

CHAPTER 8

INTRODUCTION TO LEVITICUS 8

The order for the consecration of Aaron and his sons is renewed, (^(-RBB)Leviticus 8:1-3) which accordingly was set about and performed by Moses, (^(-RBB)Leviticus 8:4,5) who having first washed and clothed them, first Aaron, and then his sons, with the garments of the priesthood, anointing at the same time the tabernacle of the altar, and what appertained to them and Aaron also, (^(-RBB)Leviticus 8:6-13) and then he slew the bullock for the sin offering, and the ram for the burnt offering, and the ram of consecration; and did with the blood, fat, shoulder, and breast, and the meat offering belonging thereunto, as he had been directed, (^(-RBB)Leviticus 8:14-30) and the chapter is concluded with some instructions about boiling the flesh, and burning the remainder of it, and keeping the charge of the Lord night and day for seven days, (^(-RBB)Leviticus 8:31-36).

Ver. 1. *And the Lord spake unto Moses*, etc.] The following section or paragraph, relating to the consecration of Aaron and his sons, was delivered, according to Jarchi, seven days before the setting up of the tabernacle; but to me it seems to have been delivered after the setting it up, since it was out of the tabernacle that the Lord said all those things recorded in the preceding chapters; and after he had given out the laws concerning sacrifices, then he renewed the order for the consecration of Aaron and his sons, that they might offer them:

saying; as follows.

Ver. 2. *Take Aaron, and his sons with him*, etc.] That is, order them to come, or send a message to them, that they appear at such a time at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, where the ceremony of consecration was to be performed, and was performed, (^(-RBB)Leviticus 8:3) which is observed and recorded by Moses, to show that he had a divine warrant for what he did, and that it was not from favour and affection to his brother, and because of the relation he and his family stood in to him, that he invested him and them with the priestly office, but it was by a

command from the Lord; nor did Aaron take this honour to himself, but was called of God to it, (^{<3874>}Hebrews 5:4):

and the garments; the garments for the priesthood, ordered and described, and now made, (see ^{<1231>}Exodus 28:1-29:46)

and the anointing oil; which also was ordered to be made, and now was made, (^{<1233>}Exodus 30:23 37:29)

and a bullock for the sin offering, and two rams, and a basket of unleavened [bread]; which were all to be used at the consecration with the anointing oil Aaron was to be anointed, and also the tabernacle and the altar; and the bullock was to be a sin offering, and one of the rams a burnt offering for Aaron, and his sons, and the other ram was the ram of consecration of them; and out of the basket of unleavened bread one cake of each sort was to be taken, and waved with other things, and burnt, which finished the consecration; but with it was no oath, as in the consecration of the antitypical high priest Christ Jesus, which difference is observed by the apostle, (^{<3872>}Hebrews 7:21) (see ^{<1231>}Exodus 29:1,2).

Ver. 3. *And gather thou all the congregation together*, etc.] That is, the heads of the tribes and the elders of the people, as Aben Ezra interprets it; for the whole body of the people, and every individual of them, could not be got together:

unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; taking this for the whole court itself, as it sometimes is; though no doubt on this occasion as great a number was convened as well could be admitted into the court, or about it, to be spectators and witnesses of the solemn investiture of Aaron and his sons with the priestly office.

Ver. 4. *And Moses did as the Lord commanded him*, etc.] He convened Aaron and his sons, and the heads of the people, at the door of the tabernacle, and came himself, and brought with him the garments, the oil, and sacrifices, even everything necessary for the consecration:

and the assembly was gathered together unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; and this was, according to the Targum of Jonathan, on the twenty third day of the month Adar or February; but it rather seems to be later, some time in the beginning of Nisan or March, and before the passover began, (see ^{<1311>}Numbers 9:1-5).

Ver. 5. *And Moses said unto the congregation*, etc.] Having convened them, he opened to them the reason of their being called together, which was not done of himself, but by divine direction:

this [is] the thing which the Lord commanded to be done; namely, what follows, concerning the consecration of Aaron and his sons to be priests, and the investiture of them with that office, attended with various rites and ceremonies to be performed, of which they were to be witnesses.

Ver. 6. *And Moses brought Aaron and his sons*, etc.] To the laver which was in the court of the tabernacle

and washed them with water; to show that they should be clean that bear the vessels of the Lord, and offer the sacrifices of the people; all that are in public office in the house of God ought to have both clean hands and a pure heart, to hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience, and to be of a pure and holy conversation; and indeed all that are made kings and priests to God, as all the saints are, they are washed from their sins in the blood of Jesus, (^{<606>}Revelation 1:5,6).

Ver. 7. *And he put upon him the coat*, etc.] The embroidered coat of fine linen, which was next to his flesh; (^{<1239>}Exodus 28:39) and all the garments were put on just in the order they are here declared; no mention is made indeed of the linen breeches, since it is highly probable these were put on by Aaron himself in some apartment in the tabernacle, or before came thither; it not being so decent to put on, or have these put on, in the sight of the whole congregation:

and girded him with the girdle; the girdle of needlework with which the linen coat was girt to him, and was distinct from the curious girdle of the ephod after mentioned, (^{<1239>}Exodus 28:39)

and clothed him with the robe: the robe of the ephod, which had at the hem of it golden bells and pomegranates, (^{<1231>}Exodus 28:31-35)

and put the ephod upon him; made of gold, blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen, which had two shoulder pieces, and on them two onyx stones, on which were engraved the names of the twelve tribes, (^{<1236>}Exodus 28:6-12)

and he girded him with the curious girdle of the ephod, and bound [it] unto him therewith; which was made of the same with the ephod, and by

which it was girt close unto him; of the mystical meaning of these garments, (see Gill on “⁽¹²³⁹⁾Exodus 28:6-12, 31-35, 39”).

Ver. 8. *And he put the breastplate upon him*, etc.] Which was made of the same materials with the ephod, and was put upon it, and fastened to it:

also he put in the breastplate the Urim and Thummim: that is, Moses did it, as all the rest; for there is no reason to be given why this should be appropriated to God as a divine work, distinct from the rest; and these seem to be the twelve precious stones set in the breastplate, whose names are given, (⁽¹²⁷⁷⁾Exodus 27:17-20) and if they are not intended, no account is here given of them; but since in (⁽¹²⁹⁸⁾Exodus 29:8-14) an account is given of the stones, and of the setting of them in the breastplate, and no mention is made of the Urim and Thummim, and here notice is taken of them, but nothing said of the stones; it seems pretty plain they must be the same; (see Gill on “⁽¹²³⁹⁾Exodus 28:30”).

Ver. 9. *And he put the mitre upon his head*, etc.] Which was made of fine linen, and was a wrap of that of a considerable length about his head, (⁽¹²³⁹⁾Exodus 28:39)

also upon the mitre, [even] upon his forehead, did he put the golden plate; which was put upon the forehead of the high priest, reaching from ear to ear, and was fastened to the mitre with a blue lace, and had on it this inscription, “holiness to the Lord”: (⁽¹²³⁶⁾Exodus 28:36,37) and is here therefore called

the holy crown: denoting both the sanctity and the dignity of the high priest, and typical of Christ, who is holiness itself, and to his people, and is now crowned with glory and honour, being a priest upon the throne: hence the Jews^{f187} speak of the crown of the law, and of the crown of the kingdom, and of the crown of the priesthood: and this, as all the rest, was done

as the Lord commanded Moses; all these were made according to the divine order, and were put on in the manner and form he directed him; of the mystery of the mitre and the crown, (see Gill on “⁽¹²³⁹⁾Exodus 28:36, 37, 39”).

Ver. 10. *And Moses took the anointing oil*, etc.] Which Bezaleel had made, according to the directions which Moses had given him, and he had received from the Lord: this Moses brought with him to the door of the

tabernacle, as he was ordered, (^{<RRD>}Leviticus 8:2-3) and now he took it and made use of it as follows:

and anointed the tabernacle and all that [was] therein; the altar of incense, the candlestick, and table of shewbread:

and sanctified them; separated and devoted them to sacred use and service.

Ver. 11. *And he sprinkled thereof upon the altar seven times*, etc.] The altar of burnt offering; the order for anointing it is given in (^{<RRD>}Exodus 30:28 40:10) but in that no directions are given for the manner of doing it by sprinkling, nor the number of times it was to be sprinkled: hence Jarchi confesses his ignorance, and says,

“I know not how it was ordered about these sprinklings;”

but no doubt Moses was instructed of God in what manner to anoint it, and how often; and the number seven may denote the perfect unction of it, and made it a fitter type of Christ, who received the unction of the Spirit without measure:

and anointed the altar, and all its vessels; pans, shovels, basins, flesh hooks, and fire pans:

both the laver and his foot; which was for the priests to wash at; and very probably this was done before Moses brought Aaron and his sons thither and washed them, (^{<RRD>}Leviticus 8:6) since it seems most proper that it should be consecrated before used, as it follows:

to sanctify them; set them apart for sacred use.

Ver. 12. *And he poured of the anointing oil upon Aaron's head*, etc.] Which ran down to his beard, and to the collar of his coat, the robe of the ephod, but not to the skirts of his garments, as we wrongly render it, (^{<RRD>}Psalms 133:2). Jarchi says it was first poured on his head, and after that he put it between his eyebrows, and drew it with his finger here and there, or from one eyebrow to another: Maimonides^{f188} gives a like account, with some addition; he says, the oil was poured on his head, and he was anointed between the eyebrows, in the form of the Greek letter χ , “chi”: a greater profusion of oil was used in the anointing of Aaron than of the tabernacle, altar, and laver, and their vessels, he being so eminent a type of Christ, our high priest, anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows:

and anointed him to sanctify him; to signify that he was set apart and devoted to the sacred office of the priesthood. The Targum of Jonathan observes, that this anointing was after he had clothed him; though some have thought it was done before the mitre and holy crown were put on: but if they were put on to complete the investiture, they might be taken off while the ceremony of anointing was performed.

Ver. 13. *And Moses brought Aaron's sons*, etc.] His four sons, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; he ordered and directed them to come there, or sent proper persons to fetch them, or from one part of the court, where they were, he might accompany them thither:

and put coats upon them, and girded them with girdles: which were made of fine linen, (⁽¹²³²⁷⁾Exodus 39:27,28) and the coats being made long to reach down to the ankles, needed girdles, especially when in service, that they might perform it more expeditiously:

and put bonnets on them; which were made of fine linen also, and differed from the mitre of the high priest only in the manner of rolling up the linen:

as the Lord commanded Moses; as all the above things were made, so they were all put on, according to the directions Moses received of the Lord, who was faithful in his house, with respect to everything he enjoined him, (⁽³⁸¹⁸⁾Hebrews 3:2,5).

Ver. 14. *And he brought the bullock for the sin [offering]*, etc.] To the tabernacle, into the court of it, to the altar of burnt offering there; that is, he caused it to be brought thither as he was ordered, (⁽¹²³¹⁰⁾Exodus 29:10)

and Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the bullock for the sin [offering]; their right hands, according to the Targum of Jonathan, which is not improbable, thereby as it were transferring their sins to it, and confessing them over it; acknowledging their guilt, and that they deserved to die, as that creature would, which was to be a vicarious sacrifice for sin, and whose blood was to purify and sanctify the altar, at which they, sinful men, were to serve.

Ver. 15. *And he slew it*, etc.] Not Aaron, nor any of his sons, who as yet were not fully consecrated and installed into their office, but Moses, as follows:

and Moses took the blood; which was received into a basin when the bullock was slain:

and put [it] upon the horns of the altar round about with his finger; upon the four horns of the altar, which were at the four corners of it, and dipping his finger into the blood, he besmeared the horns with it, and drew it about with his finger here and there; and so is said to be done round about the altar, as these horns were:

and purified the altar; or cleansed it; not from moral guilt and pollution, which it was incapable of, but from all ceremonial pollution it might be supposed to have:

and poured the blood at the bottom of the altar; the rest of the blood he did not use about the horns:

and sanctified it; separated it from common to sacred use:

to make reconciliation upon it; that it might be fit to have sacrifices offered on it to make atonement and reconciliation for sins; for which reason it was necessary it should itself be pure and holy, in such sense it was capable of being so.

Ver. 16. *And he took all the fat that was upon the inwards*, etc.] Called the “omentum”:

and the caul [above] the liver; the lobe upon the liver, as the Septuagint; or “the caul” and “the liver”, so says Jarchi; the liver separately, for he took a little of the liver with it, the caul:

and the two kidneys, and their fat, and Moses burned [it] upon the altar: the fat of these several parts, which has been often observed was done; and in imitation of which, the same has been done by the Persians and their Magi, as related by Strabo^{f189} and others^{f190}; and by the Romans, to which Persius^{f191} refers; and these several parts are generally covered with fat in fat creatures, and especially sheep, as Aristotle^{f192} observes.

Ver. 17. *But the bullock and his hide, his flesh, and his dung, he burnt with fire without the camp*, etc.] Aben Ezra observes, that some say that he did this himself; and others, that it was done by orders, that is, he ordered others to do it, which seems probable enough:

as the Lord commanded Moses; (⁽¹²⁹⁴⁾Exodus 29:14).

Ver. 18. *And he brought the ram for the burnt offering*, etc.] One of the two he was ordered to take, (^{<RRB>}Leviticus 8:2)

and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the ram; as they had done before on the head of the bullock, (see ^{<RRB>}Leviticus 8:14) their right hands, as the Targum of Jonathan, and that at the same time; not first Aaron and then his sons, as a famous grammarian, Aben Ezra makes mention of, thought; but, as he himself says, they laid them on together.

Ver. 19. *And he killed it*, etc.] That is, Moses killed the ram, as the Septuagint version expresses it:

and Moses sprinkled the blood upon the altar round about; as he did the blood of the bullock, (^{<RRB>}Leviticus 8:15).

Ver. 20. *And he cut the ram into pieces*, etc.] Cut off its head and quartered it:

and Moses burnt the head, and the pieces, and the fat; even all of it, as the following verse shows.

Ver. 21. *And he washed the inwards and the legs in water*, etc.] The one being taken out, the other cut off:

and Moses burnt the whole ram upon the altar: it [was] a burnt sacrifice for a sweet savour, [and] an offering made by fire unto the Lord; as the Lord commanded Moses; (see ^{<RRB>}Exodus 29:18).

Ver. 22-25. *And he brought the other ram, the ram of consecration*, etc.]

Or “filling”^{f193}, or “fulnesses”; because, as Jarchi says, these filled and perfected the priests in their priesthood; this was the finishing and consummation of their consecration: what is said in this and the three following verses (^{<RRB>}Leviticus 8:23-25) is the same as is ordered, (^{<RRB>}Exodus 29:19-22) and needs no further explanation.

Ver. 26. *And out of the basket of unleavened bread*, etc.] Moses was ordered to take, (^{<RRB>}Leviticus 8:2),

that [was] before the Lord; being brought to the tabernacle, where now the Lord had taken up his residence:

he took one unleavened cake; which had no oil in it or upon it:

and a cake of oiled bread; which was mixed and tempered with oil:

and one wafer; which was anointed with oil:

and put them upon the fat, and upon the right shoulder; of the ram of consecration, which he took from it, and laid the cakes uppermost upon them.

Ver. 27. *And he put all upon Aaron's hands, and upon his son's hands,* etc.] The fat and the right shoulder, with the cakes upon them:

and waved them [for] a wave offering before the Lord; (see Gill on "^{<1224>}Exodus 29:24").

Ver. 28. *And Moses took them from off their hands,* etc.] After they had been waved before the Lord:

and burnt [them] upon the altar, upon the burnt offering; of the other ram; or after that burnt offering, as Jarchi, who observes, that we do not find that the shoulder of peace offerings was offered in any place but this, it belonged to the priest; but this being at the consecration of the priests, it was offered to the Lord by Moses, to whom it seems to have belonged, as the breast also, but that was not burnt, but eaten: and the same writer affirms, that Moses ministered all the seven days of the consecration in a white shirt, or surplice; and that he might wear a linen coat, as priests did, is not improbable, since he now officiated as one:

they [were] consecrated for a sweet savour; acceptable to the Lord, and so the priests, Aaron and his sons likewise, on whose account they were made:

it [is] an offering made by fire unto the Lord; the fat, the shoulder, and the cakes.

Ver. 29. *And Moses took the breast,* etc.] Of the ram of consecration:

and waved it for a wave offering before the Lord; this Moses seems to have waved with his own hands, and not upon the hands of Aaron and his sons, putting his under them, as in the wave offering of the fat, shoulder, and cakes, and for which the following words seem to give a reason:

[for] of the ram of consecration it was Moses's part; the breast of it was his:

as the Lord commanded Moses; (see ^{<1225>}Exodus 29:26).

Ver. 30. *And Moses took of the anointing oil, and of the blood which was upon the altar*, etc.] Which was sprinkled upon the altar round about, (^{<OR>}Leviticus 8:24) and these two seem to be mixed together, since it follows:

and sprinkled [it] upon Aaron, etc. (see Gill on “^{<OR>}Exodus 29:21”).

Ver. 31. *And Moses said unto Aaron, and to his sons*, etc.] After he had offered the bullock, the two rams, and cakes of unleavened bread for the consecration of them:

boil the flesh at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; the remainder of the flesh of the ram of consecration, which was all but the fat, the shoulder, and the breast:

and there eat it with the bread that is in the basket of consecration; what was left of that, there being one cake of a sort taken out of it and burnt:

as I commanded, saying, Aaron and his sons shall eat it; (see ^{<OR>}Exodus 29:32).

Ver. 32. *And that which remaineth of the flesh and of the bread*, etc.] Until the next morning, which could not be eaten by Aaron and his sons:

shall ye burn with fire; that it might not be corrupted, nor put to common nor superstitious uses.

Ver. 33. *And ye shall not go out of the door of the tabernacle of the congregation [in] seven days*, etc.] Which was the time of their consecration, so long it lasted; and they had provision enough every day from the ram of consecration, whose flesh they were to boil and eat. The Jewish writers ^{f194} are puzzled where they should ease nature, since the place was holy; but the orders are not to be considered as so strict but that they might go in and out, though they were not to stay long, or to attend to any other business; and it was always necessary there should be some upon the spot, keeping the Lord’s charge in their turns; and it was always requisite that they should also sleep alternately; for it cannot be thought that they should be all this time without rest, any more than without food:

until the days of your consecration be at an end; which were to continue so long:

for seven days shall he consecrate you; that is, Moses, who here speaks of himself in the third person, as appears from (^{<40285>}Exodus 29:35). Aben Ezra observes, that the word “end” is wanting, and that the sense is, at the end of seven days he shall consecrate you, finish their consecration; all the seven days he was doing it, and at the end of the seventh concluded it.

Ver. 34. *As he hath done this day, [so] the Lord hath commanded to do,* etc.] The same were to be repeated every day until the seven days were ended; so Jarchi and Aben Ezra; the former of these observes, that their Rabbins explain the phrase “to do”, in the preceding clause, of the business of the red heifer, and that which follows,

to make an atonement for you, of the business of the day of atonement; and say, that it may be learned from hence that the high priest was obliged to be separate (from his own house and family) seven days before that, and so the priest that burned the red heifer; and the same is observed by other Jewish writers^{f195}: but this refers to neither of these cases, but to the present consecration of Aaron and his sons, and the making atonement by sacrifice for them, and the sanctification of them to minister in the priest’s office.

Ver. 35. *Therefore shall ye abide at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation,* etc.] Or rather “within” it, as Noldius renders it, since they were not to go out of the door of it, (^{<40883>}Leviticus 8:33) whereas our version seems to leave it undetermined whether they abode without the door or within; where they were to continue,

day and night, seven days; even the seven days of their consecration:

and keep the charge of the Lord, that ye die not; not the charge of the tabernacle, and the service of it committed to them upon their investiture with their office, hereafter to be observed by them; but what was charged upon them to attend unto, during the seven days of their consecration; and the penalty being death in case of failure, was to make them more careful and cautious of transgressing; and which was the more necessary, as they were to be pure and holy at their entrance upon their work: and though this may seem somewhat severe, yet the aggravation of their sin would be the greater, as it was to a sacred and honourable work they were called, and to which they were now consecrating; and as what was required of them was what might easily be complied with: however Moses, to show that this was not of himself, but by divine authority, adds,

for so I am commanded; that is, to declare unto them, that if they did not punctually observe the above orders, they must expect to die.

Ver. 36. *So Aaron and his sons did all things which the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses.*] They submitted to have them done to them, and for them, what was done on the first day of their consecration, all the rest of the days; and they kept within the tabernacle all that time as was enjoined them.