

Touching the Tabernacle

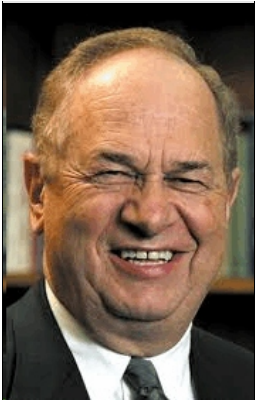
or, The yet stricter standard of holiness for priests

You shall be holy, because I Yahweh your God am holy. ...
Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord.

— LEVITICUS 19:2, ISAIAH 52:11

Analysis

A. (21:1-24) Itemize the various ways by which a priest might compromise his holy standing



WALTER KAISER
3 degrees of
holiness, just as 3
degrees of
separation from God

[chapters 21-22] Even though all the nation is called to be holy to the Lord, there appear to be degrees of successively higher holiness, just as there is a threefold division in the sanctuary and a threefold increase of holiness in the outer court, the holy place, and the holy of holies. In the outworking in the nation of Israel, the three divisions are the people, the priesthood, and the high priest himself. On the forehead of the high priest an inscription is placed that reads, "HOLY TO THE LORD" (Exod 39:30). The 2 chapters, then, will move the discussion of holiness from the laity in general (covered in the preceding chapters) first to demands laid on the priests and second to those laid on the high priest. [Kaiser 1147]

As Wenham draws to our attention [289], these 2 chapters divide into 6 sections, each closing with the same formula, "I am YHWH your sanctifier (or "... YHWH who sanctifies you" – 21:8, 15, 23; 22:9, 16, 32).

[21:9] As in the case of New Testament pastors it is written, "having faithful children, that are not accused of riot, nor unruly" (Tit. i. 6); so here, in the case of the priest's family. For the conduct of the family is noticed by the world, and they lay the blame of their misdeeds

at the door of their parents. There is a responsibility connected with belonging to a godly house; the privileges enjoyed there ought to have had a blessed effect on the children. Woe to them if it be otherwise! Double woe! for thus they hinder the usefulness of their father, who loses influence in the eyes of the world if his counsels and walk have not succeeded in drawing his own family to God. This is "profaning their father's name." The daughter mentioned here was to be burnt with fire – a type of the flames of wrath, the fire that never shall be quenched. "It is impossible but that offences come; but woe to them by whom they come!" [Bonar 375]

[21:11] Standing here, will we but listen, we can now hear the echo of this same law of priestly holiness from the New Testament, in such words as these, addressed to the whole priesthood of believers: "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me;" "Let those that have wives be as though they had none, and those that weep as though they wept not;" "Concerning them that fall asleep ... sorrow not, even as the rest, which have no hope." [Kellogg 435]

B. (22:1-33) Itemize the various ways by which a priest might compromise his holy standing

[22:10] In the almost unrestrained insistence of many in this day for "equality," there are indications not a few of a contempt for the holy offices ordained by Christ for His Church, which would admit an equal right on the part of almost any who may desire it, to be allowed to minister in the Church in holy things. But as there were dwarfed and blinded sons of Aaron, so are there not a few Christians who – evidently, at least, to all but themselves – are spiritually dwarfs or deformed; subject to ineradicable and obtrusive constitutional infirmities, such as utterly disqualify, and should preclude, them from holding any office in the holy Church of Christ. The presence of such in her ministry can only now, as of old, profane the sanctuaries of the Lord. [Kellogg 439]

[22:16] When one goes out into the world and observes the practices in which many whom we meet at the Lord's Table habitually indulge, whether in business or in society – the crookedness in commercial dealings and sharp dealing in trade, the utter dissipation in amusement, of many Church members – a spiritual man cannot but ask, Where is the discipline of the Lord's house? [Kellogg 442]

[22:17] Now this external soundness admonished the ancient people that God is served amiss when He is served by halves, since He abominates a double heart. (Proverbs 11:20.) At the same time, in this symbol was shewn forth the perfect purity

of that victim by which God was at length to be reconciled. We know in how great liberties the world indulges itself in the service of God; for whilst it lightly and contemptuously obtrudes mere trifling upon Him as if He were a child, it still fancies that its duty is properly discharged. Hence it is that it claims reward

for any rubbish ... and exults in mere mockeries of God, as if it were laying Him under obligation. A notable example of this stupid security is seen now-a-days in the Papacy, when they mock God with no less audacity than as if they were dealing with a block of wood. To omit innumerable other cases, what can be more monstrous than this arrogance of theirs, when, as they mutter their prayers, their minds wander not only into frivolous but even into unholy imaginations, and yet they pretend that the final intention, as they call it, is meritorious and approved by God? [Calvin ii 378 – one wonders nowadays whether Catholics & Protestants are really any different in the distracted-ness – 'double heart'-edness – of their worship and discipleship]

[22:28] Meanwhile, I confess that all barbarity and cruelty was thus prohibited in the sacrifices, and in them the rule was laid down, that men should not be cruel in

Are WE profaning the sanctuary? How? By lowering the standards of ministry ... and church membership!

"Where is the discipline of the Lord's house?"

reference to their daily food. It is a sight by no means pleasant to gentle minds to see the dam killed together with her young; and, if it were a common custom, men would easily grow callous as to blood-shedding in general. God would therefore not have the exercises of religion disconnected from the duties of humanity; and the tendency of the precept is, that God's altar should not be a Cyclopean slaughter-house. [Calvin ii 384]

[22:17-30] Underlying this prohibition is the idea that castration damages God's good creation. Holiness is symbolized in wholeness. Moreover, God's blessing upon all living creatures was that they should "be fruitful and multiply" (Gen. 1:22,28; 8:17). [Wenham 296]

**"... God's altar
should not be a
Cyclopean
slaughter-house ..."**

**So said John Calvin.
Who shall we cast
as the one-eyed,
cannibal, missile-
manufacturing
monster of the 21st
century?**



[22:31-33] Liberty is freedom of action within the bounds of Divine law; license recognises no limitation to human action, apart from enforced necessity – no law save man's own will and pleasure. It is therefore essential lawlessness, and therefore is sin in its most perfect and consummate expression. ... Surely it should be allowed that the Lord alone should have the right to designate the symbols of His own death in this most holy ordinance. That He chose and appointed for this purpose bread and wine, even the fermented juice of the grape, has been affirmed by the practically unanimous consensus of Christendom for almost nineteen hundred years; and it is not too much to say that this understanding of the Scripture record is sustained by the no less unanimous judgment of truly authoritative scholarship even to-day. Neither can it be denied that Christ ordained this use of wine in the Holy Supper with the most perfect knowledge of the terrible evils connected with its abuse in all ages. All this being so, how can it but contravene this principle of the law of holiness, which insists upon the exact observance of the appointments which the Lord has made for His own worship, when men, in the imagined interest of "moral reform," presume to

attempt improvements in this holy ordinance of the Lord, and substitute for the wine which He chose to make the symbol of His precious blood, something else, of different properties, for the use of which the whole New Testament affords no warrant? We speak with full knowledge of the various plausible arguments which are pressed as reasons why the Church should authorise this nineteenth-century innovation. No doubt, in many cases, the change is urged through a misapprehension as to the historical facts, which, however astonishing to scholars, is at least real and sincere. ... Strange, indeed, it is that men should unthinkingly hope to advance morality by ignoring the primal principle of all holiness, that Christ, the Son of God, is absolute and supreme Lord over all His people, and especially in all that pertains to the ordering of His own house! [Kellogg 444-445]

**"... all barbarity and cruelty was thus prohibited in the
sacrifices ..." – JOHN CALVIN**