

## God's Design for the Priesthood, Part 1

### Leviticus 21

Group <sup>1</sup>	C	V	Description
Regulations Concerning Priests	21	1-9	Regarding the purity of the priests and their family
		10-15	Regarding the high priest and his wife
		16-24	Regarding the priest being “without defect” only allowed to serve in the tabernacle

The key phrase to this chapter is found in the following verses. It is also echoed in other verses from the two chapters before and after it in Leviticus.

**Leviticus 20:8 NASB** "You shall keep My statutes and practice them; I am the LORD who sanctifies you.

**Leviticus 21:8 NASB** "You shall consecrate him, therefore, for he offers the food of your God; he shall be holy to you; for I the LORD, who sanctifies you, am holy.

**Leviticus 21:15 NASB** so that he will not profane his offspring among his people; for I am the LORD who sanctifies him."

**Leviticus 21:23 NASB** only he shall not go in to the veil or come near the altar because he has a defect, so that he will not profane My sanctuaries. For I am the LORD who sanctifies them."

**Leviticus 22:9 NASB** "They shall therefore keep My charge, so that they will not bear sin because of it and die thereby because they profane it; I am the LORD who sanctifies them.

**Leviticus 22:16 NASB** and *so* cause them to bear punishment for guilt by eating their holy *gifts*; for I am the LORD who sanctifies them."

**Leviticus 22:32 NASB** "You shall not profane My holy name, but I will be sanctified among the sons of Israel; I am the LORD who sanctifies you,

It is the Lord who sanctifies them, or makes them holy. It wasn't anything that they did per se, but it was God who is setting them apart to be His priests. Just as God chose the descendants of Abraham to be His people, so too He chose the descendants of Levi to be His priests. To that end He put certain restrictions upon them as His representatives to the people.

In this chapter we hear the echo of a few well known phrases, “Give of your best to the Master!” and “The Lord deserves your very best.”

We can read the particular requirements in the text but the key is to see and understand the theme that is woven into the text—God is the one who makes them holy. He does this because He is holy and want only holy things in His presence.

Peter echoes this same idea by quoting from Leviticus in his first letter. In the opening chapter he is calling his readers to a new life of holiness.

**1 Peter 1:14-16 NASB** As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts *which were yours* in your ignorance, **15** but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all *your* behavior; **16** because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY,

<sup>1</sup> (NASB) “Group” column from the headings in the NASB text.

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FOR I AM HOLY."

Later in his letter, Peter tells them that they have already spent enough time pursuing their former lusts and it was now time for them to pursue God, even when their friends tell them their crazy for doing it.

**1 Peter 4:1-5 NASB** Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, **2** so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. **3** For the time already past is sufficient *for you* to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties and abominable idolatries. **4** In *all* this, they are surprised that you do not run with *them* into the same excesses of dissipation, and they malign *you*; **5** but they will give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

The New Living Translation helps us understand this in a little plainer language.

**1 Peter 4:1-5 NLT** So then, since Christ suffered physical pain, you must arm yourselves with the same attitude He had, and be ready to suffer, too. For if you have suffered physically for Christ, you have finished with sin. **2** You won't spend the rest of your lives chasing your own desires, but you will be anxious to do the will of God. **3** You have had enough in the past of the evil things that godless people enjoy—their immorality and lust, their feasting and drunkenness and wild parties, and their terrible worship of idols. **4** Of course, your former friends are surprised when you no longer plunge into the flood of wild and destructive things they do. So they slander you. **5** But remember that they will have to face God, who will judge everyone, both the living and the dead.

I realize that the majority of people who will read this are already Christians and hopefully are pursuing God and desiring to live holy lives. You may be one such person, but you may also find yourself at times, like I do, still seeking after my own desires. Remember God is not distant. If we seek Him, we will find Him and will not be disappointed.

**Romans 10:8-11 NASB** But what does it say? "THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART"—that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, **9** that if you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; **10** for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. **11** For the Scripture says, "WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."

Choose today, to begin anew to pursue God in your actions, seek Him in His word, and thank Him in prayer for His lovingkindness—mercy and grace leading to salvation for undeserving sinners.

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