

The Book of Exodus

Lesson 20

Chapters 29 - 30

The Ordination Preparation

Exodus 29:1 "Now this is what you shall do to them to consecrate them to minister as priests to Me: take one young bull and two rams without blemish,² and unleavened bread and unleavened cakes mixed with oil, and unleavened wafers spread with oil; you shall make them of fine wheat flour.³ "And you shall put them in one basket, and present them in the basket along with the bull and the two rams.

The ordination of Aaron and his sons was to be performed by Moses and no one else. It was Moses' duty to select the bull and the two rams and to place in a basket the unleavened bread and unleavened cakes, the oil, the unleavened wafers and the fine wheat flour. Surely, all the congregations of the tribes were welcome to observe to this magnificent, majestic and monumental event. One note should be made here that this ordination service will not take place until the Tabernacle and all its furnishings are completed. At this point in the story, the LORD is still giving Moses the instructions to follow once he returns to the camp at the end of his 40-day stay on Mount Sinai with the LORD.

Both the bull and the two rams were to be perfect in every way. It is not stated here, but these three animals were not to be over a year old. This requirement will be strictly enforced in the sacrificial laws soon to be given to Moses by the LORD.

Three kinds of bread made from fine flour were to be used in the service. The first was the unleavened bread made from fine wheat flour. We are aware of the flat *matstsoth* that we often see used at the LORD's Supper meals observed in the Churches today. We think the *matstsoth* should be in neat little squares but in the day of Moses, the bread would have been rolled out flat (but not thin) with little regard to a perfect shape of any kind.

The second was the unleavened cakes or *challoth*. The texture of these small cakes would be different from the texture of the *matstsoth* bread because they contained salt and were made from fine barley flour. In the preparation of the cakes, the baker would perforate the dough (puncture or punch holes) and add salt on top.

The third was the unleavened wafer called the *rekikey*. It was extremely thin and fragile like a potato chip. We do not know the kind of flour used for these wafers.

The oil in all cases would have been extracted from olives.

The Calling of the Candidates

Exodus 29:4 "Then you shall bring Aaron and his sons to the doorway of the tent of meeting, and wash them with water.

It is interesting that the LORD did not give Moses any instruction for preparing himself to ordain these priests. Yet, Moses was to wash Aaron and his sons with water at the door of the Tent of Meeting. This process was and is an eternal symbol of washing away all the sin and filth of these men before they were ordained into the priestly ministry as servants of the LORD.

The Presentation of the High Priest's Garments

Exodus 29:5 "And you shall take the garments, and put on Aaron the tunic and the robe of the ephod and the ephod and the breastpiece, and gird him with the skillfully woven band of the ephod; 6 and you shall set the turban on his head, and put the holy crown on the turban. 7 "Then you shall take the anointing oil, and pour it on his head and anoint him.

After washing Aaron and his sons, Moses was to dress Aaron first in the regalia which would symbolize the priesthood of Israel for more than 1,000 years. Although the garments were a permanent sign of the priesthood, they did not guarantee the blessing and responsibilities of the priesthood – they came with the anointing of the oil. With the anointing, Aaron would become the High Priest of Israel.

The Presentation of the Heirs' Garments

Exodus 29:8 "And you shall bring his sons and put tunics on them. 9a "And you shall gird them with sashes, Aaron and his sons, and bind caps on them, and they shall have the priesthood by a perpetual statute.

Moses then was to dress the four sons of Aaron in their sashes and caps. Henceforth, the sons of Aaron would inherit the priesthood through a permanent law of the LORD. Here we must pause to notice that the four sons were not to be anointed with oil by Moses. Why? It was not Moses' place to ordain the sons of Aaron; that privilege belonged to Aaron. The ordained were to ordain the next generation. Moses was not ordained in the same way as Aaron. Moses was selected by the LORD to be the national leader of Israel for the LORD and to set aside Aaron as the first High Priest but after that, Moses' duties were completed.

The Ordination Command

Exodus 29:9b So you shall ordain Aaron and his sons.

And so, when the Tabernacle and all its furnishings were completed, Moses was to "ordain Aaron and his sons." Moses would anoint Aaron and Aaron would complete the process by ordaining his sons.

The First Offering

Exodus 29:10 "Then you shall bring the bull before the tent of meeting, and Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands on the head of the bull. **11** "And you shall slaughter the bull before the LORD at the doorway of the tent of meeting. **12** "And you shall take some of the blood of the bull and put *it* on the horns of the altar with your finger; and you shall pour out all the blood at the base of the altar. **13** "And you shall take all the fat that covers the entrails and the lobe of the liver, and the two kidneys and the fat that is on them, and offer them up in smoke on the altar. **14** "But the flesh of the bull and its hide and its refuse, you shall burn with fire outside the camp; it is a sin offering.

After the oil was administered, Aaron and his sons were to place their hands on the head of the bull while Moses killed it at the door to the Tabernacle. Its blood was to be dabbed on the horns of the Brazen Altar and the rest of its blood was to be poured around the bottom of the altar. Then certain parts of the bull (entrails, liver and kidneys) to be put on the grill of the altar and cooked. The rest of the bull was to be taken outside the camp and burned.

The Second Offering

Exodus 29:15 " You shall also take the one ram, and Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands on the head of the ram; **16** and you shall slaughter the ram and shall take its blood and sprinkle it around on the altar. **17** "Then you shall cut the ram into its pieces, and wash its entrails and its legs, and put *them* with its pieces and its head. **18** "And you shall offer up in smoke the whole ram on the altar; it is a burnt offering to the LORD: it is a soothing aroma, an offering by fire to the LORD.

The first ram was sacrificed in the same manner as the bull with Aaron and his sons laying their hands on its head and Moses killing it at the door. The blood of this ram was not to be poured around the altar, it was to be sprinkled. The whole ram was washed and then cooked on the altar with part of the bull already being cooked. This ram was to vicariously pay the penalty for the sins of the people. In the future, such a sacrifice was to vicariously pay the penalty for the sins of the person bringing the offering. This first ram was specifically for Aaron.

The Third Offering

Exodus 29:19 "Then you shall take the other ram, and Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands on the head of the ram. **20** "And you shall slaughter the ram, and take some of its blood and put *it* on the lobe of Aaron's right ear and on the lobes of his sons' right ears and on the thumbs of their right hands and on the big toes of their right feet, and sprinkle the *rest of the blood* around on the altar.

The second ram was sacrificed in the same way as the bull and the first ram. With this ram some of the blood was placed on the right lobe of the ear and the big toes on the right feet of Aaron and his sons. Then the rest of its blood was sprinkled around the altar. This ram was to vicariously pay the penalty for the sins of Aaron and his sons. It signified the fact that Aaron and his sons were dedicated to the LORD and His work with everything they saw and heard as well

as everywhere they went. The sprinkling in each case was to indicate that they as priests could neither see, work nor walk in a way pleasing to the LORD without the application of the blood of this sacrifice. The blood of any animal never truly took away the guilt of sin from anyone. It was but a mere foreshadowing of the ultimate blood that would be shed by the LORD that could take away the guilt of sin. This second ram was specifically for the sons of Aaron.

The Anointing of the Altar

Exodus 29:21 "Then 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, and on his sons and on his sons' garments with him; so he and his garments shall be consecrated, as well as his sons and his sons' garments with him.

With Aaron and his sons ordained, it would then be the time to consecrate the garments they were wearing. To "consecrate" means to *devote to the LORD*. The symbolic consecration of the garments was to be accomplished by sprinkling both blood from the altar and some of the anointing oil on the garments as Aaron and his sons were wearing them. Therefore, the stains were never removed from the garments.

Moses' Offerings

Exodus 29:22 "You shall also take the fat from the ram and the fat tail, and the fat that covers the entrails and the lobe of the liver, and the two kidneys and the fat that is on them and the right thigh (for it is a ram of ordination),²³ and one cake of bread and one cake of bread *mixed with* oil and one wafer from the basket of unleavened bread which is *set* before the LORD;²⁴ and you shall put all these in the hands of Aaron and in the hands of his sons, and shall wave them as a wave offering before the LORD.²⁵ "And you shall take them from their hands, and offer them up in smoke on the altar on the burnt offering for a soothing aroma before the LORD; it is an offering by fire to the LORD.

After the garments were consecrated, Moses was to take parts of the ram and a piece of each of the three kinds of bread and give them to Aaron and his sons. They would then wave the items as an offering before the LORD. Moses would take them back from Aaron and his sons and place them on the Brazen Altar as a burnt offering.

Aaron's Offering

Exodus 29:26 "Then you shall take the breast of Aaron's ram of ordination, and wave it as a wave offering before the LORD; and it shall be your portion.²⁷ "And you shall consecrate the breast of the wave offering and the thigh of the heave offering which was waved and which was offered from the ram of ordination, from the one which was for Aaron and from the one which was for his sons.²⁸ "And it shall be for Aaron and his sons as *their* portion forever from the sons of Israel, for it is a heave offering; and it shall be a heave offering from the sons of Israel from the sacrifices of their peace offerings, *even* their heave offering to the LORD.

Moses would take the breast of the first ram and wave it before the LORD. Moses would do the same with the thigh of the first ram. Moses' action with the thigh was called a heave offering. Moses repeated the worship process with the second ram for Aaron's sons. Together, the wave and heave offering were called the "peace offerings."

The Anointing of the Holy Garments

Exodus 29:29 "And the holy garments of Aaron shall be for his sons after him, that in them they may be anointed and ordained.

While Aaron was alive, when his sons donned the garments of the High Priest, they vicariously took on the anointing and ordination of Aaron. That anointing and ordination would be carried on through the generations of the line of Aaron who had the privilege of serving as the High Priest.

The Term of the Priest's Service

Exodus 29:30 "For seven days the one of his sons who is priest in his stead shall put them on when he enters the tent of meeting to minister in the holy place.

Herein we discover the length of service of Aaron and each son in the Tabernacle. Each served for seven days at a time, a full week. During that time, whoever entered the Tabernacle to serve as a priest would wear Aaron's garments.

The Ordination Meal

Exodus 29:31 "And you shall take the ram of ordination and boil its flesh in a holy place. 32 "And Aaron and his sons shall eat the flesh of the ram, and the bread that is in the basket, at the doorway of the tent of meeting. 33 "Thus they shall eat those things by which atonement was made at their ordination and consecration; but a layman shall not eat *them*, because they are holy. 34 "And if any of the flesh of ordination or any of the bread remains until morning, then you shall burn the remainder with fire; it shall not be eaten, because it is holy.

The meat of the ordination ram was to be boiled by Moses and eaten by Aaron and his sons at the door of the Tabernacle in this ceremony. Bread that was brought to the ceremony by Moses was to be consumed by Aaron and his sons along with the boiled meat. Only Aaron and his sons could eat the meal. Aaron and his sons had become holy in the ordination process before the LORD and all others were considered unholy. All the food that still remained when the sun arose was to be burned, not eaten.

The Seven Day Cleansing of the Altar

Exodus 29:35 "And thus you shall do to Aaron and to his sons, according to all that I have commanded you; you shall ordain them through seven days. 36 "And each day you shall offer a bull as a sin offering for atonement, and you shall purify the altar when you make atonement for it; and you shall anoint it to consecrate it. 37 "For seven days you shall make atonement for the altar and consecrate it; then the altar shall be most holy, *and* whatever touches the altar shall be holy.

Now we see that the ordination service was not just a one-day event; it continued for seven days! It is interesting that the purpose of the following seven-day ritual was to "**make atonement for the altar and consecrate it.**" Why did the altar need to be atoned and consecrated? Was it because the altar had been made with sinful hands? Most likely! On each of the seven days a bull was to be sacrificed as a sin offering and the blood was used to purify the altar and "**make atonement**" for it. The Hebrew word is *kaphar* and it means to cover over, pacify or to satisfy. It was the sin offering of the bull that covered the sins of the hands that fashioned the altar, as it might be said. Yet, the Brazen Altar in itself was not sinful. This action was therefore a ritual to rid the altar of any remnants of the sins of the persons who crafted its form. By anointing the altar with blood of the bull, the altar was wiped clean. The process also consecrated the altar for no other purposes than that of the sacrificial system. All the sacrifices that were placed on the altar were therefore holy, or sacred, because they were part of that sacrificial system.

The Morning and Evening Offering

Exodus 29:38 "Now this is what you shall offer on the altar: two one year old lambs each day, continuously. 39 "The one lamb you shall offer in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer at twilight; 40 and there shall be one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with one-fourth of a hin of beaten oil, and one-fourth of a hin of wine for a libation with one lamb. 41 "And the other lamb you shall offer at twilight, and shall offer with it the same grain offering as the morning and the same libation, for a soothing aroma, an offering by fire to the LORD. 42 "It shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the doorway of the tent of meeting before the LORD, where I will meet with you, to speak to you there.

After the seven days of atonement and consecration of the altar were put in place, a regular, continuous, routine offering was to begin on the altar. The routine involved a lamb in the morning, a lamb as the sun was setting along with about three quarts of fine flour, a quart and a half of oil and a quart and a half of wine for a "libation" or drink offering. The drink offering was not consumed by the priest; it was poured on the meat with the flour and the oil being offered on the altar. This morning and evening ritual was to continue daily without fail, a burnt offering that produced a "**soothing aroma**" in the nostrils of the LORD. The Hebrew word is *nichoach* and it means quieting or tranquilizing. As long as the offerings were made according to the LORD's will, He would meet and speak with the priests of every generation at the door of the Tabernacle.

The Acceptance of the Candidates

Exodus 29:43 "And I will meet there with the sons of Israel, and it shall be consecrated by My glory. 44 "And I will consecrate the tent of meeting and the altar; I will also consecrate Aaron and his sons to minister as priests to Me.

When Moses has completed the building of the Tabernacle (Tent of Meeting) and all the rest of the furniture and furnishings as well as the ordination ceremony of Aaron and his sons, the LORD promises to do the rest. In His eyes the entire court and the priests will be set apart for His glory.

The Dwelling of the LORD

Exodus 29:45 "And I will dwell among the sons of Israel and will be their God. 46 "And they shall know that I am the LORD their God who brought them out of the land of Egypt, that I might dwell among them; I am the LORD their God.

Once completed and consecrated, the LORD promises to live in the camp of the Israelites. His presence will be readily known at all times and His power will be understood. If for any reason any Israelite generation fails to remember the events of the exodus, all they will have to do is to look to the center of the camp where the Tabernacle rests and the watch the miracle of the priests and the offerings as well as the glory of the LORD radiating in the Holy of Holies. What other god lives in the camp of his people? None.