

FEBRUARY 19

Leviticus 7:28-9:6

Leviticus 7:28-38

The thing that stands out to me here is that God built a kind of tithe into the sacrificial system to provide for the service of the priests. Later, other tithes will be taken out to support the service of the Levites.

If the people had realized God's love and provision in contrast to their need and sin, they would have sacrificed gladly. And, they could only sacrifice if the priests made the offerings for them. The system was perfect if everyone kept their eyes on God and His love. If they put their focus anywhere else, it became a system of drudgery and complaining. Why should they have to go to Jerusalem? Why should they have to offer up their best animals? Why should they support the priests who seemed to have easy jobs with lots of help?

In Nehemiah, after he went back to Persia, the people stopped sacrificing and giving. The priests and Levites had to stop serving Israel and go back to their land to make a living. The city started going to ruin again, both physically and spiritually.

In Malachi you have the opposite. The priests allowed the people to be godless and to bring lame, blind and dying animals for sacrifice. God judges the priests because of the motive behind their tolerance. If they had stopped the people from bringing bad sacrifices, what would they have had to eat? That didn't make God happy. In 1 Samuel, Eli the priest was guilty of this too. If you wonder why he wouldn't stop his sons from desecrating the offerings, note what it says about Eli at his death. Apparently, he had quite an appetite.

I see two things here for us as disciples.

First, after we exercise responsible wisdom and seek the Lord's leading, if we can, we are to give for the ministry. Second, money or provision should never motivate our service. God doesn't ask us to work without provision, but there is a legitimate challenge to us when Jesus says, "seek ye first...and all these things will be yours as well." A lot of sin has been allowed for the sake of the financial needs of a church or ministry. Many pastors have stayed too long or been too silent, because following the Lord would have put them in an uncomfortable place. Jesus told His disciples not to be anxious, not to fear, and to live in the harvest believing that God would provide. Sometimes that sounds so strange.

Leviticus 8

The next three chapters will be devoted to appointing Aaron and his sons to be priests for Israel. For most people this is all boring detail. For us as disciples following the Lord in the harvest, I'm not saying we need to look it over with a microscope to find meaning in it, but we shouldn't just ignore it either. This is our Father and Lord and the Spirit saying something that was important to them. It is the Trinity saying something to Israel about the vital importance this should have in their lives and in the nation. Israel was to have reached their harvest field for God. These men were their leaders (disciples /shepherds) who were to have kept Israel focused on redemption and the love of God as the nation fulfilled its mission.

Vs. 1-4 Notice that all of Israel was assembled to look on this event. The tabernacle is now being called the *tent of meeting*; whereas before the tent of the meeting was a tent outside of the camp where Moses met alone with God. Now, the tabernacle is the only meeting place and it is no longer the meeting between Moses and God that is focused upon; but it is the place of meeting between God and the people.

So, as a disciple, where do you "meet" with God? Yeah, I know we now have the Spirit, but I mean, where do you meet regularly with God to read His Word and pray? I actually have a

“corner of meeting.” Sometimes just having the same time and same place can give you a lot of help in having a daily meeting with the Lord.

Vs. 5-9 The dressing of Aaron and his sons took place before the congregation. This was an important event.

In clothing Aaron, I’m always amazed at *the Urim and the Thummim*. To think that if the leaders or people asked the priest, he could give them any answer. I mean, they could have bet on horses and won. They could have told the people the weather or when a caravan would arrive. Seriously, this was an amazing thing that God had given them. Sadly, except for David, you don’t see anyone relying much on this provision.

Vs. 10-13 After Aaron was dressed, he was anointed and consecrated for ministry. You don't have to be Einstein to see that, figuratively, we have been anointed for ministry too. At salvation, because of Jesus' sacrifice and blood, we are clothed in Christ's righteousness and anointed with His Spirit. We aren't just "left" in the harvest; we are sent into it, and there we follow our Lord and grow as we reach out and make disciples.

It is through symbols like these that we know that anointing has some link to the Spirit and to commissioning. Think of what happened just after Jesus' baptism.

Notice that Moses is the one officiating. Aaron, obviously, wasn't able to consecrate himself. Moses had already been consecrated by God.

Notice that the oil was poured on Aaron's head. A woman once asked for our church elders to pray for her and anoint her for healing, and when I did it I poured the oil. It distressed her, because she was used to an oil-moistened finger being pressed against her forehead. She asked me where I got the idea to pour the oil, and this is where it came from. BTW, she was healed, but I also really think that part of the healing came when she and her husband left the area and the grumpy group of believers they were serving.

Vs. 14-17 Here Moses is leading *Aaron and his sons* in *the sin offering* that would make them eligible to stand before the Lord. Moses used the blood of this offering to consecrate the altar. For a normal person this offering could be eaten by the priests. But when this was done for the priests, part of it was offered on the altar, and the main part was hauled outside the camp and burned, thereby showing its sinfulness. Again, symbolically, Jesus was killed not in the temple in Jerusalem, but outside the city (the camp), having become sin for us.

Vs. 18-21 Now this was *the burnt offering* for *Aaron and his sons*. In worship this was for atonement, and it was totally consumed on the altar. Besides symbolizing the need for forgiveness, the total burning symbolized that the animal was taking their place and they were devoting themselves wholly to God.

V. 21 Note that where it says it was a *food offering*, it means that it was "satisfying" to the Lord. God didn't eat it. It is saying that along with it being a *pleasing aroma*, God was satisfied with the devotion and presentation of the offering. This sense of satisfaction is seen in Jesus saying, *My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work* (John 4:34). It means satisfaction, like food, but not from food.

Vs. 22-32 Normally this would have been the peace or fellowship offering, but because of the special occasion, it is *the ram of ordination*.

V. 22 Notice again that there was always a sense of identification with the offered animal and the transference of sin and guilt by the laying on of hands.

Vs. 23-24 This was part of the ordination and not a normal part of the peace offering. The blood was put on Aaron's right ear lobe, thumb and big toe. Then Moses did this to Aaron's sons. I think every discipleship kit at your local Christian bookstore should have a small vial of blood

for this purpose. JUST KIDDING! The blood was to symbolize that all of Aaron's life and ministry was to help the people stand before their God. As disciples in the harvest, bearing the blood of Jesus, this has to be our mindset also. We are to be reminded by the blood we bear, that all we think and do should be directed to helping people connect with God through the grace and forgiveness in Christ. That's kind of cool to think about.

Vs. 27-28 Normally the priests would eat this portion, but they aren't fully consecrated yet, so the right thigh gets offered on the altar.

V. 29 The officiating priest was to receive the breast.

V. 30 This again was special to this occasion. Here they have these nice new clothes, and Moses sprinkles them with oil and blood. I wonder if they had OxiClean© back then.

Vs. 31-32 The point of a peace/fellowship offering was to celebrate before the Lord and share with others what He had given. This is the celebration part of the sacrifice and ordination. Remember, the goat couldn't be boiled in its mother's milk.

Vs. 33-36 This wasn't a quick ceremony. Not only did it take time to kill, skin, cut and burn the animals; but they had to live in the courtyard before the tabernacle for *seven days*. I think for us as disciples, staying consecrated to the Lord and His harvest requires us, at times, to lock ourselves in somewhere and refocus ourselves in prayer and seeking God.

V. 36 They did all that the Lord asked them to do. That might seem like a lame point, but wait until tomorrow. Regardless of the honor the Lord shows us one day, He still expects us to try to obey. He shows us grace upon grace even in our disobedience, but sometimes there is a very short fuse when we presume on His grace. It is good, as examples to other disciples, to fear the Lord, that is, to be afraid of Him in a healthy way.

Leviticus 9

Vs. 1-6 Now that *Aaron and his sons* are fully consecrated, they will begin their duties by sacrificing for themselves and for the entire congregation. This would take some days to do all of this for all of Israel, and it would resemble a feast. Notice that all of the main offerings are present here. Some people think this would have taken place before the Passover and been concluded with the Passover feast.

This was a great event. Tomorrow will be a sad day for Aaron.

Mark 3:31-4:25

Mark 3:31-35

Doesn't it seem like we just covered this in Matthew? So what application can you make from this story regarding being a disciple?

Mark 4:1-25

As a disciple making disciples, or even talking to an unbeliever over this section (which is also part of the discipling process), how would you explain the purpose of parables?

Also, how would you explain the different seeds to a new, growing disciple? If you hang around long enough, you will meet all of these in church.

Back on January 19 we had this parable told in Matthew 13 and the reading notes on that day have some additional comments.

How do vs. 21-25 complement v. 20? What is Jesus' argument here? How did Jesus define fruit? A disciple is called to testify to Jesus in the harvest. To have light and not use it is not good. We've been given light to shape our hearts and to let it shine.

Psalm 37:12-29

There are lots of good verses here. Which of these strikes a chord with you?

As you read, notice the concern of three major characters. *The wicked* are concerned about *the righteous*. The Lord is against the wicked, but for the righteous. The righteous are concerned about the Lord. Generally speaking, everything turns out right in life, and everything works according to God's plan in the end.

Vs. 12-13 This is now David addressing why the righteous should wait. God indeed sees the wicked and has a wonderful plan for them. God just doesn't always pay on Friday.

Vs. 14-15 David says that God brings the plot of the wicked against them. It is like they chop down a tree to fall on the righteous and it falls on them instead. This may not always be true on earth, but in a spiritual and eternal sense, it is always true.

Vs. 16-20 So much of what is written here has to do with knowing the Lord and the resultant faith and understanding of God and what He is doing in the world. If a person is secure in Christ, they are unshakable, like the house the wise man built in Luke 6:46-48.

Vs. 21-26 If this is one section, it is interesting that it begins and concludes with the person who trusts in the Lord being generous with his stuff, even during hard times. It makes me think of Jesus telling His disciples not to be anxious about their lives, to give freely and to lay up treasure in heaven.

Vs. 27-29 This is the summary of what David has seen and the encouragement to follow the Lord. Notice again that the righteous/meek *shall inherit the land*.

It's probably good for us to understand that these promises are the norm, but there are exceptions. Think of v. 25. Is this true, always? I remember hearing of a US city boy having his faith turned upside down by a girl from a third world country. He held to the absolute nature of the promise, but she had seen Christians oppressed and Christian children *begging for bread*. God allows for deviations from the norm. There are God-designed exceptions. Daniel became overwhelmed when he was told how God would allow His saints to suffer. In Revelation, God allows the slaughter of those who believe to reveal the hearts of men. The entire judgment of the sheep and the goats comes as a result of how people responded to the need of God's people in the Tribulation. Paul quotes the OT (Ps. 44:22), saying, *for your sake we are being killed all the day long...* The promise is true in the normal sphere of following, but God allows, for His own purposes, the exception. Following as a disciple might mean only being given a promise for a day, not a year. Our job is to follow Christ in the harvest, not to have Him guarantee our earthly security or plans.

Proverbs 10:5

Amen!