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Parashah 26: Sh'mini

Leviticus 9:1 - 11:47

"Eighth"

"Among those who approach me, I will show myself holy;"

Leviticus 10:3

1. The Priests Begin their Ministry - 9:1-24

a) How long after the ordination ceremony did Aaron and his sons begin their work? What were the first offerings and on whose behalf were they made? What was their purpose?

b) Specifically what offerings were made next? On whose behalf were they made? Can you identify the purpose for each offering?

c) According to verse 6, what was to happen? Did the offerings cause this to happen?

d) What did Aaron do after completing the offerings (Verse 22)? Do you know what Aaron said to the people? (Hint: See Numbers 6:22-26)

e) What happened after Moses and Aaron completed their tasks? What happened to the offerings on the altar? How did the people respond?

2. The Death of Nadab and Abihu - 10:1-20

a) Specifically what did Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, do? What do you think was wrong with what they did? What can we learn from this?

b) Who removed the bodies? Why do you suppose they were chosen to do this?

c) What was the point of Moses' instructions to Aaron and his sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, in verses 6-7? Why do you think this was necessary?

d) Verses 8-11 give another command concerning how the priests were to carry out their duties. What was this command and its intent? Do you think this had any bearing on the incident with Nadab and Abihu?

e) Verse 16 explains that Moses was angry with Aaron and his sons. What reason did he have to be angry? Specifically what instructions had Aaron failed to follow? What was Aaron's response to this? Why do you think this satisfied Moses?

3. Clean and Unclean Food - 11:1-47

a) Of land animals, what two characteristics must they have to be proper food for us? Can you name some animals that have one but not both of these characteristics? How are we to treat these animals?

b) Of sea animals, what two characteristics must they have to be proper food for us? How are we to treat animals that don't have both of these characteristics?

c) Is it clear from scripture which birds are suitable as food? Can you suggest a general rule that might help determine which birds are clean and which are unclean?

d) Of insects, what characteristic must they have to be proper food for us? Can you name some insects which are edible? How are we to treat the others?

e) How does God describe the animals that are not to be considered as food? Describe the rules for dealing with these animals either dead or alive. Can you suggest some practical reasons for these rules?

f) When one comes in contact with an unclean animal or the carcass of any animal, how does his status before God change? What must he do to correct this problem?

g) In verses 41-45, God prohibits creatures that crawl on the ground as food. In general, why do you think God put such emphasis on this aspect of "clean" and "unclean"?

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Digging deeper . . . .

1. Compare the story of Nadab and Abihu with the story recorded in Acts 5:1-11. Identify similarities and differences. What insights into God's character can you gain from these stories?

2. Read Mark 7:1-23. Does Yeshua's teaching change the definition of clean and unclean foods given in Leviticus? What light does this shed on the definition of clean and unclean foods? How do you think one should approach the instructions in Leviticus 11 today?