

Extraordinary Holiness

Scripture Reading — Leviticus 21:1-9

"A priest must not make himself ceremonially unclean ..." Leviticus 21:1 —

In Israel's day some people were required to live by stricter rules and do things that "ordinary" people didn't have to. The special instructions God gave to Israel's priests affected them and their children's marriage, their beards, the way they handled a death in the family, even bodily imperfections.

The reason is clear: "Because they present the offerings made to the LORD by fire ... they are to be holy." God's people Israel were totally dependent on their priests. Only priests could sprinkle the sacrificial blood on the altar, only they could declare someone clean, and only the high priest could enter the Most Holy Place on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16). Priests were called to a greater holiness for the sake of God's people; on their behalf the priests worked in God's presence.

Today we also need such a priesthood to be perfectly holy in God's sight. There have been and are thousands of priests among the world's religions, but not even the holiest of these can help us to become holy. It takes a priest of extraordinary holiness, a perfect priest. Neither Aaron nor any of his descendants qualified. Only Jesus Christ, who lived a perfectly holy life and offered the perfect sacrifice, will do. When he entered God's presence on the greatest Day of Atonement, God declared his people wholly clean--and holy.

Prayer

Holy, holy, holy, are you, Lord God Almighty. The whole earth is full of your glory. Accept our sacrifice of praise today, O Lord. Fill us with your holy presence. Amen.

Devotion topics: [Bible](#), [Books of the Bible](#), [Leviticus](#)

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