

Shemini Leviticus - Vayikra (9:1-11:47)

The Israelites are at the entrance of The Tent of God's Sanctuary. It is time to sanctify the priests by Ordination. As God commanded, Moses immersed Aaron and his sons in natural mikvah waters, then dressed them in their holy vestments. They each had long tunics with sashes and head turbans with gold plates engraved "Holy to God. Only the High Priest Aaron wore the breastplate embedded with twelve gems, each for a tribe of Israel.

Then Moses brought forth the offerings and, before the sacrifice the priests placed their hands upon the bull Sin Offering and the Burnt ram offering and the Ordination ram offerings. Then Moses took a little blood from the Ordination ram and dabbed it on Aaron, the High Priest's right ear, his right thumb and his right big toe. The priests then made a Wave Offering followed by Moses sprinkling them and their clothes with anointing oil. To complete the Ordination, Moses told all the priests, "You must remain at the entrance of the God's Tabernacle for 7 days and nights. You are to do this Ordination Ceremony each day."

On the 8th day, Moses called for all the priests and elders of Israel. "Gather a calf and a ram and sacrifice them, then tell the Israelites how to prepare their Livestock and Fine Grain Offerings. They are to bring them before the Lord in front of the Tent of Meeting." And so the Israelites brought their offerings and came as a community to stand before the Lord. Moses said to everyone, "This is what the Lord said to do so you will be able to see the glory of God reveal itself to you. Aaron, prepare your Sin and Burnt Offerings and place them raw upon the Altar of Fire to affect atonement for yourself and the people." Aaron went up the altar and when he was done with the meat, he lifted his hands toward the people and blessed them.

Afterwards, Aaron and Moses went inside the sanctuary Tent of Appointed Meeting with God. When they came out again, they blessed the people and God's Glory was revealed as fire went forth from before God and consumed the Offerings on the Altar of Fire. And all the people saw, and shouted for joy, and fell on their faces.

When that was over, Aaron's priestly sons, Nadab and Abihu, each took his fire pan, put in fire and incense. They brought to God strange fire which God had not given them and fire came forth from before God and consumed them and they died.

Moses said to Aaron, "Remember, God said, "When I am honored by those who are closest to Me then I am honored before the entire people." Aaron was silent and Moses had their bodies removed from camp. Moses says to Aaron and his remaining sons, "Do not go in grief or tear your clothes in mourning lest you die and bring Divine wrath upon the entire community. But you should know that the entire House of Israel cries with you over those God killed. Still, Aaron, do not leave the Tabernacle for God's anointing oil is still upon you."

Then God said to Aaron, "When you enter God's Sanctuary, neither you nor your descendants may drink wine or any other intoxicant, lest you die. This is the eternal law for all generations so that you are able to distinguish between the sacred and profane, the ritually clean and the ritually unclean."

God said to Moses and Aaron. "Speak to the Israelites and tell them: There are land animals you may eat and those you may not eat. Any animal that has true hoofs, with clefts through the hoofs and that chews the cud, you may eat. You shall not eat the camel, the rabbit, the hare, and the pig. They are unclean to you.

From the waters, seas and rivers, you may eat all creatures except what does not have fins and scales. You may not eat lobster or crabs.

You may eat most birds, except the eagle, the ostrich, the sea gull, owls, the pelican and the bat. All winged swarming insects that have four legs you may not eat like bees and mosquitoes.

All animals that walk on four paws are unclean like dogs or cats as well as creatures that creep on the earth like lizards and crocodiles.

You shall not make yourselves unclean by eating these things for I the Lord am your God: you shall sanctify yourselves and be holy for I am holy."

Questions: 1) What does God mean by proclaiming, "You shall be holy for I am holy?" 2) Describe a time when eating felt holy and a time when eating felt unholy. 3) How do approach eating?

Illustration Ideas: Aaron and his sons sitting for 7 days and 7 nights in front of the Tent of Meeting...any of the unclean animals on land or in water, unclean insects, birds or reptiles...any of the clean animals....the holiness in you