

Handout: Deuteronomy Lesson 10

The limitations on the Levitical lesser ministers and their duties that separated them from their brothers in the tribe of Levi who were chief priests descended from Aaron:

1. They were not anointed or ordained; therefore, they did not wear the priestly garments.
2. They could not serve at the altar or offer the sacrifices.
3. They could not touch the sacred vessels.
4. They could not forgive sins.
5. They could not eat the sacred meal of the sin sacrifices.
6. They were not eligible to receive the priestly portions of sacrifices.
7. Their term of service was limited to age 50.
8. They could not enter the Tabernacle.
9. They served the chief priests as “dedicated” men.
10. They guarded and transported the Sanctuary.

Prerogatives of the chief priests:

1. It was the duty of the priesthood of Aaron to proclaim the Law.
2. The priests were anointed and ordained to serve at the altar, offering the communal and individual sacrifices of the people.
3. They wore liturgical vestments when ministering in the Sanctuary.
4. The priests served in the Holy Place of the Tabernacle.
5. The High Priest entered the Holy of Holies once a year on the Feast of Atonement.
6. They had the authority to forgive the sins of the people and to eat the sin sacrifices in a sacred meal.
7. The priests restored communion with God by sacrifice and prayer.

The Old Covenant priesthood was powerless, however, to offer the gift of eternal salvation through their sacrifices (see Heb 5:3; 7:27; 10:1-4; CCC 1540).

Dt 19:1-20:20 address judicial and military matters that are under the direct supervision of Israel’s authorities.

- Criminal cases in which the judges, officials and priests are involved:
 1. homicide versus manslaughter and cities of refuge
 2. boundary disputes
 3. witnesses in civil cases before the judicial courts
- Laws about the conduct of war in which the priests, officials and army commanders are involved:
 1. homily by the priest to the warriors before a battle
 2. exemptions from military service
 3. treatment of captured towns
 4. preservation of fruit trees near a siege town

Moses presents five ways in which God will guide His people during armed conflict:

1. God’s promise when faced by danger (verses 1-4).
2. God’s provision in emergencies (verses 5-9).
3. God’s peace extended to enemies who surrender (verses 10-11).
4. God’s power over willful opposition (verses 12-18).
5. God’s preservation of the good in the midst of war and destruction (verses 19-20).