You shall bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance of the tent of meeting and shall wash them with water and put on Aaron the holy garments. And you shall anoint him and consecrate him, that he may serve me as priest” (13). In Exodus 40, we learn that Moses did everything exactly as the LORD had commanded. The tabernacle was erected, and the priests were ordained on the first day of the new year. We saw in Leviticus 8 how it gave the details for the priestly ordination part of this.

Back in Exodus, as if returning to Genesis 1:2 or 2:2 where God is looking down on his creation as the One who formed and filled it, just five verses from the end of the book, we read of one last appearing of God to the people. “Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle” (Ex 40:34). God showed his presence to the people. He would be with them and be their God. However, a major problem arises. The next verse states, “And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled don it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle” (35). Someone states the problem this way. “The inability to approach God’s tent is presented as a problem that needs to be

overcome ... if he cannot enter, then no one is able to do so.”¹ If Moses is trying to show us that Exodus 40 is really a new creation, then in one sense, this keeps us in that place between Genesis 1 and Genesis 2, prior to Adam’s being “put” in the Garden. God has made his man fit to serve the sanctuary, but he is not yet allowed to go in. Something else must be done first.

Unlike Genesis, that something is what the **first 7 chapters of Leviticus** are all about. Leviticus 1 is meant to be read right after Exodus 40. These seven chapters provide the necessary explanation, something that was not needed in Genesis 1-2, for how this problem will be solved. **Sacrifices**. It is after sacrifices that Leviticus 8 retells the story of Aaron’s ordination, something only just touched on in Exodus 40. Like the last part of Exodus, we learn in Lev 8 that this ordination was itself chocked full of “sevens,” thus continuing to take our minds back to creation. Moses obeys **seven** times, blood is sprinkled **seven** times (**Lev 8:11**), and most importantly for us now, the ceremony last **seven** days (**33, 35**).

¹ **L. Michael Morales**, *Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord?: A Biblical Theology of the Book of Leviticus*, ed. D. A. Carson, vol. 37, *New Studies in Biblical Theology* (England; Downers Grove, IL: Apollos; InterVarsity Press, 2015), 116, 118.

The Solution to God's Presence Anticipated

This catches us up now to where we left off. Leviticus 9 continues with the timeline first introduced way back in **Exodus 40:2**. “On the eighth day Moses called Aaron and his sons and the elders of Israel.” The eighth day from what? The eighth day from the beginning of the ordination ritual. The eighth day of the new year.

Eight is a very important number in the Bible. Based off a system of sevens, eight both ends a cycle and beings a new one. In the Psalms for instance, it is often paired with the word “**the end**” (LXX). Jerome says of the purpose of **Psalm 5** for instance, “**The Church winning the inheritance at the end**” (Jerome).² In **Psalm 119**, the number divides the sections of the song and in doing so divides the day into eight parts. In all of the “eighth” psalms, Messiah in his coming(s) or death or resurrection is seen as the end-purpose of the song.

The few times **the number** appears in the Bible **up to this point** we have the **eighth** day rite of **circumcision** (**Gen 17:12**), where the Christ's death and the Spirit's coming are clearly what the ceremony has as its final ultimate reason for

² See my sermon on Psalm 5-6.

being (cf. **Rom 2:28-29**; **Php 3:3**). It is also a number associated with the **firstborn** (**Ex 22:30**). Those firstborn end up belonging to God, and in Abraham's day, the firstborn son was given certain privileges which later would belong to the priests.³ I believe God wanted the events of Leviticus 9 to begin on the eighth, or what one Bible headline calls the "**Octave of the Ordination**" (NABRE), because it symbolizes some **very important future things**, even as it completes the installation of Aaron and his sons into Israel's priesthood.

As we turn to the chapter itself, it is divided into three sections:

- I. Moses' commands to Aaron to the congregation (9:1-4)**
 - a. Aaron obeys (implied in vs. 5)
 - b. The congregation obeys (vs. 5-6)
- II. Moses' command to Aaron (7)**
 - a. Aaron obeys by offering a purification offering for his own sins (8-11)
 - b. Aaron obeys by offering other sacrifices for the people (12-21)
- III. Fire from the Lord (22-24)**

The **first two sections** begin with **Moses commanding**. They then end with the **obedience of those commanded**. In the case of the first section, it also ends with a

³ **Scott W. Hahn**, *Kinship by Covenant: A Canonical Approach to the Fulfillment of God's Saving Promises* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2009), 136ff.

justification or reason for the command. “That the glory of the LORD may appear to you” (Lev 9:6). Reading Exodus and Leviticus consecutively, like they were meant, how this happens will return us to that problem raised at the end of Exodus, which the entire narrative of Leviticus has been waiting to be resolved.

Commands and Obedience (Part I)

The first set of commands is directed at Aaron and his sons and the elders of Israel (Lev 9:1). These are given by Moses who was given these commands throughout this book by the LORD, the Mediator, the Word of God. The first command is directed at Aaron. “Take for yourself a bull calf for a sin/purification offering and a ram for a burnt (someone calls this the ascension) offering, both without blemish, and offer them before the LORD” (Lev 9:2).

In the previous chapter, Moses did all the sacrificing. Now, it is the high priest’s turn. Aaron must offer a sacrifice for himself. Wenham notes how “Jewish commentators have long noted the irony of this command to Aaron. The first sacrifice he has to offer is a calf, as if to atone for his

sin in making the golden calf (Ex 32), while the ram for a burnt offering recalls the same animal offered by Abraham instead of Isaac (Gen 22).”⁴ In this way, while not always in mind in this offering, “The sinfulness of man is certainly underlined by this command.”

Moses then directs Aaron to say to the people of Israel, “Take a male goat for a sin offering, and a calf and a lamb, both a year old without blemish, for a burnt (ascension) offering” (3). Then they are to take “an ox and a ram for peace offerings, to sacrifice before the LORD, and a grain offering mixed with oil” (4). All of the offerings except the special cased reparation/guilt offering will be offered on this eighth-first day when Aaron begins his priestly service in the tabernacle. “This indicates that the purpose of these sacrifices was not to atone for specific sins, but for the general sinfulness of the nation, to dedicate the whole people to the worship of God according to his appointed means, and to pray for God’s blessing on them.”⁵

It is interesting that when you add up the number of animals you get seven. Then when you add the grain offering,

⁴ Gordon J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1979), 148.

⁵ Wenham, 149.

you have a total of **eight** sacrifices.⁶ This fits that pattern that goes all the way back to creation, for what is taking place now is in fact a new creation, which is why this eight-day ceremony begins the **Jewish New Year**.

A **reason** is given at the end for doing this. “**For today the LORD will appear to you**” (**Lev 9:4**). This is a **new thing**. Previously, the people were said to have seen “**the thunder and the flashes of lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking**” (**Ex 20:18**). They also saw the pillar of cloud and fire, and the cloud covering the tabernacle (**40:34**). But they have never been said to see the LORD himself. I’ll come back to this in a moment.

The next two verses tell us that **everyone obeyed**. “**And they brought what Moses commanded in front of the tent of meeting, and all the congregation drew near and stood before the LORD**” (**5**). A couple of things to notice here are, first, the entire **congregation is represented by the elders** in **vs. 1**. Therefore, you are not to think that a million people somehow crammed themselves into the small space of the courtyard. I’m sure that out in the mountainous wilderness, many were climbing rocks and gathering close by to peak

⁶ Noticed in **Roy Gane**, *Leviticus, Numbers*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 178.

over the walls to see what would happen. But it was the elders who represented the people who appear to have gone into the precinct.

Second, they **drew near to the LORD**. This phrase is important, because in the OT, God is with his people not in his people (like at Pentecost). He comes to them in their midst. He comes to them at the tabernacle, which is his house. He is in the inner sanctum, in the Holy of Holies, on his ark-throne. This will become important for what happens at the end of the chapter.

Vs. 6 reiterates the point that the LORD had commanded them to do these things and now adds, “**That the glory of the LORD may appear to you.**” Notice that in **vs. 4** is the **Yahweh who appears**. In vs. 6 is **the Glory of Yahweh who appears**. There is something interesting to note here in the Targums. All three of the Targums on Leviticus add a word to vs. 4. One adds the word “**Glory**” (Onkelos), thereby making vs. 4 exactly parallel vs. 6. Other adds “**Memra**” (Neofiti). Still another adds “**The Glory of the Shekinah**” (Pseudo-Jonathan), which is a rather redundant way of putting it, since the Shekinah is the Glory.

Some scholars will tell you that the Jews did this to create a buffer between God and man. It was intolerable that

anyone should see the LORD himself, so they had to say that they would only see the Glory of the LORD or the Glory of the Glory of the LORD, or the Word of the LORD. This presupposes that the two are not the same. But when you read vs. 6 with vs. 4 it is plain that the Glory of the LORD *is* the LORD. In one, the Glory of the LORD will appear; in the other the LORD himself will appear.

This is no contradiction, if one is a Trinitarian. It would only be a problem for a Unitarian, someone for whom the Glory or the Word could not possibly be the LORD himself. But the NT Christians knew that “*The Spirit of glory and of God rests upon*” us (1Pe 4:14). And that we behold “*the Glory of the Lord ... in the face of Jesus Christ*” (2Co 3:18; 4:6). They are the Glory of the Father (Rom 6:4; Php 2:11; 2Pe 1:17; etc.). I strongly believe that the early Jews knew that both the Glory and the Word *were* the LORD, and all these Targums are doing is explaining that what they would behold was not God in his essence, but the Second and/or Third Person(s) of the Godhead.⁷

⁷ See the books put out by Waters of Creation Publishing by Peter Allix, Gerard De Gols, and John Owen in the Christ in All Scripture Series.

Commands and Obedience (Part II)

Aaron's Offerings for Himself

With the full obedience of Aaron and the elders and the congregation now behind us, the text now **focuses in on Aaron**. Moses will now give Aaron some commands. “**Draw near to the altar and offer your sin offering and your burnt offering and make atonement for yourself and for the people, and bring the offering of the people and make atonement for them, as the LORD has commanded**” (**Lev 9:7**). The purpose of these offers will be to **atone for sin or general uncleanness**, to **purify the space** of any other contamination, and to **prepare the people** to meet God through sacrifices that are pleasing to him as gifts. For them to see God, everything must be made holy.

It begins with Aaron obeying the LORD **on behalf of himself**. “**So Aaron drew near to the altar [that is the altar in the courtyard] and killed the calf of the sin/purification offering, which was for himself**” (**vs. 8**). The details hereafter simply explain that he is doing everything **just as we have seen in prescribed** in earlier chapters. The sons of Aaron present the **blood** to Aaron and now rather than Moses, it is

Aaron who dips his finger in the blood and puts it on the horns of the altar and pours out the blood at the base of the altar (9). He takes all the fat and the entrails and burns them on the altar as God had commanded (10). He takes the flesh and skin and burns it with fire outside the camp (11).

He then kills the burnt offering. Aaron's sons hand him the blood, he throws it against the side of the altar (12). They hand him the burnt offering, piece by piece along with the head, and he burns them on the altar (13). He washes the entrails and legs and burns them on the altar (14). And thus, the work on his own behalf is completed.

Aaron's Offerings for the People

Vs. 15 sees the new set of offerings commence. “Then he presented the people's offering...” He takes the goat of the sin/purification offering for the people and kills it and offers it as he did with the calf for himself. He presents the burnt offering and offers it according to the rule (16). He presents the grain offering, with a handful of it, and burns it on the altar, besides the burnt offering of the morning (17).

He then kills the ox and ram, which are the sacrifices of peace offerings for the people (these will be eaten). Aaron and

his sons hand him the blood, he throws it against the sides of the altar (18). The fat pieces along with the fat tail and that which covers the entrails (19) along with the fat pieces on the breasts are burned on the altar (20). The breasts and right thigh are waved/raised for a [wave/elevation offering](#) before the LORD, as Moses commanded (21). And the sacrifices for the people are completed.

Prayer of Blessing

When all of this was finished, Aaron did [something beautiful](#) for the people. “[Then Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them, and he came down from offering the sin offering and the burnt offering and the peace offerings](#)” (22). The last part of the verse shows that Aaron was [elevated](#). He had probably performed this prayer from a lofty position at the top of a ramp leading up to the altar.⁸ The point is, [everyone could see him](#).

⁸ Milgrom notes that theoretically, he need not have ascended the altar, because its top could have been reached standing on the ground; it was only three cubits (approx. 4½ ft.) high. But its length and width were five by five cubits (approx. 7½ x 7½ ft.). Thus, the priest would have no choice but to ascend it in order to reach every part of its upper surface. That he would have gone up a ramp rather than steps is explained in Exodus 20:26. See [Jacob Milgrom](#), *A Continental Commentary: Leviticus: A Book of Ritual and Ethics* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2004), 90.

His action is depicted as **lifting up his hands** and **spreading them outward towards the people**. Usually, when hands are lifted, they are lifted towards God. This is a variation. Having the hands up and out towards the people is a symbol of power going out (in the reverse way that hands down and palms out would be receiving that power). In this case, it is **the power of God** through the priest.

That power of the **power to bless**. While it doesn't tell us what he said, that hasn't stopped many from speculating. Some think Aaron gave the famous blessing from **Numbers 6:23**. “The LORD bless you and keep you. The LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. The LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.” A Targum gives a different blessing, “**May the Memra of the Lord receive your sacrifices favorably, and remit and forgive your sins**” (T. PsJon Lev 9:23). A place in the Talmud says, “**May it be the divine will that his Presence will rest on all the work of your hands**” (*t. Menah.* 7:8).⁹

Whatever the case, it is a blessing. In the OT, **this word** usually refers to the **giving of descendants**. “**God blesses by**

t. Tosefta

Menah. Menahot

⁹ Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 3, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 588.

intensifying the natural processes, making them more productive than they normally would be. When a human, in this case a priest, pronounces a blessing, the effectiveness of the blessing is not dependent upon the authority or power of the one who pronounces the blessing, nor upon the inherent power of the spoken word.”¹⁰ That’s the point of the famous Aaronic blessing. It is the LORD who must bless. This serves as a prayer that he would do it.

Prayer leads to the next verse. It says, “Moses and Aaron went into the tent of meeting.” This is the reversal of the problem from Exodus 40 where Moses was not allowed to enter. What did they do there? The oldest interpretation is that they went in there to pray. “But when the offerings had been made and the Shekinah was not revealed Aaron was bewildered, and he said to Moses, ‘Perhaps the Memra of the Lord was not pleased with the works of my hands.’ Then Moses and Aaron went into the tent of meeting and prayed for the people of the house of Israel” (T. PsJon Lev 9:23). Many modern scholars follow this interpretation.¹¹

The key words in the entire passage come next. “... and when they came out they blessed the people, and the glory

¹⁰ Mark F. Rooker, *Leviticus*, vol. 3A, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 153.

¹¹ See Gane, 179.

of the LORD appeared to all the people” (9:23). What was promised earlier has come true. God was pleased with the sacrifices. Everyone did what they were supposed to do. And now God is showing himself not just to Moses or the priests or the elders, but to everyone. All the people saw the *Glory of the LORD*, which means, according to vs. 4, that all the people saw the LORD. And since no one may see God and live, this can only mean that they saw either the Son or the Spirit (or both).

Fire from the LORD

The passage ends with a single verse that is just as important, but for different reasons. Where vs. 23 marks the resolution to the problem that arose at the end of Exodus, vs. 24 marks the background for the horrors that will appear in the next chapter, with two of Aaron’s son—Nadab and Abihu. But for now, the verse is itself a glory to behold.

“And fire came out from before the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the pieces of fat on the altar, and when all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces” (Lev 9:24). Here we have a miraculous fire (and the reason the fire of the burnt offering must not go out; 6:9-

13), a fire that starts off the offerings, a fire from God himself. It comes out from before the LORD, meaning that it must have had its origin somewhere in the Holy of Holies, where the LORD was. It is difficult to imagine or appreciate what this must have looked like. But what we know is that when the people saw it, they began to shout and then to worship.

Then and Now

From this moment on, the priesthood of Israel will intercede for a people who had lost the privilege. I'm referring to the important declaration in Exodus 19:6 where, at the foot of Mt. Sinai, God told the nation that on the condition of their obedience, "You shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex 19:6). The problem is, they weren't obedient, for while Moses was still on the mountain, they were down in the valley raising a golden calf. It was in this breaking covenant with God, symbolized when Moses threw the tablets of the Ten Commandments on the ground, shattering them in pieces, that this privilege of being a priestly nation was lost.

But in his grace, **God chose the line of Aaron** who came through Levi to intercede for the people as priests. But Aaron and his sons were, like the rest of the nation, **sinners**. And if a sinner is going to stand in God's presence, not merely his ritual uncleanness, but his sin must be atoned. This is why Aaron had to offer on his own behalf an offering of atonement for himself and for the people (**Lev 9:7**). Because he did this, and because the LORD was pleased with it, God showed himself to the people.

As I've pointed out, **this showing of himself** has a parallel construction where "Yahweh" and "Glory of Yahweh" are synonymous. This "glory" of the LORD is the weighty, heavy brilliance of God. In Exodus it appears "in" the Cloud (perhaps like lightning? **Ex 16:10**), and on Mt. Sinai it looked "**like a devouring flame on top of the mount**" (**Ex 24:16-17**). So there is something of **the brilliance of light** to this.¹² Because of this, we can speak of the Glory as an "**it**." Hence the translation in the Targum, "**Then the Glory of the Lord will reveal itself to you.**"¹³

¹² Think of something like **Luke 2:9**, "**The glory of the Lord shone around them.**"

¹³ Kevin Cathcart, Michael Maher, and Martin McNamara, eds., *The Aramaic Bible: The Targum Onqelos to Leviticus and The Targum Onqelos to Numbers*, trans. Bernard Grossfeld, vol. 8 (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1990), Le 9:7.

However, it is equally possible to translate “itself” as “**himself.**”¹⁴ In fact, “**Some OT texts attribute a human-like form to God’s Glory.**”¹⁵ In **Exodus 33:18-34:8**, Moses asks to see God’s glory. This is acceptable, but he must only see the “backside” (**33:23; 34:6**). Ezekiel sees upon the throne the “**likeness as the appearance of a man**” (**Ezek 1:26**). But two verses later it says, “**This was the appearance of the likeness of the Glory of Yahweh**” (**28**).¹⁶

Curiously, in Ezekiel 8, the same figure from 1:26 who was the likeness of the Glory of the LORD (see **Ezek 8:2**) now takes out “**the form of a hand,**” takes Ezekiel by the lock of the head, and “**The Spirit lifted me up**” (**8:3**). In this

¹⁴ As my friend Michael Emadi explains, you take the verb as reflexive and the word *yqr* as personal.

¹⁵ **J. E. Fossum**, “Glory,” ed. Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter W. van der Horst, *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible* (Leiden; Boston; Köln; Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge: Brill; Eerdmans, 1999), 349. Fossum continues, “**In Exod 33:18–34:8, it is told that God arranged for Moses to see his Glory (MT Exod 33:19 actually reads ‘Goodness’, but LXX has ‘Glory’; v 22 as well as v 18 reads ‘Glory’). Due to a merger of different sources, however, it is related that Moses saw God himself, albeit only his back (33:23; 34:6). The picture emerging from this story is that of indistinguishability between the divine Glory and the anthropomorphic Deity. The relationship between God and his Glory is here thus comparable to that between God and the →Angel of Yahweh, the human-like Messenger of God.**”

¹⁶ Enoch has a striking depiction of the Glory as some kind of humanoid form. “¹⁸ And I observed and saw inside it a lofty throne—its appearance was like crystal and its wheels like the shining sun; and (I heard?) the voice of the cherubim; ¹⁹ and from beneath the throne were issuing streams of flaming fire. It was difficult to look at it. ²⁰ And the Great Glory was sitting upon it—as for his gown, which was shining more brightly than the sun, it was whiter than any snow. ²¹ None of the angels was able to come in and see the face of the Excellent and the Glorious One; and no one of the flesh can see him—²² the flaming fire was round about him, and a great fire stood before him” (1En 14:18-22).

way, we see both the Second and Third Persons of the Trinity are closely linked to the Glory of the Yahweh.

It was out of this that Jesus would say, “They will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory” (Mark 13:26). John would say of his birth, “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father” (John 1:14). Of his death, Paul would say that they “crucified the Lord of glory” (1Co 2:8). Of his resurrection, Peter would say, “through him [we] are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory” (1Pe 1:21). No wonder then we behold “the Glory of the Lord ... in the face of Jesus Christ” (2Co 3:18; 4:6).

A relevant and interesting pre-Christian Jewish text says how “in the uppermost heaven of all dwells the Great Glory in the Holy of Holies superior to all holiness” (TLevi 3:4). A little later this becomes, “I saw the Holy Most High sitting on the throne” (5:1), similar to Isaiah 6:1, where John tells Isaiah saw Jesus’ glory (John 12:41). The next sentence in this passage says, “And he said to me, ‘Levi, to you I have given the blessing of the priesthood until I shall come and dwell in the midst of Israel’” (TLevi 5:2). The thing is, this

was written around the second century B.C., so it is not looking backward at something, but forward.¹⁷

Someone says of this passage, “The notion of God as visibly reigning on earth lent itself readily to Christian interpretation in relation to Christ, and to interpolations which make the links with the incarnation explicit, as in [the previous chapter]”¹⁸ He is referring to a sentence that says, “Blessing shall be given to you and to all your posterity until through his son’s compassion the Lord shall visit all the nations forever, [although your sons will lay hands on him in order to crucify him].”

In this way, the Glory of God is seen throughout the Christian era as referring to the coming of Jesus in his birth, life, death, and resurrection. Jesus is the final physical appearance of God come to man—in a human form.¹⁹ As one

¹⁷ Of course, in the Testament, the story takes place in the days of Jacob and Levi. Nevertheless, see the discussion that follows.

¹⁸ H. C. Kee, “Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs,” in James H. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1 (New York; London: Yale University Press, 1983), TLevi 4:4 n. b.

¹⁹ “The Lord’s disclosure of himself to his people, however, had its fullest expression in the person of Jesus Christ. By his human incarnation, the glory of God became known to those who believed (John 1:14; Hebrews 1:3), and especially through Jesus’ death and resurrection the glory of the Lord became manifest (Romans 6:4; Hebrews 2:9). But whereas the majesty of God’s glory in Old Testament times often instilled fear in those who witnessed his awesome power and heard his thunderous voice, the Lord Jesus came in humble trappings and preached the grace and truth of the kingdom. Our sure hope in the glory to come sustains us in our present sufferings (2 Corinthians 4:17; 1 Peter 5:10). The presence of the Spirit among us as we worship assures us of both present and future acceptance with God (cf. 2 Corinthians 6:16 with Leviticus 26:12).” Kenneth A. Mathews, *Leviticus: Holy God, Holy People*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2009), 86.

old commentator put it thinking of Philippians, “He looks at the things of others, and descended with His splendor eclipsed—appeared not a God in glory, but clothed in flesh; not in royal robes, but in the dress of a village youth; not as Deity in fire, but a man in tears; not in a palace, but in a manger; not with the thunderbolt in His hand, but with the hatchet and hammer of a Galilean mechanic.”²⁰

That’s *his birth* and his coming to us as a man. But there are more connections to his ministry and sacrificial death. Of *his ministry*, someone notices **Mark 2:7**. “Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?” He notices it because he is doing a study on the NT use of the OT, and in preparing the background material, he came across an old Jewish interpretation of **Leviticus 9:2** and the requirements for sin offerings. As the section concludes, it discusses the Holy One, and based on **Isa 43:25** (“I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins”) says that “whereas in this world forgiveness of sins requires sacrifice, in the

²⁰ **John Eadie**, *A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Epistle of Paul to the Philippians* (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1859), Php 2:6, p. 109. Thanks to my friend Bob Shilling for posting this on Facebook.

world to come ‘I will wipe away their sins without an offering.’”²¹ So what the Jews were anticipating, Jesus is doing.

Then there is *Christ’s sacrificial death*. Hebrews 5 reflects on **Leviticus 9:7** and the priest having to make atonement for himself for his sins. “He himself is beset with weakness. Because of this he is obligated to offer sacrifice for his own sins just as he does for those of the people” (**Heb 5:2-3**). We’ve seen this with Aaron and **the calf** offered for the golden calf sin. But Jesus “has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself” (**Heb 7:27**) and because he himself was “without sin” (**Heb 4:15**), “holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens” (**7:26**). Because of this, like **that ram** that substituted for Isaac and which seems particularly in view for Aaron’s offering, Jesus becomes the substitute that takes away our sin. Thus, we are now seeing that it is not only his coming to us that fulfills the glory; it is his life and death that fulfill the sacrificial elements of this glorious eighth day.

²¹ **Rikk E. Watts**, “Mark,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, UK: Baker Academic; Apollos, 2007), 132. The passage he refers to is *Tanḥuma Lev 3:6*.

Then there is his *resurrection* and *ascension*, which has a curious connection to the burnt offering, which is sometimes translates as an “*ascension offering*”²² (see something like the Angel of the LORD ascending in the fire of the offering in *Jdg 13:20*). Jesus’ final act in *Luke 24:50* before his ascension and in his resurrected body was “*lifting up his hands, he blessed them.*” This is an allusion to the priestly blessing in *Lev 9:22*.²³

The *eighth day* is something I want to revisit for a moment as well. Recall that the events eight days earlier actually began on the Jewish new year. This is *Rosh Hashanah*, which will be spelled out in *Lev 23:23-32*. As a new year, it spells out the renewal of life, and this is reinforced by all of the “sevens” seen in this ritual. Those sevens point to a new creation.

The eighth day, which is also the first day of the week, is given a technical name in the dedication of Solomon’s Temple where, after a series of offerings (burnt, grain,

²² *Morales*, 121. Here Morales cites Ex 29:42-46. Some of the language in this “daily ascension offering” speaks of how “they shall know that I am YHWH their God.” This language is revisited by Jeremiah in his new covenant prophesy where “I will be their God” and “they shall all know me” (Jer 31:33-34), which I take to be a reference to Jesus’ appearing not to a select few and not in mysterious clouds of glory, but in the person of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, it is the job of the Holy Spirit to cause this truth to be known in one’s heart (John 14:26), and through whom Jesus is with us always even to the end of the age (Matt 28:20).

²³ *David W. Pao* and Eckhard J. Schnabel, “Luke,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, UK: Baker Academic; Apollos, 2007), 402.

peace; [1Kg 8:64](#)), a last offering is described. This offering dedicates or “[initiates](#)”²⁴ the temple into its service to God. As Rashi said, it introduces a person or thing, for the first time, to some particular occupation in which it is intended that he (or it) should remain.²⁵ The word initiate is *hanak* and we get the word Hanukkah from it.

[Hanukkah](#), or the Festival of Lights, celebrates the re-dedication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem after Antiochus had plundered and desecrated it by erecting an altar to Zeus in it. A priest named Mattathias and his five sons led a rebellion which ended up liberating the Jews and freeing the temple once more (this is all found in the book of 1 Maccabees). This eight-day celebration very clearly harkens back to the dedication of the priests here in [Leviticus 8-9](#).

These [eight-day temple celebrations](#) have a fascinating parallel in [John 1:19-2:22](#), which counts a series of eight. Sometimes, those who discuss this often do so as they reflect upon the days of creation (John does begin, “[In the beginning...](#)”).²⁶

²⁴ It is usually translated as “dedicate.” Milgrom has both commentaries “dedicated” to reflecting upon the importance of this eighth day initiation, and obviously sees it as a major point. See [Milgrom](#), *A Continental Commentary: Leviticus*, 91-92 and the longer discussion in [Milgrom](#), *Leviticus 1-16*, 592-95.

²⁵ Milgrom, *Continental Commentary*, 91.

²⁶ See for example [Morris](#).

New Creation Week of Christ's Public Ministry

Day 1	Testimony of John	John 1:19-28
Day 2	Baptism of Jesus	John 1:29-34
Day 3	Calling of Andrew and Peter	John 1:35-42
Day 4	Calling of Philip and Nathanael	John 1:43-51
Day 7	The Wedding at Cana	John 2:1-11
Day 8 ²⁷	Jesus Predicts his Death/Resurrection	John 2:12-22

Thus, they see Jesus ushering in a new creation. But also curious (for this is not an either/or), these days in John all **begin at Jesus' baptism**, the parallel to the washing of the priest in Leviticus 8. The week comes to its climax either in Jesus entering a house where he performs a miracle and “**manifested his glory**” (**John 2:11**),²⁸ or in his prediction of his death and

²⁷ There is disagreement on how to break down these days. This is due in part to ambiguity in John's language. Especially difficult are 1) the meaning of “on the third day” (John 2:1). Some see this (the wedding at Cana) as the sixth day with the next section as the eighth (Ellis). Some see it as the seventh day (Reisner, Morris). It might be possible to see Cana as the eighth day. 2) “Not many days” (2:12) which probably means only two days. For the discussions see **Leon Morris**, *The Gospel According to John*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 114; **Rainer Riesner**, “Bethany Beyond The Jordan (John 1:28) Topography, Theology And History In The Fourth Gospel,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 38 (1987): 46 [29–63]; **Edward Earle Ellis**, *The Making of the New Testament Documents* (Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 2002), 169; **B. Olsson**, *Structure and Meaning in the Fourth Gospel* (Lund, 1974), 275-290; **P. Trudinger**, “On the Third Day There Was A Wedding at Cana,” *DRev* 104 (1986): 41-43; **Marie-Émile Boismard**, *Synopse des quatre évangiles III: Jean* (Paris: du Cerf, 1977) 105; **D. A. Carson**, *The Gospel according to John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991), 168-69.

²⁸ Trudinger sees this as pointing to the cross; Boismard sees it as pointing to Christ's resurrection. See discussion in Ellis, notes 157, 158.

resurrection which took place on the eighth day.²⁹ Of course, he refers here not to himself in the third person, but as “the temple of God.” And so, our entire passage is just brimming over with parallels and fulfillments in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Someone has said, “*The inauguration of the sacrificial cult in Leviticus 9 establishes a new form of relationship between Yahweh and Israel*” [emphasis original].³⁰ This is precisely what God is doing through Christ in the NT. As our **Great High Priest**, he has done all that is necessary for us to have **forgiveness** of our sins, complete and full **atonement**. He has entered the heavenly temple and as he comes out, he blesses his people with all the spiritual blessings that we have in Christ.

He does this by showing himself to be very God of very God to the whole world. And the world is full of his glory. John calls Jesus “**the Light**,” a title more than one has suggested is an allusion to his possible conception by the Holy Spirit during the Feast of Lights.³¹

All this is your salvation. S. H. Kellogg once said, “**Now this last is, in fact, the ultimate aim of salvation; rather,**

²⁹ This is **Ellis**’ view, 169.

³⁰ Morales, 119.

³¹ I found this most recently in **Richard Davidson**, “Christmas Festival of Lights,” Andrews University Seminary Studies 44:2 (2006): 201 [197-201]. <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2953&context=auss>.

indeed, we may say, it is salvation. For life in its fulness means the cancelling of death; death spiritual, and bodily death also, in **resurrection** from the dead; it means also perfect fellowship with the living God, and this, attained, is heaven. Hence it must needs be that the peace-offering which represents Christ as giving Himself to us as our life, and introducing us into this blessed state, comes last.”³²

This Jesus is the **Light of the Word (John 9:5)**. As the light, he illumines your way to God. Look upon that light and see that God is not hiding in darkness, shrouded and cloaked and hidden. He has sent the Son of God that you might see him in his glory.

This light is also **the life of men (John 1:4)**. Michael Morales makes a great point when he says that the coming of the Glory “forms the culmination of the narrative, the end for which the cultic legislation had been divinely revealed. God’s appearance not only validates the mediation of the tabernacle cultus and the ritual legislation, but his life-giving Presence amidst Israel is their goal. This long-awaited experience, ushering Israel into a deepened relationship with

³² S. H. Kellogg, “The Book of Leviticus,” in *The Expositor’s Bible: Genesis to Ruth*, ed. W. Robertson Nicoll, vol. 1, Expositor’s Bible (Hartford, CT: S.S. Scranton Co., 1903), 294.

YHWH God, is met with a fitting response by all the people: they shout and fall on their faces.³³

And thus, this Light and Life, this Lord Jesus, not only illumines and vivifies, he also **burns**. Malachi calls him “a refiner’s fire” (**Mal 3:2**). John said at his baptism that **he will baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire** (**Matt 3:12**). He is the same one who lit the fire that came out of the Holy of Holies and started the eternal flames of the burnt offering for Israel. And when the people saw it, they shouted and fell on the faces. Your response to this God of Fire should be no less worshipful than theirs. For he does not change but is the same from age to age. For he is the Glorious One, the Holy One of Israel.

³³ **Morales**, 120.

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