

Chapter 29

V. BLUEPRINT and CONSTRUCTION of tabernacle, Chapters 25 — 40 (a pattern and picture of Christ)

A. Blueprint for tabernacle, 25 - 30

Introduction...

1. In Chapters 29-30 we'll study the consecration of the priests and then we'll look at two more pieces of furniture in the tabernacle.
 - The altar of incense and the laver are items associated with the priest's role as representative of Israel.
 - They been saved for this point in the narrative because they are so closely associated with the priests.
2. Let's study the consecration of the priests
 - The first 37 verses describe the consecration procedure
 - With such a long section of scripture, it's helpful to start by summarizing the major parts.
 - First**,...God is establishing a consecration ceremony for the priests of Israel.
 1. In v.35 God says this is for Aaron and his sons, meaning his descendants
 2. This consecration ceremony was accomplished for each new generation of priests in Israel.
 - a. This is the ceremony in which men are set apart for service to the Lord.
 3. The next thing we read will be the details of the consecration process, which consisted of three parts...
 - 1st ...the priests are ritually cleansed and dressed in their priestly garb and anointed by oil.
 - 2nd ... sacrifices are made on their behalf to remove sin prepare them to serve the Lord in holiness.
 - 3rd ... the priests make a wave offering to the Lord of meat and bread and oil.
 - Most of which is then burned as an offering to the Lord
 - But a part is saved to become the portion to sustain the priests, which is consumed in front of the tent of meeting.
3. Then finally, this ceremony is repeated for seven days to complete the consecration.
- Following the consecration, the priests are then ready to serve the Lord.
- This ceremony was repeated for each new generation of Jewish priests throughout the history of the tabernacle and the temple.
 - This ceremony is a beautiful picture of another kind of consecration, and we're going to examine that picture as we go through the details.

The first section describes the...cleansing, clothing and anointing of the priests

Verses 1 - 9...

First... the chapter describe the materials needed for the ceremony.

- The washing, the oil and the clothing of the priests are the key items used in this first section.

- Moses begins with Aaron and all his sons at the doorway of the tent of meeting.
 - This is the place immediately in front of the Holy Place.
 - The Holy Place is the place where the priesthood served.
 - Any Jew could enter the grounds, but only priests could serve the Lord in the Holy Place.
 - So the priests stand at the entrance of the doorway to reflect the meaning of the ceremony, as their means of entering service before God.
1. This chapter records God giving Moses the instructions while Moses stands with God on the top of the mountain.
 - But the actual carrying out of these instructions are recorded in Leviticus 8.
 - In that chapter, Moses follows God's instructions exactly as they are recorded here.
 - After the priests are in the doorway, they are washed.
 2. This is not ordinary bathing, but a ritual washing intended to teach a point.
 - The person who served God must be spiritually clean.
 - And to picture God's cleansing of these men, He demands they wash physically in a public way.
 4. So the first step of priestly service was to be cleansed.
 - Having been cleansed, they were able to move forward into service.
 - But washing wasn't enough by itself.

Second... the priests put on the priestly garments the Lord prescribed for their service.

1. The High Priest, Aaron, is clothed first, followed by the other priests.
 - This clothing designated the men as priests and set them apart.
 - It gave them a new identity.
2. So before the men could serve the Living God, they had to assume a new identity.
 - Their new identity was evidenced by their new appearance.
 - That appearance communicated their new role and calling to serve in God's house.
 - Finally, the High Priest was anointed with oil on his head.
3. The oil was a symbolic way of demonstrating the person had entered into a position of authority and power assigned by God.
 - Priests were anointed
 - Prophets were anointed
 - Kings were anointed
4. So before these men could serve in God's house, there must be an official anointing to signify that God authorized that service.
 - With that authorization, the men served for a lifetime.
 - The anointing was permanent.
 - All of these steps have parallels for believers today, and I believe they are intended to picture the way God is working in the Church today.

1st ... Who are the priests of today?

- It might be tempting to make a comparison between the ceremony we see in Exodus 29 and the establishing of Christian leaders or clergy.
- But that is an age-old mistake that Jesus refers to in Revelation as the Nicolaitan heresy.

- The heresy suggests that there is a Christian priesthood or clergy that are distinct or set apart from the rest of the body of Christ.
- a. But scripture says the opposite... 1Peter 2:9
 - All believers are consecrated priests of Jesus
 - Which means the comparison we are supposed to make in this chapter are between the priesthood of Israel and the priesthood of the believer today.
 - Before we can serve God as priests in God's house, we must be cleansed spiritually.
- b. The cleansing or washing away of our sins is accomplished by faith in Jesus Christ.
 - In other words, our faith is the necessary prerequisite for any form of service as priest... Hebrews 11:6
 - And the instrument of that washing or cleansing is the Holy Spirit... Titus 3:5-6
- 2nd ... we must be clothed properly for service**
 - And all believers are clothed by Christ, Who is our High Priest... Gal. 3:26-27
 - a. Our clothing creates our identity, and being clothed in Christ means walking in His righteousness and according to His example.
 - How do you think the priest carried themselves after Moses placed their priestly garb upon them?
 - Can you imagine they walked a little taller, with a greater sense of burden and responsibility.
 - Did they think twice about how they conducted themselves around others?
 - Likewise, we are called to walk differently having "put on" Christ... Rom. 13:13-14
- 3rd ...Finally, we are anointed for our service as priests by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit... 2Cor. 1:21-22**
 - b. We have all been anointed by the Holy Spirit, which empowers us for serving the Living God in His holy place.
 - The power for service is entirely given to us by the Holy Spirit.
 - Our service to the Lord is not a matter of personal ability or careful planning or even effort... 2Tim. 1:7
 - Certainly, we must labor with the Spirit, or else we grieve Him.
 - And this anointing is given to us not to make us feel important or to enflame our pride.
 - Like the priests in the tabernacle, the anointing of God is intended to empower us to serve God's people in God's house... 1Cor. 12:7
 - The gifts of the Spirit are tools we wield in service to the God.
 - We have been consecrated by the Spirit, set apart to be Christ's servants.

- So by faith in Christ, we are commissioned into the priestly service of God, clothed with Christ, and empowered by Spirit.
- o But before we can serve to the fullest, there are steps that must be taken to prepare us for that service.

Verses 10 - 21...

1. In this second section, a series of sacrifices are performed
 - a. A bull and two rams are sacrificed on the altar.
 - Before the animals are sacrificed, the priests place their hands on the animals.
 - The act symbolizes the priests transferring their sins to these innocent substitutes.
 - Symbolically, the priests are demonstrating they are sinful, unworthy to serve in the capacity of priest.
 - Yet the Lord has made accommodation for the priests through these sacrifices.
 - We know these animals weren't the means of God's forgiveness, but were representative of the forgiveness God would provide in Christ.
 - b. The bull was the largest animal, so only the fat surrounding the internal organs and the liver and kidneys were offered on the fire.
 - This offering was a symbolic act of public confession by the priests.
 - When they placed their hands on that animal, they were indicating before God's people that they knew themselves unworthy to serve.
 - The blood of the bull is used to anoint the horns of the altar.
 - And the rest is poured out at the base.
 - These steps picture the death that sin requires.
 - c. Bulls are used in the sacrificial system as a picture of sin condemned.
 - The rest of the bull was taken outside the camp and burned as a sin offering.
 - Burning outside the camp is a picture of Hell, the pit where the damned experience eternal judgment.
 - So this sacrifice provides a visceral picture of the priests sending the bull to judgment in their place.

Application for Today...

1. The picture created for the priesthood of believers today is one of putting away sin in our lives.
 - a. We come into service bringing our sins with us, at least initially.
 - But we called to acknowledge or confess our sins to one another...
James 5:16
 - And in our confession, make clear we recognize we are not worthy for service by our own merit.
 - We practice personal humility and transparency before God's people to restrain pride and encourage repentance.
 - b. Then having confessed our sin, we send it outside the camp, so to speak.
 - We burn it up, and set it aside... Heb. 12:1

- d. Then a ram is sacrificed...the ram is used as an atoning sacrifice.
- The ram killed and the blood is used to cleanse the altar of the bull offering.
 - The blood is sprinkled around the altar.
 - Then the entire animal is burned on the altar.
- e. And the rising smoke is said to be a soothing aroma, an offering to the Lord.
- The Lord's wrath is satisfied or soothed by the ram's death.
 - The Lord is not soothed simply by the prospect of an animal dying.
 - Moses means the Lord's wrath against the priests' sin is satisfied when the priests obediently apply the Law requirements for atonement.
 - The ram is a replacement and therefore an atonement.

Application for Today...

1. The picture created for the church by the second ram is that of our total personal commitment to serving the Lord.

a. The priests under the Law dedicated the entire ram to the Lord to please the Lord.

Christ has satisfied that requirement for us, as we know.

b. So how do priests today perform this second sacrifice since no more sacrifice for sin is required?

Paul addressed this question in **Romans 12:1**

- Today, we place our entire body and life on that fire and allow it to be consumed in service to the Lord.
- We hold nothing back.
- And if we do this, it will be pleasing to the Lord.

f. Next, a second ram is sacrificed.

This blood of this ram is used to cleanse the priests themselves.

Some blood is placed on the priests' right ear lobe, right thumbs, and right big toe.

The right is the side of honor and authority.

And each part of the body carries a symbolic significance.

- The ear meant the priest was to hear the instructions of God.
- The hand symbolized the priest discharge the duties of his role with diligence.
- And the foot because he was to walk in an upright manner in service within the tabernacle.

Finally the blood was sprinkled on their garments to consecrate them by blood, set apart by the sacrifice.

- This ram reminds priests of the church to serve in the same manner that the priests of the Law served.

g. The ram died to remind the priests to hear God, serve God, walk with God.

And by that blood the priests had a visible reminder that the Lord would hold them accountable to their service.

By the blood of the ram, these men would be called to account for the quality of their service.

Application for Today...

1. As priests today, we are held to a similar standard.
 - By the blood of the Lamb of God, we have been called and commissioned to serve... **Heb. 9:13-14**
 - We have been cleansed by the blood of Christ to serve the living God.
 - That service will be judged.
 - And the standards are...
 - Whether we listened to His word.
 - Whether we acted according to what we heard.
 - Whether we walked by His Spirit.

The last step of the sacrifice is to make an offering

Verses 22 - 25...

We need to get a good picture of what's happening here.

1. The ram is slaughtered and the fat of the animal plus the right thigh is set aside.
 - V.22... we're told it is a ram of ordination, or an offering to recognize the Lord for the privilege of serving Him.
 - The fat of the animal was most prized in the ancient world.
 - It had the richest flavor and produced oil for cooking.
 - And the right thigh would have been the best piece of meat on the animal.
 - The picture is one of giving the Lord the best of the animal.
2. The Lord is receiving the best the priests could offer from the sacrifice they made.
 - And to further signify that these things were being given up to the Lord in thanks, they are waved before the Lord.
 - The scene might seem a bit humorous in our mind's eye, but the message was very serious.
 - These things belong to God, and the priests acknowledge that publicly.
3. Mixed in a cake, oil and unleavened bread
 - The cakes, oil and unleavened bread represent the fruit of the priest's ministry.
 - The cakes (or bread) represent the spiritual nourishment the priest gave the people.
 - The oil represents the anointing the priests delivered to others like prophets, kings or even later generations of priests.
 - And the unleavened bread represents the sanctification the priests prompted in the life of Israel.
 - The fruits (results) of their ministry is dedicated to the Lord, given back to Him to signify that their results are the Lord's work.

Application for Today...

1. In our priestly work, we also give all glory to the Lord for the work we achieve.
 - a. Did we make a contribution to God's people?
 - Did someone learn a spiritual truth from our teaching?
 - Did we encourage or commission another believe to serve?
 - Did we further the sanctification of a believer through prayer, counseling or by living an example?

- If so, we turn to the Lord and “wave” these things before Him in thanks for His work done through us.
2. Even the great apostle Paul followed this principle, as he wrote
1Cor. 15:10 & 1Cor. 3:6
 - a. This is our proper heart attitude as we seek to serve God’s people.

Finally, the priest of Israel receive their portion in payment for their work in the tabernacle.

Verses 29 - 34...

From that last ram that is slaughtered, the breast of the ram and the other thigh are saved for the priests to consume

First...

The meat is taken and waved before the Lord again

- The point is clear.
- The priests are giving the Lord thanks for this offering.
- They acknowledge it came from Him.

Secondly...

It is boiled and cannot be prepared any other way

- Since fire has come to represent judgment, water is a sign of purity and sanctification.
- So the nourishment for God’s people is not confused with the sacrifice for sin.
- Also, some of the bread is saved for the priests as well.

But if anything made available to the priests is not consumed immediately, it is not saved for later.

- Instead, it is burned immediately.
- The priests never get leftovers.
 - The picture of our provision is clear in this example.

Application for Today...

1. As priests serving in God’s house, we expect the Lord to supply our provision.
 - a. Because we have that expectation, we can serve Him without distraction by our physical needs.
 - In our world, many of us will be employed, but that employment is simply another venue in which to serve the Lord.
 - That service is still at the heart of our purpose and desires.
 - And we still recognize that our provision is coming through the Lord’s hand, not through our employer.
 - b. And as we receive that provision, our first responsibility is to acknowledge that provision comes from the Lord.
 - We may not walk outside and wave dollars bills at the sky to signify our thankfulness.
 - But there are other ways we can show that thankfulness.
 - Including dedicating some portion to God’s work in the church or elsewhere.

- c. Finally, we don't rely on leftovers
 - God's provision shouldn't be hoarded in such a way that we become reliant on what we store
 - rather than remaining reliant on the Lord's provision.
 - As Jesus taught... **Matt. 6:31-33**

Then the Lord tells Moses to rinse and repeat this consecration ceremony for the priests

Verses 35 - 37...

This ceremony was to be repeated every day for seven days

1. And you think your child's high school graduation ceremony went on forever...
 - This ceremony took an entire week.
 - The point was to reinforce the truth of these symbols.
 - a. For us, the repetition reminds us that our service is a daily process.
 - We are not called into service just for a moment.
 - Paul says our calling to serve is a permanent feature of our faith.
Rom. 11:29; Phil. 3:13-16
2. Everyday we are called to confess sin .
 - Everyday we are called to hear God.
 - Everyday we are called to walk in faith.
 - Everyday we serve in God's house, and our service is life long, just as the priests served for a lifetime.

Having consecrated the priests, then the Lord gives them their first daily duty

Verses 38 - 46...

This command is a part of the consecration requirement, but it is an ongoing requirement

1. The priests must perform a morning and evening sacrifice every day, everyday including sabbaths.
 - The two sacrifices are of a lamb.
 - The lamb is a clear picture of Christ, the Lamb of God.
 - The priests can maintain their consecration to serve in the tabernacle only so long as they begin and end every day of service by picturing Christ.

Application for Today...

1. Likewise, we serve God as priests only so long as everything we do begins and ends with Christ... 2 Cor. 5:15 & 1Cor. 2:1-2
 - We preach and live the Gospel of Christ.
 - We speak and teach of Christ.
 - We rest in and abide in Christ.
2. Like the priests of Israel in the tabernacle, our very purpose in service is found in testifying to Christ.
 - Our mission is not to glorify or advance some denomination.
 - We are not followers of a pastor or teacher.
 - We are not advocates for a system or program or methodology.
3. Our only focus and concern is advancing the glory for Christ