

Ezekiel 40:46

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the chamber whose prospect is toward the north is for the priests, the keepers of the charge of the altar: these are the sons of Zadok among the sons of Levi, which come near to the LORD to minister unto him.

Analysis

The 'sons of Zadok among the sons of Levi' receive special mention as those authorized to 'come near to the LORD to minister unto him.' This distinguishes the Zadokite priesthood from other Levites—a reward for faithfulness. Historically, when northern Israel apostatized, Zadok's descendants remained loyal (1 Kings 1-2). The Hebrew קָרַב (qarav, 'come near') emphasizes privileged access to God's presence, not available to all. The chamber 'toward the north' (facing the altar) positions these priests for their primary duty: maintaining sacrificial worship. This verse teaches that faithful service receives divine recognition and special privileges. Reformed theology sees continuity in this principle: faithful ministers receive spiritual authority and blessing (1 Timothy 5:17, Hebrews 13:17). Ultimately, Christ our High Priest 'after the order of Melchizedek' (Hebrews 5-7) provides access for all believers to draw near (Hebrews 10:19-22).

Historical Context

Zadok was David's faithful priest who supported Solomon against Adonijah's rebellion (1 Kings 1:32-40). As reward, Solomon removed Abiathar (who supported Adonijah) and established Zadok's exclusive priesthood (1 Kings 2:26-27, 35), fulfilling prophecy against Eli's house (1 Samuel 2:27-36). Throughout Israel's history, Zadokite priests maintained the Jerusalem temple (1 Chronicles 6:1-15,

50-53). When many priests compromised with Jeroboam's golden calves or later with pagan worship, Zadokites generally remained faithful. Ezekiel emphasizes this distinction—faithfulness during apostasy merits continued ministry (Ezekiel 44:15-16). The 'keepers of the charge of the altar' maintained perpetual fire (Leviticus 6:12-13), offered daily sacrifices (Exodus 29:38-42), and entered the Holy Place. For exiles wondering if priesthood would continue, this vision assured Zadokite succession and faithful worship restoration.

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does God reward faithfulness during times when many compromise or apostatize?
2. What does the Zadokite priesthood teach about the importance of family legacy and faithful transmission of truth to subsequent generations?
3. As a believer-priest (1 Peter 2:9), how seriously do you take your privilege to 'come near to the LORD'?

Interlinear Text

וְהַלְשָׁכָה	אֲשֶׁר	כְּנִיָּה	דָּכָר	הַצָּפֹן	לְכִנֹּיִם
And the chamber	H834	whose prospect	is toward	the north	is for the priests
H3957		H6440	H1870	H6828	H3548
שֹׁמְרֵי	מִשְׁמֶרֶת	הַמִּזְבֵּחַ	הַמָּה	מִבְּנֵי	צָד וְזָדֹק
the keepers	of the charge	of the altar	H1992	among the sons	of Zadok
H8104	H4931	H4196		H1121	H6659
הַקִּרְבִּיִּם	מִבְּנֵי	לֵוִי	אֵל	יְהוָה	לְשִׁמְחָתוֹ
which come near	among the sons	of Levi	H413	to the LORD	to minister
H7131	H1121	H3878		H3068	H8334

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 44:15 (References Lord): But the priests the Levites, the sons of Zadok, that kept the charge of my sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from me, they shall come near to me to minister unto me, and they shall stand before me to offer unto me the fat and the blood, saith the Lord GOD:

Ezekiel 43:19 (Sacrifice): And thou shalt give to the priests the Levites that be of the seed of Zadok, which approach unto me, to minister unto me, saith the Lord GOD, a young bullock for a sin offering.

1 Kings 2:35 (Parallel theme): And the king put Benaiah the son of Jehoiada in his room over the host: and Zadok the priest did the king put in the room of Abiathar.

Ezekiel 48:11 (Parallel theme): It shall be for the priests that are sanctified of the sons of Zadok; which have kept my charge, which went not astray when the children of Israel went astray, as the Levites went astray.

Numbers 16:5 (References Lord): And he spake unto Korah and unto all his company, saying, Even to morrow the LORD will shew who are his, and who is holy; and will cause him to come near unto him: even him whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him.

Numbers 18:5 (Sacrifice): And ye shall keep the charge of the sanctuary, and the charge of the altar: that there be no wrath any more upon the children of Israel.

Ezekiel 45:4 (References Lord): The holy portion of the land shall be for the priests the ministers of the sanctuary, which shall come near to minister unto the LORD: and it shall be a place for their houses, and an holy place for the sanctuary.

Ezekiel 42:13 (Sacrifice): Then said he unto me, The north chambers and the south chambers, which are before the separate place, they be holy chambers, where the priests that approach unto the LORD shall eat the most holy things: there shall they lay the most holy things, and the meat offering, and the sin offering, and the trespass offering; for the place is holy.

Leviticus 10:3 (References Lord): Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the LORD spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace.

Numbers 16:40 (References Lord): To be a memorial unto the children of Israel, that no stranger, which is not of the seed of Aaron, come near to offer incense before the LORD; that he be not as Korah, and as his company: as the LORD said to him by the hand of Moses.

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