

FEBRUARY 9

Exodus 29:1-30:10

There is a lot of detail today. It is fascinating at times to listen to someone, who really has a feel for all of this symbolism, describe what he thinks the symbols mean.

Generally speaking, as you read, look for major impressions and then look for some details that stand out to you.

What we are seeing is God describing the ceremony for the consecration of the priests, in this case, Aaron and his sons. Moses is still on the mountain. In order for them to represent the people before God, they themselves needed to be cleansed and prepared. There are aspects of this consecration that are looking ahead to Jesus. We'll see more of that when we read the book of Hebrews. The Father's preparation of the Son to be our Priest and Redeemer was more dramatic than what we'll read here. One notable difference, where there are no lines of correspondence between this ceremony and our Lord, is that He was sinless. No sin offering was necessary for Him, nor did He need to make yearly sacrifices of cleansing for Himself. He is the sinless priest who interceded for us and He is the pure sacrifice who stood in our place.

Exodus 29

Vs. 1-9 First, Aaron and his sons have to be washed and then dressed in their clothes. Notice that God promises that as long as there is an Israel, Aaron and his descendants will be the priests.

One thought here: How did the Father prepare the Son to be our priest? Were there clothes? Was there a ceremony? Think about the Christmas story and Hebrews 10:5.

Vs. 10-14 This is a sin offering to cleanse Aaron and his sons. Notice where you burned the sin offering that covered their sins. Read Hebrews 13:11-13. Pretty cool.

Vs. 15-18 This was a sacrifice symbolizing total dedication. Just as the animal was totally offered on the altar, Aaron and his sons were to be totally devoted to serving God. Look at Romans 12:1. When it says the aroma was pleasing, it was because of the total dedication of the worshiper. Later, when people with impure hearts give these offerings to God, He will say they stink.

After our sin has been forgiven, the next step is total devotion and offering to God.

Vs. 19-28 This third sacrifice symbolized their readiness to join God in ministry. They were cleansed of sin and fully devoted with all on the altar. Now their ears were dedicated to hearing God. The actions of their hands were dedicated to obeying and working for God, and the steps of their feet were dedicated to following God.

V. 21 Their nice new clothes were sprinkled in blood. Hebrews 9:22 says, *Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.*

V. 24 The wave offering of the meat and bread was symbolic of them receiving from the Lord and offering it back. It was a fragrant aroma to God as they offered this back to God on the altar.

Vs. 26-28 And they were fed and blessed by God in their service with and for Him. This is actually a meal with God. They are now partners with Him in ministry.

Vs. 29-30 The office and the clothing would always belong to Aaron and his sons.

Vs. 31-34 This special meal of ordination could only be prepared a certain way and it could only be eaten by the priests that day. It could not be made into sandwiches the next day. It had to be consumed by eating in celebration of their ordination that day or by fire on the day after.

Vs. 35-37 This ceremony would take a week for the atoning and consecration of both the priests and the altar.

Vs. 38-46 Now this would be the primary responsibility of the service of the priest. They did a lot of stuff during the special days, but this would be every day. This was their main and most important ongoing service to the people. This sacrifice was each morning and evening. It wasn't primarily for the covering of sins, but an offering of thanks to God. The elements of this sacrifice were all the things God had given them to sustain their lives: meat, flour, oil and wine.

V. 41 The acknowledgement of thanks and dependence on God would be a pleasing aroma to Him.

V. 42 The result is that God would meet with the priests and speak to them.

Vs. 43-46 And He would meet with His people and dwell with them.

For us following our Lord in the harvest, I think the preparation of the priests speaks to the heart of the disciple. We are cleansed because of Jesus; we lay our lives on the altar in full devotion and we are invited into ministry with God in the harvest. He shares the blessing with us as we hear, obey and follow. And our joy is the joy of our Savior, seeing people meet God, follow Him as disciples and dwell with Him forever.

Exodus 30:1-10

It is interesting that the altar of incense is first mentioned here. It was another of those responsibilities of the priests that had to be done twice a day. The lampstand in the Holy Place had to be supplied with oil morning and evening. But here we see this small pillar standing in the middle of the veil that would someday be torn when Jesus died. From this altar would be a continual column of incense rising up before God, symbolizing the prayer of the people. This was the place where the Christmas story really begins. The people are praying outside and Zechariah the priest goes in to add incense to this altar in the evening. On the right side of the altar he sees the angel Gabriel standing there saying to him, "Your prayers have been heard before God."

God built amazing symbols into the everyday life of the nation of Israel. These symbols would point to the coming and ministry of Jesus. Yet for us too, they still have something to say to us. As disciples in the harvest we are supposed to be constantly praying, not just for ourselves, but for the progress of the kingdom as the gospel of Christ reaches into the lives of the lost around us as we make disciples, who make disciples.

So far, the Lord has given Israel a prophet (Moses), a priest (Aaron & Sons), and symbols of perpetual light (the Word), perpetual provision and care (the bread), perpetual forgiveness (the daily sacrifices), and perpetual prayer (the incense). Then add to this that all the men were to appear before the Lord three times a year, personally bearing the testimony of redemption to their families, nation and neighbors. If Israel had truly followed God in faith and gratefulness, they would have been a blessed nation and a mighty witness for God. As disciples, this is an incredible picture of our lives in Jesus in the harvest. Instead of the temple and all the customs, we begin in the mornings (or whenever it works in the day) with our Bibles, in prayer, in faith and gratefulness, ready to follow Him into the harvest. We also have the church, a community of people to grow and work with in the harvest.

Matthew 26:14-46

Vs. 14-29 What is interesting is that Matthew/Mark/Luke record the actual giving of the Lord's Supper memorial. John gives the most comprehensive view, but doesn't give the exact words. The chronological events are as follows from Luke 22 and John 13: The supper and the partial institution of the Lord's Supper came first. Jesus had the disciples divide His cup among themselves to be drunk later, and then He broke the bread signifying His body. He mentioned

that His betrayer was at the table and next came the fight over who would be first. Jesus washed the disciples' feet, mentioned to John the identity of the betrayer, gave the morsel to Judas, Satan entered Judas and he left. With that final morsel the supper was over and Judas was gone. Then Jesus promised a blessing on those who had continued with Him and He drank the cup with them that had already been poured out, that signified the blood of the new covenant. Then came the upper room discourse (Jn. 14-17), most of which was given as they walked toward the Mount of Olives. Finally Jesus entered the garden of Gethsemane with His disciples.

This means that Judas was at the initial part of the Lord's Supper and then had his feet washed. Jesus showed him love and gave him opportunity to change his mind, right up to the end. What blows me away is that Jesus' behavior toward Judas never changed, so that the disciples had no clue it was him.

V. 18 Jerusalem was flooded with people during the Passover. It is a miracle that they found this room. It is thought that this was also the room they were in after the resurrection and on the day of Pentecost. The theory is that it belonged to the family of John Mark, the writer of the next Gospel.

V. 26 It is interesting that we are reading of God making the Old Covenant with Israel, as we are reading here of Jesus making the New Covenant with His blood.

Vs. 30-35 This is an important event, especially for Peter. Jesus was telling them what would happen. They would leave Him, but it was already predicted. This wasn't as much a warning as an encouragement to them not to feel too defeated when they did this. Rather, Jesus focused them forward. In v. 32 He mentions that when He is risen, He'll meet them in Galilee. The weight of Jesus' words is on them meeting Him in Galilee. He passes over the "risen" part and emphasizes the meeting in Galilee. I wonder why. What was so important? We'll see.

Vs. 36-46 This is Jesus' understanding and dealing with what He would have to endure on the cross.

V. 38 That distinctly human part of us, the soul, was reacting to the thought of death. Jesus was fully man in body and soul and fully God in spirit, fully joined and fully one. He was the God man.

Jesus' submission to the Father is a model to every disciple.

V. 41 This temptation probably had to do with the fear and flight that would dominate all of the disciples in a short time.

Psalm 31:19-24

What an amazing lesson of praise from David. To be able to sing this kind of praise and have this kind of testimony, you have to face all the negative, the threats and the anxiety, crying out to God.

Vs. 19-20 Laura pointed out to me this morning the words of Exodus 29:46, *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.* God has always meant to dwell with us. It makes sense that His goodness is stored up for those who fear Him and take their refuge in Him.

Vs. 21-22 David could only learn v. 21 by living through v. 22, hoping in God and crying out to Him. God has no other way to teach us so that the lesson is written on our hearts.

Vs. 23-24 It is worth waiting on the Lord to have this burned across your heart and become your testimony to others. Wait on the Lord.

Proverbs 8:14-26

It seems to me that God is saying we should really, really be seeking wisdom. What parent or spouse couldn't use more wisdom? James says that if anyone lacks wisdom they should ask God. Paul says we are to know what the will of the Lord is, like we should really be able to understand. I guess it's all in the Word. All we need to add is time and desire to read what He says and do it.

The words here also suggest why we don't seek wisdom. We don't value it more than we value other stuff. I think I'm finally beginning to get this message.

Finally, notice that the wisdom of God is seen in creation. Intelligent design is not only something God expects us to notice, but His wisdom in creation is meant to make our hearts secure and trustful. God's wisdom in creation is a major factor in the book of Job and in His rebuke of Job. It is as if God is saying, "You don't understand what has happened or why, but you see My power and wisdom in creation, so trust Me."