

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Leviticus 9: 22-24

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the Bible again. Let's continue to read Leviticus chapter 9, we will read verses 22-24 today.

Aaron and his sons first underwent a seven-day ordination ceremony, which can be seen as their pre-service training. Although Moses had already clearly described the regulations for the priests' offerings, he knew that offering sacrifices was a serious matter. Therefore, he personally led Aaron and his sons through seven days of training. During this process, Moses temporarily took on the role of the priest, offering sacrifices on behalf of Aaron and his sons, allowing them to become familiar with the priestly service.

In the seven steps of ordination, the first six steps focus on the preparation of the person. Therefore, this seven-day training not only helped them become familiar with what they were supposed to do but, more importantly, it trained them to have the right attitude. In service, the right person is always more important than doing the right thing. After the ordination ceremony was completed, on the eighth day, Aaron and his sons, for the first time, fulfilled their duties in service as the high priest and priests.

They first offered a sin offering and a burnt offering for the high priest Aaron, and then they offered a sin offering, a burnt offering, a grain offering, and a peace offering for the entire congregation of Israel. This was the first time on earth, under the priestly system, that God's people were brought before Him through sacrifices. Since God called Abraham to follow Him, God's intention has been to establish a nation so that His people could worship Him and that all the nations of the earth might be blessed. Now, after almost five hundred years, there was finally a nation that could come before God through sacrifices. In the relationship between God and man, this was a significant event.

Verse 22: "Then Aaron lifted his hand toward the people, blessed them, and came down from offering the sin offering, the burnt offering, and peace offerings."

After Aaron had offered the sin offering, burnt offering, and peace offering for the people, the grain offering was not mentioned here because the grain offering is a part of the peace offering. Aaron faithfully followed all the regulations that God had commanded Moses and completed the offerings. The duty of the priest is to bring people before God. Now that Aaron had completed the offerings, the congregation of Israel, through the sacrifices, had removed the barrier of sin and could attain peace with God, enjoying peace in His presence. After Aaron had finished the offerings, he raised his hands toward the people and blessed them.

God is a God full of grace and lovingkindness, and He is always willing to bless those who come before Him. The service of the high priest always ends with a blessing. So, Aaron raised his hands, symbolizing the mighty power of God's protection coming upon the congregation of Israel through Aaron's hands. Aaron then blessed the people, and his blessing is recorded in Numbers 6:24-26, "The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace."

Here we see that the blessings in the Old Testament are always connected to the Lord: "The Lord bless you and keep you," showing that God is the source of blessing, and He stretches out His arms to protect His people. "The Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you." God dwells in unapproachable light, and no one has seen His face, not even Moses, who only saw God's back. So how can God's face shine upon you?

In fact, this blessing is a prophecy. Colossians 1:15 says, "He is the image of the invisible God." We cannot see God, but when we see Jesus Christ, we see God. When Christ came, He brought light. John 1:4 says, "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." In the light, man sees his own sin and is willing to repent, thus receiving the grace of salvation through Jesus Christ. So, the priest's second blessing, "The Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you," is actually speaking of the grace of Jesus Christ's redemption.

Next, let's look at the third blessing: "The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace." This blessing is also a prophecy. The phrase "lift up His countenance upon you," as translated in the KJV, emphasizes the atmosphere created by the face, making one feel the presence of God. This word "countenance" is slightly different from "face." Therefore, this verse speaks of Christ, after His resurrection and ascension, sending the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, to dwell within people, bringing the presence of God. When a person has God's presence, they have peace. Thus, the priest's third blessing is connected to the Holy Spirit.

Aaron was the high priest of the Old Testament, and he blessed the people of Israel. Jesus Christ is the high priest for the saints in the New Testament. After Jesus completed His earthly ministry, before His ascension, He also lifted His hands and blessed His disciples. This is recorded in Luke 24:50-51: "And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven." After Jesus blessed them, He ascended into heaven.

Luke does not record the specific words of Jesus' blessing, but Paul received a revelation from God, revealing the blessings given to the church in 2 Corinthians 13:14: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all." This is the blessing of the Triune God for the church. It includes the love of the Father, which corresponds to the first part of Aaron's blessing, "The Lord bless you and keep you." The grace of Christ corresponds to the second part of Aaron's blessing, "The Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you." The fellowship of the Holy Spirit corresponds to the third part of Aaron's blessing, "The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace."

In the Old Testament, because Jesus Christ had not yet come, people's understanding of the Triune God was inaccurate, and thus they used figurative language. In the New Testament, when Jesus Christ came and fulfilled His ministry on earth, He clearly told His disciples that everything He did and said was based on the Father's leading. He also promised the disciples that after His resurrection and ascension, He would send the Comforter, and this Holy Spirit would guide them to understand and experience all truth.

Therefore, in the New Testament, we can accurately articulate the blessing of the Triune God as "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all." This blessing is an experience that every saint should have. Here, we see that Aaron's blessing for the people of Israel has, in the New Testament, become the blessing of the Triune God for the church. It is something that every redeemed and blessed saint can personally experience.

Verse 23: "And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of meeting, and came out and blessed the people. Then the glory of the Lord appeared to all the people, "

After Aaron finished the sacrifices and the blessings, he came down from the altar. At that moment, Moses led Aaron into the tabernacle, passing through the bronze laver, and arrived at the entrance of the tent, entering the tent of meeting for the first time. Moses received the revelation of the tabernacle and oversaw its construction, anointing every object within the tabernacle with holy anointing oil during the ordination process. Moses was very clear about God's revelation and instructions regarding the tabernacle. Now, he was leading Aaron into the tent, explaining each object in detail, and entrusting the responsibilities for maintaining the holiness and operation of the tabernacle to Aaron and the priestly system he would lead.

Before this, only Moses could come before God, so he held both the roles of king and priest. Now that the priestly system has been established and Aaron and his sons have undergone their ordination, they can begin their service. Moses transferred the priestly duties to the high priest Aaron while retaining his own role as king, which involved leading and managing the congregation of Israel.

It is unclear how long Moses and Aaron stayed in the tabernacle. Not long before, when the tabernacle was first completed, the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle, and even Moses could not approach. So, when Moses and Aaron entered the tent of meeting, the surrounding people outside could not see them. The people still remembered the terrifying scene from a few months prior when they arrived at

Mount Sinai. The Lord had descended upon the mountain, causing the earth to shake, with lightning and thunder, and the entire mountain smoked like a furnace; that frightening scene was vivid in their minds. The people recognized that approaching the great and awesome God could not be taken lightly, so they held their breath, waiting to see what would happen. After some time, they finally saw Moses and Aaron come out of the tent of meeting, and the crowd sighed in relief, knowing that God had accepted their offerings and that people could indeed come before God through the sacrifices.

Moses and Aaron blessed the people again, but the Bible does not record the specific words of this blessing. Jewish rabbis generally believe this blessing comes from Moses' prayer, as seen in the last two verses of Psalm 90:16-17: "Let Your work appear to Your servants, and Your glory to their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands for us; yes, establish the work of our hands."

When the people saw Moses and Aaron coming out safely and heard their blessing, they must have been filled with overwhelming joy, with cheers rising and falling, each person giving glory to God. At that moment, the glory of the Lord appeared to all the people, just as Moses had predicted in Leviticus 9:6, before the priestly system began its service: "As long as the people do what the Lord has commanded, the glory of the Lord will appear to all the people."

From the perspective of the New Testament typology, when Aaron completed the sacrifices and lifted his hands to bless the people, it foreshadowed Jesus blessing His disciples before His ascension. After that, when Aaron entered the tabernacle and the Israelites could no longer see him, it prefigured Christ entering the true tabernacle, becoming unseen to the saints. As stated in Hebrews 8:1-2: "Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man." Jesus Christ completed His earthly ministry, ascended, and entered the true tabernacle, the heavenly sanctuary, sitting at the right hand of the Father to begin His heavenly ministry.

In Romans 8:34, it states, "Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us." This tells us that Jesus Christ's ministry in heaven involves interceding for us. Being seated at the right hand of the Father makes His intercession the most effective, as He continues to fulfill His role as our High Priest in heaven.

And finally, when Moses and Aaron came out from the tabernacle and were seen by the Israelites, it foreshadowed the second coming of Jesus Christ, who will be seen by all the saints. Hebrews 9:28 says, "so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him, He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation." When Christ returns, He will come as both a priest and a king, just as Moses and Aaron coming out from the tent of meeting represent these two roles. Jesus will come again to save those who wait for Him, those who will see Him a second time. If we long for Christ's return, He will come to save us from this crooked and perverse generation.

Verse 24: "and fire came out from before the Lord and consumed the burnt offering and the fat on the altar. When all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces."

When Moses and Aaron came out from the tent of meeting to bless the people, the glory of the Lord appeared to all the people. At the same time, fire came out from before the Lord and consumed the burnt offering and the fat on the altar. Prior to this, the priests had been offering sacrifices, and the fire was supposed to be kindled by the priests. However, since the offerings and sacrifices were of considerable size, the fire was burning slowly. When the glory of God was revealed, it brought heavenly fire that quickly consumed the burnt offering and the fat that were still on the altar, symbolizing God's complete acceptance of the offerings made by the people.

From that time on, the fire of the burnt offering could not be extinguished, and all the offerings and sacrifices placed on the altar had to be burned with this heavenly

fire. When the people saw the glory of God and the fire from heaven consuming the offerings on the altar, they knew that God had completely accepted their sacrifices, and they rejoiced together. This was a manifestation of their genuine joy, and then they all fell on their faces to the ground. Each time God reveals Himself, it brings illumination that allows us to see our own filthiness, our inadequacies, and all our limitations. This compels us to fall down before God, and the entire congregation prostrated themselves, in awe of God's glory and holiness.

From a typological perspective, the second coming of Christ will occur with the identity of a glorious King. He will come to save those saints who long for and await His return. His coming will also be accompanied by fire from heaven: this fire is a sanctifying fire, a purifying fire, and a judging fire. In 1 Corinthians 3:13-15, it says, "Each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire."

This tells us that every Christian's life is about building a work. Some build with wood, hay, and straw, while others build with gold, silver, and precious stones. When Jesus returns, He will bring heavenly fire, and everyone will pass through it. This fire will determine whether a saint receives a reward or suffers loss. If we have built with gold, silver, and precious stones, we will receive a reward; if our building materials are wood, hay, and straw, we will suffer loss.

Dear brothers and sisters, Aaron began the ministry of the priesthood, and the outcomes of that ministry are closely related to the lives of New Testament saints serving the Lord until Christ returns. I hope that by reading the accounts in Leviticus, we can learn how to be qualified priests in the New Testament, serving God in His house and ministering to the saints.

Let us pray together: Lord, thank You that after Your resurrection and ascension, You are now in the true tabernacle in heaven, serving as our great High Priest, interceding for each one of us. Help us, like the priests of the Old Testament, to learn together under the guidance of our High Priest and to serve among God's

people. Bless the church I belong to, that it may establish a ministry of the priesthood, so that every saved saint can become a serving priest. May the church be filled with blessings from heaven, continually experiencing Your presence and revelation. Bless the church I belong to, I pray in Jesus Christ's holy name.