

Consecration of the Priesthood



(Leviticus 8:7-9)

CONSECRATION OF THE PRIESTHOOD

Christians who fail to attach significance to a study of the Tabernacle of Moses and its priestly services are hindered, to a certain extent, from a fuller appreciation of the characteristics God is looking for in His people. A consideration of Leviticus chapter 8 on the consecration of the priesthood brings out some of these characteristics.

“And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

“Take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments, and the anointing oil, and a bullock for the sin offering, and two rams, and a basket of unleavened bread;

“And gather thou all the congregation together unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.” (Lev. 8:1-3)

God instructed Moses to gather the principals and all the materials to be offered for this particular service. The entire nation of Israel was enjoined to gather in front of the Tabernacle to witness the spectacle about to take place.

“And Moses did as the LORD commanded him; and the assembly was gathered together unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

“And Moses said unto the congregation, This is the thing which the LORD commanded to be done.

“And Moses brought Aaron and his sons, and washed them with water.” (Lev. 8:4-6)

With Aaron and his sons standing in the Court of the Tabernacle and with the gate open, the nation of Israel could witness what was taking place. Aaron and his sons would have been clothed with very light undergarments, which were sufficient to cover their nakedness but exposed enough flesh to wash. Notice that Moses, the *great leader* of the people, was washing Aaron and his sons before the whole nation. What a startling drama to behold! The people must have been very inquisitive about the meaning of this event. The washing with water prefigured the cleansing work that is done by the water of God’s Word (Heb. 10:22). In this particular chapter, Leviticus 8, Moses played the chief role. Moses did the washing and the clothing, and he also instituted the activities that occurred subsequently. The anti-typical lesson is that God, the great Jehovah, washes His people by the water of His Word.

“And he [Moses] put upon him [Aaron] the coat, and girded him with the girdle, and clothed him with the robe, and put the ephod upon him, and he girded him with the curious girdle of the ephod, and bound it unto him therewith.

“And he [Moses] put the breastplate upon him: also he put in the breastplate the Urim and the Thummim.

“And he [Moses] put the mitre upon his head; also upon the mitre, even upon his forefront, did he put the golden plate, the holy crown; as the LORD commanded Moses.” (Lev. 8:7-9)

After washing Aaron and his sons, Moses concentrated his attention on Aaron as an individual and clothed him with various garments, starting with the baser ones and finishing with the outer adornments of priestly office and rank, as illustrated in the breastplate itself. The linen band around the priest’s head held a golden plate, which is described as a “holy crown.”

“And Moses took the anointing oil, and anointed the tabernacle and all that was therein, and sanctified them.

**“And he sprinkled thereof upon the altar seven times, and anointed the altar and all his vessels, both the laver and his foot, to sanctify them.”
(Lev. 8:10,11)**

First, the anointing oil was used to sanctify the Tabernacle and all the appurtenances inside the structure. Then Moses went out into the Court and sprinkled the Brazen Altar (the altar of

sacrifice) seven times and its vessels, and he also anointed the Laver and its foot or base.

**“And he poured of the anointing oil upon Aaron’s head, and anointed him, to sanctify him.”
(Lev. 8:12)**

Next Moses poured a large portion of the oil on Aaron. In the other cases, the oil was used to “anoint”; that is, with either instruments or his finger, Moses dabbed or symbolically anointed the Tabernacle and its parts. The Brazen Altar was merely sprinkled with the anointing oil seven times, but when it came to Aaron, the oil *was poured* over his head to represent the *fullness of the Holy Spirit* wherewith Christ was anointed, for it is of *his* fullness that the Christian receives. The Church or priesthood underneath Jesus Christ as the Head receives only a part of the anointing. Stated another way, the oil is received from the Head, whence all the oil originates.

“And Moses brought Aaron’s sons, and put coats upon them, and girded them with girdles, and put bonnets upon them; as the LORD commanded Moses.

**“And he brought the bullock for the sin offering: and Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the bullock for the sin offering.”
(Lev. 8:13,14)**

After Moses clothed Aaron's sons and dealt with them, the sacrificial animals were brought to the nation's attention. A bullock had been secured for the sin offering of that day. It is interesting (and significant) that here in the type, Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the bullock sin offering. Placing their hands on the head of this animal signified that the animal represented Aaron and his sons. It was as though to say, "This animal represents *us*." Consequently, whatever experience the animal went through pictures the experience of the priesthood, that is, the experience of Aaron, the high priest, the head of the priesthood (a type of Jesus, the High Priest and Head of the Church), and of Aaron's sons, the underpriests (a type of the Church).

"And he slew it; and Moses took the blood, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about with his finger, and purified the altar, and poured the blood at the bottom of the altar, and sanctified it, to make reconciliation upon it.

"And he took all the fat that was upon the inwards, and the caul above the liver, and the two kidneys, and their fat, and Moses burned it upon the altar.

"But the bullock, and his hide, his flesh, and his dung, he burnt with fire without the camp; as the LORD commanded Moses." (Lev. 8:15-17)

Continuing with the bullock for a sin offering, Moses took all the fat that was upon its inwards, the caul above the liver, and the two kidneys and their fat and burned them upon the Brazen Altar in the Court. The balance of the animal—that is, its hide, flesh, and dung—was burnt with fire outside the camp according to God’s instruction. With the inner organs of the animal being the choice portions, the lesson is that they represent the Christian’s inner affections, the dedication of his will, and his sentiments and precious thoughts with regard to the worship of God and service for Christ. All of these better qualities of the inner man are to be laid on God’s altar, as it were.

The outer hide, the flesh, and the dung represent, more or less, the carcass of the animal—that which the world views. The unconsecrated do not see as God sees. They see only the outer man and hence do not appreciate the sacrifice of the Christian. In fact, they consider the sacrifice to be foolishness and a waste of time. To not pursue the pleasures of this world is a stench in their nostrils. Accordingly, the burning of the external parts of the sin offering—the hide, the flesh, and the dung—outside the camp represents how the world regards the sacrifice of the Christian. However, God looks on that *same* sacrifice as a burning of the inner organs on His altar, and the smell of the fat burning

(cooking) is pleasant in His nostrils. It is “a sweet savour unto the LORD” (Lev. 3:5).

“And he [Moses] brought the ram for the burnt offering: and Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the ram.

“And he brought the other ram, the ram of consecration: and Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the ram.” (Lev. 8:18,22)

In addition to the bullock for a sin offering, two rams were brought: a ram for a burnt offering and a ram of consecration. Aaron and his sons also laid their hands on the heads of these two animals, again showing their representation in the animals and whatever happened to them.

First, we will consider the ram for a burnt offering.

“And he killed it; and Moses sprinkled the blood upon the altar round about.

“And he cut the ram into pieces; and Moses burnt the head, and the pieces, and the fat.

“And he washed the inwards and the legs in water; and Moses burnt the whole ram upon the altar: it was a burnt sacrifice for a sweet savour, and an offering made by fire unto the LORD; as the LORD commanded Moses.” (Lev. 8:19-21)

The ram for the burnt offering was slain. Its death represents not only the death of Christ but also the consecrated death of his Church. These lessons show the hard experiences Christ had to suffer in order to be a compassionate and merciful High Priest over both the house of sons (Christians) in the present age and the world of mankind in the next age (Heb. 2:17; 4:14,15). In other words, one purpose for Jesus to suffer hard experiences was that he might have compassion for the human race.

With his finger, Moses put the blood of the ram for a burnt offering on the horns of the Brazen Altar, as though to indicate, “The reason this altar is powerful, the reason it secures salvation, the reason it is the power of God unto salvation, is the application of the blood of this animal, which has just been slain.”

A very interesting detail is that this ram, prior to its being burnt, was cut into pieces, and the pieces were then washed; that is, the inner organs of the body and the legs were washed but not the head. In the description of the law of the burnt offering in the first chapter of the Book of Leviticus, a requirement for all burnt offerings was that when the body of the animal was segmented, the parts had to be cleansed and then later reassembled or laid, in order, to the head (Lev. 1:8,12). Cutting the animal into pieces represents the Church’s share or participation with Christ in

connection with this particular offering. The head of the animal pictures Christ, and Christians are instructed to hold “the Head,” for Jesus is the Head of the Church, which is his body (Col. 2:19; Eph. 1:22,23).

An exception was the Passover type, which was performed annually by the Jewish nation. Not only was the Passover lamb to be burned whole, but also a stringent requirement was that under no circumstances was the Passover lamb to be cut in pieces. The reason is that the animal represents Jesus Christ personally and that the Church has no share in connection with the symbolism of the offering for the Feast of Passover. But in Leviticus chapter 8, the segmenting of the ram for a burnt offering represents the Church’s share in the offering, that is, in the sufferings of Christ, and those sufferings are a pleasing aroma to God (Col. 1:24). It should be kept in mind that this ram was a burnt offering, and a burnt offering was *wholly consumed* in sacrifice to God.

Not washing the head of the animal represents that Jesus Christ was pure, sinless, and separate from the world and thus did not need cleansing as an individual, but to the contrary, the body members are very much in need of cleansing, as illustrated at the Last Supper when Jesus, shortly before his death on Calvary, washed the disciples’ feet (Heb. 7:26; John 13:4-10). The

Apostle Peter wanted not only his feet washed but also his hands and his head. However, the Master said that of the external organs, it was necessary to wash only the feet, which get defiled by daily contact with the earth. And the same thing was done in the type. Washing the legs and the *inner* organs was a requirement in Leviticus chapter 8. The world cannot appreciate or recognize the pure motivations of the Church.

In a *twofold* manner, therefore, the animals that were offered represent The Christ, Head and body. As already pointed out, when Aaron, who pictures Jesus the High Priest, and the underpriests, who picture the Church, laid their hands on the head of the animal, the signification was, "This animal represents us." In addition, the cutting of the pieces of the animal and laying them to the head indicates the relationship of Christians to the Head of the Church. In other words, this *same* lesson was duplicated and confirmed.

"And he [Moses] brought the other ram, the ram of consecration: and Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the ram.

"And he slew it; and Moses took of the blood of it, and put it upon the tip of Aaron's right ear, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot.

“And he brought Aaron’s sons, and Moses put of the blood upon the tip of their right ear, and upon the thumbs of their right hands, and upon the great toes of their right feet: and Moses sprinkled the blood upon the altar round about.” (Lev. 8:22-24)

After the ram of consecration was secured and hands were laid on its head, the animal was slain. In this case, the blood was first applied to the person of Aaron, being put upon the tip of his right ear, the thumb of his right hand, and the great toe of his right foot. The *right* side signifies favor, and of course the antitype pertains to Jesus and the Church, the called of God, whose primary concern in life, in connection with their sacrifice, is to hearken to the will of the Lord. The blood being applied to just the tip of the ear, rather than being smeared on the whole ear, represents that Christians have to listen very attentively, that they have to discriminate in their listening, and that the effect of their hearkening to the Word of God is like a jewel on the ear when others witness their behavior or conduct in life. A Christian’s dedication to God is externally recognized by others, especially those in the antitypical Tabernacle Court condition of faith. Other believers appreciate the sincere sacrifice of a Christian on behalf of his Master and Lord.

The application of blood to the right thumb of the individual pictures another aspect of Christian life. Hands signify activity,

that is, Christian activity and service for the Lord. The concern or desire of Christians, other than marital or family obligations, is to serve God. Accordingly, the right thumb is the most important of the ten fingers.

Applying the blood to the large toe of the right foot indicates that Christians are to walk in dedicated or consecrated paths. Hence the right toe represents moral conduct and places of fellowship. The right toe should direct Christians into paths that are wholesome and conducive to serving their God and King.

The three applications of the blood have a very powerful signification for Christians and constitute one reason why the ram of consecration was a *burnt* offering, which in antitype shows *God's pleasure* in this class. A burnt offering represents acceptability before God, as if to say, "The God that answereth by fire, let him be God" (1 Kings 18:24). The angel who appeared to Gideon offered cakes to Jehovah (Judges 6:17-22). As God's representative, the angel touched those cakes with his wand, and fire consumed them, assuring Gideon, "God has fellowship with you, for He has partaken of this food." Thus the fire implied recognition and acceptance of the offering.

"And he [Moses] took the fat, and the rump, and all the fat that was upon the inwards, and the caul

above the liver, and the two kidneys, and their fat, and the right shoulder.” (Lev. 8:25)

The fat, the rump, the inward fat, the caul above the liver, and the two kidneys of the ram of consecration were offered on the altar in addition to the right shoulder. In other words, the precious and vital inner organs of the animal were offered on God’s altar. In Scripture, the kidneys represent the reins of the heart, the innermost motives, the will of the Christian, which is of an even more secret nature than the thoughts of the heart. The Holy Spirit inspects the *will behind the thinking*, as well as the deed itself. The right (or best) shoulder signifies activity and labor and means that Christians are to give God the utmost of their physical, mental, and moral qualities in their service to Him.

“And out of the basket of unleavened bread, that was before the LORD, he [Moses] took one unleavened cake, and a cake of oiled bread, and one wafer, and put them on the fat, and upon the right shoulder:

“And he put all upon Aaron’s hands, and upon his sons’ hands, and waved them for a wave offering before the LORD.

“And Moses took them from off their hands, and burnt them on the altar upon the burnt offering: they were consecrations for a sweet savour: it is an offering made by fire unto the LORD.

“And Moses took the breast, and waved it for a wave offering before the LORD: for of the ram of consecration it was Moses’ part; as the LORD commanded Moses.” (Lev. 8:26-29)

Also accompanying the offering of fat, inner organs, and the right shoulder was a basket of diversified unleavened bread. The basket pictures the Bible, which contains many precious and pure truths. Out of this basket of unleavened bread were taken three token offerings: a plain cake of pure unleavened bread, an oiled cake of unleavened bread, and a thin wafer. These three samples of bread represent three precious doctrines of truth found in the Bible.

The plain unleavened cake is the doctrine of purity and justification, which is an important ingredient in connection with an appreciation of God’s calling in this age, for one is justified not by the deeds of the flesh but by the robe of Christ’s righteousness. The pure unleavened truth of God’s Word and the righteousness of Christ justify the individual.

The bread dipped in oil represents the next step in Christian development: consecration and sanctification. Thus the oil of the Holy Spirit commingled with the bread signifies the teaching of sanctification, of being set apart by a full dedication of one’s life to do the will of the Heavenly Father.

The thin wafer represents another important truth upon which God's people are to feed, namely, the doctrine of the hope of glorification. It is only when this hope is set before the Christian that he can make his calling and election sure. Stated another way, the expectation and desire to be with Jesus in glory and to live with him are a necessary part of Christian meditation day and night.

Thus the three doctrines are justification, sanctification, and the hope or foretaste of coming glory. All three are necessary ingredients of the Christian offering, as well as affections and strength of service pictured, respectively, by the inner organs and the right shoulder of the ram of consecration. The two cakes, the wafer, and the animal parts, together with the heavy shoulder, were placed on the hands of Aaron and his sons. The weight of a steer's shoulder is considerable, and Moses assisted Aaron in waving the offering. In antitype, God assisted Jesus with his path of consecration and duty at the First Advent and in the various experiences leading to Calvary. Jesus was humbled under the mighty hand of God (1 Pet. 5:6). Likewise, God has sustained Christians down through the age.

The waving of the animal's parts represents that God does not look for stagnant Christian service. He does not want mere

theoretical Christians—Christians who are developed only mentally. The waving to and fro suggests *lively, active service* for the Lord until He takes off the parts, as Moses did, and puts them in the fire and they are consumed. The lesson is that Christians are to be faithful unto death, until God calls them home, until they go into the tomb. “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Rev. 2:10).

Many Christians have a mountain of difficulty in their path for years, even though the load lessens for some as they are about to enter the grave. For those who are rightly exercised by their trials, the outward man is perishing while, simultaneously, the inward man is being renewed (2 Cor. 4:16). It was the same in the natural realm in the type. Aaron and his sons struggled to hold the heavy shoulder of the ram, waving it to and fro. Even though the thin wafer, the cakes of unleavened bread, the kidneys, and so forth, were removed, the weight of the heavy shoulder seemed to increase, until finally Moses relieved Aaron of his burden, the heavy shoulder being the last part to be lifted off.

“And Moses said unto Aaron and to his sons, Boil the flesh at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and there eat it with the bread that is in the basket of consecrations, as I commanded, saying, Aaron and his sons shall eat it.

“And ye shall not go out of the door of the tabernacle of the congregation in seven days, until the days of your consecration be at an end: for seven days shall he consecrate you.” (Lev. 8:31,33)

The seven-day consecration of the priesthood represents that the antitypical priesthood is consecrated throughout the Christian or Gospel Age, and during this time, Christians feed upon the ram of consecration. After the necessary parts were removed, the remainder of the flesh of the animal was boiled so that Aaron and his sons could eat meat and unleavened bread for seven days and not go outside the Tabernacle. The antitypical lesson is that once an individual dedicates his life to the Lord, it is a lifetime contract. He cannot change his mind later and go out of the Lord’s house. God is very pleased with faithful dedication to His service.

The seven days picture the seven stages of development of the gospel Church, from the Day of Pentecost after Jesus’ resurrection to a date, known to the Lord, in the near future. The seven churches in the Book of Revelation—Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea—represent these seven developments in the Church. After this Gospel Age is consummated, after the “seven days” have expired, then comes the eighth day, which is recorded in the next chapter, Leviticus 9. The eighth day prefigures the work of the Kingdom (Matt. 6:10).

Leviticus chapter 8 is a very forceful lesson of the duties, requirements, and obligations of Christians before their God. If they are faithful unto death, the Lord in His mercy will glorify and honor them. Just as the typical priesthood, after being dedicated to service and accepted, received the offerings of the people, so the Church of this age, if faithful in their consecration and dedication to the Lord, will be members of the great anti-typical heavenly High Priest in the next age. At that time, they will deal with the human race, healing those who are willing of their moral, mental, and physical ailments so that they will be partakers of eternal life and everlasting happiness here on earth (Rev. 1:6; 21:4).

Frank Shallieu