

The Book of Leviticus

Lesson 5: Aaron and His Sons Ordained -- Leviticus 8:1-36

Imagine the whole congregation of Israel gathered at the door of the tabernacle. The morning light catches the bronze of the altar and the white of the freshly woven garments laid out for the occasion. Moses stands ready, and beside him are his brother Aaron and Aaron's four sons. Today these men will be set apart for life, separated from ordinary work and ordinary status, to stand between a holy God and a sinful people. Leviticus 8 records the day the priesthood was born. It is a slow, deliberate, sacred ceremony, and God Himself dictated every step. Nothing here is left to human taste. Watch closely, because everything that happens to Aaron is meant to teach us how anyone may stand before the living God.

The ceremony moves through unforgettable images. First comes washing, Aaron and his sons are bathed with water at the door of the tabernacle. Then comes vesting, layer upon layer of holy garments, the breastplate with its precious stones, the mitre with its golden plate engraved 'Holiness to the LORD.' Then comes anointing, the sacred oil poured over the tabernacle, the altar, and Aaron's head until it runs down. Then come the sacrifices, a sin offering, a burnt offering, and the ram of consecration, with blood placed on the right ear, the right thumb, and the right great toe of each priest. Finally comes the waiting, seven full days within the tabernacle, until the consecration is complete.

Every detail preaches. The washing says no one comes to serve God uncleansed. The garments say the priest must be clothed in a holiness not his own. The oil says God's servants are set apart by His Spirit and consecrated for His use. The blood on ear, thumb, and toe says the whole person, all that he hears, all that he does, all that he walks toward, must belong to God. And the seven days say that consecration is not a casual moment but a deliberate, unhurried surrender. This is what it costs, and what it means, to be set apart wholly to the Lord.

We must be careful here. The Aaronic priesthood is not binding on Christians, and we dare not try to revive it. Hebrews tells us plainly that it was a shadow, and that Jesus is our great High Priest, holy, harmless, undefiled, who has passed into the heavens. He did not need to be cleansed, for He had no sin. He did not need another to consecrate Him, for He offered Himself. And yet, under the New Covenant, every Christian is part of a royal priesthood, called to offer spiritual sacrifices and to be wholly set apart to God. So as we watch Aaron washed, robed, anointed, and marked with blood, we are watching a picture both of our great High Priest and of the consecrated life to which He calls us. Step into this holy day and learn what it means to belong entirely to God.

Group Discussion: Leviticus 8 records a careful, God-directed ceremony of washing, vesting, anointing, sacrifice, and seven days of consecration to set the priests apart. What does the deliberate care of every step teach us about how seriously God takes those who would draw

near to Him, and how does this both point us to Christ our High Priest and shape our understanding of the priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2:5,9)?

Personal Reflection: Blood was placed on Aaron's right ear, right thumb, and right great toe, claiming all that he heard, all that he did, and everywhere he walked for God. Which area of your life, your hearing, your hands, or your walk, have you been slowest to surrender wholly to the Lord?

Read Leviticus 8:1–36

Study Questions

1. Leviticus 8:1–5 stresses that Moses did 'as the LORD commanded him' and gathered the whole congregation. What does the repeated emphasis on doing exactly as God commanded teach us about authority in worship and in approaching God?
2. Moses obeyed God's instructions to the letter rather than improvising. Where in your own walk with God are you tempted to do what seems right to you rather than what God has actually said?
3. Leviticus 8:6 begins the ceremony with Moses washing Aaron and his sons with water. Why must cleansing come first for those who would serve God, and how does this point forward to the washing we receive in Christ (Titus 3:5; Hebrews 10:22)?
4. Cleansing came before service for the priests. What does it mean for you that you cannot serve God acceptably out of an unwashed, unrepentant heart, and how does that drive you to Christ?

5. Leviticus 8:7–13 describes the holy garments and the anointing oil placed on Aaron and the tabernacle. What do the garments and the oil teach about the priest being clothed in holiness and set apart by God rather than by his own merit, and how does the oil point to consecration by God's Spirit?
6. Aaron was clothed in a holiness he did not manufacture for himself. In what ways are you tempted to rely on your own merit before God rather than being clothed in the righteousness Christ provides?
7. Leviticus 8:14–30 records the sin offering, the burnt offering, and the ram of consecration, with blood placed on the priests' ear, thumb, and toe. What does this sequence of sacrifices and the marking with blood teach about what is required before a sinful man may mediate between God and the people?
8. The blood claimed Aaron's ears, hands, and feet for God. As you examine your own life, which parts have you held back from God's full ownership, and what would it look like to surrender them?
9. Leviticus 8:31–36 describes seven days of consecration in which the priests remained at the tabernacle so they would not die. How does this prolonged, costly consecration of the Aaronic priesthood point us to the superior and permanent priesthood of Christ (Hebrews 7:23–28), and what does it mean that all Christians are now a royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:5,9)?

10. Look back over the whole ceremony of washing, vesting, anointing, sacrifice, and consecration. Name one specific way the Lord is using this picture to form you into a consecrated follower of Jesus, your great High Priest, who is teaching you what it means to belong wholly to God.

Digging Deeper

Reflect on these passages: Hebrews 4:14–16, we have a great High Priest, Jesus the Son of God, who can sympathize with our weakness; Hebrews 7:23–28, Christ holds His priesthood permanently because He continues forever and is able to save completely; 1 Peter 2:5,9, you are a holy and royal priesthood offering spiritual sacrifices to God; Exodus 28:1–43, the detailed pattern of the priestly garments God commanded for Aaron; Titus 3:5, He saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit

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