

Leviticus 8 (The Anointing)

Consecration of Aaron and His Sons

Lev 8:1 The LORD said to Moses,

Lev 8:2 "Bring Aaron and his sons, their garments, the anointing oil, the bull for the sin offering, the two rams and the basket containing bread made without yeast,

Lev 8:3 and gather the entire assembly at the entrance to the tent of meeting."

Lev 8:4 Moses did as the LORD commanded him, and the assembly gathered at the entrance to the tent of meeting.

Lev 8:5 Moses said to the assembly, "This is what the LORD has commanded to be done."

Lev 8:6 Then Moses brought Aaron and his sons forward and washed them with water.

Lev 8:7 He put the tunic on Aaron, tied the sash around him, clothed him with the robe and put the ephod on him. He also fastened the ephod with a decorative waistband, which he tied around him.

Lev 8:8 He placed the breastpiece on him and put the Urim and Thummim in the breastpiece.

Lev 8:9 Then he placed the turban on Aaron's head and set the gold plate, the sacred emblem, on the front of it, as the LORD commanded Moses.

Lev 8:10 Then Moses took the anointing oil and anointed the tabernacle and everything in it, and so consecrated them.

Lev 8:11 He sprinkled some of the oil on the altar seven times, anointing the altar and all its utensils and the basin with its stand, to consecrate them.

Lev 8:12 He poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron's head and anointed him to consecrate him.

Lev 8:13 Then he brought Aaron's sons forward, put tunics on them, tied sashes around them and fastened caps on them, as the LORD commanded Moses.

Lev 8:14 He then presented the bull for the sin offering, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on its head.

Lev 8:15 Moses slaughtered the bull and took some of the blood, and with his finger he put it on all the horns of the altar to purify the altar. He poured out the rest of the blood at the base of the altar. So he consecrated it to make atonement for it.

Lev 8:16 Moses also took all the fat around the internal organs, the long lobe of the liver, and both kidneys and their fat, and burned it on the altar.

Lev 8:17 But the bull with its hide and its flesh and its intestines he burned up outside the camp, as the LORD commanded Moses.

Lev 8:18 He then presented the ram for the burnt offering, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on its head.

Lev 8:19 Then Moses slaughtered the ram and splashed the blood against the sides of the altar.

Lev 8:20 He cut the ram into pieces and burned the head, the pieces and the fat.

Lev 8:21 He washed the internal organs and the legs with water and burned the whole ram on the altar. It was a burnt offering, a pleasing aroma, a food offering presented to the LORD, as the LORD commanded Moses.

Lev 8:22 He then presented the other ram, the ram for the ordination, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on its head.

Lev 8:23 Moses slaughtered the ram and took some of its blood and put it on the lobe of Aaron's right ear, on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot.

Lev 8:24 Moses also brought Aaron's sons forward and put some of the blood on the lobes of their right ears, on the thumbs of their right hands and on the big toes of their right feet. Then he splashed blood against the sides of the altar.

Lev 8:25 After that, he took the fat, the fat tail, all the fat around the internal organs, the long lobe of the liver, both kidneys and their fat and the right thigh.

Lev 8:26 And from the basket of bread made without yeast, which was before the LORD, he took one thick loaf, one thick loaf with olive oil mixed in, and one thin loaf, and he put these on the fat portions and on the right thigh.

Lev 8:27 He put all these in the hands of Aaron and his sons, and they waved them before the LORD as a wave offering.

Lev 8:28 Then Moses took them from their hands and burned them on the altar on top of the burnt offering as an ordination offering, a pleasing aroma, a food offering presented to the LORD.

Lev 8:29 Moses also took the breast, which was his share of the ordination ram, and waved it before the LORD as a wave offering, as the LORD commanded Moses.

Lev 8:30 Then Moses took some of the anointing oil and some of the blood from the altar and sprinkled them on Aaron and his garments and on his sons and their garments. So he consecrated Aaron and his garments and his sons and their garments.

Lev 8:31 Moses then said to Aaron and his sons, "Cook the meat at the entrance to the tent of meeting and eat it there with the bread from the basket of ordination offerings, as I was commanded: 'Aaron and his sons are to eat it.'

Lev 8:32 Then burn up the rest of the meat and the bread.

Lev 8:33 Do not leave the entrance to the tent of meeting for seven days, until the days of your ordination are completed, for your ordination will last seven days.

Lev 8:34 What has been done today was commanded by the LORD to make atonement for you.

Lev 8:35 You must stay at the entrance to the tent of meeting day and night for seven days and do what the LORD requires, so you will not die; for that is what I have been commanded."

Lev 8:36 So Aaron and his sons did everything the LORD commanded through Moses.

In Leviticus 8, the anointing of Aaron and his sons with sacred oil officially set them apart for divine service. It consecrated their physical bodies, authorized them to serve as mediators between God and the Israelites, and symbolically bestowed the Holy Spirit for their sacred duties.

Consecration and Holiness

Pouring the anointing oil on Aaron's head was the climactic moment that marked him and his sons as holy. It literally transformed them from common to sacred, outfitting them to approach the presence of God. As the text highlights, this act was repeated three times in the passage to emphasize that they were entirely dedicated to God.

The Mediation Role

The priests were authorized to represent sinful humanity before a holy God. By applying the anointing oil (along with sacrificial blood) to the right earlobe, right thumb, and right big toe, God was symbolically sanctifying every action of the priests—what they heard, what they did, and where they walked.

Typology and the "Anointed One"

The Hebrew word for "anointed one" is *mashiach*, which translates to Messiah or Christ. Just as Aaron was anointed with oil and blood, the anointing in Leviticus 8 prefigured the ultimate "Anointed One," Jesus Christ, who perfectly fulfills the role of the Great High Priest.

In Leviticus 8, the priestly garments are the visual climax of the ordination ritual, formally transforming Aaron and his sons into mediators between God and Israel. Clothed in the garments prescribed in Exodus 28, they symbolize the transfer of divine authority, spiritual readiness, and the sacred identity required to enter the holy Tabernacle.

The significance of the garments, which were mandated for "**dignity and honor**", operates on several distinct levels:

- **Divine Consecration:** The act of vesting the priests is commanded by God and carried out entirely by Moses, symbolizing that their authority is given from above rather than claimed by human ambition.
- **Atonement and Purity:** The garments themselves were viewed as sacred elements that required ritual cleansing, as Moses anoints them with both blood and holy anointing oil to fully dedicate the priests to service.
- **Bearing the People:** Aaron's high priestly vestments (such as the ephod and the breastpiece) bore the names of the twelve tribes of Israel engraved in stone over his shoulders and heart. This visually represented the high priest's duty to lovingly carry and intercede for the nation in the presence of God.
- **Spiritual Authority:** The golden plate engraved with the phrase "**Holiness to the Lord**" was worn on Aaron's turban. It served as a divine seal, signifying that the priest's thoughts, speech, and actions were completely separated for God's holy use.

In Leviticus 8, the priestly garments are designed "for glory and for beauty" (Exodus 28:2), serving as visual symbols of holiness and the priest's role as a mediator.

Each of the High Priest's garments carries specific spiritual and representative meaning:

- **Tunic (Coat):** Represented the covering of human shame and a life of purity. It set the baseline of moral and ritual cleanliness before God.
- **Sash (Belt):** Symbolized readiness, active service, and covenant faithfulness. It bound the priest together, preparing him to minister effectively.
- **Robe of the Ephod:** Worn under the ephod and hemmed with alternating bells and pomegranates. The bells signified the audible proclamation of the priest's accepted ministry, while the pomegranates represented fruitfulness.
- **Ephod:** An ornate vest that bore two onyx stones on the shoulders, each engraved with the names of six tribes of Israel. It represented the High Priest's role in bearing the people of Israel as a substitute representative before God.
- **Breastpiece (Breastplate):** Contained twelve precious stones, each representing a tribe of Israel, held directly over the priest's heart. It symbolized immense love, bearing the burdens of the nation, and seeking God in situations concerning the people.
- **Turban (Headpiece) and Crown:** The turban indicated submission to God's authority, while the gold plate attached to it read "HOLY TO THE LORD". This signified that the priest bore the iniquities of the people and dedicated the nation's holiness to God.

In Leviticus 8, sprinkling blood on the altar seven times was a ceremonial act to consecrate and make **atonement** for it. In biblical symbolism, the number **seven** signifies completeness and perfection, representing the absolute thoroughness required to purify the altar before God's service.

The altar, though designated for holy use, required ritual cleansing from human and worldly defilement to serve as a meeting place between God and His people. Sprinkling the blood seven times was a visual declaration that the altar was entirely and perfectly purified, hallowed, and set apart for the sanctuary.

In Leviticus 8, applying blood to the four horns of the altar consecrated the structure and initiated the atonement process. This ritual demonstrated the power of God's salvation and the comprehensive reach of His mercy. These features also served as physical anchors for binding sacrifices and as places of sanctuary.

The specific significance of the horns during this consecration ceremony includes:

- **Purification and Atonement:** Moses applied the blood of the sin offering directly to the horns of the altar to purify it. This step was required to make the structure holy and acceptable for sacrifices.
- **Symbol of Power:** In ancient biblical symbolism, horns represented might, strength, and authority. Applying blood to the horns demonstrated that God's power was actively being set apart for the forgiveness of sins.
- **Securing the Offering:** Beyond symbolism, the horns were practical. Priests used them to physically tie down large sacrificial animals during feast days to ensure the offering stayed securely on the altar.
- **A Place of Refuge:** Because the horns represented the saving power and mercy of God, they later functioned as a physical place of sanctuary where people could seek mercy or asylum when fearing for their lives.

Leviticus 8 outlines the ordination of Aaron and his sons, detailing the cleansing, clothing, and anointing required to enter God's presence. This entire ceremony serves as a physical shadow of Jesus' identity and work, pointing directly to His role as our ultimate High Priest, the perfect sacrifice, and the mediator of a new covenant.

The Ultimate High Priest

In Leviticus 8, Aaron required a sin offering because he was a flawed human who first needed atonement for himself before representing others. The [Letter to the Hebrews](#) in the New Testament contrasts this directly with Jesus. Because Jesus was sinless, He is the superior High Priest who does not need to offer sacrifices for His own sins.

Heb 7:27 Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself.

Heb 7:28 For the law appoints as high priests men in all their weakness; but the oath, which came after the law, appointed the Son, who has been made perfect forever.

Cleansing and Anointing

The ordination process began with Moses washing the priests with water, followed by anointing them with sacred oil.

- **The Washing:** This foreshadows the spiritual cleansing believers receive through Christ.

Titus 3:4 But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared,
Titus 3:5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,
Titus 3:6 whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior,
Titus 3:7 so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

- **The Anointing:** The Hebrew word for Messiah means "the Anointed One." Just as Aaron was anointed for service, Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit to begin His earthly ministry.

The Application of Blood

During the ordination, Moses applied blood to the priests' right ears, right thumbs, and right toes, consecrating their entire being to God's service. In the New Testament, believers are sprinkled with the blood of Jesus, which consecrates them to live holy lives.

1Pe 1:1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To God's elect, exiles scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia,
1Pe 1:2 who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance.

A Royal Priesthood

Leviticus 8 establishes a very specific, exclusive line of priests. However, the New Testament reveals that Jesus' ultimate sacrifice shattered that exclusivity. Through His finished work, all believers are now given direct access to God.

1Pe 2:9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

In [Leviticus 8](#), the newly consecrated priests (Aaron and his sons) were required to stay at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting for seven days to complete their **ordination and purification**. This period acted as a time of total separation from the ordinary world, signifying their complete dedication to God's service.

The week-long seclusion also served several crucial spiritual and practical functions:

- **Atonement & Consecration:** The number seven symbolizes completeness in scripture. It allowed for a repeated, thorough atonement process.
- **Protection from Defilement:** Remaining within the sacred court protected them from accidental defilement or contact with uncleanness while they transitioned into their holy roles.
- **Strict Obedience:** God commanded this week-long vigil to teach them the seriousness of their responsibilities; departing early would result in death.