

EXODUS

THE GOD WHO RESCUES

SESSION OBJECTIVE: EXODUS 29:22-46

To understand more about how the priesthood was consecrated.

Read the Text:

You shall also take the fat from the ram and the fat tail and the fat that covers the entrails, and the long lobe of the liver and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them, and the right thigh (for it is a ram of ordination), 23 and one loaf of bread and one cake of bread made with oil, and one wafer out of the basket of unleavened bread that is before the LORD. 24 You shall put all these on the palms of Aaron and on the palms of his sons, and wave them for a wave offering before the LORD. 25 Then you shall take them from their hands and burn them on the altar on top of the burnt offering, as a pleasing aroma before the LORD. It is a food offering to the LORD. 26 You shall take the breast of the ram of Aaron's ordination and wave it for a wave offering before the LORD, and it shall be your portion. 27 And you shall consecrate the breast of the wave offering that is waved and the thigh of the priests' portion that is contributed from the ram of ordination, from what was Aaron's and his sons'. 28 It shall be for Aaron and his sons as a perpetual due from the people of Israel, for it is a contribution. It shall be a contribution from the people of Israel from their peace offerings, their contribution to the LORD. 29 The holy garments of Aaron shall be for his sons after him; they shall be anointed in them and ordained in them. 30 The son who succeeds him as priest, who comes into the tent of meeting to minister in the Holy Place, shall wear them seven days. 31 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 in the entrance of the tent of meeting. 33 They shall eat those things with which atonement was made at their ordination and consecration, but an outsider shall not eat of them, because they are holy. 34 And if any of the flesh for the ordination or of the bread remain until the morning, then you shall burn the remainder with fire. It shall not be eaten, because it is holy. 35 Thus you shall do to Aaron and to his sons, according to all that I have commanded you. Through seven days shall you ordain them, 36 and every day you shall offer a bull as a sin offering for atonement. Also you shall purify the altar, when you make atonement for it, and shall anoint it to consecrate it. 37 Seven days you shall make atonement for the altar and consecrate it, and the altar shall be most holy. Whatever touches the altar shall become holy. 38 Now this is what you shall offer on the altar: two lambs a year old day by day regularly. 39 One lamb you shall offer in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer at twilight. 40 And with the first lamb a tenth measure of fine flour mingled with a fourth of a in of beaten oil, and a fourth of a in of wine for a drink offering. 41 The other lamb you shall offer at twilight, and shall offer with it a grain offering and its drink offering, as in the morning, for a pleasing aroma, a food offering to the LORD. 42 It shall be a regular burnt offering throughout your generations at the entrance of the tent of meeting before the LORD, where I will meet with you, to speak to you there. 43 There I will meet with the people of Israel, and it shall be sanctified by my glory. 44 I will consecrate the tent of meeting and the altar. Aaron also and his sons I will consecrate to serve me as priests. 45 I will dwell among the people 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. (Exodus 29:22-46, ESV)

Study the Text:

Consecrated, Pt. 2

Verses 22 through 46 continue to unfold the consecration process of the Aaronic priesthood. Below is a breakdown of some of the key details in this passage.

THE SECOND RAM (CONTINUED)

Verse 22 continues with the description of the second of the two rams to be sacrificed. After putting the blood of the ram onto the ears, fingers, and toes of the priests, as well as their garments and the altar, they were to take “the fat from the ram and the fat tail and the fat that covers the entrails and the long lobe of the liver and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them, and the right thigh (for it is a ram of ordination)” as well as “one

loaf of bread made with oil, and one wafer out of the basket of unleavened bread that is before the LORD,” and together they were placed in the palms of Aaron and his sons before they were burned as yet another “food offering” to the LORD (Ex. 29:22-26). The breast and thigh of the ram were then to be given to Aaron and his sons to consume, thereby sharing a meal of sorts with the LORD to celebrate the ordination (Ex. 29:27-28).

A PERPETUAL DUE

Verses 27 and 28 provide an important illustration of a larger principle in both the Old and New Testaments: God will provide for those He calls to His service. The fatty parts of the animal (which were seen as the most valuable parts) were offered to the LORD, along with the blood. However, the rest of the food was set aside for Moses and the priests to eat. The priests are faithful to make sacrifices from the animals brought to them by the people of Israel, and in turn, the LORD was faithful to share those portions with the priesthood, to provide food for them for their service. This is true of God concerning all of His people. Jesus speaks to this in Matthew 6:25-26: “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? 26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?” The LORD has a long history of providing for those He loves and calls to Himself. The priesthood is just one of many examples.

THE VESTMENTS

The “holy garments” that the high priest Aaron was to wear were not his own personal property, but “shall be for his sons after him; they shall be anointed in them and ordained in them” (Ex. 29:29). This is an interesting detail because it indicates that not only the high priest, but his vestments, were deeply significant to God. We often downplay the importance of “priestly vestments,” especially in non-liturgical, evangelical contexts, but there is a case to be made that the vestments matter, or at least at one time, mattered. The high priestly clothes were passed down from generation to generation so that no matter who served in this sacred role, they always wore the clothes initially consecrated in the Tabernacle.

SEVEN DAYS, SEVEN BULLS

This ordination process and consecration of the priest, the vestments, and the altar took seven days. Each day, a bull was required to be sacrificed, totaling seven bulls over the span of seven days. This is a striking detail, especially for the modern reader. We live in a fast-paced, instant-access world. Everything is at the tip of our fingers. For the ancients, the process of consecrating the priests and the altar took careful precision and a good amount of time. There was no rushing this process. Moreover, note the significance of the number “seven.” Seven represents a number of perfection in Jewish theology, a number that often represents God Himself. God is perfect, and therefore requires the perfect number of sacrifices.

THE PRIESTLY SACRIFICES

Once the priests and the altar were consecrated, they were to offer “two lambs a year old day by day regularly,” meaning every day in perpetuity. The blood of sacrifice flowed daily. Philip Graham Ryken sees a powerful connection: “In the same way that the Israelites opened and closed the day with sacrifices, we are called to begin and end every day with God. But there is something deeper at work here. The Apostle Paul alluded to it when he wrote, “Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God” (Eph. 5:1, 2). The words “fragrant offering and sacrifice” refer explicitly to the twice-daily sacrifices that the Israelites offered in the tabernacle and later at the temple. As Paul reflected on the meaning of the crucifixion, he saw that the

cross was connected with the offerings God's people had been making every day for centuries. When Jesus made the atoning sacrifice for our sins, it filled Heaven and earth with the perfume of his love."¹

What About Now?

Verse 45 summarizes well the purpose of everything described in chapter 29: "I will dwell among the people of Israel and will be their God." The Tabernacle was constructed along with the altar and consecrated with blood for the sole purpose that God might dwell with His people. All of these things were necessary to make that possible because God is holy and we are not. This chapter brings to light the importance of blood sacrifice, once and for all satisfied by the atonement of Jesus Christ. Sin requires death and blood. Jesus provides His own, that we might share in His resurrection.

Study Questions

Day One

1. Read Exodus 29:22-25. What parts of the ram were they to offer to God as a "wave offering?" What else was included in this wave offering? What were they to do with these items after waving them before the LORD? What kind of offering did it become before the LORD?

2. Read Exodus 29:26-28. What part of the ram was Moses to take as a wave offering? What was to be given to Aaron and his sons? Why is this described as "a contribution?" From which offerings does it come?

Day Two

1. Read Exodus 29:29-30. Do the holy garments belong to Aaron? Who do they go to when Aaron dies?

2. Read Exodus 29:31-34. What were they to do with the ram of ordination? Who was permitted to eat the flesh of the ram? What were they to do with the leftovers? Why?

Day Three

1. Read Exodus 29:35-37. For how many days did the consecration process last? What were they to offer each day? What was the purpose of this offering?

¹ Philip Graham Ryken, *Exodus: Saved for God's Glory*, eds. R. Kent Hughes, Preaching the Word (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2005), 917.

2. Read Exodus 29:38-41. What were the priests supposed to offer after they were consecrated, twice a day? For how long? What was offered with it?
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Day Four

1. Read Exodus 29:42-43. What regular offering is described here? What does God promise the people?
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2. Read Exodus 29:44-46. Why does God go through the trouble of all of this? What is the purpose of everything being done in this chapter, and prior?
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Discuss the Text!

Week 76 Discussion: Provision

One detail that emerges in this chapter and continues throughout the Scriptures is the reality that God provides for His servants. The priests are given a perpetual contribution from the offerings given to the LORD (Ex. 29:28). Jesus reiterates God's provision for His servants, as well (Matt. 6:25-26). The LORD does not just call us into service without caring for us. He is a gracious God who shares Himself with us. Talk as a group about the ways in which God has provided for you, especially when you sacrificed something of your own in order to serve Him.

1. Icebreaker: Has God ever radically provided something for you? If so, share the story with your group.
2. Are you responsible for providing for anyone? Do you enjoy that responsibility?
3. Is anyone responsible for providing for you? How does provision make you feel?
4. How do "tithes and offerings" play into the Lord's provision of pastors and church staff?
5. Should church staff be paid? Why or why not?
6. Kid Talk (For Home): Point out several things to your child that you pay for monthly (e.g., lights, water, internet, etc.), and talk about how, though they don't realize it, you are paying for those things so that they have access to them. Explain that this is how God works to care for us, as well. There are so many things God does for us that we aren't often aware of to provide for us, because He loves us.

Takeaways:

1. The consecration of the priesthood and the altar required a lot of sacrifice.
2. The consecration process took seven days.
3. The priests were cared for by God's sharing of the sacrifices with them for provision.
4. Christ is the ultimate fulfillment of sacrifices.