

## 180725-4 Leviticus 21, Regulations for the Aaronic Priesthood – Craig Thurman

The LORD commands Moses to instruct all of Aaron's sons concerning:

- 1b-6 Their dead
- 7 Their marriages
- 9 Their unchaste daughters
- 10-15 The high priest and his dead and marriages
- 17-23 The ban for service against those with physical defects & abnormalities, and skin disorders

Verse 24 Moses' closing narrative remarks

There is noted in this chapter the peculiar interest and care for the priesthood. There could be an application of some of the things said in this chapter to the Lord's church and his servants.

### Chapter 21

**1 ¶ And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto the priests the sons of Aaron, and say unto them, There shall none be defiled for the dead among his people:**

*shall none be defiled, לֹא-יִטְמָא, for none לֹא; יִטְמָא, yit-tam-ma, Hithpael (reflexive) fut. 3ps masc. of יִטְמָא, ta-meh; KJV, to be unclean, defiled, polluted; the Hebrew Hithpael is in vss. 1, shall be defiled; 3, may he be defiled; 4, shall defile ... defile himself; 11, defile himself; and it is true that the idea here is that the sons of Aaron not defile themselves by doing this thing.*

To be defiled by the dead would be to go into the place where the dead are, a tent or house, or to come into contact with a dead body. (Nu.19.14-16)

**2 But for his kin,**

for his kin, אֶמְ-לְשָׂארוֹ, לְשָׂארוֹ, the prefixed preposition לְ; masc. sing. noun, w/ 3ps. suff., his, of שָׂאֵר, sh<sup>e</sup>-ehr; KJV, food, near of, near kinswoman, his near kin, is nigh, kinsman, my flesh, thy body, own flesh, my flesh, and these things considered it speaks of substance, those of his substance, flesh, body. The Hebrew is only found 16 times in the Old Testament; and the feminine noun (שָׂאֵרִית) once.

**But the following clause defines the term for us ‘... that is near unto him.’**

**that is near unto him,**

that is near, הַקָּרֵב, הַ = that, & the masc. sing. adj. קָרוֹב, qah-rohv; KJV, to come nigh, near, to approach, draw near, to come (vs.3); the verb, קָרַב, to approach, come near, and to offer is found in vss. 6, 8, 17 (twice), 18, 21 (twice).

For these a priest could be defiled. It seems that had this not been stipulated the services of the priesthood of Israel could have become greatly hindered.

**that is, for his mother, and for his father, and for his son, and for his daughter, and for his brother,**

**3 And for his sister a virgin, that is nigh (v.2) unto him,**

Again, the Hebrew adjective describes the kind of relationship that this sister has to him. So, for example, if for some reason the father had the occasion to marry another woman, whether a virgin or a widow, if a daughter was born to them, though she is a sister to the sons born of the father, she would not be as near to him as that sister that was born of both the same father and mother. This seems to be what is meant by the sister that is nigh unto him. Or, this refers to the sister that is nearby.

**which hath had no husband; for her may he be defiled.**

*may he be defiled*, יִטְמָא, yit-tam-ma, Hithpael (reflexive) fut. 3ps masc. of טָמַא, ta-meh; KJV, *to be unclean, defiled, polluted*; the Hebrew Hithpael is in vss. **1**, *shall be defiled*; **3**, *may he be defiled*; **4**, *he shall ... defile himself*; **11**, *may defile himself*; and it is true that the idea here is that the sons of Aaron not *defile themselves* by doing this thing.

**4 But he shall not defile himself,**  
make himself unclean, polluted

*he shall ... defile himself*, יִטְמָא, yit-tam-ma, Hithpael (reflexive) fut. 3ps masc. of טָמַא, ta-meh; KJV, *to be unclean, defiled, polluted*; the Hebrew Hithpael is in vss. **1**, *shall be defiled*; **3**, *may he be defiled*; **4**, *he shall ... defile himself*; **11**, *defile himself*; and it is true that the idea here is that the sons of Aaron not *defile themselves* by doing this thing.

לְהִלָּח, vss. 4, 6, 7, 9 (2x), 12, 15, 23  
**being a chief man among his people, to profane himself.**  
master to be wounded or prostitute himself

*a chief man*, בַּעַל, ba-al, masc. sing. noun; KJV, *a man* (Ge.20.3), *husband* (Ex.21.22), *owner* (Ex.21.28), *master* (Ex.Ex.22.8), *to have* (Pv.17.8), *a captain* (Jer.237.13).

*to profane himself*, לְהִלָּח, l<sup>e</sup>-he-chal-lo; pref. preposition לְ, *to or for*; and Niphal (simple pass.) w/3psm. suff. of the verb root לְהִלָּח; KJV, *to wound, profane, pollute* (v.6), *prostitute, break*.

... by going beyond this rule and that rule which follows. For a son of Aaron to do such was considered, as the word *wound* carries, to prostitute himself by doing a work which others have the freedom to do.

*Mt 8:22 But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead.*

These servants must keep to the work which God has given them.

**5 They shall not make baldness upon their head, neither shall they shave off the corner of their beard,**

*they shall make & baldness* are the Qal fut. verb קָרַח, and the fem. noun קְרָחָה.

*corners*, פְּאַת, fem. sing. noun; KJV, *corner, side, part*; cf. **Lev. 19.9, 27; 13.41; 21.5; 23.22**

***nor make any cuttings in their flesh.***

*make & cuttings*, are the Qal verb שָׂרַט, sa-rat, and the fem noun שְׂרָטָה, and from which we can see the English derivative, *serated edge*.

Here the context concerns doing these things in behalf of the dead. The reading in Ez.44.20 shows this to be a general reference and not so specifically restricted.

Ez.44.20: to cut short the hair. *poll* is the Hebrew , קָסוּם, Qal infin. of קָטַם, & only found here. J. P. Green Sr., *Interlinear Bible* has *trim*; B-D-B *Hebrew & English Lexicon*, *shear or clip*. (cf. 19.26, 27, w/ref. to Israel)

As the priesthood was not allowed to enter into the inordinate acts of mourning for the dead so the saints of God in the churches are not to mourn as those do which have no hope of life after death. Of course Christians mourn, but their hope of everlasting life should have diminished the extent of grief.

1Th 4:13 *But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.*

לָלַל, vss. 4, 6, 7, 9 (2x), 12, 15, 23

**6 They shall be holy unto their God, and not profane the name of their God:**  
prostitute or wound

לָחַם

**for the offerings of the LORD made by fire, and the bread of their God, they do offer:**

*do offer*, מִקְרִיבִם, Hiphil (causative act.) pl. part. of the verb root, קָרַב, *to approach, come near, and to offer* is found in vss. 6, 8, 17 (twice), 18, 21 (twice); the adj. קָרוֹב, qah-rohv; KJV, *to come nigh, near, to approach, draw near, to come* (vss. 2, 3)

Great stress is laid upon the importance of the priests to be able to continue in service to the LORD in behalf of Israel. The *bread of their God* at least refers to best of the best offered to the LORD in the peace offerings. (Lev.3.11) If they couldn't offer, no one else could.

**therefore they shall be holy.**

The priesthood cannot become *entangled* with the affairs of this life so that they begin to fail in the service appointed them of the Lord. And so it is for the saints of the churches, and especially those servants set apart for the body.

2Ti 2:4 *No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.*

What happens when we become burdened with this life? The service of the Lord suffers and becomes commonplace to us.

לָלַךְ, vss. 4, 6, 7, 9 (2x), 12, 15, 23

**7 They shall not take a wife** (singular) **that is a whore, or profane;**  
prostitute or wounded

**neither shall they take a woman put away from her husband: for he is holy unto his God.**

*is a whore, זָנָה, Qal infin. of זָנָה, za-nah; KJV, to play the harlot, commit fornication; commit whoredom, play the whore, fall to whoredom, to be an harlot, whore, whorish; vss. 7, 9, 14*

**8 Thou shalt sanctify him therefore;**

Moses sanctified Aaron's sons by giving them the word of God.

*Joh 17:17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*

*Joh 17:19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.*

*Eph 5:26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.*

It is through knowing the word of God and applying it to our lives that we are holy. Being ignorant of God's word means that we do not know what He would have us to do?

אֶת־לֶחֶם

**for he offereth the bread of thy God:** (thy God, the God of Moses)  
brings

*do offer, verb root, קָרַב, to approach, come near, and to offer is found in vss. 6, 8, 17 (twice), 18, 21 (twice); the adj. קָרוֹב, qah-rohv; KJV, to come nigh, near, to approach, draw near, to come (vss. 2, 3)*

***he shall be holy unto thee: for I the LORD, which sanctify you, am holy.***

The LORD had sanctified the priesthood for service. (v.23, ... *for I the LORD do sanctify them.*) Therefore they were to obey the commandments of the LORD and by so doing acted holy.

Saints of God are set apart by the shed blood of Christ and constituted holy before God and the Father, but if they are disobedient to the word of God they become defiled and cannot offer spiritual sacrifices as they should.

Brethren, none of us who have the faith of Christ will ever be worthy in ourselves to stand before the Lord. Our standing before God is in Christ.

*1Co 1:30 But of him (context, of God) are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom (what we think), and righteousness (what we do), and sanctification (how we do), and redemption (& we are all His): 31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.*

We have no merit of our own. It is right that we will never *feel* in ourselves sufficient for these things. But rather than letting the truth of our personal merit-lessness hinder us, faith in Christ's sufficiency should compel us to obedience.

*Ro 7:18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. ... 24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin. 8.1 ¶ There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

לְלֵךְ, vss. 4, 6, 7, 9 (2x), 12, 15, 23

***9 And the daughter of any priest, if she profane herself by playing the whore,***

prostitute or wound

by playing the whore, לִזְנוּת, liz-noth, Qal infin. of זָנָה, za-nah; **vss. 7, 9, 14**; Green's Interlinear has *by going whoring*; the Hebrew could be, *to be a whore*.

**she profaneth her father: she shall be burnt with fire.**

prostitute or wound

Perhaps this means that after she has been stoned to death that her body would be burned in the fire. But the actions of this daughter brought upon her father's house and ministry a serious *wound*.

**10 ¶ And he that is the high priest among his brethren, upon whose head the anointing oil was poured,**

was poured, יוֹצַק, Hophal (causative passive) fut. 3ps. masc. of יָצַק, ya-tsaq; KJV, to *pour* liquid, to *cast* molten metal, the dust *groweth*.

**and that is consecrated** (מָלֵא, meaning filled, replenished, completed) **to put on**  
lit. his hand is filled

**the garments, shall not uncover his head, nor rend his clothes;**

That is the high priest is not to remove his mitre during his service.

Rabbit: how do those who advocate that the head covering in 1Co.11 is an external device reconcile this to the priests being covered during their times of service? If, on the other hand, the covering in 1Corinthians is hair (which it is), then everything harmonizes. (comp. also Lev.21.5)

**11 Neither shall he go in to any dead body, nor defile himself for his father,**

*defile himself*, נִטְמָא, yit-tam-ma, Hithpael (reflexive) fut. 3ps masc. of נִטְמָא, ta-meh; KJV, *to be unclean, defiled, polluted*; the Hebrew Hithpael is in vss. **1**, *shall be defiled*; **3**, *may he be defiled*; **4**, *he shall ... defile himself*; **11**, *defile himself*; and it is true that the idea here is that the sons of Aaron not *defile themselves* by doing this thing.

***or for his mother;***

The implication is that if the high priest would not defile himself for his father and mother he would certainly not for any other. The LORD commanded Ezekiel not to defile himself or mourn for his wife when she died. (cf. Ez.24.16-18)

לֹא יֵצֵא, vss. 4, 6, 7, 9 (2x), 12, 15, 23

***12 Neither shall he go out of the sanctuary, nor profane the sanctuary of his prostitute or wound***

***God; for the crown of the anointing oil of his God is upon him: I am the LORD.***

The high priest's service was not to be interrupted or quit his duties for the dead. To forsake or desert the his service for the dead would be to wound the LORD's dwelling place.

***13 And he shall take a wife in her virginity.***

***14 A widow, or a divorced woman, or profane, or an harlot, these shall he not take: but he shall take a virgin of his own people to wife.***

*an harlot*, זָנָה, za-nah; **vss. 7, 9, 14**

Again, we notice the singular wife. The LORD's original intent is that one man have one wife. (Ge. 2.22-25) It seems to me here that every priest was limited to marrying wives only of the children of Israel. The priesthood was purified in the days of Ezra. (10.18, 19) Like them, the children of God are to marry on in the Lord. (cf. 1Co.7.2, 5, 39)

קָלַל, vss. 4, 6, 7, 9 (2x), 12, 15, 23

**15 Neither shall he profane his seed among his people:**  
prostitute or wound

**for I the LORD do sanctify him.**

The high priest would wound his generations which come from his loins if he violated this rule governing marriages.

**16 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,**

**17 Speak unto Aaron, saying, Whosoever he be of thy seed in their generations that hath any blemish, let him not approach to offer the bread of his God.**

*blemish*, מוּמָה, moom or mum; masc. sing. noun; KJV, *blemish* (17), *spot* (3): so no physical defect whether it is a diminishing of the body or an additional member (v.18)

*let him ... approach* (Qal fut.) *to offer* (Hiphil [causative active] fut.) of the verb, קָרַב, *to approach, come near*, and *to offer* is found in vss. 6, 8, 17 (twice), 18, 21 (twice); the adj. קָרוֹב, qah-rohv; KJV, *to come nigh, near, to approach, draw near, to come* (vss. 2, 3)

**18 For whatsoever man he be that hath a blemish, he shall not approach:**

*he shall ... approach*, the Hebrew verb, קָרַב; see directly above.

**a blind man, or a lame, or he that hath a flat nose (disfigured), or any thing superfluous (deformed),**

*flat nose*, קָרַח, Qal part. of קָרַח; almost always tss. *destroyed, make away, devoted, forfeited*.

*superfluous*, שָׁרִיעַ, sa-ru-a[g], a Qal part.; 3 times in the O.T., Lev.21.18, *any thing superfluous*; Lev. 22.23, *that hath any thing superfluous*; Is. 28.20, *than that [a man] can stretch out himself*.

**19 Or a man that is brokenfooted, or brokenhanded,**

**20 Or crookbackt, or a dwarf, or that hath a blemish**

*hath a blemish*, הִבְלַל, masc. sing. noun and only found in this text; if related to the verb בָּלַל, to be *confounded, mixed, anointed, tempered*.

**in his eye, or be scurvy, or scabbed, or hath his stones broken;**

*scurvy*, נָגַב, twice *scurvy* (cf. Lev.21.20); once, Deu.28.27, *scab*.

**21 No man that hath a blemish of the seed of Aaron the priest shall come nigh to offer the offerings of the LORD made by fire:**

*shall come nigh & to offer*, are both Hiphil (causative active) infin. of the verb קָרַב; KJV, *to approach, come near*, and *to offer* is found in vss. 6, 8, 17 (twice), 18, 21 (twice); the adj. קָרוֹב, qah-rohv; KJV, *to come nigh, near, to approach, draw near, to come* (vss. 2, 3)

**he hath a blemish; he shall not come nigh to offer the bread of his God.**

**22 He shall eat the bread of his God, both of the most holy, and of the holy.**

**23 Only he shall not go in unto the vail, nor come nigh unto the altar, because**

הִבְלַל, vss. 4, 6, 7, 9 (2x), 12, 15, 23

**he hath a blemish; that he**      **profane**      **not my sanctuaries:**  
prostitute or wound

**for I the LORD do sanctify them.**

So priests with birth defects, physical defects & disorders were forbidden to participate in the services of the priesthood. But they did receive the portion allotted to them and their families just as if they were in full service.

Notice that the focus was upon the external things in order to impress upon them that God demanded perfection in the priesthood. (must read He.7.11-19, 28) Jesus Christ is that perfect high priest, after the order of Melchisedec.

*1Pe 1:19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot ...*

*Joh 1:29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*

He knew no sin. (2Co.5.21) In Him was no sin. (1Jn.3.5) He did no sin. (1Pe.2.22) He was without sin. (He.4.15)

But God has put us in Christ.

*1Jo 5:20 And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.*

*1Co 1:30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption ...*

All of us are imperfect, even since faith in Christ, and will continue so until the time of our glorification, but in Christ we may fellowship with God and with His people.

***24 And Moses told it unto Aaron, and to his sons, and unto all the children of Israel.***