

## **EXODUS 29:26-37**

### **(THE CONSECRATION OF AARON AND HIS SONS, PART III)**

We go to the mechanic from time to time to get our car tuned up. Only a dummy would think, "I sure am glad I'm getting this done. Now I'll never have to come here again." No. Rather, we get a tune up from time to time in order to keep the car running properly. If for no other reason than a funny clunking sound, we eventually have to go in again for more work.

Some of us have regular intervals we go in. That way, we stay ahead of the game. We are proactive in our mechanical needs. Some of us aren't so careful and it is the clunking sound that forces us back to the shop. No matter what, we know we will eventually have to go.

In Israel, every time people came to the temple to sacrifice, it reminded them of their sin. It had to be so. They placed their hands on an animal and confessed their transgressions over it. After that, the animal's throat was cut and its blood was poured out.

Even if they didn't believe that they deserved what the animal got; even if they didn't think of themselves as sinful; they were still reminded that the God who they had come to thought they were. There could be no mistaking this as the thing twitched and writhed until it was emptied of its life blood.

These sacrifices were there to remind them of this. And they were required often enough that they were never to forget it. Each year, they would go to Jerusalem on the Day of Atonement. They would also make sacrifices at other times and for other reasons. Each time they made one, they could think, "Gee, I did this before and here I am again. I guess I must need a spiritual tune up."

The best part about Jesus, if we actually believe His word, is that we have received a permanent tune up - at least concerning the sin-debt that we owe. Aaron and his sons are being consecrated in order to begin a priesthood that would require constant tunes up for the people it served. This included them as well. But Christ, has a priesthood far, far superior to that...

**Text Verse:** "This *is* the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,"<sup>17</sup> *then He adds,* "Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more."<sup>18</sup> Now where there is remission of these, *there is* no longer an offering for sin." Hebrews 10:16, 17

It is a marvel and a wonder. Jesus Christ's sacrifice took care of the sin debt once and forever. It is, as He said with His dying words on the cross... FINISHED. Now in Christ, there is a remission of sin and there is no longer an offering for sin. We have full pardon, full redemption, and eternal salvation.

As we continue with the consecration rites which will be expected for Aaron and his sons, let us remember this. It's all to be found in His superior word. And so let's turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

### **I. The Wave and the Heave Offerings (verses 26-28)**

**<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;**

The ram of the consecration, or literally, the ram of the filling, which began to be detailed in verse 19 last week continues to be described here. Its breast was to be taken and waved before the Lord as a wave offering.

The term for "breast" which is *khazeh*, is used now for the first of thirteen times. All will be in Exodus through Numbers. It comes from *khazah* which means "to see" because it is the part that is most seen when looking at the front of the animal. This particular part of the animal has a special significance and was to therefore now be waved before the Lord.

<sup>26</sup> (con't) **and it shall be your portion.**

This breast which had been waved was to be given to Moses as his "portion." Here another new word is brought in translated as "portion." It is *manah*. It is a noun from a verb which means "to appoint;" thus it is an assigned portion. This word is used, for example, in the tender account of Elkanah and his beloved Hannah which is found in 1 Samuel 1 -

"And whenever the time came for Elkanah to make an offering, he would give **portions** to Peninnah his wife and to all her sons and daughters. <sup>5</sup> But to Hannah he would give a double **portion**, for he loved Hannah, although the LORD had closed her womb." 1 Samuel 1:4, 5

The Lord now tells Moses that this breast was to be his. However, later, this same breast which is waved will belong to Aaron and his sons. This is recorded in Leviticus 7:28-32 -

"Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>29</sup> 'Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'He who offers the sacrifice of his peace offering to the LORD shall bring his offering to the LORD from the sacrifice of his peace offering. <sup>30</sup> His own hands shall bring the offerings made by fire to the LORD. The fat with the breast he shall bring, that the breast may be waved *as* a wave offering before the LORD. <sup>31</sup> And the priest shall burn the fat on the altar, but the

breast shall be Aaron's and his sons'. <sup>32</sup> Also the right thigh you shall give to the priest *as* a heave offering from the sacrifices of your peace offerings."

As this is later to be the portion of the priestly line, then we are being shown two things right now. The first is that Moses is acting as the priest in order to establish the priesthood. He is receiving priestly wages for his work.

The second is a logical deduction which can be made from the rite. It is that this is a fallible priesthood which is initiated by a fallible man in the consecration of other fallible men. If they are imperfect, then the law which they minister cannot perfect anyone.

As this is so, then it by necessity must be a temporary priesthood. And if a temporary priesthood, then the law to which they minister must also be temporary. The law which so many confused Christians return to in order to attempt to be pleasing to God is a law of imperfection.

How good it would be for us to simply trust in the greater priesthood of Christ which came through His perfect work. Here, even before the beginning of the Aaronic priesthood, we can learn so much if we will just open our ears, pay heed with our minds, and attend to what the rest of the Bible says about these things!

**<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.**

There are two actions which can occur with an offering. One is to wave it. A wave offering is moved backwards and forwards and horizontally. This signifies the four directions - north, south, east, and west. This is what was done with the breast. In this type of offering a picture of the cross of Christ is formed.

A heave offering is an offering which is lifted upwards in a single motion. This is what occurred with the thigh. In this is a picture of Christ on the cross. The same word, *rum*, that is used to describe this offering is used to describe the work of Christ in Isaiah 52 –

"Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently;  
He shall be **exalted** and extolled and be very high." Isaiah 52:13

As you can see, each has its own significance, and each pointed to the work of Christ. Every offering of this type, for generation after generation was simply a foreshadowing of the coming work of the Lord. Of this verse and the next verse, the liberal dolts at Cambridge state the following -

"The verses (which do not agree with vv. 22, 24; for the thigh which was there burnt on the altar is here to be the perquisite of the priests) are probably a later insertion, correcting v. 26, and harmonizing (though imperfectly) vv. 22, 25 with the practice that was usual in the case of a peace-offering, viz. for the priests to receive both the breast and the right thigh..." Dolts at Cambridge

In other words, these liberal scholars see this verse as being in error and inserted afterwards in order to harmonize the instructions with what would later occur with all such offerings. Verses 22 and 24 show that the right thigh was to be *burned* on the altar as a sweet aroma before the Lord.

In not understanding the intent of this verse, they make the immediate assumption that it is in error because it now says that the right thigh was to be *given to Aaron and his sons*. If it was burned on the altar, then how could it have been given to Aaron and his sons? But they are incorrect in their analysis.

If one refers to the *actual* ordination of Aaron and his sons in Leviticus 8, it is evident that burning the thigh of the consecration is exactly what does occur -

"And Moses sprinkled the blood all around on the altar. <sup>25</sup> Then he took the fat and the fat tail, all the fat that *was* on the entrails, the fatty lobe *attached to* the liver, the two kidneys and their fat, and the right thigh; <sup>26</sup> and from the basket of unleavened bread that was before the LORD he took one unleavened cake, a cake of bread *anointed with* oil, and one wafer, and put *them* on the fat and on the right thigh; <sup>27</sup> and he put all *these* in Aaron's hands and in his sons' hands, and waved them *as* a wave offering before the LORD. <sup>28</sup> Then Moses took them from their hands and burned *them* on the altar, on the burnt offering. They *were* consecration offerings for a sweet aroma." Leviticus 8:24-28

There is no contradiction in this verse and verses 22 & 24. Rather, this is a short digression to explain that from the time *after* the consecration, the right thigh was to belong to Aaron and his sons. However, for the ordination, this was not given to them. Instead it was offered to the Lord on their behalf. They weren't yet ordained. Therefore they were not yet given the rights of ordained priests.

Rather than being cumbersome, contradictory, or confused, it is a logical time to show that the ordination was the *exception* to the rule of the right thigh. The dolts at Cambridge get no credit for their analysis. Instead, they get shameful demerits for not thinking this verse through, for not checking the passage which concerns the actual ordination, and for attempting to appear smart when they actually have made themselves look doltish and uneducated by trying to find fault in God's word.

**28 It shall be from the children of Israel for Aaron and his sons by a statute forever.**

The rights of the offerings were to be *l'khaq olam* or "by statute forever." This is not to be taken in the ultimate sense that we think of when we use the word "forever." Rather, *olam* gives the sense of "to the vanishing point."

In the context of the Aaronic priesthood, it would last until the coming of the Messiah who would fulfill the types and pictures of the Old Covenant. At that time, the law would pass away, being superseded by that which the law only anticipated. Until that time though, the giving of the breast and thigh to Aaron was to be a permanent statute. And there is a reason for this...

**28 (con't) 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.**

The breast of the wave offering was given to Aaron and his sons because Aaron bore the breastplate of judgment upon his breast for the sons of Israel. The right thigh was to be given to them because he bore the memorial stones on his shoulders for them as well.

As he carried the responsibility and burden of them upon himself, these offerings were to be given in kind to him. The contrast between this offering and the burnt-offering of verses 15-18 is summed up very well by Benson -

"In the burnt-offering, God had the glory of their priesthood, in this they had the comfort of it." Benson

The meaty and wholesome parts of the animal were given to Aaron and his sons as a comforting aspect of their high responsibilities before the Lord.

*An offering waved to my God  
To the four corners of the earth I offer it  
In hopes that through acceptance together we will trod  
And so to Him, this offering I submit*

*An offering lifted high to my God  
I raised it up and petition Him for my life  
In hopes that through acceptance together we will trod  
And that between us will end, our state of strife*

*An offering raised up to My God above  
And an offering lifted up to Him on High  
On behalf of the people that I love  
I will be raised on Calvary's cross, there to die*

## **II. Imputed Holiness (verses 29-34)**

**<sup>29</sup> “And the holy garments of Aaron shall be his sons’ after him,**

Verses 29 & 30 are now a new digression, but by no means an illogical or misplaced one. Verse 31 in thought follows logically after verse 28, but at some point the matter of the garments of Aaron, which were made specifically for the office of high priest, must be addressed. What will happen to them when he dies?



The answer is found in these two verses. The logic of placing these two verses here is evident. The ram of the ordination, or the "ram of the filling" is that by which the office is filled. Therefore, to mention this now concerning the garments for the office which is held is appropriate and precise.

In this is another hint of the temporary nature of the law. Noting that the garments of Aaron were to pass down to his sons after him shows that he would, in fact, die. Thus nothing is made perfect through the Aaronic priesthood.

If Aaron is the representative of the law before the Lord, and if he is to die, then it implies that his sinful state remained. Further, if the designated representative before the Lord died, then those on whose behalf he ministered for were also not perfected. This is explained in Hebrews 10 -

"For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. <sup>2</sup> For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. <sup>3</sup> But in those *sacrifices there is* a reminder of sins every year. <sup>4</sup> For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins." Hebrews 10:1-4

However, at the time of the establishment of the priesthood, these things weren't expected to be thought through. Only now as we look at the whole counsel of God can we clearly see the temporary nature of the law, and the limitations that went along with the associated offices and rites connected to it. Only in Christ is that which is perfect and eternal realized.

As far as the passing on of these garments, the transfer of them from Aaron is noted in Numbers 20:24-28 -

"Aaron shall be gathered to his people, for he shall not enter the land which I have given to the children of Israel, because you rebelled against My word at the water of Meribah. <sup>25</sup> Take Aaron and Eleazar his son, and bring them up to Mount Hor; <sup>26</sup> and strip Aaron of his garments and put them on Eleazar his son; for Aaron shall be gathered *to his people* and die there.' <sup>27</sup> So Moses did just as the LORD commanded, and they went up to Mount Hor in the sight of all the congregation. <sup>28</sup> Moses stripped Aaron of his garments and put them on Eleazar his son; and Aaron died there on the top of the mountain. Then Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain."

This is the only time that the transfer of these garments is noted in Scripture, but it would have been the regular custom at the death of each high priest. As long as the garments lasted, they were to be passed on. We can only assume that as they wore out, new ones were made to replace them.

<sup>29</sup> (con't) **to be anointed in them and to be consecrated in them.**

The Hebrew is more expressive than the English here. *l'mashkha bahem u-l'maleh bam eth yadam*. Only Young's gives a proper, literal translation of what it says -

"...to be anointed in them, and to consecrate in them **their hand**;" (YLT)

To consecrate them in their hand goes back to the idea of filling the hand for the duties of the job. The hand of the man performs the tasks of the job. And so to fill their hand in the rite of consecration then makes the work of their hands acceptable to the Lord. Thus, whoever was to perform the priestly duties was to be properly anointed and consecrated for the office.

**<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*.**

Again, as has been noted elsewhere, it is not the "tabernacle of meeting" but the "tent of meeting." The word *ohel* signifies a tent. Aaron would be the first priest to be so ordained. This is recorded in Leviticus 8 -

"And you shall not go outside the door of the tabernacle of meeting *for* seven days, until the days of your consecration are ended. For seven days he shall consecrate you. <sup>34</sup> As he has done this day, so the LORD has commanded to do, to make atonement for you. <sup>35</sup> Therefore you shall stay *at* the door of the tabernacle of meeting day and night for seven days, and keep the charge of the LORD, so that you may not die; for so I have been commanded." <sup>36</sup> So Aaron and his sons did all the things that the LORD had commanded by the hand of Moses." Leviticus 8:33-36

The number seven, as has already been seen, is the number of perfection. It corresponds to countless occurrences in Scripture. Why seven days is chosen for this rite of ordination then should be explained. Seven represents *spiritual perfection*.

Looking at the different ways to arrive at seven, we can see several important truths. The first is one plus six. As a cardinal number, one denotes *unity*; as an ordinal it denotes *primacy*; six is the number of man. Thus, the ordination of Aaron shows the unity of the office and the primacy of the man in relation to all others in Israel.

The second is two plus five. Two is the number of difference or division; five is the number of grace. In this then, there is the idea that the office of High Priest is a distinct office through which grace is offered.

And the third is three plus four. Three is the number of divine perfection - that which is real, solid, substantial, and complete; four is the number of creation. In this then we see the uniting of body and soul.

These seven days set aside for ordination follow logically and perfectly with each formation of the number. Aaron is being prepared to be the sole man to assume the high priestly role. He is the "set apart man" through whom the grace of God is transmitted to His people. And, he is the man who is to be prepared both physically and spiritually for the accomplishment of the tasks set before him.

However, this ordination is only a shadow of the true ordination of Christ as our eternal High Priest who literally fulfills what Aaron only pictures. This seven day period is only given as a prefiguring of the greater High Priest to come.

**<sup>31</sup> "And you shall take the ram of the consecration and boil its flesh in the holy place.**

The rest of the animal which was not burnt on the altar or given to Moses as the officiating priest will be taken and boiled, as it says, "in the holy place." However, this will be further defined in Leviticus 8 to not be specifically *in* the holy place, but at its door -

"And Moses said to Aaron and his sons, 'Boil the flesh *at* the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and eat it there with the bread that *is* in the basket of consecration offerings...' " Leviticus 8:31

**<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.**

In verses 23-25, one of each of the three types of bread were taken from the basket and presented to the Lord as a part of the burnt offering. That which remained, along with the flesh of the ram, was to be eaten by the door of the tent of meeting.

If you remember, each of those types of bread individually pictured Christ. The ram has also pictured Christ. Thus this meal is symbolically a partaking of His body. As He said in John, "My flesh is food indeed" (John 6:55), and "I am the Bread of life" (John 6:35).

The sharing of it between the Lord and Aaron and his sons is intended to solidify the bond between them. Christ, being He who unites the heavenly and the earthly as One. All during the week of ordination, they were being spiritually prepared for their lifelong duties as priests to the Lord, as is next made explicit...

**<sup>33</sup> They shall eat those things with which the atonement was made, to consecrate *and* to sanctify them;**

The purpose of the food is to consecrate and sanctify them. But how was this possible? It is because these were the things with which atonement was made. This is really the first time this word, *kaphar* or atonement, is used in the Bible in this sense.

It has only been used twice so far. The first was when Noah *covered* the ark with pitch in Genesis 6:14. The second time is when Jacob set about to appease, or *cover*, the anger of his brother Esau with a gift in Genesis 32:20.

Now it is used for the third time indicating the covering or atonement of the sins of Aaron and his sons. This covering or atonement is simply a combination of the words "at-one-ment." In others words, the intent of atonement is to reconcile through the covering. Peace and harmony is restored.

In the case of Aaron and his sons, the need for atonement actually highlights their failings. They needed a sacrifice for themselves. In this foreshadowing of Christ, we see how He far excelled the Aaronic priesthood. He had no sins of His own.

The sacrifices of Aaron were first for himself and only then for the sins of others. However, the atonement of Christ's sacrifice was exclusively for the sins of others. God in His grace and mercy accepted the temporary covering of the death of animals until the time when He would send Jesus to be the final, permanent sacrifice for the sins of those He would redeem.

<sup>33</sup> (con't) **but an outsider shall not eat *them*, because they *are* holy.**

The "outsider," or *zuwr*, is introduced into the Bible here. In this context it means anyone who was not of the ordained priestly line of Aaron, not even a regular Levite. This word comes from a primitive root which means to turn aside, as if for lodging. And so it speaks of a stranger or a foreigner. It is someone who is not a part of what is going on in the usual dealings of a place or matter. Because the food was considered holy, only someone who was consecrated as holy was to partake of it.

**<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.**

This is a direct command which is very similar to that of the Passover sacrifice. Concerning that sacrifice in Exodus 12, it said -

"You shall let none of it remain until morning, and what remains of it until morning you shall burn with fire." Exodus 12:10

The consecration offerings, like the Passover, were not to be eaten on the second day. Instead, they were to be burnt with fire. The reason for this is specifically given - "...because it is holy." The holiness of God is what is to be impressed upon their minds. Food which had gone through the night was susceptible to corruption. This would be unacceptable to consume when considering God's holy and incorruptible nature.

Further, it was exclusively to be eaten by the priests. If not, it was to be returned to God by fire, not passed on to another. If another ate of it, it would diminish the entire ordination process because they were not so ordained. It would be, in essence, mixing the holy with the profane.

And finally, if something which was devoted to a sacred use was given to someone else, they could then use it as an object of superstitious worship of some sort, such as a talisman. Like the Passover which pictured Christ so well, no such thing was to happen to the holy food of the consecration which also pictures Him in every detail.

*The offering shall be pure and undefiled  
And it shall not be allowed to become corrupt  
Upon you with My grace I have smiled  
Therefore, let nothing our fellowship interrupt*

*The offering shall be pure, not stained with sin  
It shall be holy as I am also holy  
Only through holiness can you the victory win  
This is how it is and how it shall be*

*The offering is Pure and Undefiled  
It is Pure and not stained with sin  
Upon My people through Jesus I have smiled  
For them and through His holiness, the victory He did win*

### **III. A Holy Offering to the Lord (verses 35-37)**

**<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.**

What this verse is telling us is that this same ceremony was to be conducted, not just on the first day, but on each day for seven days. This means that no matter what day the rite was started on, it would include at least one Sabbath. And yet, there was no guilt to be imputed for having conducted the priestly affairs on a Sabbath.



This is spoken of by Jesus in Matthew 12:5, where the priests are said to profane the Sabbath and yet remain blameless. This is just the first of such recorded instances in Scripture. The priestly functions were to progress on without regard to a Sabbath. Again, it is showing a distinction between the holy and the profane.

If a priest were not on duty, they would be required to observe the Sabbath, but if they were on duty, they would not be so required. Further, if they were called to duty on the Sabbath, they would be held guiltless. This is seen in the record of the fateful end of the wicked queen Athaliah -

"This *is* what you shall do: One-third of you entering on the Sabbath, of the priests and the Levites, *shall be* keeping watch over the doors; <sup>5</sup> one-third *shall be* at the king's house; and one-third at the Gate of the Foundation. All the people *shall be* in the courts of the house of the LORD. <sup>6</sup> But let no one come into the house of the LORD except the priests and those of the Levites who serve. They may go in, for they *are* holy; but all the people shall keep the watch of the LORD. <sup>7</sup> And the Levites shall surround the king on all sides, every man with his weapons in his hand; and whoever comes into the house, let him be put to death. You are to be with the king when he comes in and when he goes out.'

<sup>8</sup> So the Levites and all Judah did according to all that Jehoiada the priest commanded. And each man took his men who were to be on duty on the Sabbath, with those who were going *off duty* on the Sabbath; for Jehoiada the priest had not dismissed the divisions." 2 Chronicles 23:4-8

**<sup>36</sup> And you shall offer a bull every day *as* a sin offering for atonement.**

Each of the seven days of the ordination, a bull was to be sacrificed as "a sin offering for atonement." This looked forward to "the full and complete atonement for sin by the sacrifice of Christ." This again takes us back to the number seven and its derivatives.

As I noted, and as just one example, three plus four is seven. Three is the number of divine perfection - that which is real, solid, substantial, and complete; four is the number of creation. In this then we see the uniting of body and soul.

The bull pictures Christ, the High Priest. The blood pictures His blood covering, or atoning, for our sin. And so the seven pictures Him as the God/Man who is wholly capable of accomplishing this atonement.

He wasn't just an offering for sin; He was made to be sin that we, by imputation of His righteousness, might become the righteousness of God in Him. This is all being pictured in these verses which are so quickly passed over by most who dare to read them even just one time.

<sup>36</sup> (con't) **You shall cleanse the altar when you make atonement for it, and you shall anoint it to sanctify it.**

The cleansing of the altar here shows us a rather important truth which is found in the Bible. Sin is considered in a much wider sense than we tend to think of it. The biblical aspect of sin is that it can even infect a material object. That which is unholy is defiled, and defilement is sin. This is seen explicitly in Haggai 2 -

"On the twenty-fourth *day* of the ninth *month*, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying, <sup>11</sup> "Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Now, ask the priests *concerning the law*, saying, <sup>12</sup> "If one carries holy meat in the fold of his garment, and with the edge he touches bread or stew, wine or oil, or any food, will it become holy?"'"

Then the priests answered and said, "No."

<sup>13</sup> And Haggai said, "If *one who is unclean because of a dead body* touches any of these, will it be unclean?"

So the priests answered and said, "It shall be unclean."

<sup>14</sup> Then Haggai answered and said, "'So is this people, and so is this nation before Me,' says the LORD, 'and so is every work of their hands; and what they offer there is unclean.'" Haggai 2:10-14

In order to consecrate the altar, he had to make atonement for the sin of the altar. But where did that come from? It came from the sinful men who erected it. Further, the materials used in it are a part of the fallen creation.

Therefore, at least symbolically, it had to be made acceptable so that the gifts laid upon it would also be acceptable. John Lange, however, asks an obvious question concerning the state of the priests who would minister at it and their own sinful state. Did their sin also transfer to the altar?

"But as yet there can be no reference to this source of impurity; for in that case how could the priests ever make atonement for the altar?" John Lange

It is a good question, but the fact that the High Priest had to continue to sacrifice for his own sins year by year on the Day of Atonement showed that he was still a man with sin. The atonement for the altar was not made by sinless priests at all. And yet, the altar was to be considered acceptable for use.

Hence, once again, we see that the service of these men under the law, and thus the law itself, was to only be a temporary stepping stone in God's greater redemptive workings. The law could save none. Nor could it truly bring a state of sinless perfection to man.

In the sanctification of the altar, it was set apart for sacred use. It was also deemed as holy so that the gifts offered upon it would be holy. This is seen in Matthew 23 -

"Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift? <sup>20</sup> Therefore he who swears by the altar, swears by it and by all things on it." Matthew 23:19, 20

However, in Christ the true Altar, we read that He sanctified Himself, so that our lives as gifts to God might be acceptable to Him. This is seen in John 17 -

"As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. <sup>19</sup> And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth." John 17:18, 19

**<sup>37</sup> Seven days you shall make atonement for the altar and sanctify it.**

This is now the third time that an interval of seven days is mandated. The first was in verse 30 concerning consecration of the son to replace Aaron. The second was in verse 35 concerning the consecration of Aaron and his sons. And now we have this time concerning the atonement and sanctification of the altar.

Once the period of seven days, with its associated rites, was complete then the altar would be ready for service as is seen next...

**37 (con't) And the altar shall be most holy.**

Literally, it says *ha'mizbeakh qodesh qadashim* - an altar, holiness of holinesses. From that time forward, the altar would be considered acceptable for the offering of the gifts of the people to the Lord. Because of its most holy status, the result is the final words of our verses today...

**\*37 (fin) Whatever touches the altar must be holy.**

Scholars disagree on what is meant here. Ellicott and those in agreement with him say that it should read as the NKJV, "Whatever touches the altar must be holy." He says –

"...nothing which is not holy must touch it. The future has the force of an imperative, as in the Ten Commandments."

However, other scholars disagree and say that it should read, "...whatever touches the altar shall be made holy." (Jubilee Bible). Their stand is that -

"...this may be understood as implying that whatever was laid on the altar became the Lord's property, and must be wholly devoted to sacred uses, for in no other sense could such things be sanctified by touching the altar." Adam Clarke

The second is correct. The altar was once and for all sanctified as holy so that whatever was *offered upon it* would become holy. Further, that which was unholy and which touched it became set apart as devoted to the Lord. This is seen in the account of Joab going into the altar to seek mercy in 1 Kings 2. He was not holy when he went in, but his fate was devoted to the Lord through the word of Solomon.

So why is this important? The answer is that the altar pictures Christ. Our offerings to God are made holy through Him. They are not holy in and of themselves. Nor can our touching Him in a defiled state make Him impure. This is seen in the account of the woman with the flow of blood in Luke 8 -

"Now a woman, having a flow of blood for twelve years, who had spent all her livelihood on physicians and could not be healed by any, <sup>44</sup> came from behind and touched the border of His garment. And immediately her flow of blood stopped.

<sup>45</sup> And Jesus said, "Who touched Me?"

When all denied it, Peter and those with him said, "Master, the multitudes throng and press You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?'"

<sup>46</sup> But Jesus said, "Somebody touched Me, for I perceived power going out from Me." <sup>47</sup> Now when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling; and falling down before Him, she declared to Him in the presence of all the people the reason she had touched Him and how she was healed immediately.

<sup>48</sup> And He said to her, "Daughter, be of good cheer; your faith has made you well. Go in peace." Luke 8:43-48

As with all things in the Bible which may seem obvious on the surface, the truth is that more often than not, there is more to what is going on than meets the eyes. Christ was not defiled by the unclean woman, and yet she - meaning her offering of faith - was deemed holy by God and accepted because she had offered upon the true Altar.

These verses, some of which seem so immensely different that the religion we espouse in knowing Christ, are actually intricately tied up in who He is and what He has done and still does for us. The law had to come and these rites and rituals

needed to be given first before we could realize our need for that which is greater.

The temporary atonement of a bull or a ram, being graciously offered by God, could never truly perform the function it was given for. It could only temporarily stay off His wrath and provide us with His mercy and grace. The law was necessary, but thank God that the law is now fulfilled and set aside.

In Christ, we have the fullness of what was actually lacking in the law. We have peace with God, we have atonement for our sins, and we have full redemption as sons of God - all by mere faith in His marvelous provision. Let us never forget this as we read these sometimes difficult passages. We have what they only pictured. We have Jesus; sweet Jesus. If you have never received the precious gift of Christ Jesus; do it today!...

**Closing Verse:** "And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. <sup>12</sup> But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, <sup>13</sup> from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. <sup>14</sup> For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified." Hebrews 10:11-14

**Next Week:** Exodus 29:38-46 *Wonderful words through which we will trod* (I Will Dwell Among Them and be Their God) (82<sup>nd</sup> Exodus Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. Even if a deep ocean lies ahead of You, He can part the waters and lead you through it on dry ground. So follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

## **The Consecration of Aaron and His Sons**

Then you shall take the breast  
Of the ram of Aaron's consecration  
And wave it as a wave offering before the Lord; per His behest  
And it shall be your portion

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, it is the best

Of that which is for Aaron, as I tell you  
And of that which is for his sons too  
It shall be from the children of Israel  
For Aaron and his sons by a statute forever, so I to you tell

For it is a heave offering  
It shall be a heave offering from the children of Israel  
(hear My word)  
From the sacrifices of their peace offerings  
That is, their heave offering to the Lord  
And the holy garments of Aaron  
Shall be his sons' after him, so shall you do



To be anointed in them  
And to be consecrated in them too  
That son who becomes priest in his place  
Shall for seven days put them on  
When he enters the tabernacle of meeting  
To minister in the holy place, these he shall don

And the ram of the consecration you shall take  
And boil its flesh in the holy place  
A boiling of its flesh you shall make

Then Aaron and his sons shall  
The flesh of the ram, they shall be eating  
And the bread that is in the basket  
By the door of the tabernacle of meeting

They shall eat those things  
With which the atonement was made, so shall it be  
To consecrate and to sanctify them  
But an outsider shall not eat them, because they are holy

And if any of the flesh of the consecration offerings  
Or of the bread, remains until the morning - do hear Me  
Then you shall burn the remainder with fire

It shall not be eaten, because it is holy  
Thus you shall do to Aaron and his sons  
According to all that I have commanded you to do  
Seven days you shall consecrate them  
According to all that I instruct to you

And you shall every day offer a bull  
As a sin offering for atonement, yes each day  
You shall cleanse the altar when you make atonement for it  
And you shall anoint it to sanctify it, as to you I say

Seven days you shall make atonement  
For the altar and sanctify it, according to these words from Me  
And the altar most holy shall be  
Whatever touches the altar must be holy

Lord God Almighty, we thank you for what You have done  
You have made us a kingdom of priests to You  
And it is only because of the work of Your Son  
It is only because of what He alone did do

And so we do thank You and we give You praise  
Yes, Lord God Almighty, we shall do so... even unto eternal days

Hallelujah and Amen...