

The Higher Calling

Leviticus Chapter 21

Exodus 19:5-6 "Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and **you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.**" These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel."

1Peter 2:9 "But you are A CHOSEN RACE, **A royal PRIESTHOOD**, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;"

Hebrews 13:10-16 "We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat. For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest as an offering for sin, are burned outside the camp. **Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate.** So, let us go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach. For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come. **Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.**"

Revelation 1:8 "And hath **made us kings and priests** unto God and his Father; to him [be] glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

The purpose of this chapter is to show a Higher Calling. We have already see that the Sons of Israel need to be distinctly different than the other nations (people) around them. This chapter will demonstrate that the Priests and the High Priest have an even higher calling. They are to be even more distinct.

The application is that if you have been wrestling with being distinct from the world around us, get ready, God has called you and me "priests" - we have and even higher calling than we realize.

Lev 21:1 **1) Higher Calling Concerning the Dead** vs 1-6

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Speak to the priests, the sons of Aaron, and say to them: 'No one shall defile himself for a *dead* person among his people,

Lev 21:2 except for his relatives who are nearest to him, his mother and his father and his son and his daughter and his brother,

Lev 21:3 also for his virgin sister, who is near to him because she has had no husband; for her he may defile himself.

- "Speak to the Priests" - (Priest = kohein, cohen) this is to all the priests. Not just the High Priest. It also is not for the rest of the people. This is a higher calling for the Priests.
- They cannot defile themselves with a dead person except for their own immediate family.
- Interesting it includes an unmarried sister. This demonstrates the standard of care within a family unit. That an unmarried woman is under the care of the father and family.

Lev 21:4 'He shall not defile himself as a relative by marriage among his people, and so **profane** himself.

- NKJV = "Otherwise he shall not defile himself, being a chief man among his people, to profane himself."
- "Relative by marriage" "Husband" and "Chief man" are all valid translations of the word used here. *Ba'al* is the Hebrew word.
- The context is being defiled by touching the dead. The NASB translation of inserting Husband or marriage doesn't fit. With verse 3 and 5. Verse 5 is in relation to a pagan practice of self mutilation for the dead (see Leviticus 19:27-28)

Lev 21:5 'They shall not make any baldness on their heads, nor shave off the edges of their beards, nor make any cuts in their flesh.

- These are pagan mourning practices.
- The Lord doesn't want us to mourn as the unbelievers do.
- Death of loved ones is filled with sorrow, but God wants us to understand a hope that we have that unbelievers do not have.
- 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14 "But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those

who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus."

Lev 21:6 'They shall be holy to their God and not **profane** the name of their God, for they present the offerings by fire to the LORD, the food of their God; so they shall be holy.

Lev 21:7 **2) Higher Calling Concerning Marriage** vs 7-9

'They shall not take a woman who is **profaned** by harlotry, nor shall they take a woman divorced from her husband; for he is holy to his God.

- Two restrictions on the priests concerning marriage
 - Forbidden to marry a woman of harlotry.
 1. This was acceptable in ancient cultures.
 2. The Prophet Hosea - not a priest but a prophet was instructed by God to marry a woman of harlotry for demonstration purpose. This was to illustrate Israel's unfaithfulness verses the Lord God's faithfulness.
 - Forbidden to marry a divorced woman.
 1. The priests were to live and demonstrate faithfulness and not be touched by unfaithfulness.
 2. Divorce still has a stigma attached to it. This rule is not saying that divorced women are evil. The purpose here is to maintain the symbol of faithfulness and purity.
- Priests were to marry within the family of the Israel and they could not marry a convert. The priest to demonstrate faithfulness and purity should marry a virgin.

Lev 21:8 'You shall consecrate him, therefore, for he offers the food of your God; he shall be holy to you; for I the LORD, who sanctifies you, am holy.

Lev 21:9 'Also the daughter of any priest, if she **profanes** herself by harlotry, she **profanes** her father; she shall be burned with fire.

- The priest cannot ignore nor tolerate his own daughter's harlotry. It must be punished.
- The behavior of a daughter who profaned herself this way affected the High Priest's ability to marry a virgin from his own tribe.

Lev 21:10 **3) Even Higher Calling for the High Priest** vs 10-?

'The priest who is the highest among his brothers, on whose head the anointing oil has been poured and who has been consecrated to wear the garments, shall not uncover his head nor tear his clothes;

Lev 21:11 nor shall he approach any dead person, nor defile himself *even* for his father or his mother;

Lev 21:12 nor shall he go out of the sanctuary nor **profane** the sanctuary of his God, for the consecration of the anointing oil of his God is on him; I am the LORD.

- Tearing clothes was an extreme sign of mourning. The High Priest was forbidden to mourn in that manner.
 - **Matthew 26:65** "Then the high priest tore his robes and said, "He has blasphemed! What further need do we have of witnesses? Behold, you have now heard the blasphemy;"
- The High Priest was not allowed to leave his post. He was to be about the duties of the sanctuary.
 - **Romans 8:34** "Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us."
- This means that the High Priest could not attend the funeral of his family members.

Lev 21:13 'He shall take a wife in her virginity.

Lev 21:14 'A widow, or a divorced woman, or one who is **profaned** by harlotry, these he may not take; but rather he is to marry a virgin of his own people,

Lev 21:15 so that he will not **profane** his offspring among his people; for I am the LORD who sanctifies him."

- God wants the Priestly line to remain pure.

- Lev 21:16 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,
- Lev 21:17 "Speak to Aaron, saying, 'No man of your offspring throughout their generations who has a defect shall approach to offer the food of his God.
- Lev 21:18 'For no one who has a defect shall approach: a blind man, or a lame man, or he who has a disfigured *face*, or any deformed *limb*,
- Lev 21:19 or a man who has a broken foot or broken hand,
- Lev 21:20 or a hunchback or a dwarf, or *one who has* a defect in his eye or eczema or scabs or crushed testicles.
- Here is the list of defects:

Blind	Hunchback
Lame	Dwarf
Facial Damage	Eye Problems
Deformed Limb	Eczema
Broken Hand	Scabs
Broken Foot	Crushed Testicles
 - Again this is not saying that people who have these defects are inferior, evil or discounted. The purpose is to maintain an image of the High Priest being perfect
 - Jesus is the High Priest. He also was the sacrifice. This High Priest and Jesus were to be without blemish.
 - John 18:38 Pilate said of Jesus after examination " *I find no fault in him*"
 - John 19:36 " *For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken.*"
- Lev 21:21 'No man among the descendants of Aaron the priest who has a defect is to come near to offer the LORD'S offerings by fire; *since* he has a defect, he shall not come near to offer the food of his God.
- Lev 21:22 'He may eat the food of his God, *both* of the most holy and of the holy,
- Lev 21:23 only he shall not go in to the veil or come near the altar because he has a defect, so that he will not **profane** My sanctuaries. For I am the LORD who sanctifies them."
- Those who have defects may serve as a priest and share in the food as a priest but they cannot be a High Priest. The truth is that God holds the picture of the High Priest without blemish, but he DOES NOT CAST AWAY the disabled.
- Lev 21:24 So Moses spoke to Aaron and to his sons and to all the sons of Israel.

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