

## BIBLE CLASS STUDY GUIDE

## LEVITICUS 8-10

In chapters 1-7, much instruction was given to the Israelites concerning the role of the priests. The priests were to offer the various sacrifices to God on behalf of the people. In chapters 8-10, some history is given concerning the first priests.

## PREPARATION

8:1-9

Aaron (Moses' brother) and his sons were to be priests for the Israelite people. First, though, there were preparations to be made for their anointing ("installation"). Notice that a priestly sin offering would be brought for the occasion (v2) and the entire assembly would watch (v3). Also, the men were dressed in the priestly garments that God had described to Moses as recorded in Exodus 28. Aaron wore the dress of the high priest which was a little more elaborate than the garments worn by his sons (c.f. Lev 8:9, 13).

- ! Why do you suppose God wanted the assembly of Israel present for the anointing of the priests?
- ! Do you see any significance in the fact that the priests were washed with water before they were able to wear the special garments (v6)?
- ! The garments of the priests were very ornate and showy. Why do you think God might have commanded such dress? In New Testament times God does not direct our pastors to dress in a particular way when ministering to the people, so why do our pastors wear special garments in church?



## ANOINTING

8:10-13

Using a special formulation of olive oil and spices (see Ex 30), Moses anointed the items of the tabernacle, "and so consecrated them" (v10). To *consecrate* something means to *set it aside for a specific purpose*. In this case, the furnishings of the tabernacle were set aside for the worship and praise of the LORD. Aaron the high priest was also anointed with oil.

- ! We do not generally anoint our church furnishings, but we certainly do think of our building and contents as *consecrated* to the LORD. The altar, the candles, the pulpits and lecterns—all are set aside for the specific purpose of worshiping and praising God.

- ! To what extent are our homes *consecrated* to the LORD?
- ! To what extent are we consecrated to the LORD?  
(see Hymn 400; 1 Cor 6:19-20)

## OFFERINGS

8:14-21

After the articles of the tabernacle were anointed, the offerings were brought to the LORD. First, the bull for the sin offering, the blood of which was also placed on the altar to "purify the altar." Then the ram for the burnt offering was given.

- ! In both the sin offering and the whole burnt offering, Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the animal before it was offered. What was the significance of this?

## ORDINATION OFFERING

8:22-36

The term 'ordination' has the root meaning 'to fill the hand.' As ordained priests these men were to receive into their hands from God the right of offering sacrifices for the people and also the privilege of receiving into their hands portions of certain sacrifices" (*The People's Bible: Leviticus*).

- ! What was done with the blood of the ordination ram (v22-24)?
- ! What was the significance of this special anointing with blood?

Normally the fat portions of the animal sacrifices went directly to the LORD. In this case, these portions were given to Aaron and his sons to "wave" before the LORD prior to their sacrifice. In this way, the priests were made visible intercessors between the people and their God.

After the ordination offering was given, Moses also used the blood of the animal to consecrate the clothing which the new priests wore.

Notice also how this ordination offering took on some of the characteristics of a fellowship offering. Aaron and his sons cooked the meat of the offering and ate it together by the door of the tabernacle. This represented the fellowship they had with God. The ordination was not completed until they had stayed for seven days at the entrance to the tabernacle. What do you suppose was the significance of this?

- ! What were the consequences for failing to carry out God's will (v35)?

## THE MINISTRY OF THE PRIESTS BEGINS

9:1-22

This section details how Aaron and his sons offered the first sacrifices on behalf of the people. All the regulations that God had given to Israel through Moses were now to be put into practice. On behalf of the people these first offerings would be 1) a male goat for a sin offering; 2) a calf and a lamb for a burnt offering; 3) an ox and a ram for a fellowship offering; 4) a grain offering mixed with oil. Before he could offer for the people, however, Aaron first had to offer a sacrifice for his own sins.



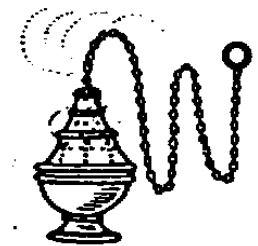
Aaron and his sons did everything the way they had been commanded. After the offerings have been made, Aaron blesses the people, steps down from the altar, and the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people.

- ! See how v7 reminds us of the purpose of these sacrifices.
- ! What was the reaction of the people to the presence of the LORD? How did this differ from their reaction at Mt. Sinai? What was the difference between the two appearances? (See also Heb 12:28-29)

## FAILURE OF TWO PRIESTS: NADAB AND ABIHU

10:1-11

Things seemed to be going smoothly. There was rejoicing among the people at the presence of the LORD (v34). But it didn't take long for two of the new priests to disobey God's commandments regarding worship in the tabernacle. The consequence of their disobedience was that which God had already outlined (8:35).



The Bible says that Nadab and Abihu, two of Aaron's sons, brought *unauthorized fire* to the LORD—a bad mistake for their first day on the job. They were immediately put to death for their actions. We aren't told exactly what they did wrong. Perhaps they offered incense at the wrong time or using the wrong spices. Maybe they were making fun of the worship of God when they brought the offering. There is some indication that they might have been drunk as they entered the Tent of Meeting to burn incense (v8-9). Somehow they had dishonored God in the presence of all the people (v3). Thus they endangered the spiritual lives not only of themselves but of those who had watched them.

- ! God gave specific instructions that Aaron and the remaining priests were not to mourn or become involved with the funeral activities of the dead men (vv6-7). Why do you think this was? Could this relate at all to Jesus' words in Lk 9:57-62?

! Was the consequence of Nadab and Abihu's sin too strict? Elsewhere in the Bible, there are indications that the spiritual leaders of the people are held to very high standards. See Lk 12:48; Js 3:1; 1 Tim 3:1-7, Heb 13:17.

! What does this event teach us about the seriousness of sin?

## **WHAT TO DO NOW?**

10:12-15

The incident with Nadab and Abihu had ruined an otherwise fine day. Almost forgotten now were the offerings that had already been made (like the goat for sin in 9:15). Moses instructed Aaron and his two remaining sons to finish what they had started. Part of the grain offering and certain meat from other offerings were their designated portions. They were to eat them in a "holy" and "ceremonially clean" place.

## **YET ANOTHER MISTAKE**

10:16-20

Later, Moses checked back with Eliezar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons, to see if they had eaten their portion of the offerings. He was aggravated to find that instead they had burned up those portions. Aaron interceded for his sons remarking, in effect, that they had been too disturbed by the events of the day to eat and it had been an unintentional mistake. Moses accepted the explanation of Aaron.

## **NOTES**

## **CONTINUING READING**

G Read Leviticus 11-15