

Christ in the Sacrifices 15-10-18b

We pick up our study now, we're looking at the Law of the Grain Offering and specifically the consumption of this particular offering by the sons of Aaron. In verse 18 of Leviticus chapter 6, All the males among the children of Aaron may eat it, the sons of Aaron. It is a statute forever in your generations concerning the offerings made by fire to the Lord.

Everyone who touches them must be holy, it says in your new King James. Well let's begin with the sons of Aaron. If you turn over one book to Numbers chapter 3, we have the concept of representation that we introduced in the first session elucidated.

These are the records of Aaron and Moses when the Lord spoke with Moses on Mount Sinai, Numbers chapter 3. These are the names of the sons of Aaron, and then it gives them. These are the names of the sons of Aaron, Nadab, the firstborn, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. We'll just call them Abihu because that's how I learned it in Sunday school.

These are the names of the sons of Aaron, the anointed priests whom he consecrated to minister as priests. Sons of Aaron consecrated to minister as priests. There are Levites that are not descended from Aaron.

He is a member of the tribe of Levi, he's not Levi. So his sons are a clan, they are a subset of the tribe of Levi. Nadab and Abihu died before the Lord when they offered profane fire before the Lord in the wilderness of Sinai, and they had no children.

And it makes you suspect that they were the young bucks, you know, we're young and we have a better idea crowd. So Eleazar and Ithamar ministered as priests in the presence of Aaron their father. Two lived, two died.

The Lord spoke to Moses saying, Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may serve him. The priests serve the high priest. In these contexts when we see Aaron, what goes for him goes for the high priest from then on.

And what goes for his sons is the priestly instruction. They shall attend to his needs and the needs of the whole congregation before the tabernacle of meeting to do the work of the tabernacle. They shall attend to the furnishings and to the needs of the children of Israel to do the work of the tabernacle.

And you shall give the Levites to Aaron and his sons. They are given entirely to him from among the children of Israel. So the rest of the tribe is given to Aaron and his sons for service.

Now this again is very demeaning and debasing and politically incorrect for all of the other Levites that they're not as good as Aaron and they're not as good as Aaron's sons. And they have to serve somebody else in their tribe, right? This would be the modern take, well how can God set one family within the tribe above the others and have the others serve? How

denigrating, how despicable, how hateful is that to devalue them and demean them and make them subjugate and subservient? This is all the nonsense that pertains in our modern culture. To serve is not demeaning.

What did the Lord Jesus tell his disciples? The Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many. I think if the Lord Jesus Christ can do it, we shouldn't get up on our high horse. The Lord Jesus rode a donkey, right? At any rate, the other Levites are assigned by God to serve the family of Aaron, not because Aaron is superior, not because he's smarter, not because he is more gifted, not because he's more capable.

It is an assignment. There are many such assignments. Employees work for employers, enlisted men follow the orders of officers, junior officers follow the orders of senior officers, junior enlisted follow the orders of senior enlisted.

There is a necessary functional structure that works when people understand the principle of responsibility and of obedience, submission to a higher authority. It is of God and there's nothing wrong with it and being somewhere on a lower rung of the ladder is not demeaning, it is not degrading, it is not debasing, and anybody who takes it that way is arrogant. It is arrogant to assume that you are too good to serve.

Just look at the Lord Jesus Christ. He was equal with God and he did not continue to grasp it. He emptied himself and took on the form of a great Lord and Master.

Is that what he did? Form of a servant. So the Levites are given to Aaron to serve. Now skip down to verse 40 of Numbers chapter 3. The Lord said to Moses, number all the firstborn males of the children of Israel from a month old and above, and take the number of their names.

And you shall take the Levites for Me, I am the Lord. Instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel, and the livestock of the Levites, instead of all the firstborn among the livestock of the children of Israel. So Moses numbered the firstborn among the children of Israel as the Lord commanded him, all the firstborn males, according to the number of names from a month old and above.

Of those who were numbered of them were 22,273. Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, Take the Levites instead of the firstborn among the children of Israel, and the livestock of the Levites instead of their livestock. The Levites shall be Mine, I am the Lord.

And for redemption of the 273 of the firstborn of the children of Israel, who are more than the number of the Levites, you shall take five shekels for each one individually. You shall take them in the currency of the shekel of the sanctuary, the shekel of 20 geras. You shall give money with which the excess number of them is redeemed to Aaron and his sons.

So Moses took the redemption money from those who were over and above those who were redeemed by the Levites. From the firstborn of the children of Israel he took the money, 1,365 shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary. Moses gave their redemption money to

Aaron and his sons, according to the word of the Lord, as the Lord commanded Moses." Now, if I was of the persuasion that the Bible was written by a bunch of human beings, a bunch of goat herds who were just trying to manufacture some mythology, I would not have ever thought to make the number of Levites different than the number of firstborn Israelites, so that there was a remainder, and having to arrive at a solution.

Why didn't God just miraculously... And lo, when they completed the count, they found that the firstborn in Israel exactly matched the number of Levites. It's a miracle! And it's just of God. But of course, God arranged this, and it's perfect.

But in the real world that this reflects, it was not perfect, and there weren't enough Levites to redeem all the firstborn, and so the extras were purchased with money. They are sort of a different category. How did they figure out which ones were the excess? I don't know.

But when they did the one-for-one matchup, there were too many firstborn Israelites for the number of Levites to redeem them. So what does God say? You will redeem... All of them must be redeemed. The firstborn must be redeemed.

But these are going to be redeemed not with a living substitute, but with money. Not with a living substitute, but with inanimate treasure, shekels. What is the principle here? What is the point? No firstborn can stand before God without being redeemed.

And they, the firstborn, are representative of their families, their clans, their tribes. And everyone in Israel must be redeemed, and this is reflected in the firstborn. And the Levites are the stand-in.

It is their life for the firstborn. In other words, if you translate backward, who ought to be serving God in the tabernacle? The firstborn of every family. But this is impractical because if you take the firstborn from every family, who's going to do the family business and maintain the holdings and provide the leadership and the offspring and manage things, so they are redeemed.

They are replaced in the service of God by the Levites. The Levites are now doing what the firstborn would be doing. But in sort of an idealized view, it is the firstborn son of each family that serves the Lord in the tabernacle.

And he is representative of his whole family group, so that ultimately all of the people are serving the Lord in the Lord's holy place. But in practical terms, to run a nation and have things go forward, they can't do that. So the firstborn are redeemed by the Levites, and if there aren't enough Levites to represent all of the families, then those families redeem their firstborn with money.

The money goes into the treasury to help the Levites do what they need to do. They can get supplies, they can break a shovel, they can get a new one made, and so on. But it is sort of a different type of redemption because some of these firstborn are not replaced with a living

replacement.

All of this is highly significant. And it is that significance that we're looking for as we ask ourselves the question, why do the priests, the sons of Aaron, eat the grain offering and portions of the other sacrifices that are brought? Why do they do that? Why are those instructions there? Well, this idea of representation, of substitution, of redemption is pertinent. It is central to that understanding.

Think about this, you were redeemed, the Bible tells us, not with silver and gold. What does it say in Peter? You were not redeemed with perishable things such as silver and gold, but with what? The precious blood of Christ. We were redeemed by the precious blood of Christ.

It is the priests who offer the sacrifices. It is the priests who oversee the entire sacrificial system. They are closely associated with it.

They are the ones who make those offerings happen. The Lord Jesus is, in a sense, His own priest. There is no priest officiating at the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus.

He is the high priest after the order of Melchizedek, and He is both priest and sacrifice. He is both the one who officiates and the subject of the sacrifice, all in one. If we are redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, He is not our Levite, He is our Melchizedekian high priest.

We enter into that order. The interpretive connection that we are making here is that in the same way that the Levites did what the individual first-born Israelites could not do, which is full-time service, holy to the Lord, dwelling in the holy precincts, partaking of their meals in the holy precincts. This is what the Levites and the sons of Aaron specifically do on their behalf as their representatives.

Who is our representative? It is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is our redemption. He is our purchase price.

He is our stand-in and our substitute. It is He that is our righteousness and our peace and our sanctification. Because we cannot sit at the right hand of the Father, because we cannot perform perfectly all of the Father's will, because we cannot be acceptable in His sight and dwell in His presence at all times, the Lord Jesus Christ does that for us.

The Lord Jesus does that for us. So how much appreciation should we have not only for the work of the Lord Jesus Christ in the past in redeeming us and being our substitute, but His present ministry of representation before the Father. He represents our humanity perfected, sanctified, glorified in the presence of the Father.

And this is the earnest. This is the firstfruits. He is the firstfruits, and it's going to sort of work like a chiasm.

The firstfruits of the resurrection, the firstfruits of perfected humanity is already in God's

presence. And if the firstfruits are holy, so is the rest. And so part of the guarantee, part of the assurance that we have that we will be raised and we will be made acceptable in the Beloved is the Beloved is already acceptable and sitting in the presence of God and is enjoying fellowship with the Father.

And as our representative and as our firstfruits, He will be there. So back to the grain offering now. The Levites and the sons of Aaron in particular represent the firstborn in general and those who come before God in worship in particular.

So if the priest is going to eat and we go back to Leviticus chapter six, now all the males among the children of Aaron may eat it. Notice not all of the Levites, but all the males of the sons of Aaron, all of the priests, all of the males. It is a statute forever in your generations concerning the offerings made by fire.

And then it says, everyone who touches them must be holy. In the Hebrew of this verse, that is not what it says exactly. You could translate it that way and many of the versions do.

But this says, all the males among the sons of Aaron will eat it. It is a statute olam unto the ages in your generations from the offerings of the Lord. And then we have this last little sentence, kol asher, and then we have the verb naga.

It is a penune which makes it weak, so you have yaga here, translated touch. Bachem, touches them, yakdash. Which is from kadosh, but it has the yod in front because this is the verb kadash from which kadosh, holy comes.

But this is the verbal form of the word, which means to be consecrated, to be set apart, to be holy. But this is the imperfect, and so you would translate it, will be holy. But it doesn't say, there's no them and there's no must.

It literally says, all who touch them will be holy. So some versions actually translate this, anything that touches them is holy, or anything that, as though touching the offering will sanctify whatever touches it. I don't think that is the sense.

I think that the translation here is not far off, but when it says everyone who touches them must be holy, this is sort of a time future. Everyone who touches them will be consecrated. It is a statute forever in your generations concerning the offerings.

What is the context here? The priests, only people who are in a holy place, and who are ritually clean, and are sons of Aaron will ever touch these. And this is another exclusion of the children, of the wives, of the visitors, guests, anybody else that might be in the precincts. This is a portion from the offerings that is assigned to and eaten only by the sons of Aaron, and the idea here is everything is holy.

They will only do it in the holy place, the offering itself is holy, and the ones who come in contact with this offering to eat it must also be holy. They can't be in some state of ritual

defilement or impurity. Holiness, holiness, holiness, everywhere you look.

No contamination, no defilement of any kind. Why? Back to asking the question, what does this mean to us? We know that the grain offering represents the offering of our labors, the work of our hands, we dedicate it to God, it should be sanctified, but the priests here are eating of it. What does that mean? Well here's my suggestion, and of course these things are not as scrutable in some cases as other things.

It is an interpretive challenge to figure this out because we don't have a guidebook that says, like Jesus explaining the parables to the disciples, Lord, what did you mean by the soils and the seeds? Jesus gives a great explanation, we don't have that, so we do have to figure it out. This is what I would suggest to you. First of all, what are the equivalences here? The priests we know are representative, and they are even special within the representative.

The Levites represent the firstborn who represent the families. So the families are represented by the firstborn, the firstborn are represented by the Levites, the Levites are represented by the sons of Aaron, and the sons of Aaron only can eat this offering. You see the stairs, the steps of Ahaz we are climbing here to put a very sharp point on this.

And ultimately there will be one. You go from all Israelites to the firstborn, you go from the firstborn to the Levites, you go from the Levites to the sons of Aaron, you go from the sons of Aaron to Aaron himself as the high priest, but ultimately the fulfillment of that whole pyramid is the Lord Jesus Christ. And for us, he is our representative, he is our priest, he is our high priest, he is the offering, and he is the holy place.

He pretty much is reflected in every detail of the tabernacle and later the temple. So how do we get to the point of application? Well, the one thing we have not talked about is they don't wave it before the Lord and then incinerate it themselves. What do they do with it? They eat it.

And this is really the key. It is consumed, it is partaken of. Now it can only be partaken of where? In the holy place.

What's in the holy place, what makes it holy? God's presence. It will be eaten before the Lord. It is eaten by the holiest guys in Israel before the Lord.

And it is the eating that really, I think, cracks the code, solves the riddle. Because eating is a communal activity. Think of Revelation 3.20. Behold, I stand at the door and knock.

If any man will hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him. And eat with him. And he will eat with me.

Why didn't it just stop with, I'll come in and we'll talk. I'll come in and you'll be on the floor worshiping and I will be standing here with my glory effusing through the cracks in the walls. Remember, the Lord painted the scene of in the resurrection when the Son of Man comes into his kingdom and there are those who come to the door and say, Lord, Lord, he's going to be

sitting down at the table.

And people want to come in and sit at that table. And he's going to say to them who say, Lord, Lord, in your name did we not do these things? He says, I never knew you. And he closes the door, but he sits down at the table.

What did the Lord tell the disciples at the last supper? I will not partake of this again, the bread and the cup. This cup, I will not drink it again until I drink it new with you. That implies a meal.

This is a meal cup. This is a fellowship dinner. He says, we will once again be sharing a fellowship meal in the kingdom.

That's the next time we'll do this. The two disciples on the road to Emmaus, when is it they recognize the Lord at the table breaking the bread? That's full knowledge. That's full communion, full fellowship.

So back to this grain offering, if we think of it in terms of whatever I do, I should do heartily. I'm going to dedicate it to the Lord God. And remember, as an Israelite, when you brought that offering and presented it, there is a memorial portion that goes straight to the Lord God via smoke and frankincense.

And it is a pleasing aroma. But the rest of it goes to the priest. It benefits the priest.

It feeds his body. It nourishes him, him in particular, not anybody associated with him, not his guests. It's the sons of Aaron who eat it, who consume it, who benefit from it.

They eat it before the Lord. They're not allowed to go eat it off somewhere else. They don't have a Levite camp out somewhere.

They don't have a sons of Aaron weenie row someplace, be all beef weenies, you know, and go out and go off somewhere. It's eaten before the Lord. The priests enjoy the meal.

They benefit from it, but it is a part of their fellowship with God, which is representative. In practical terms, all Israelites can't come in and turn the temple or the tabernacle into a giant dining hall. But the idea is when you go back down the representation chain, the people of Israel are eating a fellowship meal with God.

You remember the only other time was when the 70 elders went up halfway up Mount Sinai. What was that? They ate before the Lord. Remember that? There was a meal.

And they are representative. They are elders. Same thing here.

When you go up from families to firstborn to Levites to sons of Aaron, eating this sanctified meal before the Lord, two things happen. It represents, in a representative way, intimate fellowship with God. There's no closer time of fellowship than around a meal.

This is one of the things that gets lost with microwaves and multiple schedules and fast food and all the rest of it. Many people have decried in our culture the loss of the family gathered around the table for fellowship and for communion and for intimate converse. So that's part of it.

But secondly, it belongs to the priest. It's God's offering, but God assigns it to the priest for his benefit. The sons of Aaron benefit from it.

And here's the bottom line. The things that you and I do as unto the Lord benefit the body of Christ. They bless his body.

He is in heaven sitting at the right hand of the Father. He is in the holy place enjoying communion with the Father. His body now is us.

And there is a double benefit when we do what we do as unto the Lord. It blesses fellow believers. It blesses the body of Christ on earth.

We are a blessing whether we know it or not, whether we do what we do for those people or not. It's our attitude. It's our example.

It is the glow of blessing that surrounds people who do what they do because they want to please the Lord. There is blessing by association. There is blessing by influence.

There is blessing by co-location. There is blessing by encouragement. There is blessing by prayer.

There is blessing by example. And this function of bringing our grain offering, bringing our human labors to the Lord in a sanctified manner, realizing that a great portion of that benefit is going to accrue to the Lord Jesus, the priest, and both him in heaven. It reflects his glory.

It justifies his work on our behalf. It was a good thing that he saved us. There is benefit.

You think about the Lord Jesus rescuing us and delivering us and representing us before the Father. It would be nice if some of us actually were beneficial and forwarded the Father's plan and made it worth the Lord's trouble to save us, that we get it, that we are on board, that we have the attitude the Lord Jesus had. I am here to do my Father's work, my Father's will.

And when the Lord Jesus has left us here to represent him and we are doing what he did, that work is a sanctified offering. There is a frankincense aroma that comes up before the Father and glorifies the Son and benefits the priest, benefits the Lord Jesus himself. It not only pleases the Father, but it benefits and pleases our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is our representative, who is our priest, who sits in the holy place that we are not allowed to enter.

We can't yet eat our meals in the holy place, but the Lord Jesus does that. We dedicate our time, we dedicate our efforts, we ask God's blessing, we ask for sanctification, we ask for purification in our motives and in the way we do things, the mundane, ordinary things of life. It doesn't

matter what we're doing, it is how we do it and why we do it.

Do we treat it as a grain offering, recognizing that in this particular function there is a direct benefit and a direct connection to the Lord Jesus Christ himself. He is our representative. He is our example.

I think that's why there is so much emphasis placed here on the priestly role, not just in bringing the offering and burning the memorial portion, but in consuming it and benefiting from it and eating that fellowship meal with God in the holy place. That's the attitude we can have to elevate the daily tasks and the daily chores and the daily assignments that we have into something that is without spot and without blemish, that is flour ground fine, anointed with oil, sprinkled with frankincense, and fit to be brought before the Lord and to be enjoyed before the Lord by our priest, the Lord Jesus Christ. Let's close here in a word of prayer.

We'll pick up next time looking at chapter 3, the Law of the Trespass Offering. Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word and how powerfully and beautifully it communicates to us on so many levels, multifaceted, multidimensional communication of Your truth and yet made accessible to us in our flesh and our limited grasp. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will take these things that are spiritually discerned and minister them to our hearts, that we will be motivated and encouraged, and that it will inform every thought and action in the days ahead.

To the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray, amen.