

# Rites of Passage

The Priestly Ordination of Aaron and His Sons and the New Covenant Priesthood

Leviticus 8:1 **The LORD spoke to Moses, saying,**

<sup>2</sup> **"Take Aaron and his sons** with him, and the garments and the anointing oil and the bull of the sin offering and the two rams and the basket of unleavened bread.

<sup>3</sup> And assemble all the congregation at the entrance of the tent of meeting."

<sup>4</sup> And **Moses did as the LORD commanded him**, and the congregation was assembled at the entrance of the tent of meeting.

<sup>5</sup> And Moses said to the congregation, "This is the thing that the LORD has commanded to be done."

<sup>6</sup> And Moses brought Aaron and his sons and washed them with water.

<sup>7</sup> And he put the coat on him and tied the sash around his waist and clothed him with the robe and put the ephod on him and tied the skillfully woven band of the ephod around him, binding it to him with the band.

<sup>8</sup> And he placed the breastpiece on him, and in the breastpiece he put the Urim and the Thummim.

<sup>9</sup> And he set the turban on his head, and on the turban, in front, he set the golden plate, the holy crown, **as the LORD commanded Moses**.

<sup>10</sup> Then Moses took the anointing oil and anointed the tabernacle and all that was in it, and consecrated them.

<sup>11</sup> And he **sprinkled some of it on the altar seven times**, and anointed the altar and all its utensils and the basin and its stand, to consecrate them.

<sup>12</sup> And he poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron's head and anointed him to consecrate him.

<sup>13</sup> And Moses brought Aaron's sons and clothed them with coats and tied sashes around their waists and bound caps on them, **as the LORD commanded Moses**.

<sup>14</sup> Then he brought the bull of the sin offering, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the bull of the sin offering.

<sup>15</sup> And he killed it, and Moses took the blood, and with his finger put it on the horns of the altar around it and purified the altar and poured out the blood at the base of the altar and consecrated it to make atonement for it.

<sup>16</sup> And he took all the fat that was on the entrails and the long lobe of the liver and the two kidneys with their fat, and Moses burned them on the altar.

<sup>17</sup> But the bull and its skin and its flesh and its dung he burned up with fire outside the camp, **as the LORD commanded Moses.**

<sup>18</sup> Then he presented the ram of the burnt offering, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the ram.

<sup>19</sup> And he killed it, and Moses threw the blood against the sides of the altar.

<sup>20</sup> He cut the ram into pieces, and Moses burned the head and the pieces and the fat.

<sup>21</sup> He washed the entrails and the legs with water, and Moses burned the whole ram on the altar. It was a burnt offering with a pleasing aroma, a food offering for the LORD, **as the LORD commanded Moses.**

<sup>22</sup> Then he presented the other ram, the ram of ordination, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the ram.

<sup>23</sup> And he killed it, and Moses took some of its blood and put it on the lobe of Aaron's right ear and on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot.

<sup>24</sup> Then he presented Aaron's sons, and Moses put some of the blood on the lobes of their right ears and on the thumbs of their right hands and on the big toes of their right feet. And Moses threw the blood against the sides of the altar.

<sup>25</sup> Then he took the fat and the fat tail and all the fat that was on the entrails and the long lobe of the liver and the two kidneys with their fat and the right thigh,

<sup>26</sup> and out of the basket of unleavened bread that was before the LORD he took one unleavened loaf and one loaf of bread with oil and one wafer and placed them on the pieces of fat and on the right thigh.

<sup>27</sup> And he put all these in the hands of Aaron and in the hands of his sons and waved them as a wave offering before the LORD.

<sup>28</sup> Then Moses took them from their hands and burned them on the altar with the burnt offering. This was an ordination offering with a pleasing aroma, a food offering to the LORD.

<sup>29</sup> And Moses took the breast and waved it for a wave offering before the LORD. It was Moses' portion of the ram of ordination, **as the LORD commanded Moses.**

<sup>30</sup> Then Moses took some of the anointing oil and of the blood that was on the altar and sprinkled it on Aaron and his garments, and also on his sons and his sons' garments. So he consecrated Aaron and his garments, and his sons and his sons' garments with him.

<sup>31</sup> And Moses said to Aaron and his sons, "Boil the flesh at the entrance of the tent of meeting, and there eat it and the bread that is in the basket of ordination offerings, as I commanded, saying, 'Aaron and his sons shall eat it.'

<sup>32</sup> And what remains of the flesh and the bread you shall burn up with fire.

<sup>33</sup> And you shall not go outside the entrance of the tent of meeting **for seven days**, until the days of your ordination are completed, for it will take **seven days** to ordain you.

<sup>34</sup> As has been done today, the LORD has commanded to be done to make atonement for you.

<sup>35</sup> At the entrance of the tent of meeting you shall remain day and night for **seven days**, performing what the LORD has charged, so that you do not die, for so I have been commanded."

<sup>36</sup> And Aaron and his sons did all the things that **the LORD commanded by Moses.**"

(Lev 8:1-36)

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## A Tradition Unlike Any Other

Every year since 1981, the simple melody played on a dulcet piano begins to unveil its otherworldly majesty. It is a simple splendor shared by its namesake: *Augusta* and all of its famous **traditional** landmarks: Magnolia Lane, Founder's Circle, Rae's Creek, Hogan Bridge, and Amen Corner's Camelia, White Dogwood, and Golden Bell. A deep, strong, but serenely peaceful voice of one of the great sports commentators now **renews** its annual salutation to the eager patrons. "*Hello friends,*" he says as the piano now gives way to the softly plucked strings of the acoustic guitar. He has been saying it since 2003, when he sent it out as secret little message to his father, beloved by so many of his own friends, now deep in the throes of Alzheimer's. "*Once a year, the golf world gathers for a time-honored tradition unlike any other...*"

The music, the voice, and the intro are, without fail, **followed** on screen by the course, the history, the architect, the legends, and the greatest golfers on earth. For four majestic days, the world seems untouched by time, unmarked by the divisions and hatred that permeate our age. For four days, on the greatest stage in all of sports, an

honorable battle is waged to see who will become the next Champion.

As they walk up the 72<sup>nd</sup> hole, the winner is often in the last pairing. Rarely, but occasionally, he is far ahead of his rivals, and joy unspeakable already beams across his face. More often, the match is tight, and the stress is almost unbearable. He still has to play out. The throngs and hordes roar as they welcome the pairing to the final hole on those [hallowed grounds](#) in a quickly constricting circle that encompasses the green, scores and even hundreds of people deep, all vying for the best view. History will soon be made.

As the final putt vanishes into that tiny four-and-a-half-inch hole, the hands are raised, the wife and kids run out from the crowd, the tears begin to flow. But only now will the greatest of all [rites of passage](#) in sport commence. He makes his way off those pristine, heavenly acres of lush green and azalea red to the friendly confines of Butler Cabin, one of the most historic properties at Augusta National. It is a place few human beings will ever be allowed to enter.

The inviting walkway to the unassuming door leads to a cozy stone-walled room with a fireplace and mantel.

A low round wooden table is surrounded now by five chairs. Last year's winner is joined by the low amateur and this year's champion. They sit across from the Chairman of the Club, himself situated beside the host who begins the introductions. Jim Nance always asks a few short and relevant questions which are bantered around. But all anyone really cares about is **the jacket**.

Originally awarded in 1949 to the future three-time champion Sam Sneed, the **Green Jacket** may be the most unique of all trophies. Each year, the previous winner presents a new jacket, slipping the cozy coveted cloth onto the champion's back. In this way, an unbroken line of succession reaches back to the beginning. But the **jacket itself is as hallowed** as the grounds upon which the ceremony is commenced.

Therefore, even for the winner, it comes with the **strictest of rules**. Only the current champion may take it off the grounds, and he must return it the next year, where it will forever remain, to be worn only when he returns to the course or if he is out representing The Great Major Tournament or its celebrated club. Unless, of course, your name is Gary Player, who forgot to bring it back from South Africa, told the members they could go

get it, and when they declined, took an oath that he would never wear it in public.

Nevertheless, with the jacket comes a life-changing moment, a new status, a new name: **Master's Champion**. Everything changes from here on out. He who wears the jacket will never be the same man again.

## Rite of Passage

As Leviticus 7 comes to a close, **the shifting focus** from **Moses** receiving God's law to his brother **Aaron** carrying out his life-long duties becomes cemented in the most important **rite of passage** of **the Levitical covenant**. This is seen in the movement of **seven** "**the LORD commanded**" formulas found in Leviticus 8.<sup>1</sup> They begin, "**Moses did as the LORD commanded him**" (**Lev 8:4**), move to "**as the LORD commanded Moses**" (**9, 13, 17, 21, 29**), and conclude, "**And Aaron and his sons did all the things that the LORD commanded by Moses**" (**36**). What, exactly, did they do?

This number, coming on the heels of seven chapters, appears in the rite itself, which is a seven day rite (**33, 35**)

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<sup>1</sup> This was brought to my attention in **L. Michael Morales**, *Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord?: A Biblical Theology of the Book of Leviticus*, ed. D. A. Carson, vol. 37, *New Studies in Biblical Theology* (England; Downers Grove, IL: Apollos; InterVarsity Press, 2015), 122 n. 20.

commenced by the sevenfold sprinkling of blood (11). It also reflects the various themes of seven found throughout the latter chapters of Exodus. From its own sevenfold “the LORD spoke” formulas (Ex 25:1; 30:11, 17, 22, 34; 31:1, 12), to seven groupings of materials for the tabernacle (metals, dyed yarns, fabrics, timber, oil, spices, and gems), to the sevenfold description of the tabernacle that parallels the days of creation (Ex 40),<sup>2</sup> these Leviticus 8 “sevens” become a kind of encoding onto the sanctuary that this will become the center of a perfect new creation, with God’s priest being its guardian and keeper.

In fact, the same word “to keep” (*shamar*) found in the Garden is here at the end of our passage, with a similar warning that was given to Adam a creation. “At the entrance of the tent of meeting you shall remain day and night for seven days, keeping the charge of the LORD, so that you do not die, for so I have been commanded” (Lev 8:35).<sup>3</sup> This shows the seriousness and importance of doing everything exactly

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<sup>2</sup> See my sermon “Building the Tabernacle of God: The Work of a New Creation,” on Exodus 35:1-40:33, <https://www.rbnc.com/Exodus%2035.1-40.35%20May%201,%202011%20big%20font.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> The idea of “serving” (*abad*) is also found throughout the Levitical ordination in Numbers where it is translated as “serve” or “service” (Num 8:11, 15, 19, 22, 25, 26). The two words are often found together with regard to the priests of Israel. See Meredith Kline, *Kingdom Prologue* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006), 86; G. K. Beale, “Eden, The Temple, and the Church’s Mission in the New Creation,” *JETS* 48:1(2005), 8 [5-32].



as handed down in this rite of passage. In this way, it is not surprising to find **the setting** of the story moves from Mt. Sinai, where the instructions were given (**Lev 7:38**), to “**the entrance of the tent of meeting**” (**Lev 8:3**), where we found ourselves at the beginning of the book (**Lev 1:1**). This tent, with all of its regulations and strict rules, is God’s OT house in the midst of his people. What exactly will take place here now?

Leviticus 8 is an entire chapter detailing the consecration or **ordination of Aaron and his sons** into the priesthood of Israel. It is his rite of passage, and it makes even the glory of Augusta pale by comparison. It is the companion to **Exodus 29**, which is the law God gave regarding this event (see the chart at the end of the sermon). Thus, the chapter is brimming over with **parallels to Exodus**. The reason is because this is moment when the commands we have been looking at in Leviticus and the commands that were given in Exodus will finally culminate in something actual and historical in time and space. This chapter begins the long history of the priestly work of Israel’s special chosen tribe.

We can divide it into **two main parts**. **Vv. 1-13** describe the **consecration of Aaron** and his sons at the hands of Moses; **vv. 14-36** explain the **sacrificial and consecrative elements**

that had to occur after the initial ordination at the tabernacle precinct. These in turn can be divided into smaller sections:

- I. Gathering of All to the Door of the Tabernacle (Lev 8:1-5)**
  - A. God commands Moses (1-3)
  - B. Moses carries out the commands (4-5)
- II. Aaron and his Sons are Ordained (Lev 8:1-13)**
  - A. Moses washes Aaron and his sons (6)
  - B. Moses dresses Aaron in his priestly regalia (7-9)
  - C. Moses anoints the tabernacle (10), altar (11), Aaron's head (12)
  - D. Moses dresses Aaron's sons in their priestly vestments (13)
- III. The Tabernacle Sacrifices and Anointing (Lev 8:14-36)**
  - A. Moses officiates a purification offering on behalf of the priests (14-17)
  - B. Moses officiates a burnt offering on behalf of the priests (18-21)
  - C. Moses officiates an ordination sacrifice on behalf of the priests (22-29)
  - D. Moses sprinkles anointing oil and blood from the altar on the priests (30)
  - E. Moses instructs the priests to eat ordination meat and to remain seven days (31-35)
  - F. Aaron and his sons fulfill Moses's concluding instructions (36)<sup>4</sup>

All of this becomes the vital rite of passage for the Aaron, for his sons, for the tabernacle itself, and for even the nation of

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<sup>4</sup> This is the basic outline in [Roy Gane](#), *NIVAC: Leviticus*, 163-64.

Israel. This is **one of the chapters that changes everything**. Nothing will be the same again, in either Testament. In fact, what we see here bears typological similarity to one of the most **significant events in the New Testament**, which in turn becomes the explanation for so much of the application we have already made in the five sacrifices of Israel. That is, there is a type-antitype relationship that exists in the OT ordination of the priests of Aaron and his sons with that of the Lord Jesus Christ—the Great High Priest. And this in turn is carried over through to his body on earth, Christians, who form a new covenant priesthood of believers.

## **Congregational Gathering and Obedience (Lev 8:1-5)**

The chapter begins in that now well-known fashion, “**The LORD** [tg. **Memra**] **spoke to Moses, saying...**” (**Lev 8:1**). This is going to become **the vital point** of the first five verses. What we are about to see is not made up willy-nilly. It is not the invention of Moses and a secret society of power-hungry Levites who carry out clandestine rituals to lord authority over the gullible people. It isn't the retooling of the

rituals from pagan neighbors. It is Yahweh himself, the Word of God, speaking to Moses.

“Take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments and the anointing oil and the bull of the sin offering and the two rams and the basket of unleavened bread ...” (2). It sounds as if Moses already knows what he is to bring. He does! It was spelled out to him in these very precise terms in **Exodus 29:1-3, 5a**. This is the cross-fertilization of Holy Scripture. **It interprets itself**. It comments upon itself. **It builds upon itself**. Though it is five, Torah is also one, and it must be read as a whole, not merely as parts and pieces.

“Assemble all the congregation at the entrance of the tent of meeting” (3). The only reason can be that the LORD is now commanding Moses to ordain the priests. This makes good sense of **the reasoning behind the first seven chapters**. First you have the sacrifices, then you need someone to offer them. It also begins the **chiastic movement** of the book from the Courtyard where the sacrifices were to take place, to (now) the Holy Place, which will then move to the Most Holy Place, focusing in on the Ark of the Covenant, only to return back out through those same tiers as the book comes to an end. In this way, we are moving at this moment closer

to holy things than even we were in the first seven chapters, and we have seen how holy those were already.

Leviticus Spatial Movement <sup>5</sup>			
Courtyard (Outer)	Holy Place (Middle)	Most Holy Place (Inner)	Ark (Focus)
Ch. 1-7	Ch. 8-12:8	Ch. 16-18	Ch. 19
	Ch. 22:26-24	Ch. 20-22:25	
Ch. 25-27			

And thus it concludes, “And Moses did as the LORD commanded him, and the congregation was assembled at the entrance of the tent of meeting. And Moses said to the congregation, ‘This is the thing that the LORD has commanded to be done’” (4-5). These last two verses form their own small chiasm, bringing attention that the command of the LORD was carried out: he bought them before the tent.

Moses did as the LORD commanded (4a) ← (4b) the congregation was assembled at the tent  
 Moses said to the congregation (5a) ← (5b) This is the thing that the LORD has commanded

This is only the first of the seven times we will read about this important idea.

<sup>5</sup> Moshe Kline, “The Literary Structure of Leviticus,” *The Biblical Historian* 2/3 (2006): 20 [1-28].

## Priestly Ordination (Lev 8:6-13)

When the people had assembled, “Moses brought Aaron and his sons and washed them with water” (Lev 8:6). This is the fulfillment of the command from Exodus 29:4. In both places, the term “washed” is *rachats*.

In a book ironically called *Understanding Theology*, R. T. Kendall writes, “symbolic sprinkling with water as well as blood was used from ancient times.” This is true. We have seen many bloody sprinklings already in Leviticus (cf. 1:5, 11; 3:2; 8; 4:6; etc.). We will see one today. There are a few sprinklings with water. Most are in Numbers 19, with one in Leviticus where a house is sprinkled seven times (Lev 14:51).

On at least one occasion, people are sprinkled.<sup>6</sup> Those people are the Levites at their ordination ceremony (Num 8:7).<sup>7</sup> Perhaps this is the reason Kendall cites Leviticus 8:6 as an example of a symbolic water sprinkling.<sup>8</sup> But in doing this, he has confused *rachats* with *nazah*. *Nazah* is a sprinkling. But *rachats* is a ritual bath. The priests are to be bathed,

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<sup>6</sup> Numbers 19:18-19 also contains a sprinkling of water of people, as do Isa 52:15; Ezek 36:25 and 43:24.

<sup>7</sup> The word used here is *nazah*.

<sup>8</sup> R. T. Kendall, *Understanding Theology, Volume Two* (Ross-shire, Great Britain: Christian Focus, 2000), 297. Strangely, his other two proofs (1 Kings 7:23; Jeremiah 52:17) are simply about the temple “sea,” and do not mention sprinkling either.

not sprinkled. *Rachats* is what the **daughter of Pharaoh** came down to do at the Nile (**Ex 2:5**). This is what **Bathsheba** was doing on her roof (**2Sa 11:2**). This is what **Naaman** was told to do in the Jordan (**2Kg 5:10, 12, 13**). Curiously, the only instance that the verb *baptizō* (baptism) occurs in the LXX is here when it says he “**dipped himself seven times in the Jordan**” (14).

Kendall has also confused the “priest” with the “Levites,” a common enough error. But the two ordination rites were as different as were the jobs the two groups were given to do (the one, officiate the sacrificial system; the other, take care of the physical property). While all priests were Levites, not all Levites were priests, as Korah had to learn the hard way.

Priests	Levites
Washed (Lev 8:6)	Sprinkled (Num 8:7)
Put on new garments (Lev 8:13)	Washed their clothes (8:21)
Had blood applied to their right ear, thumb, and toe (Ex 29:20; Lev 8:23; 14:14, 17, 25, 28)	—
Made the priests “holy”	Made them “clean” (8:6) <sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Chart in **Dale A. Brueggemann**, “Numbers,” in *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*, ed. Philip W. Comfort, vol. 2 (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1996), 278.

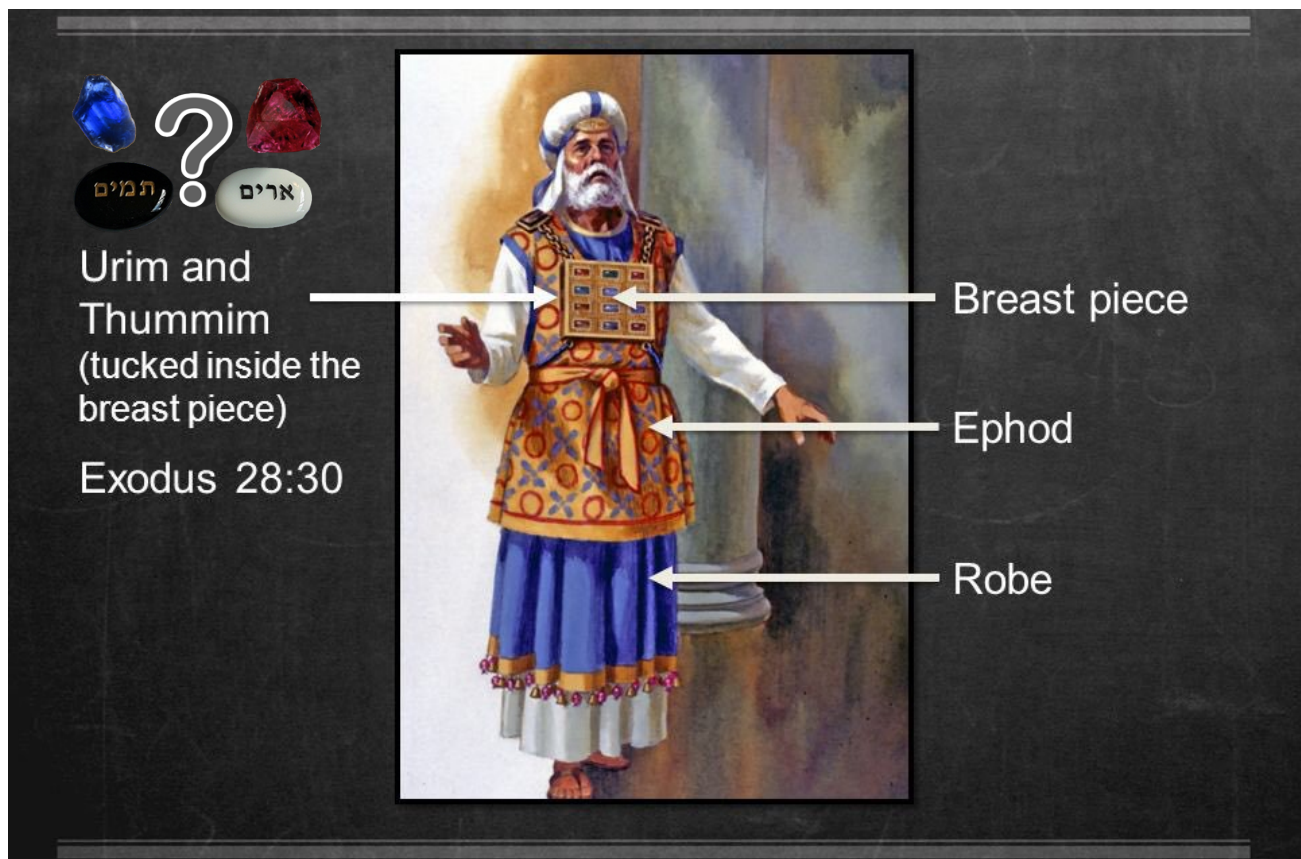
This is important, I believe, for **the mode of baptism**, because as we will see later, this whole ceremony is intimately related to Christian baptism.

At any rate, Moses is the one washing them with water. To be ordained into the priesthood, **someone else must wash you**. This is a once-for-all washing. He always remains a priest afterward. After that, he can wash himself. Those other washings are daily, because they do not serve the same function as this here in **Lev 8:6**.

Following the washing, Moses **clothed** him. He “**put the coat on him and tied the sash around his waist and clothed him with the robe ...**” (**Lev 8:7**). I doubt that the gentlemen at Augusta had this in mind with the Green Jacket, but the idea is certainly similar enough to justify an analogy. Not only does he have to be washed by someone else, that same person must clothe him in the very special clothing of the priest, created and set apart for this very purpose.

That clothing consists of “**the ephod**” and “**a skillfully tied woven band**” (7). There was a **breastpiece** and in that breastpiece was something called the **Urim and Thummim** (8).





Very briefly, the **ephod** (**Ex 28:6-14**), which is a kind of vest, went over the linen garments. It was made of gold, blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen, thus resembling the colors of the tabernacle. It had a front and back, but no sides. It went over the body at shoulder pieces, which each had a single emerald (LXX) stone set in gold filigree upon which was engraved half the names of the tribes of Israel. It was sometimes used as an **oracle** to determine God's will or even the future (**Jdg 8:27; 17:1-15**). It was also a **remembrance** or memorial of the sons of Israel, so that the priest

would always remember his mediatorial work for the people.

The **breastpiece** (**Ex 29:15-29**), called the breastpiece (or oracle) of judgment, was a square object about 9 inches long and wide. It was made of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet yarns, and fine twined linen. It fastened to the ephod via two rings of gold and a golden chain. Upon it was set four rows of precious stones, each containing three different stones, for a total of twelve, again reminding the priest of the tribes of Israel. Its purpose **symbolized his work as intercessor** and the judgment of God upon the Israelite in the sacrificial system.

Exodus 28-17-20												
Version	Row 1			Row 2			Row 3			Row 4		
	Reuben	Simeon	Levi	Judah	Issachar	Zebulon	Dan	Naphtali	Gad	Asher	Joseph	Benjamin
NAS	Ruby	Topaz	Emerald	Turquoise	Sapphire	Diamond	Jacinth	Agate	Amethyst	Beryl	Onyx	Jasper
JPS	Carnelian	Topaz	Emerald	Carbuncle	Sapphire	Emerald	Jacinth	Agate	Amethyst	Beryl	Onyx	Jasper
NJB	Sard	Topaz	Emerald	Garnet	Sapphire	Diamond	Hyacinth	Agate	Amethyst	Beryl	Cornelian	Jasper
TNK	Carnelian	Chrysolite	Emerald	Turquoise	Sapphire	Amethyst	Jacinth	Agate	Crystal	Beryl	Lapis Lazuli	Jasper
LXX	Sardus	Topaz	Emerald	Carbuncle	Sapphire	Jasper	Ligure	Agate	Amethyst	Chrysolite	Beryl	Onyx
ESV	Sardus	Topaz	Carbuncle	Emerald	Sapphire	Diamond	Jacinth	Agate	Amethyst	Beryl	Onyx	Jasper
NET	Ruby	Topaz	Beryl	Turquoise	Sapphire	Emerald	Jacinth	Agate	Amethyst	Chrysolite	Onyx	Jasper
KJV	Sardus	Topaz	Carbuncle	Emerald	Sapphire	Diamond	Ligure	Agate	Amethyst	Beryl	Onyx	Jasper
ASV	Sardus	Topaz	Carbuncle	Emerald	Sapphire	Diamond	Jacinth	Agate	Amethyst	Beryl	Onyx	Jasper
NRS	Carnelian	Chrysolite	Emerald	Turquoise	Sapphire	Moonstone	Jacinth	Agate	Amethyst	Beryl	Onyx	Jasper
NIV	Ruby	Topaz	Beryl	Turquoise	Sapphire	Emerald	Jacinth	Agate	Amethyst	Chrysolite	Onyx	Jasper
YLT	Sardius	Topaz	Carbuncle	Emerald	Sapphire	Diamond	Opal	Agate	Amethyst	Beryl	Onyx	Jasper
Revelation 21:19-20												
NAS	Jasper	Sapphire	Chalcedony	Emerald	Sardonyx	Sardus	Chrysolite	Beryl	Topaz	Chrysoprase	Jacinth	Amethyst

Finally, there is the **Urim and Thummim**, not mentioned in Exodus 29, but it is in **Exodus 28:30**. These mysterious objects have been lost to history, but the DSS and other sources identify them as more **stones**, perhaps sapphire

and ruby or stones that somehow became illuminated or were square like dice. Their purpose was to **further discern the will of God** (i.e. **Num 27:2 1; 1 Sam 28:6**).<sup>10</sup>

Finally (**Lev 8:9**; cf. **Ex 28:36-38**), the **turban** was placed on his head, which in the front contained a **golden plate**, the holy crown, as the LORD commanded Moses. Upon the plate was engraved “**Holy to the LORD.**” The reason for the head covering is explicitly stated, “**Aaron shall bear any guilt from the holy things that the people of Israel consecrate as their holy gifts ... that they may be accepted before the LORD**” (**Ex 28:38**).

After the clothing was concluded, “**Moses took the anointing oil and anointed the tabernacle and all that was in it and consecrated them**” (**Lev 8:10**). He then **sprinkled** some of it on the altar **seven times** and anointed the altar and all its utensils and the basin and its stand, to consecrate them (**11**). Some of it he **poured** on Aaron’s head to anoint and consecrate him (**12**). Then Aaron’s sons were brought, clothed with their attire, and all was done “**as the LORD commanded Moses**” (**13**). Thus concludes the ordination aspect of the ceremony.

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<sup>10</sup> For more on all of this see my sermon “Priestly Clothing” on Exodus 28, <https://www.rbnc.com/Exodus%2028%20Jan%209,%202011%20big%20font.pdf>. Heiser has a good discussion of the Urim and Thummim.

## Tabernacle Sacrifices and Anointing (Lev 8:14-36)

At this point, *the ceremony shifts gears*. Moses begins to officiate over *three different offerings* on behalf of the priests. The first is a *purification offering* (cf. **Lev 4**). He brings a *bull*, the costliest of all animal offerings. Aaron and his sons lay their hands on its head (**Lev 8:14**). Moses kills it, takes the *blood*, and with his finger puts some on *the horns of the altar* to purify the altar. Then he pours out the blood at the base of the altar and consecrates it, thereby making atonement for it (**15**). Remember, *atonement* can be made for *objects* as well as *people*. It is an act of making it holy, as well as cleansing it from defilement and contamination. This is why “sin” offering is not the best translation; purification offering is better, because it can include sin.

Moses then takes all the *entrails and the fat*, and just as prescribed in the law of the purification offering, he burns it all on the altar (**16**). For this is what belongs to the LORD. However, the bull and its *skin and flesh* and its *dung* are taken outside the camp and burned, again “*as the LORD commanded Moses*” (**17**)

He then begins the process of the *burnt offering* (cf. **Lev 1**). This time a *ram* is presented, and Aaron and his sons all

lay their hands on the head of the ram (**Lev 8:18**). Moses kills it and throws the **blood** against the sides of the altar (**19**). He cuts the ram into pieces and burns the head and the fat (**20**). He **washes** (*rachats*) the entrails and legs with water. Clearly, this is not a sprinkling! But in this case, it serves merely as a precursor to burning the whole ram on the altar so that it might be a burnt offering with a pleasing aroma, a food offering for the LORD, **as the LORD commanded** (**21**).

The third offering is a second **ram** called “*the ram of ordination*” (cf. **Lev 7:37**). Again, Aaron and his sons lay their hands on its head (**8:22**), Moses kills it and takes some of its **blood** and now does something peculiar (**23**). He puts it on the **lob of Aaron’s right ear, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot**. This strange symbolism is at the very least a picture of the head to foot disinfecting of the priests with the blood.

Since the altar and Aaron are both anointed first with oil and then with blood, and since the blood was likewise “put” on the horns, it symbolizes the **intimate connection** he as mediator of God’s power will have with the tabernacle and sacrifices.<sup>11</sup> Like “blood-brothers” who cut their fingers and

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<sup>11</sup> **Gordon J. Wenham**, *The Book of Leviticus*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1979), 142.

touch them together, the two are tied together by the blood. Some have speculated the possible significance of the body parts, “The ear, because the priest must at all times hearken to the holy voice of God; the hand, because he must execute God’s commands, and especially the priestly functions; the foot, because he must walk rightly and holy.”<sup>12</sup>

The next verse tells us that Moses does the same thing to Aaron’s sons and then he throws the rest of the blood against the sides of the altar (Lev 8:24). This has a direct link back to Exodus 24. There, the blood was thrown upon the altar, which represented God as one of the parties of the covenant. The rest was sprinkled or flung over the people who were the other party. And so, in this new covenant made with the sons of Levi, the symbolism is clear that they will now represent the people before God.<sup>13</sup>

At this point, Moses follows the prescribed ritual of the fat and entrails (25), he takes some of the various kinds of bread that were brought and places them on the pieces of fat and the right thigh (26). He puts all these in the hands of Aaron and his sons and waved them (or raised them, see

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<sup>12</sup> Mark F. Rooker, *Leviticus*, vol. 3A, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 147; cf. Oehler, *Old Testament Theology*, 211; V. P. Hamilton, *Handbook on the Pentateuch* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1982), 266.

<sup>13</sup> See Heiser’s discussion.

comments on **Leviticus 7:30**) as a wave/elevation offering before the LORD (27). Moses then **takes this from their hands** and burns it all on the altar as a burnt offering, and this is a special *ordination offering* with a pleasing aroma, a food offering to the LORD (28).

Moses takes the breast and waves/raises it as another *wave/elevation offering* and it becomes **Moses' portion** of the ram of ordination, “**as the LORD commanded Moses**” (29). Since Moses is acting as the priest here, he is entitled to a portion of the offering to eat.

Moses then takes some of the **anointing oil** and the **blood** from the altar and **sprinkles** it on Aaron and his garments and on his sons and their garments, thus consecrating Aaron, his sons, and all the garments (30). Everything must be cleansed in the sanctuary, not just the people. All of the stuff must be cleansed too. It must be decontaminated, ritually sanitized with the blood-detergent.

Now the priests will begin to **eat the ordination meat**. Together, they all boil the flesh at the entrance of the tent of meeting, and in that place eat it and the bread in the basket, because God had commanded “**Aaron and his sons shall eat it**” (31). Whatever they **didn't eat was burnt with fire** (32). They were to remain inside the precinct for **seven full days**,

for this was the length of the ordination, “for it will take seven days to ordain you” (33).

The passage concludes with a kind of explanation to Aaron. “As has been done today, the LORD has commanded to be done to make atonement for you” (34). Aaron must be purified, or he cannot stand before God in his House, let alone perform any duties on behalf of the people and be accepted. “At the entrance of the tent of meeting you shall remain day and night for seven days, performing what the LORD has charged, so that you do not die, for so I have been commanded” (35). And the transition between Moses and Aaron is completed in the last verse, “And Aaron and his sons did all the things that the LORD commanded by Moses” (36). This verse will become vital in the set up for the next couple of chapters, but for now, we will leave other comments alone.

## New Covenant Rites of Passage

As we begin to think about what this means for us today, we must first go through the narrow neck of an hourglass. If the priests and their ordination ceremony is the upper large bulb holding the sand, and we are the lower large bulb



into which the sand will fall, the narrow neck is Jesus Christ. He funnels Leviticus to the church.

The Lord fulfilled this ordination ceremony. The question is, how or when? The answer escapes many people, but not everyone. Long ago, Cyril of Jerusalem said,

If any man wishes to know why the grace is given through water [of baptism] instead of some other element, he will find the answer if he takes up the divine Scriptures ... The high priest washes himself, then offers incense; for Aaron was first washed, then became high priest ... Further, the laver had been set within the tabernacle, as a symbol of baptism.

(Cyril of Jerusalem, *Lenten Lectures Catechesis: On Baptism* 3.5).<sup>14</sup>

And then,

You must know that this [anointing at his baptism]<sup>15</sup> is pre-figured in the Old Testament. When Moses, conferring on his brother the divine appointment, was ordering him high priest, he anointed him after he had bathed in water, and

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<sup>14</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem, *The Works of Saint Cyril of Jerusalem*, ed. Roy Joseph Deferrari, trans. Leo P. McCauley and Anthony A. Stephenson, vol. 61, *The Fathers of the Church* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1969), 111.

<sup>15</sup> Cyril refers here to Jesus' anointing by the Holy Spirit at his baptism which he says has its antitype in the Christian church in Chrismation or "Holy Chrism," which was and still is in some Protestant denominations and also in Rome and Orthodoxy, anointing oil that goes on an adult convert after baptism or at confirmation.

thenceforward he was called “christ” [“anointed”] (Lev 8:5), clearly after the typological [anointing].

(Cyril of Jerusalem, *The Mystagogical Lectures* 3.6).<sup>16</sup>

Cyril is teaching us that Jesus’ baptism fulfills this ceremony.

Contrary to the Fathers,<sup>17</sup> this is outright denied by some. For example, the *UBS Handbook on (translating) Leviticus* says of this OT rite,

*Washed them with water ...* Translators should be careful ... not to translate by an expression that will evoke the idea of baptism (“to enter into the water” or “to be plunged into water”) ... In seeking to avoid wrong meanings, it may be necessary to use a rather neutral translation such as “he had them wash themselves” or “he caused them to wash themselves.”<sup>18</sup>

But the Scripture itself, especially through **typology** (though there is more to it than that), begs us to see what is

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<sup>16</sup> Leo McCauley, “Foreword to Catecheses 13–18,” in *The Works of Saint Cyril of Jerusalem*, ed. Bernard M. Peebles, trans. Leo P. McCauley and Anthony A. Stephenson, vol. 64, *The Fathers of the Church* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1970), 172–173.

<sup>17</sup> See also Origen; Homily on Leviticus 8:3; Homily 6: *Concerning the clothing of the high priest and the priests*. See Origen, *Homilies on Leviticus 1–16*, ed. Thomas P. Halton, trans. Gary Wayne Barkley, vol. 83, *The Fathers of the Church* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1990), 116. Many contemporary writers have seen the same connections, to one degree or another (for a list of quotations, see the Appendix at the end of the sermon). They include Reformed thinkers such as Meredith Kline, Peter Leithart, and Arthur Pink; Dispensationalists such as C. I. Scofield and ; biblical commentators such as .

<sup>18</sup> René Péter-Contesse and John Ellington, *A Handbook on Leviticus*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1992), 111.

taking place with Aaron as **the precursor of Christ's baptism**. This is why Jesus was thirty years old at the moment he was washed by a priest (John the Baptist) immediately before beginning his priestly ministry on earth. There are all kinds of requirements that the priest had to meet in order to undergo this ceremony. Merely being a son of Aaron was not enough. Other things were included and Jesus met every single one of them:

<b>Jesus and Aaron's Ordinations Compared</b> (from my book <i>Waters of Creation: A Biblical-Theological Study of Baptism</i> , p. 7-8)	
1. Jesus was baptized. (Matt 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:21; John 1:31-32)	1. A priest had to be washed in water at his ordination. (Ex 29:4; Lev 8:6)
2. Jesus was thirty years old at his baptism, the moment prior to beginning his ministry. (Luke 3:23)	2. A priest could not begin ministry until age 30. (Num 4:3; 47)
3. Jesus was called directly by God at his baptism (Heb 5:4-10; cf. Matt 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22).	3. A priest had to be called of God as was Aaron. (Ex 28:1)
4. Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist, a Levitical priest in the line of Aaron. (Luke 1:5, 13)	4. A priest had to be washed by one already ordained by God. (Ex 29:9; Lev 29:6; Num 25:13)
5. Jesus was without spot or blemish (Heb 5:9; 1 Pet 1:19; cf. Matt 3:14).	5. A priest had to be without defect in several special ways. (Lev 21:16-23)
6. Jesus was a male. (Matt 1:21)	6. A priest had to be a male. (Num 3:15)
7. Jesus begins his ministry immediately after his baptism. (Luke 4:18ff)	7. A priest began his ministry immediately after the ordination ceremony was completed. (Ex 29:1)
8. Jesus' "genealogy" stems from Melchizedek, the High Priest of [Jeru]Salem. (Heb 7:11; cf. Ps 110:4)	8. A priest had to be descended from a priest. (Ex 28:1)

The **water** itself is **only one of three events** that Jesus fulfills at his baptism. The second is the **clothing**. Clothing is something that covers a person. Throughout the OT, as we have seen in earlier studies, Christ is surrounded by fire or a cloud, first in the bush, then in the pillar and cloud, then again on Mt. Sinai, and so forth. These are images of the Holy Spirit. In these cases, they act like clothing for the

Angel, even as the Spirit becomes clothing for us, to make us presentable to God. Paul says, “For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened-- not that we would be *unclothed*, but that we would be further *clothed*, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has *given us the Spirit* as a guarantee” (2Co 5:4-5). Hence, the figure of the **dove** descending upon Christ is a picture of the Spirit overshadowing him to help him and enshroud him throughout his ministry.

Finally, there is **the anointing**. This is also seen in the descent of the Holy Spirit. Peter makes this explicit, “**God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power**” (Acts 10:38). Therefore, **all three of the key elements** of the ordination ceremony, along with all of the mandatory qualifications of the priests, are met in Jesus and his baptism. Jesus fulfills this ceremony in his baptism (as he himself told John in **Matt 3:15**), because it is immediately after it that he begins his priestly ministry, as he himself says in Luke’s Gospel quoting Isaiah, “**The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty**

those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor” (Luke 4:18-19; cf. Isa 61:1-2).

This is all **priestly work**, as that chapter of Isaiah teaches. For the work of this Anointed One, this Messiah in Isaiah 61, is that he himself will **dress those** who mourn a beautiful **headdress and garment** (Isa 61:3), he **brings good news to the poor**, which Paul says is a priestly duty (Rom 15:16; cf. Isa 61:1), and he **proclaims the year of the LORD's favor**, which Hebrews says is a priestly duty (Heb 4:9; cf. Isa 61:2).<sup>19</sup> In other words, Jesus as the high priest will now begin a ministry of ordaining sons into his priestly ministry. And thus, Peter and John both refer to the priestly nation that is the church (1Pe 2:5, 9; Rev 1:6; 5:10; 20:6).

This is exactly what Paul tells us Jesus has done when he evokes the imagery of Leviticus 8 saying, “For all of you who were *baptized* into Christ have *clothed* yourselves with Christ” (Gal 3:27 NAS). As Cyril said, “‘Baptized into Christ’ and ‘clothed with Christ’ (Gal 3:27), you have been shaped to the likeness of the Son of God (Rom 8:29). For God, in “predestining us to be adopted as his sons’ (Eph 1:5), has ‘conformed us to the body of the glory’ (Php 3:21) of

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<sup>19</sup> See Douglas Van Dorn, *Waters of Creation: A Biblical-Theological Study of Baptism* (Erie, CO: Waters of Creation Pub., 2009), 5-6.

Christ. As ‘partakers of Christ’ (Heb 3:14) therefore, you are rightly called ‘anointed ones’: it was of you that God said: ‘Touch not my [anointed ones]’ (Ps 104:15 LXX).” (Cyril of Jerusalem, *The Mystagogical Lectures* 3.1).

In this way, it is my strong belief that Christian baptism follows after Christ’s own baptism. It is a baptism that ordains us into the priestly ministry of Christ—our Great High Priest after the order of Melchizedek. We are like Aaron’s sons in this rite, following our High Priest. It is for this reason that I do not believe sprinkling is the correct application of Christian baptism. Nor do I see infants as proper recipients of it, for no infant was ever baptized in the OT type, because they couldn’t serve in the tabernacle as a priest. But Christ’s priesthood does include many changes, including the blemished, women, Gentiles, and those of various ages so long as they are able to attend to the sanctuary consciously.<sup>20</sup>

Importantly, all of this is rooted in the Levitical *covenant*. Lev 8 is the initiation or ordination ceremony of that covenant. Water is its sacrament. Because we are a nation of priests, the correct OT covenantal sacrament analogy is not circumcision, but baptism. Baptism comes from baptism.

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<sup>20</sup> See *Waters of Creation*, 153-55.

Baptism fulfills baptism. Our covenant ordination rite comes out of a covenant ordination rite. In this way, this Reformed Baptist considers himself covenantal, yet maintains a Baptist position on the sacrament. We are not allowed to change something unless God gives us explicit reason to do so.

At any rate, whatever you make of my argument there, the point is still absolutely clear that in Christian baptism, you are being **ordained into a priestly ministry**. This is why it is so necessary to go through the **bottleneck of Christ**. You must see how he fulfills this ceremony. He has now washed and clothed and anointed you with all the necessary elements you need carry out your new covenant sacrificial duties that we have seen in the first seven chapters. **If you were not priests**, you could not offer sacrifices of your bodies, you could not offer prayers of incense, you could not proclaim the year of the Lord's favor to anyone. The first seven chapters of Leviticus would be total irrelevant to you. There would be no NT counterpart to those sacrifices. But Christ has called you to into his priesthood, predestined you for it, and brought you into it by the glorious Holy Spirit who has washed you, clothed you, and anointed you to serve as Christ's body—his holy temple on earth.

While we've said many things with regard to the various sacrifices in previous studies, I'll bring out just a couple more things from the second half of the chapter. First, I finally received a satisfactory answer to a most puzzling passage this week. John tells us, "Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? This is he who came by water and blood-- Jesus Christ; not by the water only but by the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three that testify: the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree" (1Jn 5:5-8). The context is of believers, whom we have seen are a royal priesthood.

The puzzling part is the last part. In some early manuscripts it reads, "Because three are who are testifying *in the heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these -- the three -- are one*" (1Jn 5:7 YLT). Though this passage was used by the early church to prove the Trinity, all modern scholars agree that "Father, Word, and Holy Spirit" are an addition by a scribe. The reason is most likely because he had no idea what "Spirit, water, and blood" could possibly have been referring to. To rather than translate, he interpreted.



But in the most unexpected of places, I read **Spurgeon** give what seems to me not only a right interpretation, but a direct link to Leviticus 8.

**For there are three that testify.** Our Lord Himself was attested by **these three witnesses**. If you will carefully read in Exodus 29 or in Leviticus 8, you will see that when a priest was ordained (and a priest was a type of Christ) three things were always used: he was washed with **water**, a sacrifice was brought and his ear, his thumb, and his toe were touched with **blood**. Then he was anointed with oil, in token of that unction of the **Spirit** with which the coming High Priest of our profession would be anointed. Thus, every priest came by the anointing Spirit, by water, and by blood, as a matter of type. If Jesus Christ is indeed the Priest that was to come, He will be known by these three signs.<sup>21</sup>

The same must also be true of anyone would identify himself with the Son of God. Cyril again said, “**Before admission to Baptism and the grace of the Holy Spirit you were not strictly entitled to this name but were like people on the way towards being Christians**” (Cyril, *The Mystagogical Lectures*

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<sup>21</sup> Charles Spurgeon, *Spurgeon Commentary: 1 John*, ed. Elliot Ritzema, Spurgeon Commentary Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014), 1 Jn 5:7.

3.5). No one is entitled to the name of Christ until the Holy Spirit comes upon them and converts them.<sup>22</sup>

Spurgeon notices, the sacrificial part of the ceremony further illuminates that you must have not only the Spirit clothing and anointing you. You must have the blood of the Son of God dabbled upon you by someone else, namely, by God himself. That means, this is not something you can do yourself. Someone else must do this for you. How does this happen? It happens first by the blood being spilt. This took place 2,000 years ago when the Lamb of God shed his blood on the cross as a sacrifice pleasing to God. It happens in your life by faith in this truth. Jesus died so that you might live. That is, when you believe that this happened for you, the blood is applied, the Spirit is granted, and you properly then bear the name Christian. Baptism (the first part of the ceremony) is then that vital public step that tells the world Christ

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<sup>22</sup> I have several problems with Cyril's overall context of Chrism. Just before this he writes, "Once privileged to receive the holy Chrism, you are called Christians and have a name that bespeaks your new birth." Chrism is the oil that is placed on the one who has just been baptized, after their baptism. He calls this oil the antitype of the Holy Spirit. I think he confuses the order of the Holy Spirit and baptism. I think he returns to types and shadows by administering chrim oil, which is now done by the Holy Spirit. But I do agree that that we are not entitled to taking the name upon ourselves until we are baptized. For Christianity is a public declaration that Christ has saved us that that we want to serve the Lord Jesus for the rest of our lives (this is not to say that it isn't also a means of grace whereby Christ begins his sanctifying work of setting us apart as holy, for it is surely that too).

*has saved* you and that you wish him to set you apart as holy for work in his church-temple as his priestly servant.<sup>23</sup>

For eight chapters now we have been seeing sacrifice after sacrifice typifying something that would only miraculously be fulfilled in space and time in an ultimate way over 1,000 years later. **The odds** of this are impossible by chance. Instead, God planned it all out and the Son came to do the Father's will so that what was revealed by him to Moses in these pages would be fulfilled in your hearing of his baptism, life, and death on the cross. All that is left now is for the Word of God himself to **powerfully infuse you** with the life-giving blood, to wash you with the water of life, and to anoint you with the Holy Spirit. My prayer is that you would find this truth to be real and that you would then follow your Lord in the waters of baptism.

Finally, for any who do this or have already undergone it, **understand anew** that this transition from death to life and then the rite of baptism transferring you from called and chosen to priests of the living God are the **greatest of all your rites of passage in this life**, and the first in your born-again

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<sup>23</sup> There has never been any disagreement on this basic fact in all of church history, regardless of denomination—when an adult convert is first baptized as a Christian. The disagreements have always been over the baptism of infants and I have already addressed why the Scriptures do not teach this doctrine.

life. I can't help but think again of the **beauty** of the Masters' ceremony, with all of its wonderful traditions culminating in that coveted Green Jacket. I also can't help but think of the profoundly meaningful **ordeal** this entire ritual must have been for Moses and Aaron and his sons, not to mention the congregation that witnessed seven days straight of careful, vital, dangerous, important regulations. Baptism is our beautiful ordeal, for it simultaneously displays the glories of God in Christ to us, even while showing us that we must die to this world if we are to live to God.

May God impress both the beauty and the seriousness of this rite of passage upon your mind in a fresh and new way. Go forth from the hallowed grounds of Christ's church singing a celestial tune and thinking about this tradition truly unlike any other. And may you leave this place more encouraged than ever to serve the living God together as his royal priesthood.

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## Appendix: Quotations on Baptism and Leviticus 8

### Reformed

*Meredith Kline*

“Paul identified these judicial waters of the exodus as a baptism (1 Cor 10:2), reflecting the fact that baptism symbolizes the undergoing of a judgment ordeal. The waters of baptism are a death passage with forensic significance. Thus, for those who by faith undergo baptismal death in Christ’s baptism-crucifixion, baptism is unto the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; cf. Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3). Such was the meaning of the washing of the Levitical priests at the brazen laver. It was a forensic baptism, signifying the judicial clearing of the record, the pardoning of the evil deeds of the hands which must minister at the altar, the forgiving of the evil paths trodden by the feet which must enter the house of God. And the legal ground of the judicial pardon was Christ’s atoning sacrifice in the baptism of his death (Luke 12:50), typified in the sacrifices offered on the altar next to the laver.”<sup>24</sup> (Comment: Kline sees it as baptism, but does not mention ordination.)

*Peter Leithart*

“If ordination can be construed as an operative ceremony, so, by our typology, can baptism.”<sup>25</sup> Comment: Leithart has an extended treatment of this whole topic. He clearly sees the truth of what baptism is in his regard, yet he is still a paedobaptist).

*Arthur Pink*

“Thou art My Son.” The application of these words to the call which Christ received to His priestly office, refers, historically, we doubt not to what is recorded in Matthew 3:16, 17. There we behold a shadowing forth on the lower and visible plane of that which was to take place, a little later, in the higher and invisible sphere. There we find the antitype of what occurred on the occasion of Aaron’s induction

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<sup>24</sup> **Meredith G. Kline**, *Glory in Our Midst: A Biblical-Theological Reading of Zechariah’s Night Visions* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2001), 109.

<sup>25</sup> **Peter J. Leithart**, *The Priesthood of the Plebs: A Theology of Baptism* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2003), 158. See pp. 155-60 for starters.

to the priestly office. In Leviticus 8 we find three things recorded of the type: First, his call (verses 1, 2). Second, his anointing (verse 12). Third, his consecration, (verse 22) These same three things, only in inverse order again (for in *all* things He has the pre-eminence) are found on the occasion of our Savior's baptism, which was one of the great crises of His earthly career. For thirty years He had lived in retirement at Nazareth. Now the time had arrived for His public ministry. Accordingly, He consecrates, dedicates Himself to God—presenting Himself for baptism at the hands of God's servant. Second, it was at the Jordan He was anointed for His work: "God *anointed* Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 10:38). Third, it was there and then He was owned of God. "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." That was the Father's attestation to His acceptance of Christ for His priestly office and work.<sup>26</sup>

## Dispensational

### *C. I. Scofield*

29:1 The priest type of consecration. (Cf. the temple type, 1 Ki. 8:1–11; 2 Chr. 5:4–14). The order in Leviticus (8:1–9:24) differs from the order here. In Leviticus the filling the hands precedes the sprinkling. 29:4 Aaron shares in the washing (i.e. symbol of regeneration, Tit. 3:5; John 3:5–6): (1) as needing it, being in this in *contrast* with Christ (Heb. 7:26–28); (2) to typify Christ's action, who received the baptism of John, not as needing it, but as thus identifying Himself with sinners, and as fulfilling the Aaronic type. As in Aaron's case, His anointing followed the washing (Ex. 29:4, 7; Mt. 3:14–16).<sup>27</sup>

### *Lewis Sperry Chafer*

"If it be true that Christ's baptism was His formal induction into the office of Priest, it only remains to discover by what mode priests of the Mosaic system were

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<sup>26</sup> Arthur Walkington Pink, *An Exposition of Hebrews* (Swengel, PA: Bible Truth Depot, 1954), 228.

<sup>27</sup> C. I. Scofield, ed., *The Scofield Reference Bible: The Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments* (New York; London; Toronto; Melbourne; Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1917), 108.



consecrated; for His baptism, if it fulfilled all righteousness, could not depart from the specified requirements of the ...”<sup>28</sup>

*Merril F. Unger*

What, then, did occur when Jesus was baptized by John in Jordan (Mt 3:13-15) and the ‘Holy Spirit descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him’ (Lk 3:21, 22)? In the light of our Savior’s own explanation of the event as a fulfilling of ‘all righteousness’ (Mt 3:15), and in the light of the priesthood as it appertained to our Lord’s redemptive ministry, the event clearly marked ‘His formal induction into the office of priest.’

At His baptism Christ received His anointing with the Holy Spirit (Mt 3:16) for His threefold office of prophet, priest, and king, which is comprehensively descriptive of His entire ministry. Yet the essence of His redemptive work does not lie in His prophetic or kingly office, but in His consecration as a priest, the Great High Priest, for it was in this office He offered not ‘the blood of bulls and goats,’ but Himself in order to put away sin (Heb 9:24-26). It is this consecration to His priesthood that comes into clearest view in the baptismal scene.”

In His reference to fulfilling all righteousness lies the import and motive of His baptism. Jesus meant the righteousness of the Mosaic law, which was in force till His death on Calvary, and to which he carefully conformed. The Levitical law required that all priests be consecrated when they ‘began to be about thirty years of age,’ as was the case<sup>3</sup> with Jesus (Lk 3:23; cf. Num 4:3). The consecration was twofold—first the washing, then the anointing (Ex 29:4-7; Lev 8:6-36). Aaron shared in the washing, being a sinner and needing it, and furnishing the type of the baptism of Christ, Who, not being a sinner Himself and not needing it, nevertheless identified Himself with sinners, and fulfilled the Aaronic type.

After the washing came the anointing (Ex 29:5-7). When John the Baptist at Jordan’s bank ‘washed’ (baptized) Jesus, the heavens were opened and the Holy Spirit came upon Him. This was the priestly anointing of Him who was not only a priest by divine appointment, but an eternal priest (Ps 110:4) and who was thus divinely consecrated for the work of redemption (Mt 3:16; Ac 4:27; 10:38).”<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> **Lewis Sperry Chafer**, *Systematic Theology: Christology* (Dallas Seminary Press, 1950), 65. Unfortunately, I do not have access to more of this quotation.

<sup>29</sup> **Merrill F. Unger**, *The Baptism & Gifts of the Holy Spirit* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1974), 51-52.

2. He was thus solemnly consecrated to his priestly office. There are directions given in Exodus 29:4, and Leviticus 8:5, 6; that the priests under the Jewish dispensation should be set apart by the washing of water to their office. Thus Christ was set apart; and as his priesthood was *peculiar*, not after the order of Aaron, but of Melchisedec, a *special* minister was raised up to consecrate him, in the person of John.<sup>30</sup>

## Commentators

*Daniel Bagot*

Jesus' baptism in water (corresponding to the washing of Aaron) and anointing with the Spirit (corresponding to Aaron's anointing with oil) indicates that he is now the new High Priest, come to offer a better sacrifice and lead his people in true worship.<sup>10</sup> However, it also indicates something more in relationship to the theme of priesthood.<sup>31</sup>

*S. H. Kellogg*

And as the anointing of Aaron took place in the sight of all Israel, assembled at the door of the tent of meeting, so in the fulness of time was Jesus, in the sight of all the multitude that waited on the baptism of John, after having been washed with water, "to fulfil all righteousness," anointed from heaven, as "the Holy Ghost descended in bodily form, as a dove." and abode upon him (Luke 3:22).<sup>32</sup>

*Roy Gane*

Notice the parallel between Christ's baptism and Spirit-anointing and Leviticus 8, where Aaron and his sons were purified with water and then anointed.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Daniel Bagot, *An Exposition of the Gospel according to St. Matthew* (London; Edinburgh; Dublin: R. Groombridge; J. Nisbet & Co.; John Johnstone; R. Grant & Sons; W. Curry Jr. & Co.; John Robertson; Samuel Oldham, 1844), 78.

<sup>10</sup> This statement summarizes the theme of the letter to the Hebrews, about which we will say more in a later chapter.

<sup>31</sup> Noel Due, *Created for Worship* (Scotland: Mentor, 2005), 12.

<sup>32</sup> S. H. Kellogg, "The Book of Leviticus," in *The Expositor's Bible: Genesis to Ruth*, ed. W. Robertson Nicoll, vol. 1, Expositor's Bible (Hartford, CT: S.S. Scranton Co., 1903), 288.

<sup>33</sup> Roy Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 167.

## Interesting Comments on Passover

*L. Michael Morales*

The entire Passover ceremony—along with the redemption it commemorates—had Israel’s consecration to YHWH as its goal. Indeed, all three of its elements make the Passover celebration remarkably similar to the consecration of the Aaronic priests in Exodus 29 and Leviticus 8, which also involved sacrificing, blood smearing and the eating of holy meat. Through the Passover ritual each Israelite household functions in a priestly manner and Israel itself is being prepared to become ‘a kingdom of priests and a holy nation’ (Exod. 19:6).<sup>15</sup> Indeed, through the Passover rites ‘the whole nation became a priesthood for one day’.<sup>16 34</sup>

(T. Desmond Alexander quote from Morales)

Although some differences in the details exist, there is good reason to believe that the Passover ritual is about consecrating the people as ‘priests’. The sacrifice of the animal atones for the sin of the people, the blood smeared on the doorposts purifies those within the house, and the sacrificial meat sanctifies or makes holy all who eat it. Understood in this way, the Passover ritual enables all of the Israelites to obtain a holy status, an important requisite for becoming a royal priesthood (Exod. 19:6).<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Alexander 2009: 129.

<sup>16</sup> Gray 1925: 374.

<sup>34</sup> L. Michael Morales, *Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord?: A Biblical Theology of the Book of Leviticus*, ed. D. A. Carson, vol. 37, *New Studies in Biblical Theology* (England; Downers Grove, IL: Apollos; InterVarsity Press, 2015), 81.

<sup>35</sup> T. Desmond Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem: Exploring God’s Plan for Life on Earth* (Nottingham, England: Inter-Varsity, 2008), 128–129.

## Appendix: Comparing Leviticus 8 and Exodus 29

Leviticus 8	Exodus 29
<b>Consecration/Ordination Aspect of the Ceremony</b>	
2 proper sacrifice materials are brought	1-2 the necessary materials for sacrifice
4, 6 they meet at the doorway of the tent of meeting for washing	3 coming to the doorway of the tent of meeting for washing
7-9 Aaron is dressed in High Priest garments	5-6 dressing Aaron in the High Priest garments
12 Aaron is anointed	7 anointing Aaron
13 Nadab and Abihu receive priestly tunics	8 dressing Nadab and Abihu in priests tunics
13 Aaron and his sons are bound with caps and sashes	9 binding sashes and caps on Aaron and his sons
Differences include: (1) the Urim and Thummim in Lev 8:8 is not in Exodus 29:5; (2) Moses anoints the tabernacles, altar, utensils, basin, and stand prior to anointing Aaron (Lev 8:10-11), while Exodus 29:7 only has a command to anoint Aaron; (3) Leviticus says, "just as the LORD commanded" seven times while Exodus has none, because it was only instruction.	

<b>Sacrificial Aspect of the Ceremony</b>	
14 Bull for sin offering before tent of meeting, Aaron and sons lay hands upon head of bull.	10 Bull before tent of meeting, Aaron and sons lay hands on head of bull.
15 Moses slaughters bull, puts blood on horns of altar and purifies altar, pours blood out at base of altar to consecrate and atone for it.	11-12 Slaughter bull <i>before the LORD</i> at tent of meeting, blood onto the horns of the altar with finger, and pour blood at base of altar.
16-17 Fat on the entrails, lobe of liver, two kidneys, and kidney fat are offered as smoke offering. Bull, hide, and flesh is burned outside camp, <i>just as the LORD had commanded Moses</i> .	13-14 Fat that covers entrails, lobe of liver, two kidneys, and fat on kidneys offered up in smoke on altar. Bull's flesh and hide burned outside the camp as a sin offering.
18-19 Ram of burn offering presented, Aaron and his sons lay hands on head of ram. Moses slaughters ram and sprinkles blood around altar.	15-16 A certain ram is taken, and Aaron and his sons lay hand on head of ram. Moses slaughters ram and sprinkles blood around on the altar.
20-21 Ram cut into pieces and head/pieces/suet offered in smoke. Entrails and legs washed and offered in smoke. Burnt offering is a soothing Aroma and offering by fire to the LORD, <i>just as the LORD had commanded Moses</i> .	17-18 Ram cut into pieces and head/pieces/legs/entrails washed. Offer up the whole ram on altar, a burnt offering to the LORD, a soothing aroma, an offering by fire.
22 Second ram of ordination, and Aaron and sons lay hands on head of ram.	19 Another ram, and Aaron and sons lay hands of head of ram.
23-24 Moses slaughters ram, puts some blood on lobe of Aaron's right ear, thumb of right hand, and big toe of right foot. Moses puts blood on Aaron's sons: lobe of right ear, thumb of right hand, and big toe of right foot. Sprinkle remaining blood around on altar.	20 Moses slaughters ram, takes blood and puts it on lobe of Aaron's right ear and his sons' right ears, thumbs of their right hands, and big toes of right feet. Sprinkle remaining blood around on altar.

	21	Take blood and altar and anointing oil, sprinkle on Aaron and his garments, on sons and sons' garments, so Aaron, his sons, and the garments are consecrated.
25-26	22-23	Moses takes fat from ram, fat tail, fat that covers entrails, lobe of the liver, two kidneys, kidney fat, and right thigh ( <i>for it is a ram of ordination</i> ). Also, one cake of bread, one cake of bread with oil, one wafer.
27	24	Moses places previous items in hands of Aaron and his sons as wave offering before the LORD.
28	25	Moses takes wave offerings and offers them as smoke on the altar, a burnt offering and soothing aroma, an offering by fire to the LORD.
29	26	Moses takes breast of Aaron's ram of ordination, waves it as wave offering before the LORD as his portion.
30		Moses takes anointing oil and blood from altar, sprinkles on Aaron, his garments, his sons, their garments, and consecrates Aaron, his garments, his sons, and his sons' garments.
	27	It is made clear that Moses consecrated the breast of wave offering, thigh of heave offering, which was offered from ram of ordination, one for Aaron and the other for his sons. This verse is a description of what happened in 29:26.
		This portion describes the future of the 28-30 Aaronic priesthood and will be discussed in a latter blog post.
<p>This chart is adapted from William Brown, "Exodus and Leviticus: A Parallel Reading (Part I and II)," <i>The Biblical Review</i> (July 31 and Aug 1, 2015), <a href="https://thebiblicalreview.wordpress.com/2015/07/31/exodus-and-leviticus-a-parallel-reading-part-i/">https://thebiblicalreview.wordpress.com/2015/07/31/exodus-and-leviticus-a-parallel-reading-part-i/</a>; <a href="https://thebiblicalreview.wordpress.com/2015/08/01/exodus-and-leviticus-a-parallel-reading-part-ii/">https://thebiblicalreview.wordpress.com/2015/08/01/exodus-and-leviticus-a-parallel-reading-part-ii/</a>.</p>		