

Leviticus 21:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Speak unto Aaron, saying, Whosoever he be of thy seed in their generations that hath any blemish, let him not approach to offer the bread of his God.

Analysis

Speak unto Aaron, saying, Whosoever he be of thy seed in their generations that hath any blemish, let him not approach to offer the bread of his God.

This verse falls within the section on **Priestly Holiness**. Higher standards for priests due to their sacred role, including restrictions on mourning practices and marriage.

The Aaronic priesthood mediated between God and Israel, offering sacrifices and maintaining the tabernacle. This prefigured Christ's superior priesthood after the order of Melchizedek.

The holiness demanded in Leviticus becomes possible through Christ, who both satisfies God's righteous requirements and transforms believers by His Spirit.

Historical Context

Higher standards for priests due to their sacred role, including restrictions on mourning practices and marriage. Chapters 17-27, often called the 'Holiness Code,' expand covenant obligations beyond ritual to encompass all of life—sexuality, economics, justice, and relationships. The repeated refrain 'I am the LORD' grounds these laws in God's character and covenant relationship with Israel. Israel received these laws while encamped at Sinai, before entering

Canaan. The laws prepared them for life in the promised land, distinguishing them from Canaanite practices and establishing their identity as God's holy nation. The portable tabernacle, central to Levitical worship, accompanied them through wilderness wanderings and eventually found permanent form in Solomon's temple. Ancient texts like the Code of Hammurabi show that law codes were common in the ancient Near East, but biblical law uniquely grounded ethics in God's character rather than merely social convention.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does Christ's superior priesthood, prefigured in this verse, assure you of access to God and effective intercession?
2. What does this verse teach about the seriousness of sin, the cost of redemption, or the beauty of holiness?
3. How does this verse reveal God's character, and how should that revelation shape your relationship with Him?

Interlinear Text

תִּזְרַעַב אִישׁ לְאֶתְרָא אֶל דָּבָר
Whosoever he be of thy seed
unto Aaron saying unto Aaron speak

מִזְרַעַב תִּזְרַעַב אֶל דָּבָר לְאֶתְרָא אִישׁ
H2233 H376 H559 H175 H413
H1696

לְאַשְׁר בָּו מִזְרַעַב מִזְרַעַב
that hath any blemish in their generations

לְדָרְתָּם בָּו אֶשְׁר יְהִי הָאָשָׁר
H3971 H3808 H1961 H834
H1755

אֶלְקָיִם לְבָקָר יְבָקָר
the bread of his God let him not approach

לְבָקָר יְבָקָר אֶלְקָיִם
H430 H3899 H7126 H7126
H1696

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 65:4 (Parallel theme): Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple.

Leviticus 10:3 (Parallel theme): 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 16:5 (Parallel theme): 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.