

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

Leviticus 21: 10-15

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the Bible again. Today, we'll continue to read Leviticus 21:10-15.

God's requirements for the priests were higher than those for the people of Israel. In addition to the statutes and ordinances in chapters 18 to 20, the priests were required to observe three additional laws. First, they were not allowed to defile themselves by contact with death, except for seven close blood relatives. Second, they were forbidden to follow pagan customs, such as shaving their heads, trimming their beards, or cutting their bodies. Third, they were required to maintain the purity of marriage and were not permitted to marry prostitutes or divorced women. For New Testament saints, after receiving grace and salvation, they become God's chosen people under the New Covenant, corresponding to the people of Israel under the Old Covenant. Therefore, the spiritual implications behind the statutes and ordinances in chapters 18 to 20 also apply to New Testament saints.

Not only that, but every New Testament saint is also a priest under the New Covenant. According to God's command, they must serve Him in the church. To fulfill the duties of a priest, a certain measure of spiritual life is required. Therefore, every saint must grow and learn to serve in the church until they are able to abstain from spiritual death, refrain from following the trends of the world, and maintain purity before God. When these three requirements are met, they can become priests of God's New Covenant, serving and worshiping God in the church alongside the other priests. In the Old Testament, within Aaron's family, each generation had one person designated to inherit the role of high priest, while the other males served as priests. God's requirements for the high priest were even stricter than those for the priests, and the regulations concerning the high priest are recorded in Leviticus 21:10-15, which is the passage we will read today.

Before we delve into the main text, let us first consider its New Testament application. First, we must ask: who is the High Priest in the New Testament? Some might say it is the Pope if they are Catholic, or perhaps the senior pastor of a church. I'm sorry, but this is not my understanding. According to 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1, the only offices recognized by God in the church are elders and deacons: elders shepherd the church, and deacons assist the elders in serving the church. Peter himself was an elder in the church, and he encouraged all those serving as elders to shepherd God's flock according to His will. In 1 Peter 5:4, Peter promises, "and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away." Here, we see that Peter deliberately reserves the title of Chief Shepherd for Christ.

In addition to elders and deacons, God has also given the church many gifts. Through the coordination and service of these gifts, the church can be built up. Paul compares the church to the body of Christ in 1 Corinthians 12:27-28: "Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually. And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that, miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues." Paul explains that we are all members of the body, each fulfilling various functions according to God's arrangement. This means that we are all priests, serving in the tabernacle, and this tabernacle is the church, which is the body of Christ.

At the same time, Paul tells us in Ephesians 5:23, "Christ is the head of the church." Every member must function according to the direction of the head. If every member is a priest, then naturally, the head is the High Priest. Therefore, the High Priest in the New Testament refers to Jesus Christ. Aaron's role as the High Priest is a typology of Christ. In Hebrews 7:17 and 8:1, it is explicitly stated that Christ is the High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek, and He now sits at the right hand of God the Father, fulfilling His heavenly ministry. As we study the ordinances for the High Priest today, we begin by understanding the facts in the Old Testament—what Aaron and his descendants who served as High Priests were required to observe. At the same time, we align these ordinances with the ministry of Christ, which will help us understand God's will.

Verse 10: "He who is the high priest among his brethren, on whose head the anointing oil was poured and who is consecrated to wear the garments, shall not uncover his head nor tear his clothes;"

In Aaron's family, each generation had one male designated to become the High Priest. As a High Priest, there were three specific aspects to his role: first, oil was poured on his head; second, he was consecrated to the holy office; third, he was clothed in holy garments. The oil symbolizes the Holy Spirit. The pouring of oil on his head signifies the selection by the Holy Spirit and that his head was entirely submitted to the authority of the Holy Spirit, being in complete oneness with the Spirit. Only someone in complete harmony with the Holy Spirit could assume the holy office, serving as High Priest according to God's will. When the High Priest performed his duties, he was required to wear the High Priest's robes, manifesting the glory and splendor of God.

We have said that Aaron's role as High Priest is a typology of Christ. So, when did Christ become the High Priest? When Christ became flesh and came to earth to begin His ministry, His role was as John the Baptist declared: "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." He was the sacrificial lamb for atonement. When Jesus completed His earthly ministry, was crucified on the cross, and rose again three days later, His role transitioned. After His resurrection, Peter declared in Acts 2:32-33: "This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. Therefore, being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear."

We see that after Jesus' resurrection, He was exalted by God the Father and seated at the right hand of the Father. He then received the promised Holy Spirit from the Father. Here we understand that the anointing of the Holy Spirit was first upon Jesus Christ. After He received the promised Holy Spirit, it was poured out from Him onto the disciples, bringing about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. This reveals that Jesus Christ, after His death, resurrection, and ascension, was anointed as the High Priest. The order of this High Priest anointing is as described in Psalm 133:2: "It is like the precious oil upon the head, running

down on the beard, the beard of Aaron, running down on the edge of his garments." After Jesus Christ was anointed, He began His heavenly ministry as the High Priest in heaven.

The glorious scene of Jesus' heavenly ministry is described in Revelation 5:5-7, which states: "But one of the elders said to me, 'Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.' And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne."

The Lamb described here is the One who was crucified, resurrected, ascended, and now sits at the right hand of the Father. The heavenly ministry of the Lamb is revealed through the new song sung by the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders. Revelation 5:9-10 says: "And they sang a new song, saying: 'You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth.'" This, then, is the heavenly ministry of Christ. After we have been redeemed, our process of life growth and sanctification is the process by which we belong to God, become citizens of His kingdom, serve as priests, and reign on earth.

Here we see that Christ is our common High Priest today, clothed in glory, fulfilling His ministry in heaven. When Aaron served as the High Priest, he could not appear disheveled, nor could he tear his clothes, which indicates that the High Priest must have complete control over his emotions. In Leviticus 10:6, we see that Aaron's two sons were consumed by fire from God because they offered unauthorized fire. Moses immediately warned the priests on duty, saying: "Do not uncover your heads nor tear your clothes, lest you die, and wrath come upon all the people." This shows that the High Priest must value his service above all else. Even if a close family member dies, he must not behave like an ordinary person by disheveling his hair or tearing his clothes, but instead must remain focused on his service before God.

Verse 11-12: "11 nor shall he go near any dead body, nor defile himself for his father or his mother; 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 upon him: I am the Lord."

Even if a parent dies, the High Priest must not become defiled by death. In verses 2 and 3 of this chapter, we read that priests can handle the funeral rites for seven types of close relatives, but the requirements for the High Priest are much stricter. Even if his parents die, he must not become defiled, and he is not allowed to leave the Holy Place to avoid profaning the sanctuary of God. The High Priest, under any circumstance, must not become defiled by the impurity of death.

This verse tells us that the anointing oil's crown is on his head. The term "anointing oil's crown" is a very special phrase. The High Priest wears a crown on his head, and on the crown, there is a gold plate engraved with "Holy to the Lord," indicating that the High Priest should be completely dedicated to God. When the High Priest performs his duties, the anointing oil is poured on his head, and at that moment, the crown becomes the anointing oil's crown. It is no longer a matter of title or position but in the actual experience; he must be holy to the Lord. God adds the phrase "I am the Lord" here.

Dear brothers and sisters, the high requirements for the High Priest, such as not being allowed to touch death even when their parents pass away, may seem unreasonable to us. These are special demands placed upon the High Priest. In the light of this, let us reflect on how Jesus, during His earthly ministry, managed His relationships and emotions, especially in regard to family ties.

First, in Luke 2, it is mentioned that when Jesus was twelve years old, He went with His parents to Jerusalem for the feast. On the way back, Jesus was not in the group, and later Mary realized this. She hurriedly searched for Him, and after three days, they returned to the temple, where they found Jesus conversing with the teachers. Mary, very concerned, said to Him, "Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously." Jesus' response in Luke 2:49 was, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?"

Perhaps, from a human perspective, we might think Jesus' response was too calm, but on the other hand, Jesus was regulating His relationship with His family.

Another example is in John 2. Jesus went with His mother to a wedding in Cana, and during the celebration, the wine ran out. His mother, Mary, hoped Jesus could help, so she quickly told Him, "They have no wine." Jesus' response in John 2:4 was, "Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come." Jesus acted according to the Father's timetable. Of course, despite this, at Mary's request, Jesus performed His first miracle, turning water into wine.

The third event is in Mark 3. At that time, Jesus was busy with His work, and He didn't even have time to eat. Jesus' mother and brothers, out of concern for Him, came to try to stop Him. When others told Jesus, "Your mother and Your brothers are outside looking for You," Jesus' response in Mark 3:33-35 was, "Who is My mother, or who are My brothers?" And He looked around in a circle at those who sat about Him and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and My mother."

From the three examples above, we see that when Jesus was fulfilling His duties on earth, He controlled His personal relationships, placing the will of His Heavenly Father above all else. Although this is a requirement for the high priest, when we, as priests, take on our responsibilities, we must also learn to prioritize God's matters first.

Verse 13-15: " And he shall take a wife in her virginity. A widow or a divorced woman or a defiled woman or a harlot—these he shall not marry; but he shall take a virgin of his own people as wife. Nor shall he profane his posterity among his people, for I the Lord sanctify him."

The high priest could only marry a virgin, not a widow, not a divorced woman, and certainly not a prostitute. He was also prohibited from marrying someone from outside the people of Israel; only a virgin from among the people could be his wife. This was because the descendants of the high priest would serve as priests, leading

the people in offering sacrifices to God. Therefore, the high priest had to maintain a pure lineage, ensuring his children were not dishonored. Among the sons of Aaron, one would inherit the role of high priest, and this individual had to strictly follow the marriage law, only marrying a virgin from among the people. However, there were no such strict requirements for his other sons. In verse 7 of this chapter, it is stated that they (the priests) were not to marry prostitutes or divorced women, but there was no requirement for them to marry a virgin from among the people.

The marriage laws for the high priest, how should they be applied in the New Testament? As we have mentioned earlier, Jesus Christ is our common high priest. The Bible tells us that one day He will come to receive the church as His bride. Therefore, Paul, in 2 Corinthians 11:2, says to the saints in Corinth, "For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." The saints in the church are all chosen by God the Father, and they are all His children, possessing God's life. From the perspective of life, they are all the people of Christ, and only those who are pure, like virgins, can be matched with Christ. Therefore, to become the bride of Christ, we must separate ourselves from the world, like chaste virgins, who love Christ and are willing to be completely consecrated to Him.

Paul's warning to the Corinthians is also a warning to us. In 2 Corinthians 11:3, he says, "But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." Satan continues to tempt the saints today, presenting various enticing things from the world to lure them into following the trends of the world. Yet God is still doing a purifying work within the church because God declares, "I am the Lord who sanctifies him." It is not easy for us to detach ourselves from the world, but God desires to make us holy. All we need is a willing heart, a heart open to God, and God will be able to work in us.

Dear brothers and sisters, we must understand that Jesus Christ, who is seated at the right hand of the Father, is fulfilling His heavenly role to protect and perfect every saint. He desires for each of us to grow spiritually mature, to be separated from the world, and to become a pure and spotless bride, perfectly fit for Christ.

Let us pray together: Lord, thank You for not only paying the price of redemption for us, allowing us to receive grace and salvation, but also for placing us in the church with a group of saints who love You, to pursue holiness together. You want us to be separated and made holy, and one day, You will return to take Your church as Your bride. In this process, may Your beauty draw us, that we may set our eyes solely on You and follow You alone. Bless my life. I pray in the holy name of Jesus Christ. Amen.