

Sent: Thursday, April 15, 2021 4:16 AM
Subject: Tuesday Nite's MB Study on Exodus 30

"How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered! How blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity!" (Psalm 32:1-2)

Last week, we saw the elaborate details God gave to Moses on the mountain about how to conduct the ceremony for the ordination and consecration of Aaron and his sons as priests for the people before God, a ceremony which was to take place at the doorway of the tabernacle--when the tabernacle was finished--with all the assembly of the congregation gathered to see it all take place! The ceremony was to begin with the washing, and dressing, and anointing of Aaron and his sons, followed by a whole array of animal sacrifices and offerings to be made on the Altar of Burnt Offering, with a "soothing aroma of fire" of offered to the LORD, and with the sprinkling, and pouring, and daubing of blood on Aaron and his sons, as well as on the various furnishings of the tabernacle, as a way of making atonement and consecrating them for service! The whole process was to take place over a seven-day period of time--and the same process was to be repeated whenever new priests would be ordained in the days to come! And with the sacrifices of burnt offerings to be offered continually before the LORD at the doorway of the tabernacle throughout their generations! It was in this way that God would come to dwell (or "tabernacle") among the sons of Israel and be their God!

In last nite's lesson, on Exodus 30, we saw more of God's instructions to Moses about the workings of the tabernacle, beginning with instructions for building an Altar of Incense, which was to be positioned in the Holy Place (along with the Table of Showbread and Golden Lampstand, discussed in Exodus 25) but, verse 6 says, "in front of the veil" that was to be "near the Ark of the Testimony" (in the Holy of Holies), where God would appear over the Mercy Seat, between the cherubim in "shekinah glory"!

Interestingly, the instructions for the Altar of Incense were given here, following instructions about the priesthood (and not before with the other pieces), apparently because it was the last piece of furniture to which the priests would come before entering the Holy of Holies, once a year, on the "day of atonement".

Exodus 30:5 says Aaron was to burn "fragrant incense" on the altar every morning and every evening when he would "trim the lamps," and that they were to be a "perpetual incense before the LORD throughout their generations"! The incense was to be made with a special formula given by the LORD to Moses (in verses 34-38), with none to be made like it for other purposes, at the risk of someone doing it being "cut off from His people"! The incense would give off a "sweet aroma" to the LORD and be "most holy" to Him!

The Altar of Incense can be seen as a symbol of the prayers of God's people! Our prayers ascending to God as the smoke of the incense ascended in the sanctuary! Situated "near" the mercy seat of the ark, the altar of incense also pictured Christ's mediation on our behalf--our Advocate's standing in the presence of the Father. And the burning of the incense continually showing the perpetual nature of Christ's mediation, a sweet-smelling savor to God!

In Psalm 141:2, David prayed, "May my prayer be counted as incense before You!" And in his vision of heaven, John (in Revelation 5:8) saw the elders around the throne "holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints"! And, in Revelation 8:3, seeing the "smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints going up before God..."! All of which gives new perspective to the

apostle Paul's call for us (in 1 Thessalonians 5:17) to "pray without ceasing" (just as the incense of old was to be "always burning")!

Well, there are more instructions from God to Moses in Exodus 30 concerning the building of the tabernacle which has symbolic meaning for us as we learn about the Bronze Laver, which was to be positioned next the Altar of Burnt Offering, in the courtyard, just before the entrance to tabernacle--where Aaron and his sons were to "wash their hands and feet" with water before entering the tabernacle! Signifying the importance of "cleanliness and purification before service"! And symbolizing the need, in both the Old and New Testaments, to have their (and our) "sins washed away"!

Numbers 8:6-7 records the LORD calling for Moses to "sprinkle purifying water" on the Levites so that they would be "clean," and able to serve as priests! And David, in Psalm 51, after being confronted and convicted by his sin with Bathsheba, prayed "to be washed thoroughly from his iniquity and "cleansed from his sin" that he might be "restored to the joy of salvation."

In the New Testament, Jesus referred to Nicodemus' need to have his sins "washed away," and said, in John 3:5, "Truly, truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit." And Titus 3:5-6 speaks of the need for a "washing of regeneration"!

Then, going back to Exodus 30, God spells out to Moses His own special formula for making a "holy anointing oil"--out of the "finest of spices"--which was to be used to "anoint" the entire tabernacle and all the furnishings and utensils, and everything involved in worshipping Him, to "consecrate" it all! And to do it "throughout your generations"! And like the incense, it was to be a unique blend of spices to be only used in the tabernacle! It was to be "holy"!

The "anointing" symbolizes for us the Holy Spirit who "indwells" and "sets apart," and empowers believers for ministry and service! 1 John 2:20 and 27 speaks of believers as having "an anointing from the Holy One" which they have received from God who "abides" in them!

And so, the more we learn about Exodus the more we see the symbolisms for Christ and God's great plan of redemption--as well as applications for the Christian life! And we learn more about God Himself--who is holy and actually wants to "dwell" with His people--and has actually made a way for that to happen--and who's into the "nitty gritty" details of our lives, who has the "very hairs of our head numbered (Luke 12:7), and is "intimately acquainted with all our ways (Psalm 139:3), and is even into using precious jewels and the finest of spices (all of which He created for His purpose), and even endows men with gifts to produce "soothing aromas" which have a way of seeping into the very "portals" of heaven!

How blessed we are to have a God who created us in His image and loved us so much that He would make a way for our "sins to be washed away" so that He could "dwell" among us and be our God, and we could obey, worship, and serve Him!

2 Corinthians 2:14 says, "But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place!"

Men, may we be able to create this week a special kind of sweet aroma that pleases God!

Lowell