

## Exodus 29-30 Chapter Study

### INTRODUCTION

#### *Outline For Exodus*

- I. The Exodus • Chs. 1-13:16
- II. The Journey to Sinai • Chs. 13:17-40:38

A.-F.

#### G. At Mt. Sinai • 20-40

##### 17. 28-30 • The Priesthood Instituted

##### a.-f. (ch. 28 - the priests' uniform)

As we begin tonight, we need to recap the end of the study last week, where we saw that while under the old covenant we find in *these* chapters, only the tribe of Levi were priests and only Aaron and his sons were privileged to serve as the high priest with it's sacred service – under the New Covenant, we are *all* priests.

So what we're seeing in these chapters that describe the priesthood is really a picture of the privilege and calling that's placed on us.

Keep that in mind as we now work our way through the next chapters.

### CHAPTER 29

#### g. 29:1-37 – the consecration of Aaron & his sons

<sup>1</sup> “**And this is what you shall do to them to hallow them for ministering to Me as priests:**

After God gave the instructions for the uniform of the priests, He set out instructions for *how* they were to be *set apart* for their special service.

The word “**hallow**” means “**to make holy.**”

If something is holy, it means it's been set aside from common use, for the special use and purposes of God – and ONLY God.

Most of us have at home in our closet, a special set of clothes we wear only for the most special of occasions.

Men have a suit, the ladies have a dress.

Some guys even have a tuxedo, and a few of the ladies, a formal gown.

In fact, many of the women still have their wedding dress hanging in their closet.

It's sealed up in plastic to protect it. It's a special garment.

They would never think of wearing it or do some gardening in or to clean the house.

The men would never wear their tux or suit to mow the lawn or to wash the car in.

No, these clothes are special – and worn only for the most important of occasions.

That's the idea of holiness – but raised to an even higher level because to be holy means to be elevated to the most important thing of all, the service of God!

God tells Moses that Aaron and his sons are to be set apart from all other functions to serve Him in a special way.

An elaborate ritual is to mark their *consecration*, their *dedication*.

**Take one young bull and two rams without blemish, <sup>2</sup> and unleavened bread, unleavened cakes mixed with oil, and unleavened wafers anointed with oil (you shall make them of wheat flour). <sup>3</sup> You shall put them in one basket and bring them in the basket, with the bull and the two rams. <sup>4</sup> “And Aaron and his sons you shall bring to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and you shall wash them with water. <sup>5</sup> Then you shall take the garments, put the tunic on Aaron, and the robe of the ephod, the ephod, and the breastplate, and gird him with the intricately woven band of the ephod. <sup>6</sup> You shall put the turban on his head, and put the holy crown on the turban. <sup>7</sup> And you shall take the anointing oil, pour *it* on his head, and**

anoint him. <sup>8</sup> Then you shall bring his sons and put tunics on them. <sup>9</sup> And you shall gird them with sashes, Aaron and his sons, and put the hats on them. The priesthood shall be theirs for a perpetual statute. So you shall consecrate Aaron and his sons.

Try to get the picture here. Put yourself in the courtyard of the newly constructed tabernacle and see what's being described here.

Moses is the one who would be officiating at this consecration of Aaron and his sons -- he would be representing the Lord Himself.

He would secure a bull and two rams and bring them inside the courtyard.

Then he would collect loaves of wheat bread, some wheat cakes and wafers and put them all in one basket which he'd set down near the animals.

Then, Aaron and his sons would come right before the door of the tabernacle where Moses would wash them thoroughly before placing the newly made priestly garments on them.

What an incredible picture this is!

Throughout this entire consecration ceremony, Moses does *all the work* – Aaron and his sons do *nothing* but *receive* the benefit of Moses' work.

And remember, Moses represents God here.

Before Aaron could receive his new garments, he had to be cleansed with water.

And that cleansing was *humbling* as he stood out in the open and yielded to Moses' washing.

All priestly ministry must begin with cleansing, and a cleansing that's *received*, as Aaron received his from Moses.

In the same way, if we're to be effective in our service, the first step is cleansing.

And it's not something we *strive for* or try to give *ourselves*.

It is something we *yield to* and *receive by faith*.

And it is *humbling*, just as it was for Aaron.

We *cannot* be cleansed from our sin *without* being humbled first.

There must be sincere *contrition*, a *sense* of the wrong we've done by sin and a humble acknowledgement that left to ourselves we are lost and without hope.

Every so often you'll find someone who says that they know God forgives them but they find it hard to forgive themselves for some horrible thing they've done.

Now, let's think about that. That means *their* standards are *higher* than God's and that they hold themselves to a tougher rule than God does.

That's absurd! God is absolutely holy and tolerates no sin whatsoever.

There is no high standard than His.

What a person is *really* saying when they say they cannot forgive themselves is that they don't accept the forgiveness God offers them through Christ, and that they have to atone for their sin *themselves*.

This is the height of pride and arrogance and the worst kind of unbelief for it denies the sufficiency of Christ's atonement.

No – to be forgiven, to receive the forgiveness God so graciously offers in Christ, we must be *humbled*, brought low by the realization of the error and guilt of our sin.

But then forgiveness is simply *appropriated*, received by faith in Christ; that He indeed paid the price and there's nothing left for me to add, only to humbly receive – just as Aaron did here when Moses washed him.

The water Moses washed him with represents the Word of God – as Paul makes clear in Ephesians 5:26.

It's by the ministry of the Word of God that we're made aware of our sin, convicted by the Holy Spirit, and then assured of our forgiveness.

Once Aaron was washed, *then* the special garments were placed on him.

In the same way, once we're cleansed & forgiven by the Lord, we're clothed in the righteousness of Christ – a beautiful garment of a new person *in* Him.

Then, once Aaron had been clothed in his new garments, he was anointed with the holy oil, a symbol of the Holy Spirit.

And so for us, once we've been forgiven of sin and clothed in the righteousness of Christ, then the Holy Spirit comes upon us, equipping us for service.

That oil, which was also used as the fuel for the lamps, empowered Aaron for service.

It's the Holy Spirit who gives us the spiritual power *we need* to accomplish *our* service.

Look at verse 7 –

**7 And you shall take the anointing oil, pour it on his head, and anoint him.**

The oil wasn't dabbed on; it was *poured*. A whole bottle of it was spent on him.

Psalms 133:2 refers to this anointing of Aaron –

**It is like the precious oil upon the head, Running down on the beard, The beard of Aaron, Running down on the edge of his garments.**

His head and shoulder were covered with oil.

It had sweet herbs and spices in it so it was like perfume and smelled incredible!

But it was all symbolic of the sweet presence and power of the Holy Spirit, equipping Aaron with what he needed to perform his God-ordained task.

This all pictures the *baptism of the Holy Spirit*, Who comes in His sweet fullness to empower us to our calling and service of the Lord.

Keep this idea of the sweetness of the anointing oil in mind, and how when Aaron went about his priestly service, where ever he went, a sweetness lingered in the air around him.

The reason I say that is because there are some really goofy ideas going around about the ministry and power of the Holy Spirit.

Many people equate *power* with *dramatic* signs that are often anything but *sweet*.

They equate the moving of the Spirit of God with *weirdness*!

I'm sure you're aware of the goofy things people are doing in some circles today and *blaming* it on the Holy Spirit.

Uncontrolled laughter, animal noises, wild visions, so-called slaying in the Spirit.

This is anything but sweet – it's *odious*!

The presence of the Lord is powerful, certainly; but it is also *sweet*, and His anointed ones work in sweetness.

**10 “You shall also have the bull brought before the tabernacle of meeting, and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands on the head of the bull. 11 Then you shall kill the bull before the LORD, by the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 12 You shall take some of the blood of the bull and put it on the horns of the altar with your finger, and pour all the blood beside the base of the altar. 13 And you shall take all the fat that covers the entrails, the fatty lobe attached to the liver, and the two kidneys and the fat that is on them, and burn them on the altar. 14 But the flesh of the bull, with its skin and its offal, you shall burn with fire outside the camp. It is a sin offering.**

The bull was sacrificed to consecrate the altar that stood before the tabernacle.

That altar, known as the “altar of burnt offering” was the place where the priests would perform most of their service.

It's the altar that the sacrifices and offerings of the people of Israel would be offered on.

And as Aaron and his sons begin their service, they must identify themselves with that altar first!

While their service was special, they were also number along with the people.

They may have a unique calling, but in and of themselves, they were sinners just like everyone else.

So they placed their hands on the bull's head, in a symbolic transfer of their sin and its guilt to the bull, then the bull was slaughtered.

Some of its blood was placed on the horns of the altar and the rest was poured at the base.

As we mentioned last week, the horns of the altar were the focal point of the entire altar.

They were raised pieces at the four corners which were the place where the priest would lay their hand in symbolic identification with the altar.

The blood of the bull is applied to them here as an act of sanctification and consecration.

Those little smudges of blood represented the entire bull for the life is in the blood.  
The rest of the blood was poured at the base of the altar, representing the fact that the  
*entire* altar rested on a foundation of blood.

Then, the choice parts of the bull were burned on the altar, while its hide and intestines were taken  
outside the camp and burned there.

These were the unclean parts of the bull, and so unfit to offer on the altar to God.  
As the sin offering, the bull represented the fact that in order for us to be forgiven, a sacrifice has to be  
made, a life given in substitution for us.

And in this, the bull represents Christ, who took our place on the Cross and died so that we might be  
forgiven.

While His offering was a holy thing and accepted before God, symbolized by the choice parts of  
the bull being offered on the altar, because Jesus was made the sin of the world, He was  
offered up on the cross *outside* the camp, so to speak -- *outside* the walls of Jerusalem.

Hebrews 13:11-12 says -

**<sup>11</sup>For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the  
high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. <sup>12</sup>Therefore Jesus also, that He  
might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate.**

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**<sup>15</sup> “You shall also take one ram, and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands on the  
head of the ram; <sup>16</sup> and you shall kill the ram, and you shall take its blood and  
sprinkle *it* all around on the altar. <sup>17</sup> Then you shall cut the ram in pieces, wash its  
entrails and its legs, and put *them* with its pieces and with its head. <sup>18</sup> And you  
shall burn the whole ram on the altar. It *is* a burnt offering to the LORD; it *is* a  
sweet aroma, an offering made by fire to the LORD.**

Besides the bull, God told Moses to bring 2 rams.

The first was offered *completely*, symbolizing Aaron’s *total* consecration to the Lord and His  
service.

When you came to Christ, did you bring Him *everything*, or did you reserve some things for yourself?

When you put your faith in Him, was it as just *Savior*, or as *Lord* too?

And if Lord, Lord of everything?

Does Jesus have all of you? Are you wholly holy?

He may be Lord of your church-life, but is He Lord of your home? Marriage?

Is He Lord when you’re watching TV? Buying clothes?

Is He Lord of the Highway, the streets?

Is He Lord of your fantasy life? Your sex-life?

Is He Lord of your money?

The first ram represented being wholly consecrated to the Lord, nothing holding back.

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A cow & a chicken were sitting in a field across the highway from an all-night truck-stop.

The cow said, “Hey, look at that sign in the window.

It read, “Steak and eggs - \$1.99”

The chicken said, “That sounds like a good deal.”

The cow said, “That’s easy for you to say. For you a meal like that is merely an *offering*. For  
me, it’s *total dedication*.”

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Notice how God calls this consecration offering a *sweet aroma*.

He’s well pleased with the life that’s offered up to Him without holding anything back.

**<sup>19</sup> “You shall also take the other ram, and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands on  
the head of the ram. <sup>20</sup> Then you shall kill the ram, and take some of its blood and  
put *it* on the tip of the right ear of Aaron and on the tip of the right ear of his sons,  
on the thumb of their right hand and on the big toe of their right foot, and sprinkle  
the blood all around on the altar.**

This ram served a different purpose.

Its blood was to be placed on Aaron and his sons’ right ears, hands and feet.

This was another symbol of their being tied to the altar, and that their service was holy.  
Their ears were to be given to the Lord, listening to Him, taking their direction from Him,  
their minds filled with His Word.  
The work of their hands was to be holy – given to glorifying God.  
Where ever they went, where ever their feet carried them, they were on a holy mission,  
following the Lord's lead.

**21 And you shall take some of the blood that is on the altar, and some of the anointing oil, and sprinkle *it* on Aaron and on his garments, on his sons and on the garments of his sons with him; and he and his garments shall be hallowed, and his sons and his sons' garments with him.**

The blood of both rams was not poured at the base of the altar, but *on* the altar.

So by this time, there was quite a quantity of blood pooled on the altar.

Moses was to take some of this, add some of the holy oil to it and then sprinkle it on Aaron and his sons.

This seems strange when we remember how beautiful the high priests garments were.

To spatter them with oily blood would seemingly ruin them.

But God is making an important point here – there can be no consecration, no holiness, no empowering for service, no access to Him, and no way to please Him *apart from sacrifice*.

It all rests on the substitutionary sacrifice of another on our behalf.

So, not matter how busy Aaron was, no matter how beautifully he was arrayed, no matter how elaborate the ritual or meaningful its lesson – above it all is the reality of sacrifice.

All of this is meant to point us to the Person and Work of Jesus Christ.

We stand before God today, *because* of Christ.

We are clothed in the beauty of holiness today, because of Jesus.

We are righteousness because of Him.

We are useful, because He made us so.

It was the shedding of His blood, that made possible the anointing of His Spirit.

I want to ask you to picture Aaron as he would now look.

Gorgeous from a distance, but the closer you get, the more aware you are of some things that seem different and disconcerting.

His head is dripping with oil, his shoulders wet with it and his garments are spattered with crimson stains.

And as you get even closer, a sweet fragrance greets your nostrils, but a little closer still and there's the unmistakable scent of blood.

When people first see us, what they *ought to see* is the beauty and attraction of a life that's successful because it obeys God.

But as they get closer and get to know us better what they ought to learn is that that success comes from a *vital union with Jesus Christ*.

They ought to become aware that there's far more going on in our lives than in the life of the unbeliever – that there's a presence with us that is *not* us – it's the Holy Spirit.

Then as they get even closer, they ought to sense a sweetness about us, that we are in fellowship with God – it's not just a religious thing – it's our life and it has made us new, different people.

But ultimately, they ought to *sense* the blood, that what *we* have, *they* can have too.

Paul says it this way in 2 Corinthians 2:15-16

**For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things?**

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**22 “Also you shall take the fat of the ram, the fat tail, the fat that covers the entrails, the fatty lobe attached to the liver, the two kidneys and the fat on them, the right thigh (for it is a ram of consecration), 23 one loaf of bread, one cake made with oil,**

and one wafer from the basket of the unleavened bread that *is* before the LORD; <sup>24</sup> and you shall put all these in the hands of Aaron and in the hands of his sons, and you shall wave them as a wave offering before the LORD. <sup>25</sup> You shall receive them back from their hands and burn *them* on the altar as a burnt offering, as a sweet aroma before the LORD. It *is* an offering made by fire to the LORD. <sup>26</sup> “Then you shall take the breast of the ram of Aaron’s consecration and wave it as a wave offering before the LORD; and it shall be your portion. <sup>27</sup> And from the ram of the consecration you shall consecrate the breast of the wave offering which is waved, and the thigh of the heave offering which is raised, of *that* which *is* for Aaron and of *that* which is for his sons. <sup>28</sup> It shall be from the children of Israel *for* Aaron and his sons by a statute forever. For it is a heave offering; it shall be a heave offering from the children of Israel from the sacrifices of their peace offerings, *that is*, their heave offering to the LORD. <sup>29</sup> “And the holy garments of Aaron shall be his sons’ after him, to be anointed in them and to be consecrated in them. <sup>30</sup> That son who becomes priest in his place shall put them on for seven days, when he enters the tabernacle of meeting to minister in the holy *place*. <sup>31</sup> “And you shall take the ram of the consecration and boil its flesh in the holy place. <sup>32</sup> Then Aaron and his sons shall eat the flesh of the ram, and the bread that *is* in the basket, *by* the door of the tabernacle of meeting. <sup>33</sup> They shall eat those things with which the atonement was made, to consecrate *and* to sanctify them; but an outsider shall not eat *them*, because they *are* holy. <sup>34</sup> And if any of the flesh of the consecration offerings, or of the bread, remains until the morning, then you shall burn the remainder with fire. It shall not be eaten, because it *is* holy. <sup>35</sup> “Thus you shall do to Aaron and his sons, according to all that I have commanded you. Seven days you shall consecrate them.

The rest of the second ram was to be divided into 2 parts; the first part which included most of the innards and the right thigh were to be offered up to the Lord, along with one loaf of the bread, one of the cakes and one of the wafers.

Aaron was to take these, hold them up to the Lord as an act of offering, called a *wave* or *heave* offering, and then he was to place them on the altar to be burned by fire.

The rest of the ram was given to Aaron and his sons, along with the rest of the bread, cakes, and wafers.

They were to take these and wave them as they had the first, and then make a *meal* of them.

This meal was to be eaten at one sitting and if there were any leftovers, then they were to be disposed of by burning them on the altar.

The idea in all of this was the picture of their *intimate fellowship* with God.

For the people of the ancient world, there was no higher invitation to union and fellowship with someone than a summons to dine with him.

God was welcoming the priests into the closest kind of intimacy by inviting them to partake of that which was offered up on HIS altar!

He goes on to say that from then on, the priests would be given the breast portion of the offerings the people brought in the normal course of their worship.

This ritual of initial consecration that Aaron and his sons would go through would last for a period of seven days.

And in the future, when a new high priest replaced the old, this consecration rite would be done over again.

<sup>36</sup> **And you shall offer a bull every day as a sin offering for atonement. You shall cleanse the altar when you make atonement for it, and you shall anoint it to sanctify it. <sup>37</sup> Seven days you shall make atonement for the altar and sanctify it. And the altar shall be most holy. Whatever touches the altar must be holy.**

While the ritual of washing and clothing Aaron, and then offering the first bull and 2 rams would only take a few hours, the rest of the 7 days of consecration were to be marked by a *daily* offering of

another bull which would follow the same pattern as the first.

They were to cleanse the altar first by removing the old ash and then offering a new bull each day.

This repeated offering in the first week the tabernacle would be in use was a way to kind of “season” the altar, much like you have to season a new cooking dish.

The difference of course being that the “seasoning” in sight here is *spiritual* and speaks of the *holiness* of the altar.

Before we move on – there is something at the end of v. 37 we need to take a closer look at.

**Whatever touches the altar must be holy.**

This is a warning. God is calling them to show care and diligence in approaching the altar.

They are to come to it with a sober mind and careful hearts.

This is a moment of seriousness.

Would any of us walk to the edge of the 101 FWY and just stroll out on it?

Would any of us walk up under the spinning blade of a helicopter without ducking our head?

Would any of us play around the buzz-saw in a lumber mill?

No! We show extreme caution when we’re around these dangerous places and things.

Is anything more dangerous than God? Is any place more terrifying than His presence?

No! And yet it seems we show little caution when we talk about Him or come into His presence.

God was telling the priests here – “Look, this whole altar thing is serious business. Be careful!”

There were times when Israel forgot that and God sent them a reminder.

When David was having the ark brought to Jerusalem and they were carrying it on a cart instead of on their shoulders like they were supposed to, Uzzah reached up to steady it when it came near to falling off the cart, and God struck him dead on the spot.

Think of it, Uzzah was doing what seemed like a good thing, protecting the ark – but in fact, there was a total disregard for the holiness of God!

As Christians, we enjoy the *grace* of God, His unmerited favor and blessing.

Access to Him has been opened wide by the work of Christ.

But there’s a very serious danger that comes with that ready access, and that’s the danger of cheapening the price Jesus paid and of denigrating the cost of grace because it’s free to us.

It may be free to us, but IT COST JESUS ALL!

Aaron and his sons could enjoy a meal and intimate fellowship with God, but only because a whole bunch of animals gave their lives.

And on everyone of them, before they were slaughtered, Aaron put his hands on their heads and watched them die!

He had a graphic reminder of just how costly his fellowship with God was. He wore a sign of that cost in the blood that stained his clothes.

You and I must never, ever forget the cost Jesus paid so that we might be forgiven and have fellowship with God.

Indeed friends, *we* must bear His blood!

This is what communion is all about, and why we need to celebrate it often.

And when we come to the Lords’ table, we must come as they did to the altar, with a sense of sobriety and seriousness. That is a holy moment!

Paul told the Corinthians in ch. 11 of his first letter that because some of them were coming to the Lord’s table with a too casual attitude, actually a carnal and raunchy attitude, they had fallen ill, and some had even died as judgment from the Lord. [1 Cor 11:17-34]

Worship is a holy moment.

The study of His word is a holy time and deserves honor and carefulness.

We need to treat these things and times with a sense of seriousness and honor for they are holy to the Lord.

There is one more thing I want to note before we move on.

What did Aaron and his sons *do* throughout this consecration service?

Nothing! They simply received! They are priests, and they are being dedicated here to their service as priests, but it all begins with them being in the place of *receiving*.

Even the ram for the wave offering is *put into their hands!*

In the same way, as we are called by the Lord to be a kingdom of priests, our service begins, not with our *doing*, but our *receiving*.

The Lord first puts *into* us what He wants *from* us.

And He expects nothing from us that He hasn't already given.

#### h. 29:38-46 – the daily offering

**38 “Now this *is* what you shall offer on the altar: two lambs of the first year, day by day continually. 39 One lamb you shall offer in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer at twilight.**

This was the basic daily duty of the priests who served in the tabernacle.

They were to offer a yearling lamb in the morning and the evening.

**40 With the one lamb shall be one-tenth of an ephah of flour [3 qts.] mixed with one-fourth of a hin of pressed oil [about a qt.], and one-fourth of a hin of wine as a drink offering. 41 And the other lamb you shall offer at twilight; and you shall offer with it the grain offering and the drink offering, as in the morning, for a sweet aroma, an offering made by fire to the LORD.**

Along with the lamb, they were to offer up flour, oil and wine.

These were the four basic staples of their diet.

This offering symbolized the life of daily communion with God which was the heart and soul of the nation.

It was to be renewed at the outset of every day and the conclusion to every night as kind of the *bookends* to their day.

This really isn't a bad pattern for us – to start our day with a turning of our hearts and souls to our Lamb, offering ourselves to Him as He gave Himself for us, praying that He would use us that day.

Then, ending the day with another time of reflecting back on the Lord and how we've progressed through it toward Him.

It's also a good idea to dedicate the night hours to the Lord, just as we've dedicated the daytime.

Pray the Lord's *protection* over you and yours while you sleep.

**42 This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the LORD, where I will meet you to speak with you. 43 And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by My glory. 44 So I will consecrate the tabernacle of meeting and the altar. I will also consecrate both Aaron and his sons to minister to Me as priests. 45 I will dwell among the children of Israel and will be their God. 46 And they shall know that I *am* the LORD their God, who brought them up out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them. I *am* the LORD their God.**

The consecration *ritual* which has been spelled out here is not *really* what will turn Aaron and his sons into priests – only God can do that!

And here He says He will.

Going to seminary and getting a Masters of Divinity does not make someone a pastor.

Going to Bible College or the School of Ministry does not earn someone a pulpit or teachers' rostrum.

God does not call and ordain men to the ministry because of a diploma.

His calling is sovereign and quite frankly has *nothing whatsoever* to do with education.

A man called to lead the flock of God ought to seek out some training and education, but he must never confuse the anointing of God with a class.

You gotta' love Jesus' selection of the men He chose to be the Apostles!

He didn't pick them from the Sanhedrin of the established religious schools.

He didn't even pick them from the elite social centers of the day.

He picked mostly common workmen from Hickville!



They were fishermen and turn-coat tax-collectors from Galilee.

They were the Original Dirty Dozen, and He turned them into the world's most powerful & influential group in the history of the world!

In the book of Acts, when they stood before the Sanhedrin to be arraigned on charges of heresy, these uneducated country simpletons answered with such wisdom and skill, the Sanhedrin were left speechless and concluded, "These men must have spent time with Jesus!"

All you need is God's calling and anointing. If you have that, the very best *next thing* you can do is to spend time with Him.

## CHAPTER 30

### i. 30:1-10 – the golden altar

<sup>1</sup> "You shall make an altar to burn incense on; you shall make it of acacia wood. <sup>2</sup> A cubit *shall be* its length and a cubit its width—it shall be square—and two cubits *shall be* its height. Its horns *shall be* of one piece with it. <sup>3</sup> And you shall overlay its top, its sides all around, and its horns with pure gold; and you shall make for it a molding of gold all around. <sup>4</sup> Two gold rings you shall make for it, under the molding on both its sides. You shall place *them* on its two sides, and they will be holders for the poles with which to bear it. <sup>5</sup> You shall make the poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold. <sup>6</sup> And you shall put it before the veil that *is* before the ark of the Testimony, before the mercy seat that *is* over the Testimony, where I will meet with you. <sup>7</sup> "Aaron shall burn on it sweet incense every morning; when he tends the lamps, he shall burn incense on it. <sup>8</sup> And when Aaron lights the lamps at twilight, he shall burn incense on it, a perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations.

This altar was not for sacrifice – it was for offering incense, which represents prayer.

This is made clear in Revelation 5:8 where we read of ". . . golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints."

In Rev. 8:3-4 we find this –

**Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand.**

Remember that the tabernacle is a picture of the throne room of heaven.

In Rev. 8 we catch a glimpse of that throne room and before God's throne stands a golden altar on which the prayers of God's saints are offered up before Him.

So in the earthly tabernacle, a golden altar was placed right before the veil that lead into the Holy of holies. And on it incense was burnt.

The priest who attended to the lamps in the morning and the evening would also put charcoal and incense on the altar to insure that there was a steady stream of incense smoke going up before the veil and the ark behind it.

It's interesting that this piece of furniture for the tabernacle wasn't listed before when we were told of the table of showbread and the golden lampstand.

The reason why is because this altar is tied specifically to the ministry of the priests and they haven't been set up and consecrated to their work till now.

But now that they've been installed and are occupied with their tabernacle tasks, God speaks about this altar which speaks of prayer, and specifically the prayer of *worship*.

As priests, there's something we can give God no one else can – worship!

The lost do not worship, and their prayers are feeble and ineffective at best.

Really, there is only one prayer that God will heed from the lips of the lost, and that is the prayer of confessing Christ.

But God's people have the privilege of coming before Him with their petitions, their requests, and their worship and adoration 24/7.

There is no request too small or insignificant between the Heavenly Father and His precious children.

No matter how inarticulate or halting our prayers, they delight Him, like the smell of the incense rising from the altar is a sweet, sweet smell, so are the prayers and praise of His own.

In the tabernacle, nothing was closer to God's presence than the golden altar and its incense.

In the same way, nothing brings us closer to God than prayer & praise.

He is only a prayer away.

**<sup>9</sup> You shall not offer strange incense on it, or a burnt offering, or a grain offering; nor shall you pour a drink offering on it.**

The incense offered on this altar had to be of a special formulation, given in vs. 34-38.

No other incense could be offered on it. The point was that God only accepts that which comes to Him according to His way.

It isn't enough to be "religious" or to fancy one's self a "spiritual person."

Prayer, in and of itself, does not impress God.

He is not merely the "Spirit in the sky," the "Big Man Upstairs," the "First Cause," the "Unmoved Mover," "Einstein's Something," or Lucas' "Force."

He's the Creator & Sustainer of the universe, the God of the Bible, the Redeemer of Israel, Yahweh, Jesus Christ.

And the only prayer that avails with Him is prayer offered IN THAT NAME!

And just as God did not want this altar to be a place of sacrifice, He doesn't want anyone to think that praying *saves* them!

Jesus saves, not prayer.

So praying now and then doesn't open the door of heaven to a person.

God also told them it was not a place for the grain offering, which speaks of giving of one's profit and income.

Salvation isn't earned by gifts to God.

There are those who think that because they give monetarily or of their produce and property, this has secured a place in heaven for them – as though God is short of cash and makes a bargain with them – a kind of salvation by exchange.

Finally, He said that they were not to offer a drink offering in it – which speaks of *fellowship*.

There are many who think they have a *special arrangement* with God.

They have generally good thoughts about God and the Bible and Church and every so often even attend, and throw a 5 spot in the offering when it comes by, and oh, it makes them feel so good! Look! They gave!

They consider themselves to be pretty good people, basically religious folk, but *balanced* too – that is, they aren't *fanatical*, like those *fundamentalists* who are the cause of so much trouble today.

Going to church *every* week, reading their Bible, and worshiping, well, that's all too much and shows a bit of too much emotional neediness.

People who are into God like that aren't living in the real world, they think.

The golden altar speaks of those who have come to God the way *He's* proscribed, through Jesus Christ, and have entered into a life of *true* intimacy and fellowship.

**<sup>10</sup> And Aaron shall make atonement upon its horns once a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonement; once a year he shall make atonement upon it throughout your generations. It is most holy to the LORD."**

Though no offering was to be made on the golden altar, when the high priest went into the Holy of holies once a year on the Day of Atonement, he was to pause at the altar and renew the blood on its 4 corners.

This is one more reminder that our relationship & fellowship with God is all based on the sacrificial work of Jesus Christ.

Without Him we have no ground, no standing before a Holy God.

**j. 30:11-16 – the ransom money**

**<sup>11</sup> Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: <sup>12</sup> “When you take the census of the children of Israel for their number, then every man shall give a ransom for himself to the LORD, when you number them, that there may be no plague among them when you number them. <sup>13</sup> This is what everyone among those who are numbered shall give: half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary (a shekel *is* twenty gerahs). [The shekel was a silver coin and the half-shekel was about a ¼ ounce] The half-shekel *shall be* an offering to the LORD. <sup>14</sup> Everyone included among those who are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering to the LORD. <sup>15</sup> The rich shall not give more and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when you give an offering to the LORD, to make atonement for yourselves. <sup>16</sup> And you shall take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and shall appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of meeting, that it may be a memorial for the children of Israel before the LORD, to make atonement for yourselves.”**

It was important to take a census of the people so that the nation could be organized more effectively.

And God here tells Moses *how* the children of Israel were to be numbered.

You see, there was a problem with just taking a census.

Counting people or things was a way in the ancient world of showing *ownership*.

And since Israel belonged to God – He had redeemed them from Egypt and they had bound themselves to Him by the covenant of Sinai - no man could number them because that would be presumptive and making a tacit claim to owning the people.

King David got into trouble for this in 1 Samuel 24 and a serious plague came on the nation that led to the death of thousands.

So God here tells Moses how a census could be taken *without* falling under judgment.

Though it's referred to here as an offering, really, it's a *tax*.

And in v. 12, it's called a *ransom*.

While every other offering the people brought was to be voluntary, this was *commanded*, an obligation no one could neglect.

Every adult 20 years and above would pay a half shekel – no exceptions.

The coins would then be counted up and this would yield the census total.

The tax was then used to support the tabernacle service.

If the adult population of Israel was about 2 million, that means the sum of silver would be about 15½ tons!

That would provide all they needed for the silver furnishing of the tabernacle and provide a nice bank for the purchasing of supplies for some time.

The Lord is very clear here in His instructions that the tax is to be a *flat* tax, the same amount for all!

Economic condition, sex, or age is to have no bearing.

As we saw last week, silver is the metal which symbolizes *redemption*.

This census tax, called the “ransom of souls” was paid in silver and was the same for all. It was a picture of the fact that all are redeemed the same way – by the blood of Christ.

It doesn't matter who you are, how much you make, whether you're a male or female – we are all sinners and all equally in need of a Savior. And one sacrifice pays for all!

And just as this ransom of souls was commanded – so salvation is commanded!

All other offerings we make to God are voluntary and have to flow from a willing and cheerful heart. But salvation is necessary! It's commanded. And it's commanded through faith in Christ.

Here's what Peter said when standing before the Sanhedrin -

**Acts 4:10-12 <sup>10</sup>let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the**

dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. <sup>11</sup>This is the ‘stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.’ <sup>12</sup>Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we MUST be saved.”

k. 30:17-21 – the bronze laver

<sup>17</sup> Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: <sup>18</sup> “You shall also make a laver of bronze, with its base also of bronze, for washing. You shall put it between the tabernacle of meeting and the altar. And you shall put water in it, <sup>19</sup> for Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet in water from it. <sup>20</sup> When they go into the tabernacle of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister, to burn an offering made by fire to the LORD, they shall wash with water, lest they die. <sup>21</sup> So they shall wash their hands and their feet, lest they die. And it shall be a statute forever to them—to him and his descendants throughout their generations.”

The bronze laver was effectively a large bowl for washing.

It had no specific dimensions given for it, unlike the other pieces of furniture in the tabernacle. Now, since God has been so careful to instruct Moses to make everything in the tabernacle just as he’d been shown the pattern on the mount, and that word “pattern” is a special word which speaks of technical drawings; why doesn’t the laver get dimensions?

That in itself is a clue to what it is a symbol for in heaven.

It represents something that has no size or dimensions in heaven.

The Apostle John saw it in his visions in Revelation as the crystal sea which is the floor of the throne room of God. [Rev. 4:6]

It’s upon this that the saints stand, a vast multitude which no man could number. [Rev. 7:9]

John refers to it as a sea – which is what the laver is also called in 2 Kings 25:13, 1

Chronicles 18:8, & Jeremiah 52:17.

When it was made, Exodus 38:8 tells us the bronze came from the mirrors of the women of Israel.

Ancient mirrors were made of highly polished metal, and bronze was the best because it was a hard metal that would hold its reflecting power for a long time without getting scratched.

As the women had used their mirrors to check their appearance and make themselves more attractive, so the laver was used to cleanse the priests and make them attractive in a spiritual sense – with the *beauty of holiness*.

But notice here that they only had to wash their hands and feet, not their whole bodies.

That was done at their consecration, when they were first inaugurated into their role as priests.

This reminds us of the story of Jesus washing Peter’s feet – [elaborate **John 13:10 He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean**].

The point is, the priests had been called and sanctified by God to their office.

But living in this fallen world, they would need to come before the Lord often for cleansing. And in that case the laver stood ready to wash their hands and feet.

So, what does the laver represent?

It speaks of the Word of God – as Ephesians 5:26 makes clear.

“ . . . that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,”

Psalm 119:9 says -

**How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word.**

In John 15:3 Jesus said,

**You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.**

This is why no dimensions are given for the laver, because it is an unending supply.

And it is that which the saints stand on in heaven, just as we stand on it by faith now on earth.

Psalm 24:3-4 - *Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and pure heart.*

### I. 30:22-33 – the making of the anointing oil

**22** Moreover the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: **23** “Also take for yourself quality spices—five hundred *shekels* of liquid myrrh, half as much sweet-smelling cinnamon (two hundred and fifty *shekels*), two hundred and fifty *shekels* of sweet-smelling cane, **24** five hundred *shekels* of cassia, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, and a hin of olive oil. **25** And you shall make from these a holy anointing oil, an ointment compounded according to the art of the perfumer. It shall be a holy anointing oil. **26** With it you shall anoint the tabernacle of meeting and the ark of the Testimony; **27** the table and all its utensils, the lampstand and its utensils, and the altar of incense; **28** the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, and the laver and its base. **29** You shall consecrate them, that they may be most holy; whatever touches them must be holy. **30** And you shall anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that *they* may minister to Me as priests. **31** “And you shall speak to the children of Israel, saying: ‘This shall be a holy anointing oil to Me throughout your generations. **32** It shall not be poured on man’s flesh; nor shall you make *any other* like it, according to its composition. It *is* holy, *and* it shall be holy to you. **33** Whoever compounds *any* like it, or whoever puts *any* of it on an outsider, shall be cut off from his people.’ ”

The anointing oil was to be composed, and then used to consecrate everything that was tied to the tabernacle service.

As we said earlier, the oil is symbolic of the Holy Spirit.

And as we see here, while it was to be used liberally in the service of God, it was to be used ONLY in His service.

V. 32 makes it clear – the oil was not to be poured on man’s flesh!

That is, the anointing of the Spirit was never to be used to advance the glory of some man or woman. The glory was to go to God alone!

Also, there was never to be any *fake oil*, any concoction that *pretended* to be the anointing.

How sternly this speaks to all that today which would seek to use the power of God as a platform for self-promotion – or any counterfeiting of the anointing of God.

Those who do such, the Lord says, shall be cut off.

If find it extremely interesting that time and again, those who make merchandise of the power and Spirit of God, are eventually shown to be dishonest hucksters and sham pretenders and are made a laughing stock.

They get off easier than did those who would counterfeit the Spirit of God in Moses’ day – they were cut-off – literally stoned to death.

Today, they end up becoming a sad joke – Robert Tilton, Jim Bakker, and such.

Make no mistake, some of the more popular hucksters that still gather a crowd today will soon follow in their shame-filled footsteps.

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On our last trip to Israel, we visited *The Three Arches* gift shop in Bethlehem.

The owner had taken the list of ingredients here and made up his own perfume and was hawking it.

I didn’t know if I should laugh or run for the store for fear of the judgment of God.

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This oil was to be used to anoint every and any thing associated with the service of the Lord.

As priests of the New Covenant, we need to see everything we have as the gift of the Lord and a part of our service of Him.

As such, it comes under the consecration of the Holy Spirit.

Our homes and all their furnishings; the TV, the computer; all of it.

### m. 30:34-38 – the making of the incense

**34** And the LORD said to Moses: “Take sweet spices, stacte and onycha and galbanum, and pure frankincense with *these* sweet spices; there shall be equal

amounts of each. <sup>35</sup> You shall make of these an incense, a compound according to the art of the perfumer, salted, pure, *and* holy. <sup>36</sup> And you shall beat *some* of it very fine, and put some of it before the Testimony in the tabernacle of meeting where I will meet with you. It shall be most holy to you. <sup>37</sup> But *as for* the incense which you shall make, you shall not make any for yourselves, according to its composition. It shall be to you holy for the LORD. <sup>38</sup> Whoever makes *any* like it, to smell it, he shall be cut off from his people.”

The command here is the same as with the holy anointing oil.

As the incense symbolized prayer – God is saying that the sweetness of what they enjoyed with Him was something that was to be looked to and enjoyed with Him *alone*.

This was not to be duplicated and used in any other way.

Even so, prayer is ever to be focused on God alone.

Worship is for HIM, for His pleasure! We may enjoy it, and should, but *our* enjoyment is not our focus or intent.

It’s the overflow of that which is pleasing to God.

I fear that in this day of *professionalism*, and when our culture is seemingly fixated on entertainment, we can come to church and to our times of worship with a *me-centered* mentality.

We like or dislike the “worship.” The music isn’t to our taste.

It was too loud, too quiet; too fast, too slow.

It was too excited, not excited enough.

All these are issues of personal taste that really have very little to do with what ought to be the important question – is the focus on God and His glory. Is *He* being loved and honored!

Is it a sincere and holy offering to Him – does He find it sweet?

If it’s sweet to Him then it *ought* to be so to us.