

**CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE-
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

[Adapted from Bethel Bible-Presbyterian Church,
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DHW BIBLE CLASS

LESSON 22

EXODUS

CHAPTERS 30-31

INTRODUCTION

Exodus 32 continues the account. Two more items of the furniture of the tabernacle are mentioned now, namely, *the altar of incense* and *the laver*. The LORD did not give the reason why these two items were not mentioned earlier together with the other items. If the LORD had not given any reason, it is best that we do not speculate. This is always a good principle in studying and interpreting the Word of God. The rest of the things mentioned in these two chapters complete the articles and requirements for the building of the tabernacle. As before, these items of the tabernacle present a clear picture of the true tabernacle in which the Lord Jesus Christ is the High Priest even now in the presence of God the Father interceding on behalf of all the children of God.

OUTLINE

1. The Altar of Incense (30:1-10).

- a. It would be made of shittim wood with four corner horns overlaid with pure gold (vv. 1-3).
- b. Two golden rings for the staves

to carry it (vv. 4-5).

- c. It would be placed before the veil (v. 6).
- d. Aaron was required to burn sweet incense every morning and every evening (vv. 7-9).
- e. Aaron must make an atonement once a year upon the horns with blood (v. 10).

2. The Atonement Money (30:11-16).

- a. The atonement money for every person was half a shekel unto the LORD (vv. 11-13).
- b. Every one from twenty years and above should give an offering to the LORD (v. 14).
- c. The rich should not give more, and the poor must not give less than half a shekel (v. 15).
- d. The offering was for the service of the tabernacle (v. 16).

3. The Laver (30:17-21).

- a. It would be made of bronze and placed between the tabernacle and the Brazen altar (vv. 17-18).
- b. It would be used for the washing of hands and feet before they minister in the tabernacle (vv. 19-21).

4. The Sacred Anointing Oil (30:22-33).

- a. The preparation of the anointing oil of myrrh, cinnamon, calamus, cassia and olive oil (vv. 22-25).
- b. The oil was to be used for anointing all the tabernacle furniture and Aaron and his sons (vv. 26-30).
- c. Moses was warned against any unauthorised use of the oil (vv. 31-33).

5. **The Sacred Incense (30:34-38).**
 - a. The incense would be made of stacte, onycha, galbanum, frankincense into a perfume (vv.34-35).
 - b. It would be offered before the testimony in the tabernacle (v.36).
 - c. Warning against unauthorised making and use of the perfume (vv.37-38).
6. **The Appointment of Bezaleel and Aholiab (31:1-11).**
 - a. The LORD specifically called and specially anointed these two men (vv.1-6).
 - b. They might make the tabernacle and all its furniture (vv.7-9).
 - c. They would also make the holy garments (vv.10-11).
7. **The Sabbath (31:12-17).**
 - a. The LORD reminded Moses concerning the Sabbath (vv.12-13).
 - b. The rehearsing of the requirements in keeping the Sabbath (vv.14-17).
8. **Moses Received the Two Tablets (31:18).**

SUMMARY

The Altar of Incense

The altar of incense was made with the same material as all the other furniture—shittim wood with an overlay of pure gold. It was smaller than the Ark and it was placed in the Holy Place just before the Veil in line

with the Ark, which was in the Holy of Holies. There were four horns at the corners like the Brazen altar. There were rings for the staves to be inserted for the carrying of the altar. Aaron was required to burn the prescribed incense on it every morning and evening continually. The offering of “strange incense”, that is, incense not made according to the LORD’s prescription, was a very serious violation. Once a year when the offering of atonement was kept, Aaron had to sprinkle the blood of the sacrifice on the horns of the altar.

Incense, in Scripture, often symbolises prayer. The Psalmist cried out, “Let my prayer be set forth before Thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice” (141:2). In the New Testament when Zacharias the priest entered into the Temple of the Lord to burn incense, the children of Israel were praying outside (Luke 1:9, 10). And in Revelation, the *smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel’s hand* (8:3,4).

How the LORD our God is pleased when His children pray to Him morning and evening continually. Paul called on the Thessalonian Christians to *pray without ceasing*. This is well pleasing in the sight of God, a sweet savour unto the Lord. Praying and being in fellowship with God is a privilege of the

Christian only. How sad it is that Christians do not engage themselves in this; not to pray is to deprive themselves of God's ordained means of seeking God's help in time of need.

The Ransom Money

The LORD also spoke to Moses that whenever a census of the children of Israel was done, a ransom (or atonement, same word) was to be taken for each person above the age of twenty so that "there be no plague among them" (v.12). This seems to suggest that each time when Moses was to take a census, they were in danger of being stricken with a plague. The reason for this is not given. Some scholars suggested that since they were potential soldiers, who would take a life, they had to pay a ransom for life. Others suggest that the taking of a census could lead to pride. But these speculative explanations present many insoluble problems. Whatever the reason was, it was not revealed except that the ransom money received would be used for the service of "the tabernacle of the congregation" (30:16).

The Laver

The Laver was made of bronze and was placed between the tabernacle proper and the Brazen altar. The laver was filled with water. Aaron and his sons had to wash their hands and feet when they entered the tabernacle or

when they ministered to the LORD (30:19, 20). The violation of this requirement was the penalty of death. This teaches us the absolute holiness of God and when serving Him it must never be taken for granted and done carelessly. God has clearly prescribed the way, and violating the law means death to the priests. God takes worshipping and serving Him in the manner prescribed by Him very seriously. In like manner, Christians who gather on the Lord's day to worship Him must have the right attitude of heart and mind. When Christians are convicted of their sins, they need to confess and repent before Lord and ask for forgiveness. The Lord has promised to forgive those who confess their sins. Daily confession and repentance of our sins before the Lord is a necessary aspect of our walk before God.

The Anointing Oil

The consecration of the various articles and furniture of the tabernacle were either done with blood or the anointing oil. God gave Moses the specific *recipe* for making the anointing oil. The formula for making the anointing oil was holy. No one was allowed to copy the formula and make a copy of it and use it on any person. The penalty was severe. Any breach of this law would result in the person being "cut off from his people" (30:33). This means that the person would be

excommunicated from the community. In those days, it was a terrible punishment. In the desert, people needed one another to live, and to be “cut off” would mean deprivation and hardship.

The Fragrant Oil

Another fragrant oil was to be made for the altar of incense. God gave another formula for the making of this oil. The restriction on its use was the same as the anointing oil. It must not be copied and made, and it must not be used privately on any individual. It was holy unto the LORD. The penalty was the same; the offender would be cut off from his people. What was sacred and not sacred was very clearly identified. In this respect, we must learn that not all things in life may be presented and accepted before the Lord and the things which had been consecrated for use unto the Lord should not be for private use.

Appointment of Craftsmen

Bezaleel, a man from the tribe of Judah, was specially called and appointed by God to work on all the articles and furniture of the tabernacle (31:1, 2). His name means “in the shadow of God”. God not only called him but bestowed upon him “the spirit of God in wisdom and in understanding, and in knowledge, and all manner of craftsmanship” (31:3). The “spirit of God” was undoubtedly

the Holy Spirit. Bezaleel was filled with the Holy Spirit to do the works of God.

God called and God enabled. Moreover, his assistant was also specially called and appointed by God. He was Aholiab, a Danite, and God also bestowed upon him wisdom (31:6). His name means “the father (God) is my tent”. Obviously other people would be called by these two who had been specially ordained to carry out the assignment of making the things pertaining to the tabernacle. It would be observed that many details were not spelt out, and hence Bezaleel had room for creativity, which would definitely be inspired by the Holy Spirit. However, where God had specifically given the requirements. Bezaleel must obey to the letter.

We observe first that when God calls a person to serve Him, He would enable him. He would empower him and give him the necessary gifts to carry out His work. If a person is called to preach and teach the Word of God, God would grant him the wisdom, understanding, and knowledge of His Word. God would also grant him the ability to communicate

Another thing we learn is that the Christian who is called must do according to what God had commanded him to do. Obedience is the most important characteristic of any person who serves the Lord. He

has to do every thing in accordance to His will. God's will is revealed in His Word. He has to be careful that when he does the work of God, it has to be done in God's way. God's work must be done in God's way, and not in any other way which might be attractive to man.

Remembering the Sabbath

The LORD concluded the instructions concerning the tabernacle by reminding the children of Israel the commandment concerning the Sabbath (Exodus 20:8-11). The LORD added some new significant thoughts about the Sabbath. Observe that the LORD called it "my Sabbath." One day in the week is to be devoted to the LORD. Christians must realise this. It is the Lord's Day. It is true that every day belongs to Him, but this particular day, is His especially. Christians must not adopt the attitude of the world in treating the Lord's Day as a weekend recreational holiday. This mental attitude does not prepare the mind and the heart of the Christian to worship the LORD. How many Christians are always late for Sunday worship service, and on a rainy day some even prefer to stay in the comfort of one's home. Christians are not teaching their children to wake up early and prepare to go to church to worship God. It is no surprise that their children will imbibe the same attitude as their parents. While God is loving and understanding, He is also holy. He has

enjoined Christians to be holy as He is holy. Christians must not take God for granted.

The LORD next mentioned that the Sabbath was a sign between Him and His people so that they might know that He is the LORD that sanctified them (31:13). What it means here is that by keeping the Sabbath, it serves as a sign of the covenant God made with Israel setting them apart for His service and for Himself. Similarly, when Christians faithfully keep the Lord's Day, it demonstrates that God had chosen and sanctified us (separate us, set us apart) for His service. This is God's way in teaching the children of Christian parents that they belong to God. They are not their own for they have been bought with the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. If the world were to look at Christians, they would know that Christians are different. They belong to God.

The violation of this commandment was so serious that the soul that broke this commandment would be sentenced to death. To break the fourth commandment is to sin against a thrice holy God. The law stipulates the death penalty for the offender. The Lord Jesus Christ who is the Lord of the Sabbath taught that acts of mercy and necessity could be done on the Sabbath day. But that does not mean skipping the worship of God on

the Lord's Sabbath day and do works of "necessity" and earn more money. If Christians draw near to God and walk in His ways, such an attitude and subtle manoeuvre might deceive man but not God, and worst still is self-deceiving. Keep the Lord's Sabbath.

Summary

Chapter 31 concludes the instructions given to Moses concerning the building of the Lord's Tabernacle, the appointment of Aaron and his sons to serve the Lord's as priests, the work required of them, and last but not the least a reminder to keep the Lord's Sabbath. The New Testament has shed much light on the Tabernacle, which God commanded Moses to build. The Tabernacle in the wilderness, the Priestly service before the LORD, and the sacrifices all picture the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. In addition, they teach Christians who are all made priests unto the Lord how we ought to conduct ourselves before the Lord. May we be diligent in serving the Lord our God.

DAILY READINGS & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Daily Readings

MONDAY: Exodus 30:1-10; 2 Chronicles 29:1-11; Revelation 5:8; 8:3-4

TUESDAY: Exodus 30:11-21; Psalm 49:6-8; Hebrews 9:11-28

WEDNESDAY: Exodus 30:22-38; 1 Kings 1:32-40; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22

THURSDAY: Exodus 31:1-11; Ephesians 5:15-20; Acts 1:8

FRIDAY: Exodus 31:12-18 ; Acts 13:14; Matthew 12:12; Luke 13:15-16.

Discussion Questions

1. What offerings had to be made every morning and evening?

2. According to Revelation 5:8, what does the incense speak of?

3. How often must the priests burn the incense?

4. What serious warning was given to the priest concerning the burning of incense?

5. What was required of the priest to do once a year?

distinction between the holy and the common?

6. Why do the rich and the poor pay the same amount of ransom money?

9. What does God reveal to us about Himself by filling Bezaleel to do the intricate work of the tabernacle?

7. When the priests washed, what do you think they would think about God and themselves?

10. What new emphasis is added here regarding the purpose of the Sabbath and the punishment of those who disregard it? (see. 20:8-11; 23:10-13, for the other references):

8. The formulas for making the anointing oil and incense might not be used for every day purposes. Why do you think God made such a sharp, utter
