

Numbers 18:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the LORD said unto Aaron, Thou and thy sons and thy father's house with thee shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary: and thou and thy sons with thee shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood.

Analysis

After Aaron's rod budded confirming his priesthood, God detailed priestly responsibilities: 'Thou and thy sons... shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary.' This sobering charge meant priests bore responsibility for any failure in maintaining proper worship. Privilege and authority always come with proportional accountability. Those closest to God's holiness bear greatest responsibility for its proper representation.

Historical Context

The phrase 'bear iniquity' appears throughout Leviticus (e.g., 10:17, 22:9), indicating that priests served as mediators absorbing the consequences of Israel's sin. This anticipates Christ as ultimate High Priest who bore humanity's iniquity completely (Isaiah 53:11, Hebrews 9:28).

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does spiritual privilege increase rather than decrease your accountability?
2. In what ways do you 'bear iniquity' through intercessory or mediatorial service?

Interlinear Text

וַיֹּאמֶר	יְהוָה	אֶל	אַהֲרֹן	אֶת־הַ	וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל	וּבֵית
said	And the LORD		unto Aaron		Thou and thy sons	house
H559	H3068	H413	H175	H859	H1121	H1004
וְאֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל	אֶת־יְהוָה	וְתִשָּׂא	אֶת־	עֲוֹן	הַמִּקְדָּשׁ	
and thy father's		with thee shall bear		the iniquity	of the sanctuary	
H1	H854	H5375	H853	H5771	H4720	
וְאֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל	וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל	אֶת־יְהוָה	וְתִשָּׂא	אֶת־	עֲוֹן	
H859	Thou and thy sons		with thee shall bear		the iniquity	
	H1121	H854	H5375	H853	H5771	
כְּהֹנִתְכֶם:						
of your priesthood						
H3550						

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 28:38 (Sin): And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD.

Hebrews 13:17 (Parallel theme): Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

Hebrews 4:15 (Sin): For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

1 Peter 2:24 (Sin): Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.