

Character Study: Aaron

Part 1 – The Role of a High Priest

Exodus 28-29, Leviticus 8-9, 16

What's happening?

- Aaron was the older brother of Moses and was Moses' spokesman when Moses was sent by God to ask the Pharaoh to allow the Israelites to leave Egypt (see study on Moses).
- Aaron was selected by God to be the high priest for the Israelites, and his four sons served as priests. They were consecrated ("set apart") by the people for the special work God had for them. They even wore specific articles of clothing to signify their special role in maintaining fellowship between God and the Israelites. (Ex. 28-29; Lev. 8)
- The priests worked in the Tabernacle, carrying out various duties which included presenting sacrifices and offerings on behalf of themselves and the Israelites. As high priest, Aaron oversaw all the work. (Lev. 9)
- The tenth day of the seventh month was the Day of Atonement. This would be a festival each year in which any sins that remained uncleansed would be "atoned for" (covered). This was accomplished when Aaron would go into the room of the Tabernacle called the "Most Holy Place" and make a special offering on behalf of the people. (Lev. 16)

What's God doing?

> God designated Aaron and his sons as priests to represent the Israelites before God (they were from the tribe of Levi, whose descendants would carry on this role). A mediator, as well as sacrifices, played a necessary role in allowing the people to maintain fellowship with God.

What's to learn?

→ The Day of Atonement was a significant day each year for Israel, but even this fell short of bringing complete forgiveness ("for it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins" - Heb. 10:4). However, these sacrifices did picture the perfect, complete sacrifice of Christ, which would bring redemption (1 Peter 1:18-21).

→ The work of the high priest in the Old Testament only covered the sins of the people. Christ's work on the cross goes beyond that, completely removing the sin of those who trust in Him (Rom. 3:24-25).