

Numbers 18:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

In the most holy place shalt thou eat it; every male shall eat it: it shall be holy unto thee.

Analysis

In the most holy place shalt thou eat it; every male shall eat it: it shall be holy unto thee. The consumption of most holy offerings required ritual purity and sacred space. Bemakom qadosh (בְּמִקְדָּשׁ, "in a holy place") designated the tabernacle courtyard—specifically within the sacred precincts where God's presence dwelt. Eating these offerings wasn't casual dining but a sacred act requiring appropriate location.

"Every male shall eat it" restricted participation to priests themselves (kol zakhar, כל-זָכָר), excluding their wives and daughters who could partake of other offerings (verse 11). This gender restriction for most holy things emphasized the priestly office's representative nature. The repetition "it shall be holy unto thee" (qodesh yihyeh lekha, קָדֵשׁ יִהְיֶה לְךָ) underscores that even consuming these portions was worship, not mere sustenance.

This regulation taught that proximity to holy things requires holiness. The priests' bodies became vessels for sanctified food, making their persons extensions of the sanctuary. New Testament believers are similarly called to present their bodies as living sacrifices (Romans 12:1), recognizing that what we consume—physically and spiritually—affects our consecration to God.

Historical Context

The courtyard of the tabernacle (later the temple court) served as the designated eating area for most holy offerings. Leviticus 6:16, 26; 7:6 provide additional regulations. This practice distinguished Israel from surrounding cultures where temple meals often involved pagan rituals and sexual immorality. Israel's priests ate their portions as worship, maintaining ritual purity. The gender restriction for most holy things paralleled their exclusive role in offering these sacrifices—both functions belonged to ordained priests only, teaching that mediation between God and people required divine appointment, not human presumption.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does the requirement to eat holy things in a holy place challenge modern casualness about sacred matters?
2. What does it mean to treat your body as a temple where holy things are consumed?
3. How should the sacredness of priestly meals inform Christian attitudes toward the Lord's Supper?

Interlinear Text

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|-----------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------|
| וְאַתָּה | לְקֹדֶשׁ | לְקֹדֶשׁ | וְאַתָּה | לְקֹדֶשׁ | כָּל | זֶכֶר |
| In the most | In the most | place shalt thou eat | place shalt thou eat | In the most | it every male | |
| H6944 | H6944 | H398 | H398 | H1961 | H2145 | |
| | | | | | | |
| וְאַתָּה | לְקֹדֶשׁ | לְקֹדֶשׁ | וְאַתָּה | לְקֹדֶשׁ | לְקֹדֶשׁ | וְאַתָּה |
| place shalt thou eat | H853 | In the most | H398 | H1961 | H0 | |
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Additional Cross-References

Leviticus 7:6 (Holy): Every male among the priests shall eat thereof: it shall be eaten in the holy place: it is most holy.

Leviticus 6:29 (Holy): All the males among the priests shall eat thereof: it is most holy.

Leviticus 6:16 (Holy): And the remainder thereof shall Aaron and his sons eat: with unleavened bread shall it be eaten in the holy place; in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation they shall eat it.