

Leviticus Chapter 21

Leviticus 21:1 "And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto the priests the sons of Aaron, and say unto them, There shall none be defiled for the dead among his people:"

“Defiled”:

Coming into contact with a corpse (Num. 19:11), or being in the same room with one (Num. 19:14), made one unclean.

The exceptions were the dead from the priest’s own family (verses 2-4).

In this chapter, we will see that the priests and high priest were not as other men.

They were set aside for God's work.

The ministry had to come first above everything.

The defilement in this Scripture, is a defilement that is only connected to the priesthood.

I say one more time, this is not for the entire congregation, but for the priesthood.

The message is given to Moses by the LORD, and was to be given to the priests by Moses.

The defilement was handling a dead body, or mourning for the dead.

Leviticus 21:2 "But for his kin, that is near unto him, [that is], for his mother, and for his father, and for his son, and for his daughter, and for his brother,"

For such he might be defiled and mourn, or be where they were, and take care of, and attend their funerals.

This clause some take to be general, of which the particulars follow, as Aben Ezra.

But others take it to be the first particular excepted, and instanced in, and intends his wife.

For it may be rendered, as by some, "for his flesh", or "the rest of him", the other part of himself, his wife, which is his other self, and one flesh with him.

And so Jarchi and others observe, there is no flesh of his, but his wife.

And if she is not intended here, she is not expressed elsewhere, though must be supposed, because it is allowed the priest to defile himself for other relations not so near.

And it is plain from the case of Ezekiel, that a priest might mourn for his wife (Ezek. 24:15).

He being forbid it, shows his case to be an extraordinary one, and that ordinarily it was admitted. Otherwise there would have been no need of a particular prohibition of him.

"That is, for his mother, and for his father, and for his son, and for his daughter, and his brother":

R. Alphes adds, "and his wife".

These being all near relations, and for whom natural affection would lead and oblige him to mourn, and show a concern for their death, and to take care of their funeral.

This is to be understood of common priests; for as for the high priest, he might not mourn, or be concerned for either of these.

Leviticus 21:3 "And for his sister a virgin, that is nigh unto him, which hath had no husband; for her may he be defiled."

That is, his sister by both father's and mother's side, as Aben Ezra.

Though, according to Gersom, his sister by his father's side, and not by his mother's side, is meant.

But, according to Alphes, by his mother's side.

Perhaps this may signify not nearness of kin, which is expressed by being his sister, but nearness of place, for, being unmarried, she remained unto her death in her father's house.

"Which hath had no husband":

Neither betrothed to one, for then she would have been nigh to her husband, and not her brother.

And therefore he might not pollute himself for her, as Gersom observes; nor married to him.

For such a one he might not defile himself, even though she might have been rejected or divorced by her husband, as the same writer says.

"For her may he be defiled":

For a pure virgin that had never been betrothed nor married to a man, and had never departed from her father's house.

And so, had no husband to mourn for her, and take care of her funeral, and so for all the rest before mentioned.

And which Jarchi says is a command, and not a bare sufferance or allowance, but what he ought and was obliged to do.

And so it is related of Joseph, a priest, that his wife died in the evening of the Sabbath, and he would not defile himself for her.

And his brethren the priests obliged him, and made him defile himself against his will.

We see in this, an exception for very close members of the family.

The priests should not do this for servants or friends, but was allowed to mourn for very close members of the family.

In the case of Aaron's two sons who brought strange fire into the temple, Aaron was not allowed to mourn or even remove their bodies from the tabernacle.

They had angered God, and God had justly killed them.

In most cases however, when a close relative died, the priests could mourn their death.

Leviticus 21:4 "[But] he shall not defile himself, [being] a chief man among his people, to profane himself."

Which is not to be understood of any lord or nobleman or any chief ruler or governor of the people.

For the context speaks only of priests, and not of other personages.

Besides, such might defile themselves, or mourn for their dead, as Abraham did for Sarah.

Nor of any husband for his wife, for even a priest, as has been observed, might do this for his wife, and much more a private person.

Nor is there any need to restrain it, as some Jewish writers do, to an adulterous wife, which a husband might not mourn for, though he might for his right and lawful wife.

But there is nothing in the text, neither of a husband, nor a wife.

The words are to be interpreted of a priest, and either of him as considered as a person of eminence, consequence, and importance, and sons giving a reason why he should not defile himself for the dead.

Because he was a principal person among his people to officiate for them in sacred things.

Wherefore if he did not take care that he was not defiled for the dead, which might often happen.

He would be frequently hindered from doing his office for the people, which would be attended with ill consequence to them.

And therefore the above cases are only excepted, as being such that rarely happened.

Or rather the words are to be considered as a prohibition of defiling himself "for any chief", or principal man, lord, ruler, or governor, among his people.

Even for such a one he was not to defile himself, being no relation of his.

"To profane himself":

Make himself unfit for sacred service, or make himself a common person.

Put himself upon a level with a common private man, and be no more capable of serving at the altar, or doing any part of the work of priest, than such a one.

Verses 5-6

God people are not supposed to "sorrow as others who have no hope" (1 Thess. 4:13); even the believer's grief should glorify God.

Thus, the priests must not mourn the way pagans did, shaving heads ... beards, or making cuttings in their flesh (19:27-28; Deut. 14:1).

Any association with pagan practices would "profane the name of God" and make them unfit to present the offerings at the altar.

Leviticus 21:5 "They shall not make baldness upon their head, neither shall they shave off the corner of their beard, nor make any cuttings in their flesh."

"Baldness ... corner ... cuttings in their flesh":

These were the superstitious marks of grief (see note on 19:27-28; compare 1 Kings 18:28).

We see in this, that even though they were allowed to mourn, they could not go to extreme with that mourning.

They were leaders of the community, and should set a good example.

The shaving of the head and the cutting of themselves was a worldlier practice, which should not be indulged in by the priests or the high priest.

Christians should not go to the extreme grieving either.

We are not like the world.

We have hope of the resurrection.

With a Christian, it is not a final parting, but a separation for a while.

Leviticus 21:6 "They shall be holy unto their God, and not profane the name of their God: for the offerings of the LORD made by fire, [and] the bread of their God, they do offer: therefore they shall be holy."

“The bread of their God”:

The phrase appears 5 times (in Lev. Chapter 21; compare verses 8, 17, 21-22).

It most likely refers to the bread of the Presence in the Holy Place (compare Exodus 25:30; 39:36; 40:23; Lev. 24:5-9).

We see in the Scripture above, why they were not to do this.

They were to minister in the temple.

During this time of their ministering, they would be in close association with the things of the temple.

They must not touch holy things with unclean hands.

We covered in a previous lesson, the length of time a person would be unclean after touching a dead body.

Ministering, then or now, is not to be taken lightly.

Verses 7-8

The priest was allowed to marry, but only in the purest of circumstances.

A holy marriage union pictured the holy union between God and His people (see 21:13-14).

The priests were to be living models of that holy union.

Compare Paul’s words regarding pastors in (1 Tim. 3:2, 4; Titus 1:6).

Leviticus 21:7 "They shall not take a wife [that is] a whore, or profane; neither shall they take a woman put away from her husband: for he [is] holy unto his God."

By the former is meant a common whore, that prostitutes herself to any one through lust or for gain.

And by the latter one whose chastity is violated, but either unwillingly, that has been forced and ravished.

Or else willingly, being enticed, persuaded, and prevailed upon, but did not make a practice of it.

This seems to be the true sense of the words: but the Jewish writers understand them differently.

By a "whore" they suppose is meant one that is not an Israelite woman, that is not born of an Israelite.

At least of an Israelite woman, as proselytes or freed persons.

For they say there are no whores but such, or one that lies with such persons, she may not marry with.

As such as are guilty of cutting off, or any of the Nethinim (the name given to the Temple assistants), or spurious persons, so Jarchi.

And by a "profane" person they think is meant such as are born of those that are rejected, as the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it.

That is, that are either born of incestuous marriages, such as are forbidden (Lev. 18:1).

Or that are born of those that are rejected in the priesthood.

Or whom a priest might not marry, as the daughter of a widow, by the high priest, or the daughter of one divorced, by a common priest, which is the sense of Jarchi.

"Neither shall they take a woman put away by her husband":

Which was, in these and later times, common for any offence, when the crime of adultery was not pretended.

But this always supposed something bad or amiss, and made such a woman suspected of having done an unseemly thing.

Therefore, priests were forbidden to marry such persons.

The Targum of Jonathan adds, "or by her husband's brother;" and so takes in one that has loosed the shoe, as the Jews call her, who being left without issue, her husband's brother refused to marry her.

And therefore, she plucked off his shoe, and spit in his face (see Deut. 25:7).

Such a one a priest might not marry, according to this paraphrase, and other Jewish writers, and if he did was to be beaten.

"For he is holy unto his God":

Separated from common persons, and devoted to the service of God.

And therefore, not to be defiled with such sort of women, or to lie under any scandal or reproach through such, marriages.

We can see from this that it is terribly important that a person in the ministry have a godly spouse.

A married minister could not be a very good example to their congregation, if their mate was a worldly person.

When a man takes a wife, they two become one flesh.

To be one with an unfaithful wife would not be speaking very highly of the minister.

Notice also, that the person a priest or a minister marries must not use profanity.

What a person is, comes out of their mouth when they speak.

Priests, high priests, and ministers today must live godly lives.

They are to set an example for the people they are leading.

Leviticus 21:8 "Thou shalt sanctify him therefore; for he offereth the bread of thy God: he shall be holy unto thee: for I the LORD, which sanctify you, [am] holy."

In thought and word, as Aben Ezra.

By thinking and speaking well of him.

Should esteem and reckon him a holy person, being in a sacred office, and honor him as such.

And do all that can be done to preserve him from unholiness and impurity, and particularly from marrying with improper and unsuitable persons.

Such as would bring a scandal on him and his sacred office.

This seems to be spoken to Moses, and so to the civil magistrate in succession, who were not to suffer such marriages to take place in the priesthood.

And were not only to persuade from it, but to exercise their authority, and oblige them to put away such wives, and if they refused, to use severity.

So Jarchi, "thou shalt sanctify him".

Whether he will or not.

If he will not put her away, beat him and chastise him until he does put "her away" (see Ezra 2:62).

"For he offereth the bread of thy God":

Meaning not the showbread he set in order before the LORD every week, but the various gift and sacrifices which were offered to God by him, and were acceptable to him as his food.

And therefore, he ought to be holy that drew nigh to God, and was employed in such service (see Lev. 21:6).

"He shall be holy unto thee":

In thy account and estimation, and for thy service to offer holy sacrifices, and therefore should be careful of his holiness to preserve it.

"For I the LORD, which sanctify you, am holy":

In his nature, works, and ways, and who had separated them from all other people to be a holy people to him.

And therefore, they that ministered in holy things for them should be holy likewise.

We have mentioned this so many times before, but sanctify means to set aside for God's purpose.

The bread in the Scripture above was the bread that was offered in the tabernacle.

I see a message in this for ministers of today.

The true Bread is the Word of God.

The person bringing the Word of God to the people must be separated from the world and its trappings.

It is terribly important for the person bringing the Word to be righteous (in right standing with God).

High priests and priests then, and ministers now, are representing God to the people.

They should (as near as possible), be Christlike.

Some people will never be closer to knowing God, than the God you show them in your life.

Is Christ truly living in you?

Are you truly in Christ?

Is the following Scripture true in your life?

Galatians 2:20 "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

Leviticus 21:9 "And the daughter of any priest, if she profane herself by playing the whore, she profaneth her father: she shall be burnt with fire."

The priests' children were to live a holy life.

The common punishment of stoning (compare Deut. 22:21), is replaced with burning by fire (compare 1 Tim. 3:4; Titus 1:6).

This is a terrible sin for anyone's child to do, but for the daughter of a priest it is even more terrible.

Not only must the priest, but his family as well, live godly lives.

It is not enough to stone her to death, but she must be burned up so that no memory of the sin remains.

Verses 10-15

Here is a summary of the standards for the High-Priest which were the highest and most holy in accord with his utmost sacred responsibility.

Leviticus 21:10 "And [he that is] the high priest among his brethren, upon whose head the anointing oil was poured, and that is consecrated to put on the garments, shall not uncover his head, nor rend his clothes;"

"Shall not uncover his head, nor rend his clothes":

Acts associated with mourning or anguish (compare the violation in Christ's trial; Matt. 26:65; Mark 14:63).

Leviticus 21:11 "Neither shall he go in to any dead body, nor defile himself for his father, or for his mother;"

That is, into a tent or house where any dead body lies, as Jarchi and Aben Ezra interpret it.

For whoever went into such a place was unclean seven days.

And so long therefore a High Priest, should he enter there, would be prevented doing the duty of his office (see Num. 19:14).

This was aped and followed by the Heathens in later times.

So, among the Romans, the "Flamen Dialis", or high priest of Jupiter, might not go into a place where a dead body was burnt or buried, nor touch any.

And it was a custom with them, as Servius tells us, to put a branch of cypress at the door of a house where a dead body was, that a high priest might not enter through ignorance, and be defiled.

"Nor defile himself for his father, or for his mother":

By entering into the tent or house where they lay dead.

Or by touching them, or attending the funeral of them, or by concerning himself about it.

And there was no need to mention his son or his daughter, his brother or his sister.

For if he was not to defile himself for any of his parents, much less for any of those which are excepted in the case of a common priest (Lev. 21:2).

The Jews do indeed make one exception in the case of a High Priest, and that is, that if he meets with a dead body along the way, he was obliged to defile himself for it and bury it.

And so among the Romans, though it was a crime for a High Priest to look upon a dead body, yet it was reckoned greater, if, when he saw it, left it unburied.

Leviticus 21:12 "Neither shall he go out of the sanctuary, nor profane the sanctuary of his God; for the crown of the anointing oil of his God [is] upon him: I [am] the LORD."

To wit, to attend the funerals of any person.

For upon other occasions he might and did commonly go out.

"Nor profane the sanctuary of his God":

By deserting the service of it, on any account, and particularly on account of the dead.

By departing from it to go after them, and by entering into it again before the time, when so defiled.

"For the crown of the anointing oil of his God is upon him":

The anointing oil, which was a crown of glory, and gave him a superior dignity to others.

Which it became him to be careful not to debase by any of the above things.

Or "the crown and the anointing oil", so some supply the word.

And both the golden plate or the holy crown, as it is sometimes called, and the anointing oil were upon him.

Which showed him to be a very dignified person, a sort of king as well as a priest, and so a type of Christ, who is a priest upon his throne (Zech. 6:13).

"I am the LORD":

Whose High Priest he is, and who command him all these things, and expect to be obeyed in them.

We see in this verse of Scripture, an even further separation.

The High Priest, when the anointing oil was upon him, was not to even participate in mourning for even the close members of his family.

Once the High Priest had begun his time of serving in the sanctuary, he was not to leave for any reason, until that time was over.

His separation was even more exacting than the priests.

Even for the funeral of his father or mother, he was not allowed to leave the sanctuary, until he had fulfilled his duties.

Leviticus 21:13 "And he shall take a wife in her virginity."

One, and not two, or more, as Ben Gersom observes.

And so Maimonides says, a High Priest might never take two women together; for it is said, "a wife", or "woman", one, and not two.

And so it is explained in the Talmud.

For though polygamy was practiced by the Israelites, and even by the common priests, yet these writers suppose it was by no means allowed to a High Priest.

Among the Egyptians, though they took as many wives as they pleased, their priests, married but one; and so a minister of the New Testament is to be the husband of one wife (1 Tim. 3:2).

And this wife that the High Priest was to take was to be a "virgin".

One that not only had never known a man, but that was never betrothed to any.

Yea, according to the Talmudists, who was not quite ripe for marriage.

Or the time of her puberty not fully completed, which was the age of twelve years.

Within, or somewhat before that time, the High Priest was to marry her, that it might be out of all doubt that she was a pure virgin.

Since it is said, "in her virginity", within the time of her puberty, before it was quite up.

This, by many, is thought to be an emblem of Christ and his church.

As he was typified by the High Priest, so the church by the virgin he married, which is espoused to Christ as a chaste virgin (2 Cor. 11:2).

Leviticus 21:14 "A widow, or a divorced woman, or profane, [or] a harlot, these shall he not take: but he shall take a virgin of his own people to wife."

By this the High Priest was not only forbidden to marry the widow of an ordinary Israelite, or even the widow of a priest, but, according to the Jewish canons.

A virgin who had been betrothed to another man, and whom she lost by death before they were married.

If he, however, became engaged to a widow before he was elected to the pontificate, he could marry her after his consecration.

"Or a divorced woman, or profane, or a harlot":

Whether by a priest, or a common Israelite.

And indeed, if a common priest might not marry such a person, much less a High Priest.

Or profane anyone born of those that were not fit for priests to marry, as the Targum of Jonathan and Jarchi (see notes on Lev. 21:7).

"Or a harlot":

A common prostitute.

"These shall he not take":

Which are forbid in order to maintain the dignity of his office, and a reverence of it.

There seems to be a gradation in these instances, he might not marry a widow, which was forbidden no other man.

And if not such a one, much less a divorced woman, still less a profane person, and least of all an harlot.

"But he shall take a virgin of his own people to wife":

Not only of his tribe, but of all Israel.

We see another separation here.

The High Priest must marry only someone who was a virgin of his own people.

The priests, however could marry a widow or a stranger living in their land.

We must remember right here that the High Priest is symbolic of Jesus (our High Priest).

Jesus is coming back for a bride who is a chaste virgin.

The church (all believers), must be true to Jesus alone.

The fact that the church must be a virgin, is in the spirit.

The church must have no other gods.

The priests represent the Christians.

We must remember also, that adultery can be in the physical realm, or in the spiritual realm.

Spiritual adultery, is when a person worships another god, who is not the true God.

Leviticus 21:15 "Neither shall he profane his seed among his people: for I the LORD do sanctify him."

By marrying any such persons, whereby his children, born of them, would lie under disgrace, and be unfit to succeed him in the priesthood.

Or by marrying among mean persons, or by marrying them too such as were unlawful, and would be a disparagement to them.

"For I the LORD do sanctify him":

Separate him from all others, to the high and sacred office of the high priesthood.

And am concerned for his honor and holiness.

And therefore it became him to observe these laws and rules, and abstain from such disagreeable marriages.

We see from this that, much of what we are is passed on to our children.

It is important for the leaders not to even give the appearance of evil.

Children from ungodly relationships seldom have much to be proud of.

Verses 16-23

“Blemish”:

Just as the sacrifice had to be without blemish, so did the one offering the sacrifice.

As visible things exert strong impressions on the minds of people, any physical impurity or malformation tended to distract from the weight and authority of the sacred office, failed to externally exemplify the inward wholeness God sought, and failed to be a picture of Jesus Christ, the Perfect High-Priest to come (compare Heb. 7:26).

Leviticus 21:16 "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,"

After he had spoken to him of the holiness of the priests, that they should not defile themselves, neither with the dead nor with impure marriages.

He proceeded to add some things concerning blemishes in their bodies, which rendered them unfit for the service.

"Saying":

As follows.

Leviticus 21:17 "Speak unto Aaron, saying, Whosoever [he be] of thy seed in their generations that hath [any] blemish, let him not approach to offer the bread of his God."

Who being the high priest, it was incumbent on him, at least at this time, to see that the laws and rules relating to the priesthood were observed.

And particularly to examine carefully who were and who were not to be admitted to serve in it.

"Whosoever he be of thy seed in their generations":

Or, "a man of thy seed", for this only respected his male seed.

Females of his seed had no concern in the following laws; but his sons, in all successive ages and generations, to the coming of the Messiah, had, whether High Priests or common priests.

"That hath any blemish":

In any part of his body, particularly such as are after mentioned.

"Let him not approach to offer the bread of his God":

Neither go into the Holy Place, to set the showbread in order there, nor to offer any sacrifice upon the altar.

So Josephus explains this law; that a priest should be perfect, and if he labored under any defect, should not ascend the altar, nor enter into the temple.

This was imitated by the Heathens.

Romulus ordered that such as were weak and feeble in any part of the body should not be made priests.

The Jewish priests were types of Christ, who is holy, harmless, without spot and blemish.

And through whose blood and righteousness all who are made priests by him are not blamable.

Without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.

And a Gospel minister, bishop, or pastor, ought to be unblemished in his life and conversation (Titus 1:6).

And there are some who think that the blemishes of the mind and of the life are rather here meant than those of the body.

Verses 18-20

Twelve defects that would bar a person from carrying out the priestly duties are enumerated (later Judaism expanded the list to 142).

A "flat nose" which most likely means "split" as it is a passive participle and has this idea in (see Isaiah 11:15).

"Crookbacked" has been interpreted to mean "brow or forehead".

Others take it as 'hunchback' and make it a reference to spinal tuberculosis, citing a model suffering like this for an ancient Egyptian tomb (2700 - 2200 B.C.), of Mitri at Saqqara.

“Dwarf” actually means “thin, small”, used of incense (16:12), or cows (Gen. 41:3-4).

Its association with “crookbacked” may not be accidental if related to tuberculosis.

The reference to “stones broken” seems to refer to an ailment of the testicles.

Leviticus 21:18 "For whatsoever man [he be] that hath a blemish, he shall not approach: a blind man, or a lame, or he that hath a flat nose, or any thing superfluous,"

This part of the verse is simply an emphatic repetition of the same declaration at the end of the last verse to introduce the examples of the bodily blemishes which disqualified the priests for the service at the altar.

A similar law obtained among the Greeks and Romans, that a priest should be perfect in all his parts.

"A blind man":

During the second Temple, this was not only interpreted to be partial blindness on both eyes, or on one eye, but was taken to include any blemish in the eye or in the eyelid.

Of which the administrators of the Law enumerate twenty-six cases, nineteen in the eye and seven in the eyelid.

Or a lame":

This was understood during the second Temple to refer to any imperfection in the gait of the priest, which might show itself in twenty different ways.

"Or he that hath a flat nose":

Of the nasal deformity no less than nine different illustrations are given.

"Or any thing superfluous":

That is, one member of the body more stretched out or longer than the others, or out of proportion, as an eye, shoulder, thigh, leg, etc.

Leviticus 21:19 "Or a man that is broken-footed, or broken-handed,"

That has any of the bones or joints in his hands and feet broke, or when they are distorted, and he is clubfooted.

Or his fingers crooked and clustered together.

And such a man could not be fit to ascend the altar, and lay the sacrifice in order upon it.

And may be an emblem of such as are awkward or disorderly in their walk and conservation.

And to every good work and action unfit, and so unfit for their master's use.

Leviticus 21:20 "Or crookbacked, or a dwarf, or that hath a blemish in his eye, or be scurvy, or scabbed, or hath his stones broken;"

That has a protuberance, or bunch upon his back, one that we commonly call "hunchbacked".

The Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem paraphrase it, "whose eyebrows lying cover his eyes".

And so Jarchi, interprets it, the hair of whose eyebrows is long and lying.

And so other Jewish writers understand it of some deformity about the eyes, the hair of the eyebrows being thick and heavy over them.

"Or a dwarf":

One of a small stature, as Aben Ezra, as generally hunchbacked persons are.

And so unfit to attend the altar, being scarce able to reach up to it.

And do the business of it, as well as must make a very mean appearance.

But the above Targums understand this also of some blemish about the eyes, paraphrasing it "or he that has no hair on his eyebrows".

"Or that hath a blemish in his eye":

A mixture, a confusion, or rather a suffusion in it, as the above Targum.

In which, as one of them says, the white is mixed with the black, and with which agrees what is said in the Misnah.

Where it is asked, what is the confusion or suffusion?

"Or be scurvy or scabbed":

Both these were kinds of ulcers, according to the Jewish writers.

Particularly Jarchi, who says of the first, that it is a dry scab within and without.

And of the other, that it is the Egyptian scab, which is moist without and dry with it; and so the Targum of Jonathan.

"Or hath his stones broken":

This is differently interpreted in the Misnah, and by other Jewish writers.

Some say it signifies one that has no testicles, or only one; so the Septuagint and the Jerusalem Targum.

Others, whose testicles are broken or bruised, so Jarchi.

Or are inflated, so Akiba, Aben Ezra, and the Targum of Jonathan.

Some understand it of an "hernia" or rupture.

All which may in a moral and mystical sense signify either some defect in the understanding, or vices in the heart or life, which render unfit for public service in the sanctuary.

Leviticus 21:21 "No man that hath a blemish of the seed of Aaron the priest shall come nigh to offer the offerings of the LORD made by fire: he hath a blemish; he shall not come nigh to offer the bread of his God."

Whether a high priest or a common priest that lies on him anyone of the above blemishes.

And which the Jewish writers make to amount to the number of one hundred and forty.

And which they reckon, so many in one part of the booty and so many in another, till they make up the said number.

And whoever had any might not;

"Come nigh to offer the offerings of the LORD made by fire":

The burnt offerings on the altar, to which he might not approach, and the meat offerings, and the fat, and the incense.

"He hath a blemish":

In one part of him or another; and though but one.

"He shall not come nigh to offer the bread of his God":

This is repeated for the confirmation of it, and to show how determined the LORD was in this matter.

And how much he should resent it in any that should be found guilty of the breach of those rules, and so it is designed to deter from attempting it.

Leviticus 21:22 "He shall eat the bread of his God, [both] of the most holy, and of the holy."

That part of the sacrifices which was appropriated by the LORD to the priests, for the maintenance of them and their families.

For though their natural infirmities disqualified them for service, yet they did not become hereby impure, either in a moral nor ceremonial sense.

And might eat of the sacrifices, which impure persons might not.

And so the tradition is, blemished persons, whether their blemishes are fixed or transient, may divide and eat, but not offer.

These being priests, and having no inheritance, nor any way of getting their livelihood, provision is made for them that they might not perish through their defects in nature.

Which were not voluntary and brought upon them by themselves, but by the providence of God.

And such were allowed to eat;

"Both of the most holy and of the holy":

There were things the priests eat of, which were most holy, as what remained of the meat offerings, and of the sin offerings, and of the trespass offerings.

Which only the males of the priest's family might eat of.

And that only in the holy place.

And there were others less holy, the lighter holy things, as the Jews call them.

As the wave breast, and heave shoulder, and the tithes and firstfruits, which were eaten of by all in their families.

Their daughters as well as their sons, and in their own houses.

Now of each of these might the blemished priests eat (see Num. 18:9), etc.

Leviticus 21:23 "Only he shall not go in unto the veil, nor come nigh unto the altar, because he hath a blemish; that he profane not my sanctuaries: for I the LORD do sanctify them."

So far as to the vail, which divided between the holy and the Holy of Holies.

That is, he shall not go into the Holy Place which was before the vail.

Not to set the showbread upon the table there, nor to light and him the lamps in the candlestick.

Nor to offer incense on the altar of incense, which stood in it.

Some render it "within the vail", where only the High Priest might enter once a year.

But if he had any blemish on him he might not, nor might such a one be a High Priest.

"Nor come nigh unto the altar":

As not to the altar of incense in the Holy Place, so neither to the altar of burnt offering in the court of the tabernacle.

That is, so as to officiate there.

But though they might not be employed in such sacred service, the Jews in later times have found business for them to employ them in.

And that was worming the wood, or searching the wood for worms, which was used in the burning of the sacrifices.

For we are told, that at the northeast corner (of the court of the women), was the wood room.

Where the priests that had blemishes wormed the wood.

"Because he hath a blemish":

Either fixed or transient.

One of those particularly expressed, or any other.

For the Jews suppose there are others implied besides those expressed, which disqualified for service.

"That he profane not my sanctuaries":

If a High Priest, the Holy of Holies; if a common priest, the Holy Place, and the court of the tabernacle.

"For I the LORD do sanctify them":

The vail, to which blemished priests might not go.

And the altar, to which they might not come nigh.

Or rather, the sanctuaries or Holy Places, where they might not officiate.

Which God had separated and devoted for sacred uses, and were not to be defiled by any.

We see in this that the High Priest was a type of Christ.

He was to be without blemish of all types, because he shadowed Jesus (the eternal High Priest).

Jesus was holy and without blemish.

The person who was the only one allowed to go inside the veil, was the High Priest.

It seems that the sons of Aaron, or any other High Priest who had a blemish of any kind in their body could not hold the office of High Priest.

They could eat of the bread given to the High Priest and his family from the offerings.

They could not represent Christ who was without blemish.

The perfect Lamb of God (Jesus Christ our Lord), is foreshadowed here.

Praise God, He was perfect in every way.

Leviticus 21:24 "And Moses told [it] unto Aaron, and to his sons, and unto all the children of Israel."

What God had said to him concerning the priests defiling themselves for the dead, both common priests and High Priest.

And concerning their marriages and their blemishes; that they might be careful not to transgress the laws and rules given them concerning those things.

"And unto all the children of Israel":

To the heads of the tribes and elders of the people, and by them to the whole, that they might know who were fit, and who not, to put their sacrifice into their hands, to offer for them.

Jarchi thinks this was to warn the Sanhedrim concerning the priests, whose business it was to examine and judge who were fit for service and who not.

For so we are told, that in the chamber Gazith, or of hewn stone, the great Sanhedrim of Israel sat and judged the priests, and rejected some and received others.

To me, this just shows that Moses was an obedient servant of God.

Whatever God told him to do and say, he did.

Moses did not alter one word, but gave the message as accurately as possible.

Leviticus Chapter 21 Questions

1. Who was the message given to in verse one?
2. The priests and High Priest were not as other _____.
3. What had to come first in their lives?
4. What is this defilement in verse one?
5. What members of the family were there exceptions made for?
6. What sin had Aaron's two sons committed that displeased God?
7. What happened to the first two sons of Aaron?
8. Verse 4 tells us that the _____ could not defile himself.
9. What three things were specifically mentioned that they were not to do while mourning?
10. Why should Christians not go to extremes mourning?
11. In verse 6, why was the priest to remain holy?
12. They shall not take a wife that is a _____ or _____.
13. What is terribly important for the spouse of a minister to be?
14. What does sanctify mean?
15. What is the true Bread?
16. High priests and priests then, and ministers now, are representing whom?
17. If the daughter of a priest is a whore, what shall be done to her?
18. What are several things mentioned in verse 10 that further state this is the high priest?
19. Whose requirements were even more exacting than the priest's?
20. The high priest must marry a woman who was a _____.
21. Could she be from another foreign tribe?
22. Who were the priests allowed to marry, that were forbidden to the High Priest?
23. Who do the priests represent?
24. Who does the High Priest represent?
25. What are the two kinds of adultery?

26. What were some of the blemishes specifically mentioned that a high priest could not have?
27. What was one thing priests could do that had these blemishes?
28. Where could a priest with these blemishes absolutely not go?
29. Who was this High Priest a type of?
30. What does verse 24 tell us about Moses?