

Ezekiel 44:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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:

Analysis

The Zadokite priests receive special honor for covenant faithfulness—'they kept the charge of my sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray.' Faithfulness during apostasy earns perpetual privilege. The Hebrew שָׁמַר (shamar, 'kept') means guarding, watching, maintaining—active, vigilant service. While others compromised, Zadokites remained loyal, and God rewards faithfulness. The privilege: 'come near to me to minister... stand before me to offer.' This access to God's immediate presence represents the highest honor. The offerings—'fat and blood'—are most sacred portions, emphasizing that only the faithful handle holy things. Reformed theology sees this principle throughout Scripture: 'to him that hath shall be given' (Matthew 25:29)—faithful stewardship receives increased responsibility. Ultimately, Christ our High Priest remained perfectly faithful (Hebrews 3:1-6), earning eternal priesthood (Hebrews 7:23-28).

Historical Context

Zadok supported David against Absalom's rebellion (2 Samuel 15:24-29) and Solomon against Adonijah's usurpation (1 Kings 1:32-40). 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).

When Jeroboam established rival worship at Dan and Bethel, many Levites compromised, but Zadokites generally maintained Jerusalem temple faithfulness. Ezekiel distinguishes between Zadokite priests (44:15-16) and ordinary Levites demoted for unfaithfulness (44:10-14). This principle—rewarding faithfulness, judging compromise—appears throughout Scripture (Revelation 2-3 evaluates churches similarly). The fat and blood were most sacred portions (Leviticus 3:16-17, 7:23-27), reserved exclusively for God and authorized priests.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What 'charge of the sanctuary' has God entrusted to you that requires faithful keeping despite cultural apostasy?
2. How does God's reward of Zadokite faithfulness encourage perseverance when compromise seems easier and more popular?
3. As a believer-priest, how seriously do you handle 'holy things'—Scripture, worship, ministry—with appropriate reverence?

Interlinear Text

אֲתָּה שָׁמַר וְאַשְׁר צָדָקָה וְבָנֵי	בְּלוּלִים וּבְפָנֵן יְמִים	בְּנֵי	בְּנֵי	אֲשֶׁר צָדָקָה וְ	אֲשֶׁר צָדָקָה וְ	אֲשֶׁר צָדָקָה וְ
But the priests the Levites the sons of Zadok				H834	that kept	H853
H3548	H3881	H1121	H6659		H8104	
מִשְׁמָן רְתַת מִקְדָּשִׁי בָּתָע וְתַת בְּנֵי	מִקְדָּשִׁי	בָּתָע וְתַת	בְּנֵי	בְּנֵי	יִשְׂרָאֵל	יִשְׂרָאֵל
the charge of my sanctuary went astray		the sons	of Israel	H1121	H3478	H5921
H4931	H4720	H8582				H1992
לִפְנֵי יְהֹוָה אֲלֵיכָם לְשָׁרֶת נִיְּלָה אֶל	לִפְנֵי יְהֹוָה	לְשָׁרֶת נִיְּלָה	לְשָׁרֶת נִיְּלָה	לְשָׁרֶת נִיְּלָה	לְשָׁרֶת נִיְּלָה	לְשָׁרֶת נִיְּלָה
from me they shall come near to me to minister unto me and they shall stand				H413	H8334	H5975
	H7126					
לְפָנֵי	לְפָנֵי	לְפָנֵי	לְפָנֵי	לְפָנֵי	לְפָנֵי	לְפָנֵי
before from me they shall come near				H0	unto me the fat and the blood	saith
H6440	H7126				H2459	H1818
אָדָן אֱלֹהִים						
the Lord GOD						
H136	H3069					

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 10:8 (References Lord): At that time the LORD separated the tribe of Levi, to bear the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to stand before the LORD to minister unto him, and to bless in his name, unto this day.

Ezekiel 48:11 (References Israel): 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.

Ezekiel 44:7 (Blood): In that ye have brought into my sanctuary strangers, uncircumcised in heart, and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in my sanctuary, to pollute it, even my house, when ye offer my bread, the fat and the blood, and they have broken my covenant because of all your abominations.

Ezekiel 40:46 (References Lord): 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.

Ezekiel 43:19 (References God): 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 Samuel 2:35 (Parallel theme): And I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever.

2 Timothy 2:2 (Parallel theme): And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

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