

4-11-26 Message to Roeh Israel Abilene – Shemini (eighth)

Torah: Lev 9:1-11:47

Haftarah: 2 Sam 6:1 – 7:17

Recommended Brit Hadashah: Revelation 7:9-17

A Continuing Priesthood

Central question of this message: Are you rising to the level of covenant relationship with G-d that will allow you to serve Him in His Temple?

Today we are in parasha *Shemini*, which means “eighth”. It takes its name from the seventh word in the English, and the third word in the original Hebrew.

Lev 9:1-3

9 Now it came about on the **eighth** day that Moses called Aaron and his sons and the elders of Israel; 2 and he said to Aaron, "Take for yourself a calf, a bull, for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering, both without defect, and offer them before the Lord.

וּלְבָנָיו	לְאַהֲרֹן	מֹשֶׁה	קָרָא	הַשְּׁמִינִי	בַּיּוֹם	וַיְהִי	9:1
and his sons,	Aaron	Moses	called	the eighth	on day,	And it came to pass	
<u>1121</u>	<u>175</u>	<u>4872</u>	<u>7121</u>	<u>8066</u>	<u>3117</u>	<u>1961</u>	
					יִשְׂרָאֵל:	וְלִזְקֵנָיִךְ	
					Israel;	and the elders of	
					<u>3478</u>	<u>2205</u>	
לְחַטָּאת	בֶּן־בָּקָר	עֵגֶל	לָךְ	קַח־	אַהֲרֹן	אֵלֶי־	2
for a sin offering,	young	a calf	thee	Take	Aaron,	unto	And he said
<u>2403</u>	<u>1241</u> <u>1121</u>	<u>5695</u>	<u>3807a</u>	<u>3947</u>	<u>175</u>	<u>413</u>	<u>559</u>
יְהוָה:	לִפְנֵי	וַתִּקְרַב	הַמִּימָם	לְעֹלָה	וְאַיִל		
the Lord.	before	and offer	without blemish,	for a burnt offering,	and a ram		
<u>3068</u>	<u>6440</u>	<u>7126</u>	<u>8549</u>	<u>5930</u>	<u>352</u>		

Since we began the book of VaYikra (Leviticus), we have seen how G-d is preparing His people and their leaders to inaugurate them for service within the *mishkan* (tabernacle).

We ended the last parasha with the seven days of separation and sanctification which were ordered regarding Aaron and his sons. They were required to make sacrifices and remain outside the doorway of the *mishkan*.

After the construction of the *mishkan*, only Moses has been permitted to enter its doorway, and make the offerings within the interior rooms. That will change in this parasha.

Our Sages consider that Aaron was still under great conviction regarding the sin of the golden calf.¹ Aaron had been in leadership of the people during the time Moses' was on the mountain with G-d, and Aaron had allowed the people to convince him to create an idol for the people to worship, representing G-d. Aaron had seen the disfavor of G-d which had fallen upon the people because of that grievous sin.

The Sages believe that Aaron likely considered himself disqualified for further priestly service due to that failure of leadership at a crucial time. But G-d still had a plan for Aaron, and his sons, and so Aaron's sin was not fully accounted to him because of the mercy of G-d, and for the reason that Aaron was still important to that plan.

And further, the sin offering that Aaron was required to bring was a calf.² I suspect that when he saw the pieces of that calf on the altar, he could not help but be reminded of his sin. The imagery was stark, I believe. And I believe his repentance was genuine. And that might have been the only thing that saved his life, and his office.

¹ Exodus 32:8

² Leviticus 9:8

Once all the preliminary sacrifices had been made, Aaron blessed the people, before Moses took Aaron into the *mishkan*.

Lev 9:22-24

22 Then Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them, and he stepped down after making the sin offering and the burnt offering and the peace offerings. 23 And Moses and Aaron went into the tent of meeting. When they came out and blessed the people, the glory of the Lord appeared to all the people. 24 Then fire came out from before the Lord and consumed the burnt offering and the portions of fat on the altar; and when all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces.

Although it is not stated in the passage, we believe that Aaron gave the three-verse blessing at this time, that has come to be known as the “Aaronic benediction.” The exact wording of that benediction is found in the parallel passage in the book of *B’Midbar* (Numbers).³

³ Numbers 6:24-26

And we see that Moses brought Aaron alone into the *mishkan* after the days of purification. And that happened before all the people. I believe that Moses did this for two reasons. First, to show Aaron how to properly do what must be done inside the *mishkan*, including the holy incense. But secondly, so that the people would know for certain that Aaron had been redeemed, and restored to his office.

The next remarkable thing that happened in the passage is that “fire came out from before the L-rd” and consumed the offering. When that happened, the people were all surprised and fell down in shock. That demonstration of G-d’s power shouldn’t have been such a shock, since they had lived through all the plagues, as well as the dividing of the sea, as well as the miraculous destruction of the Egyptian army which pursued them.

And it seems that the lesson of holiness and awe of G-d was lost upon the two sons of Aaron.

Lev 10:1-3

10 Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took their respective firepans, and after putting fire in them, placed incense on it and offered strange fire before the

Lord, which He had not commanded them. 2 And fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord. 3 Then Moses said to Aaron, "It is what the Lord spoke, saying,

'By those who come near Me I will be treated as holy,
And before all the people I will be honored.'"

What was the “strange fire?” Some have said it was coals from a fire outside the grounds of the *mishkan*. Others have suggested that these two came into the *mishkan* intoxicated. Regardless, what the Torah says is that they had done something presumptuously “which [G-d] had not commanded them.”

The lesson we should all get from this involves the boundaries and successive layers of increasing holiness exist, surrounding where the L-rd chooses to place his throne.

The holiest place is the Holy of Holies. Only once a year a single person – the high priest – is to enter that place, and he does a precise series of actions. Then there is the Holy Place, still inside the *mishkan*, where the menorah, the table of the bread, and the altar of incense are located. This is where only the priests enter to do what

is needed in that area. Outside this area is the courtyard of the altar, where the altar of sacrifice and the bronze laver are found. Here is where the men of Israel could enter with their sacrifices. This area is separated from the camp of Israel by a hanging curtain. So, there are successive layers of holiness and each has a certain requirement for entry and service. And we find out clearly in this parasha that nobody should disregard the instructions of G-d regarding how He wants things done in the various levels of holiness around His throne.

We know that there were even more circles of holiness which surrounded the Holy of Holies in Solomon's Temple, and Herod's Temple. There was also a Court of Women (where all of Israel could go, but women were not permitted into the Court of Sacrifice), then outside of that was the Court of the Nations (where all Israel, and all those who were coming to worship G-d, but not yet grafted-in to the nation of Israel could go). This was the place known as Solomon's Colonnade. Then there were the outer Temple walls. Outside those walls all people could come.

I have already taught on the various levels of covenant relationship that are available with G-d, and I will not repeat those. Those have

application as well to who can go into which of the circles of holiness and at what times.

The questions I wish to address now are: First, will there be prohibited places in the kingdom age, where some people may not be able to go. And will there be special classes of people who carry out specific duties in the Temple? We can find the answers in Scripture.

First, we need to consider the construction of the Temple as described by Ezekiel. I am not going to give the instructions of that construction in detail, but one could construct a complex based upon the measurements that were given to Ezekiel. Some have prepared plans for such a Temple, and they are available on line. I find a very nice description and layout at <https://calvarydelta.com/wp-content/uploads/Ezekiel-40-41-Diagrams.pdf>.

What I wish for you to notice with the layout of this Temple is that it follows the pattern of the *mishkan* more than it does Herod's Temple or Solomon's Temple. As was with the *mishkan*, and Ezekiel's Temple, there is an outer wall, an outer court (where Jews can gather with their sacrifices, an inner court, where we find the altar of sacrifice for Jews.

Note the absence of a “court of the gentiles.” Why is there no such court either in the *mishkan*, or Ezekiel’s Temple? Because surrounding the grounds of the *mishkan* and Ezekiel’s Temple there are no gentiles.

And we see later in Ezekiel’s prophecy that no foreigners (gentiles) who were “uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh” are allowed to enter the Temple. Their presence there profaned the Temple and made G-d’s covenant void!

And it is for that reason that the L-rd directs that no foreigner who is uncircumcised in flesh and uncircumcised in heart will enter the Temple. So, that tells us who will not enter the Temple. Who will enter? Those who are circumcised in heart and in flesh may enter. That is another way of saying Jews – made up of ethnic Jews who have not rejected G-d,⁴ together with people from the nations who have been grafted-into the Jewish people (in the pattern of Ruth), and are considered fully Jewish.

⁴ Ethnic Jews can leave the covenant of G-d by turning their backs on the Torah, and the circumcision of the flesh will be of no benefit. Romans 2:17-29.

G-d continues by setting aside a smaller class of those in this Temple by saying the Levites will offer sacrifices on the altar.

Is there in this Temple the higher class of Levites, the cohenim, who have access to the interior of the Temple itself? The Ezekiel passage is not completely clear, although it does seem to identify some priests who will minister to the L-rd and attend to His table.

But note that the lifestyle requirements for the Levites and Priests closely match the instructions we find in Leviticus in our last few parashiot.

And these priests will also be judges of disputes among the people. This is again closely aligned with Deuteronomy 16-17. And it is clear that the law which they will apply is the Torah.

Ezek 44:4-31

4 Then He brought me by way of the north gate to the front of the house; and I looked, and behold, the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord, and I fell on my face. 5 And the Lord said to me, "Son of man, mark well, see with your eyes, and hear with your ears all

that I say to you concerning all the statutes of the house of the Lord and concerning all its laws; and mark well the entrance of the house, with all exits of the sanctuary. 6 "And you shall say to the rebellious ones, to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord God,' Enough of all your abominations, O house of Israel, 7 when you brought in foreigners, uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in My sanctuary to profane it, even My house, when you offered My food, the fat and the blood; for they made My covenant void — this in addition to all your abominations. 8 "And you have not kept charge of My holy things yourselves, but you have set foreigners to keep charge of My sanctuary."

9 'Thus says the Lord God, "No foreigner, uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, of all the foreigners who are among the sons of Israel, shall enter My sanctuary. 10 "But the Levites who went far from Me, when Israel went astray, who went astray from Me after their idols, shall bear the punishment for their iniquity. 11 "Yet they shall be ministers in My sanctuary, having oversight at the

gates of the house and ministering in the house; they shall slaughter the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before them to minister to them. 12 "Because they ministered to them before their idols and became a stumbling block of iniquity to the house of Israel, therefore I have sworn against them," declares the Lord God, "that they shall bear the punishment for their iniquity. 13 "And they shall not come near to Me to serve as a priest to Me, nor come near to any of My holy things, to the things that are most holy; but they shall bear their shame and their abominations which they have committed. 14 "Yet I will appoint them to keep charge of the house, of all its service, and of all that shall be done in it.

15 "But the Levitical priests, the sons of Zadok,⁵ who kept charge of My sanctuary when the sons of Israel went astray from Me, shall come near to Me to minister to Me; and they shall stand before Me to offer Me the fat and the blood," declares the Lord

⁵ I don't believe that literal "sons of Zadok" are mentioned here. I believe it is a typology statement, connected to what has appeared here in the English as if it is a proper name. The root word in Hebrew is *tzadek*, which means "righteous" and "justice." I believe that righteousness and a zeal for justice will be the defining characteristic of these priests, and they will be selected from those who come from all nations, as stated in Isa 66.

God. 16 "They shall enter My sanctuary; they shall come near to My table to minister to Me and keep My charge. 17 "And it shall be that when they enter at the gates of the inner court, they shall be clothed with linen garments; and wool shall not be on them while they are ministering in the gates of the inner court and in the house. 18 "Linen turbans shall be on their heads, and linen undergarments shall be on their loins; they shall not gird themselves with anything which makes them sweat. 19 "And when they go out into the outer court, into the outer court to the people, they shall put off their garments in which they have been ministering and lay them in the holy chambers; then they shall put on other garments that they may not transmit holiness to the people with their garments. 20 "Also they shall not shave their heads, yet they shall not let their locks grow long; they shall only trim the hair of their heads. 21 "Nor shall any of the priests drink wine when they enter the inner court. 22 "And they shall not marry a widow or a divorced woman but shall take virgins from the offspring of the house of Israel, or a widow who is the widow of a priest. **23 "Moreover, they shall teach My people the difference between the holy and the**

profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean. 24 "And in a dispute they shall take their stand to judge; they shall judge it according to My ordinances. They shall also keep My laws and My statutes in all My appointed feasts, and sanctify My sabbaths.⁶ 25 "And they shall not go to a dead person to defile themselves; however, for father, for mother, for son, for daughter, for brother, or for a sister who has not had a husband, they may defile themselves. 26 "And after he is cleansed, seven days shall elapse for him. 27 "And on the day that he goes into the sanctuary, into the inner court to minister in the sanctuary, he shall offer his sin offering," declares the Lord God.

28 "And it shall be with regard to an inheritance for them, that I am their inheritance; and you shall give them no possession in Israel — I am their possession. 29 "They shall eat the grain offering, the sin offering, and the guilt offering; and every devoted thing in Israel shall be theirs. 30 "And the first of all the first fruits of

⁶ The three general classes of commandments found in Torah are *mitzvot* (commands) *chukim* (laws) and *mishphatim* (ordinances and judgments). This passage invokes all of these, thus invoking all of Torah as the "law of the land" of Israel in the Kingdom to Come.

every kind and every contribution of every kind, from all your contributions, shall be for the priests; you shall also give to the priest the first of your dough to cause a blessing to rest on your house. 31 "The priests shall not eat any bird or beast that has died a natural death or has been torn to pieces.

There is a problem today with stocking this Temple with sufficient priests and Levites to carry out the many duties of the priesthood. That is because the genealogical records have been long destroyed, and the vast majority of Jews don't have any idea of their ancient heritage, or tribal affiliation. And to make matters worse, intermarriage has blurred the genealogical lines further. On top of that, many people from the nations have joined to the Jewish people and have become Jews. They have no genealogy within Israel at all.

So, where will sufficient priests and Levites be found when the Ezekiel Temple is standing? Scripture gives us that answer, as well.

The L-rd will arise, and His enemies are scattered. And He will take vengeance upon the enemies of Israel on that day.

Then He will send Jewish missionaries⁷ into the nations in a final ingathering to supplement the first ingathering of Jews to the land of Israel which is in progress even today.

These missionaries will have great success, and will bring back to Israel with them a number of believers so vast, that nobody can count them.

Then G-d will do something He has never yet done – He will choose from this ingathered crowd of believers some to be priests and some to be Levites to serve Him in His Temple.

And those who are enemies of G-d are struck down, and serve to show us that a longsuffering G-d will not suffer forever. The harvest of souls from the earth will have an end, as the fullness of the kingdom of Israel is established on this earth, and Yeshua takes His throne among us.

Isa 66:12-24

⁷ These could be the 144,000 of Revelation 7 and 14.

12 For thus says the Lord, "Behold, I extend peace to her like a river, And the glory of the nations like an overflowing stream; And you shall be nursed, you shall be carried on the hip and fondled on the knees.

13 "As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you;

And you shall be comforted in Jerusalem."

14 Then you shall see this, and your heart shall be glad,

And your bones shall flourish like the new grass; And the hand of the Lord shall be made known to His servants,

But He shall be indignant toward His enemies.

**15 For behold, the Lord will come in fire
And His chariots like the whirlwind,
To render His anger with fury,
And His rebuke with flames of fire.**

16 For the Lord will execute judgment by fire

**And by His sword on all flesh,
And those slain by the Lord will be many.**

**17 "Those who sanctify and purify
themselves to go to the gardens,
Following one in the center,
Who eat swine's flesh, detestable things,
and mice,⁸
Shall come to an end altogether," declares
the Lord.**

**18 "For I know their works and their thoughts; the time
is coming to gather all nations and tongues. And
they shall come and see My glory. 19 "And I will set a
sign among them and will send survivors from them to
the nations: Tarshish, Put, Lud, Meshech, Rosh, Tubal,
and Javan, to the distant coastlands that have neither
heard My fame nor seen My glory. And they will
declare My glory among the nations.20 "Then they
shall bring all your brethren from all the nations as a
grain offering to the Lord, on horses, in chariots, in
litters, on mules, and on camels, to My holy mountain
Jerusalem," says the Lord, "just as the sons of Israel
bring their grain offering in a clean vessel to the house**

⁸ Kosher laws seem to be in full effect at this time. There is no other definition in Scripture of the phrase "detestable things" other than in the kosher laws of Lev. 11.

of the Lord. **21 "I will also take some of them for priests and for Levites," says the Lord.**

22 "For just as the new heavens and the new earth Which I make will endure before Me," declares the Lord, "So your offspring and your name will endure.

23 "And it shall be from new moon to new moon And from sabbath to sabbath, All mankind will come to bow down before Me," says the Lord.

24 "Then they shall go forth and look On the corpses of the men Who have transgressed against Me. For their worm shall not die, And their fire shall not be quenched; And they shall be an abhorrence to all mankind."

This explains why there are no Gentiles in the Temple, and no need for a court of the gentiles. There is no such people group any longer. There are either people who are in covenant relationship with G-d (at whatever level they are) or dead people. Still, there will be some in this time who are in covenant relationship, but not fully grafted-

in to the Jewish people (and thus not circumcised in heart and flesh). Those will be permitted to live in the Land, but not enter the Temple.

There will be some who came to G-d from among the nations, but fear that since they are not ethnically Jewish, they won't be allowed into the Temple. Their hearts are pure, and they are circumcised into the Jewish family, but they still lack confidence. G-d speaks comfort to them, and reminds them that if they are observant of Torah, and keep the Sabbaths, then they will be welcome to serve in the Temple.

And regarding those who G-d chooses to be priests from among the ingathered, there is something happening here that has never happened before. G-d chooses priests and Levites based not upon family genealogy, but rather on the heart.

Isa 56:1-8

56 Thus says the Lord,

"Preserve justice, and do righteousness, For My salvation is about to come And My righteousness to be revealed. 2 "How blessed is the man who does this, And the son of man who takes hold of it; **Who keeps**

from profaning the sabbath, And keeps his hand from doing any evil." 3 Let not the foreigner who has joined himself to the Lord say, "The Lord will surely separate me from His people. "Neither let the eunuch say, "Behold, I am a dry tree." 4 For thus says the Lord, **To the eunuchs who keep My sabbaths, And choose what pleases Me, And hold fast My covenant,** 5 To them I will give in My house and within My walls a memorial, And a name better than that of sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name which will not be cut off.

6 **"Also the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord, To minister to Him, and to love the name of the Lord, To be His servants, every one who keeps from profaning the sabbath, And holds fast My covenant;** 7 Even those I will bring to My holy mountain, And make them joyful in My house of prayer. **Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be acceptable on My altar; For My house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples."** 8 The Lord God, who gathers the dispersed of Israel, declares, "Yet others I will gather to them, to those already gathered."

We have a vision of these gathered ones, holding palm branches as they surround the Throne of G-d, serving Him in the Temple.

Rev 7:9-17

9 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands; 10 and they cry out with a loud voice, saying,

"Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." 11 And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, 12 saying,

"Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen." 13 And one of the elders answered, saying to me, "These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they, and from where have they

come?" 14 And I said to him, "My lord, you know."

And he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

15 "For this reason, they are before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits on the throne shall spread His tabernacle over them. 16 "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; neither shall the sun beat down on them, nor any heat; 17 for the Lamb in the center of the throne shall be their shepherd, and shall guide them to springs of the water of life; and God shall wipe every tear from their eyes."

We see that these parashiot in Leviticus remain very relevant, all the way into the Temple in which Yeshua will take His throne.

I believe some of you might well be such students of Torah, and such lovers of G-d that your hearts will shine into the spiritual realm so brightly as to attract the attention of the Almighty G-d of Israel, and you just might be chosen for some outstanding and exalted office of service – in this world, or the next.