

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

אֶת שְׁמֵר וְ	אֲשֶׁר	רָצָד וְזָק	בְּנֵי	הַלְוִיִּם	וְהַכֹּהֲנִים יִם
that kept	H834	of Zadok	H6659	the sons	H1121
H853	H8104			H3881	H3548
הֵמָּה מַעַל יִשְׂרָאֵל	בְּנֵי	בָּתַע וְ	מִקְדָּשִׁי	מִשְׁמֵה רֵת	
of Israel	H5921	went astray	H8582	the charge	H4931
H3478	H1121		H4720		
וְעָמְדוּ	לְשָׁרֵת נִי	אֵלַי	לְהִקָּר יִם		
unto me and they shall stand	H5975	to me to minister	H8334	from me they shall come near	H7126
		H413			
נֹאֵם	וְדָם	חֵלֶב	לִי	לְהִקָּר יִם	לִפְנֵי י
saith	H5002	unto me the fat	H2459	from me they shall come near	H7126
	H1818		H0		H6440
				יְהוָה:	אֲדָנִי י
				GOD	the Lord
				H3069	H136

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.