

Exodus Chapter 30 Continued

Verses 17-21” (see note on 27:1-18). The business of sacrifice was dirty; constant washing of the priests’ hands and feet in the “bronze laver” was necessary for purity and cleanliness. Purity for the believer is necessary as well, and Christ is the only source of continual cleansing from sins.

Exodus 30:17 "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,"

The frequent repetition of this phrase, and the shortness of these discourses, in comparison of the length of the forty days, show that God did not deliver all these laws and prescriptions at one time. But successively at several times, possibly upon the Sabbath days.

Verses 18-21: “Laver of brass”: The washing of hands and feet was mandatory before engaging in priestly duties. Again, the seriousness of being ceremonially purified is seen in the warning of death if this washing is neglected. Nothing casual was being done in the sanctuary or out in the courtyard!

Exodus 30:18 "Thou shalt also make a laver [of] brass, and his foot [also of] brass, to wash [withal]: and thou shalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein."

“Laver of brass”: This is the laver of cleansing located between the altar of burnt offering and the door of the tabernacle. It was made of bronze and set aside for ceremonial washing of the priests before they entered the Holy Place. The symbolic meaning is indeed significant and precious. It provided a type of cleansing that served to maintain fitness from a spiritual ministry.

The altar of sacrifice dealt with the priests’ guilt, but something else was required for effective fellowship and worship in the tabernacle. The blood did not remove the defilement of sin. So before one could enter the presence of a holy God, sin had to be taken care of (Eph. 5:26; John 15:3 in the life of the believer today). We are freed from the guilt of sin and its penalty by the application of the blood (Rom. 5:9), but there remains defilement of sin that comes through daily living and is cleansed by the washing of the Word of God (John 13:10).

This altar was to be in the outer court. This was not to be inside the tabernacle. Nothing made of brass could be in the Holy Place or the Holy of Holies. This laver not only was made of brass but was on a stand of brass as well. This laver had a number of physical uses. One of which was every time Aaron or his sons went into the Holy Place, they were to be washed before they entered. They were to wash their hands and feet on penalty of death before they entered the Holy Place. This was not an option, it was mandatory. The animals had to be washed also. This water in this basin was to be kept fresh and full at all times. The spiritual meaning of this laver could certainly be baptism; because after repentance at the brazen altar, certainly comes the washing of baptism.

Exodus 30:19 "For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat:"

A large vessel of brass, holding water, was to be set near the door of the tabernacle. Aaron and his sons must wash their hands and feet at this laver, every time they went in to minister. This was to teach them purity in all their services, and to dread the pollution of sin. They must not only wash and be made clean, when first made priests, but must wash and be kept clean, whenever they went to minister. It teaches us daily to attend upon God, daily to renew our repentance for sin, and our looking to the blood of Christ for remission. For in many things we daily offend.

Exodus 30:20 "When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the LORD:"

"That they die not" (compare Exodus 28:35 and 43). Contempt of the simple and easy regulation to wash at the laver would imply contempt of purity itself. And so an entire hypocrisy of life and character, than which nothing could be a greater offence to God.

Exodus 30:21 "So they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not: and it shall be a statute for ever to them, [even] to him and to his seed throughout their generations."

By the immediate hand of God, who would so greatly resent such a neglect of his command. And by how much easier it was to perform it, by so much the more were they inexcusable, and to be treated with greater severity. And this is repeated, that they might carefully observe it, lest they perish.

"And it shall be a statute for ever to them, even to him and to his seed, throughout their generations": To be observed by Aaron and his descendants in all ages, as long as their priesthood lasted. Until the Messiah should come, and wash all his people, his priests, with his own blood, from all their sins (Rev. 1:5).

We see that the walk of the priests had to be clean and everything they put their hands to, must be clean. It was a very serious thing to go in to minister to God, unless the priest was clean in every way. This had to do with the clean life God requires His ministers to lead. This not only applied to then, but to now as well.

Verses 22-38: The "holy anointing oil" and the "incense" were exclusively for the priests' use. The oil is thought to represent Jesus as the Christ, the anointed of the Lord (Psalm 45:8). Christians understand the incense to be a symbol of the sweet life and sacrifice of Jesus (Ephesians 5:2).

Nothing was left to chance or to human ingenuity. The ingredients for making the anointing oil were carefully spelled out. Anything different was totally unacceptable and brought with it the penalty of death (verse 33). This was to be a unique blend! Using it for any other purpose also

erased its holy status as set apart for use in the tabernacle and made it no different from the ordinary and the mundane.

Exodus 30:22 "Moreover the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,"

Some little time afterwards, while he was yet with him on the mount.

Exodus 30:23 "Take thou also unto thee principal spices, of pure myrrh five hundred [shekels], and of sweet cinnamon half so much, [even] two hundred and fifty [shekels], and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty [shekels],"

Directions are here given for making the holy anointing oil, and the incense to be used in the service of the tabernacle. To show the excellency of holiness, there was this spiced oil in the tabernacle, which was grateful to the sight and to the smell. Christ's name is as ointment poured forth (SOS. 1:3), and the good name of Christians is like precious ointment (Eccl. 7:1). The incense burned upon the golden altar was prepared of sweet spices. When it was used, it was to be beaten very small; thus it pleased the Lord to bruise the Redeemer, when he offered himself for a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savor.

The same should not be made for any common use. Thus God would keep in the people's minds reverence for his own services, and teach us not to profane or abuse anything whereby God makes himself known. It is a great affront to God to jest with sacred things, and to make sport with his word and ordinances. It is most dangerous and fatal to use professions of the gospel of Christ to forward worldly interests.

Exodus 30:24 "And of cassia five hundred [shekels], after the shekel of the sanctuary, and of oil olive a hin:"

Or two hundred and fifty ounces.

"After the shekel of the sanctuary": According to the standard weight kept there. This "cassia" was not the "cassia solutiva", which is of a purgative nature, and now in use in physic, but the "cassia odorata", or the sweet smelling "cassia". Which, Pancirollus says, some take to be the nard, out of which a most sweet oil is pressed; and Servius says, that cassia is an herb of a most sweet smell. Pliny speaks of it along with cinnamon; and Galen says when cinnamon was needed but not available, it was usual to put in its stead a double quantity of cassia; Leo Africanus speaks of trees in Africa bearing cassia, and which chiefly grew in Egypt.

"And of oil olive an hin": Containing twelve logs: According to Godwin, it was of our measure three quarts. but, as Bishop Cumberland has more exactly calculated it, it held a wine gallon, a quart, and a little more. This was the purest and best of oil, and most fit and proper to be a part of this holy anointing oil.

Verses 25 and 35: "Art of the apothecary": The skill of the perfumer was obviously already well known in Israel, a trade which they undoubtedly observed in Egypt.

Exodus 30:25 "And thou shalt make it an oil of holy ointment, an ointment compound after the art of the apothecary: it shall be a holy anointing oil."

Rather, "a holy anointing oil".

"After the art of the apothecary": According to Jewish tradition, the essences of the spices were first extracted, and then mixed with the oil. The preparation of the anointing oil, as well as of the incense, was entrusted to Bezaleel (Exodus 37:29). And the care of preserving it to Eleazar, the son of Aaron (Num. 4:16). In a later age, it was prepared by the sons of the priests (1 Chron. 9:30).

We see that this was special oil made for use in the temple; however, no one was to be anointed with this oil but the high priest and the priests. This was not to be taken lightly, but was to be weighed up specifically. It was not only to be made of these specific things, but in the specific portions given. This oil was holy unto the Lord. An apothecary was like a modern druggist. He measured specifically the ingredients. This holy ointment would be used to anoint the priests.

These spices that were mixed to make this holy oil were rare. Most of them came from trees and their leaves, while one came from reeds. They gave off a sweet perfume. Olive oil throughout the Bible spiritually means the Holy Spirit. If we are to minister for God, I believe it is of utmost importance to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. We will truly be a sweet smell to the Lord, when we are anointed to do His will.

Exodus 30:26 "And thou shalt anoint the tabernacle of the congregation therewith, and the ark of the testimony,"

The tabernacle and its contents were to be first consecrated, then the priests. In the tabernacle itself, the consecration was to begin with the ark of the testimony in the Holy of Holies. Then to proceed to the Holy place, where the table of shewbread with its "vessels," the golden candlestick, and the altar of incense were to be anointed. Finally, to pass the vail to the outer court, where the holy oil was to be sprinkled upon the brazen altar, and upon the laver, to sanctify them (see Exodus 30:26-29; and compare Lev. 8:10-11).

Exodus 30:27 "And the table and all his vessels, and the candlestick and his vessels, and the altar of incense,"

The shewbread table with all things that was associated to it; the rings, staves, dishes, spoons, and the bowls. All were anointed; which had respect to Christ, and the communion of his people with him. Feeding on him, that food which endures for ever, whom God the Father has sealed and sanctified.

"And the candlestick and his vessels": An emblem of the church, and of the light of the word held forth in it, which being accompanied with the grace of the Spirit of God, is the savor of life unto life.

"And the altar of incense": On which the odors, the prayers of the saints, come up before God through the mediation of Christ.

Exodus 30:28 "And the altar of burnt offering with all his vessels, and the laver and his foot."

Pans, shovels, basins, etc. and this altar particularly was sprinkled with it seven times (Lev. 8:10).

"And the laver, and his foot"; the laver of brass for the priests to wash their hands and feet in, and the foot or base of it on which it stood (see Exodus 30:18).

Exodus 30:29 "And thou shalt sanctify them, that they may be most holy: whatsoever toucheth them shall be holy."

By anointing them, and so be set apart for sacred uses only. As by the grace of the Holy Spirit, the people of God, the vessels of mercy, are really sanctified, and made ready for the master's use. Therefore, it is called the sanctification of the Spirit, which is true holiness, in opposition to typical or ceremonial holiness, here intended. And if this holy anointing oil made those things most holy that were anointed with it, how much more must the grace of the Spirit those who partake of it. And though it is at present imperfect, it will be perfected, and become complete holiness, without which no man can see the Lord.

"Whatsoever toucheth them shall be holy": As is said of the most holy altar (see note on Exodus 29:37). The Targum of Jonathan interprets it of persons that approach these holy places, and things so anointed and sanctified, paraphrasing the words thus: "Whosoever cometh unto them of the priests shall be holy. But of the rest of the tribes shall be burnt with flaming fire before the Lord".

This anointing of this furniture and articles of the tabernacle and the outer court showed that God had set them aside for holy use only. They were dedicated to God and should be used for godly service only. This is one of the reasons that I do not like to see the sanctuary in the church used for other things. This should be a separated place, not a place for any worldly things. The things like the piano in church, should not be used any more to play the world's music. The sanctuary should be a holy, separated place.

Exodus 30:30 "And thou shalt anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that [they] may minister unto me in the priest's office."

Them alone, and not others, as Aben Ezra. Who were typical of Christ anointed with the Spirit of God without measure, to his various offices of prophet, priest and King. Also of all the saints, who are anointed priests to God, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Christ.

"And consecrate them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office": By anointing them, and by other rites mentioned in the preceding chapter; whereby they were set apart for that office, and were qualified for it, and had authority to exercise it.

We need to take note again here, that all Christians have been made priests of God and have been anointed with the blessed Holy Spirit of God. We are a set aside people dedicated to the service of God. We read in Revelation that Jesus, our high priest, has made us priests unto God and His Father.

Revelation 1:6 "And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him [be] glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

You see, Jesus (our High Priest), has purchased us with His blood and set us aside for Him. We see in Hebrews that Jesus Christ is our High Priest.

Hebrews 3:1 "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;"

Exodus 30:31 "And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, This shall be a holy anointing oil unto me throughout your generations."

When he was come down from the mount, and gave the instructions about the making and using of this oil. The oil thus prepared to be reserved exclusively for the sacred purposes thus specified.

"Throughout your generations" (see note on Exodus 12:14).

Exodus 30:32 "Upon man's flesh shall it not be poured, neither shall ye make [any other] like it, after the composition of it: it [is] holy, [and] it shall be holy unto you."

I.e., it shall not be in ordinary use as an ointment, a mere "man," who is not a priest, shall not apply it to his private use. It shall be reserved altogether for holy purposes.

"Neither shall ye make any other like it": After the composition of it, i.e., after the recipe given in (Exodus 30:23-25). The ingredients might be used in unguents separately. They might even be so used when united in some different proportions from those laid down for the "holy ointment". But in the proportions fixed for the holy oil they must have no secular employment.

"It is holy, and it shall be holy unto you": It was set apart for sacred use by the Lord, and so it was to be reckoned by them, and not to be used in any way, or for any other purpose than he had directed. All which shows, that the grace of the Spirit belongs to the Lord's people, his priests. Other men are carnal, and have no lot or part in this matter, and are not to be admitted to holy ordinances, as if they were holy persons. Nor is fellowship in holy things to be allowed them; nor is counterfeit grace of any avail. Which, though it may bear a likeness to true grace, is not that, nor to be so accounted, nor rested on. As feigned faith, the hypocrite's hope, dissembled love, and pretended humility.

We see from the statement above about the flesh, that this was of the Spirit. This was a spiritual anointing of God. This reminds me of the man in the New Testament who tried to buy the Holy Spirit of God, but the things of the Spirit cannot be purchased. The things of the Spirit are anointing's from God, not man. If you would like to read more about this, you may find it (in Acts 8:15-24).

Exodus 30:33 "Whosoever compoundeth [any] like it, or whosoever putteth [any] of it upon a stranger, shall even be cut off from his people."

For his own use, or for any other than what God had appointed it for.

"Whosoever putteth any of it upon a stranger": Meaning not a Gentile, an alien from the commonwealth of Israel; though Japhet interprets it of such a stranger who was not of the children of Israel. This Aben Ezra says is not right, but he says it means one that is not of the seed of Aaron. And so the Targum of Jonathan, "upon a profane person (or a common person, a laic), that is not of the sons of Aaron". Though the kings of Israel seem to be an exception to this, which might be by a special order from the Lord. Yet it is a question whether it was with this, or with common oil, that they were anointed. Indeed, the oil with which Solomon was anointed was taken out of the tabernacle (1 Kings 1:39).

"Shall even be cut off from his people": Either by death, by the immediate hand of God inflicting some disease upon him. Or by excommunication from the congregation of Israel. Or by not favoring him with any posterity, to keep up his name in the nation.

This is so serious; people should not play around with the things of the Spirit. The things of the Spirit should not be taught or sold. The things of the Spirit are gifts from God to those that He has chosen to give them to. They are given to people to minister with, not for self-satisfaction. You may read why the gifts of the Spirit are poured out on certain people (in Acts 2, beginning with verse 17).

Verses 34-38: "Perfume (incense)": God also listed the ingredients for the unique blend of incense prescribed for use at the altar of incense. Making anything different would have been to make "strange incense" (verse 9), and would also result in death (verse 38). Personal use rendered its holy status null and void. Nadab and Abihu were executed for violating this command (Leviticus 10:1-2).

Exodus 30:34 "And the LORD said unto Moses, Take unto thee sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum; [these] sweet spices with pure frankincense: of each shall there be a like [weight]:"

Rather, "Take unto thee spices". The word translated "spices" has no epithet. Incense, as commonly used in the ancient world, was not a composition, but some single spice, most frequently frankincense. That, however, employed by the Hebrews was always a compound. According to Josephus, the incense burnt in the later temple contained thirteen ingredients.

Stacte is probably the gum storax, which is the produce of the *styrax officinalis*, a tree common in Syria and Palestine. It burns readily, and emits much smoke.

Onycha is thought to be the "claw" or operculum of the *unguis odoratus*, or *blatta Byzantina*, a sort of shell-fish common in the Red Sea. This "claw" produces, when burnt, a strong odor.

Galbanum is a gum well known to modern chemists. It may be procured from various plants, as the *opoidia galbanifera*, the *galbanum Persicum*, and others. When burnt, this gum has a strong pungent odor, which is said to be disagreeable in itself, but to bring out and prolong the scent of other spices.

Frankincense was probably the main element of the "holy incense," as it is of such incense as is burnt in modern times. It is a gum or resin obtained from incisions in the bark of the *arbor thuris*, or frankincense-tree, which grows abundantly in India, and in the islands of the Indian archipelago. Anciently, the tree appears to have grown also in Arabia, whence the Egyptians, the Phoenicians, the Hebrews (Isa. 60:6; Jer. 6:20), and the Greeks obtained it in large quantities. The odor is very peculiar, and to most persons very agreeable. In England, it is best known as the scent given out by the pastilles which are burnt in sick rooms.

Exodus 30:35 "And thou shalt make it a perfume, a confection after the art of the apothecary, tempered together, pure [and] holy:"

"Art of the apothecary" The skill of the perfumer was obviously already well known in Israel, a trade which they undoubtedly observed in Egypt.

We have already studied in a previous lesson; how serious it would be to burn strange incense. This is important to get it mixed in exacting proportions. Remember we spoke earlier of this incense as compared with the prayers of the Christians. It also, is very important to pray with reverence expecting from God and always in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is our formula that must be exact, as well. The Lord gave us the formula to use, when He taught the disciples how to pray. He said, after this manner pray ye.

John 14:14 "If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it."

There is a formula. It must be asked in Jesus' name.

Exodus 30:36 "And thou shalt beat [some] of it very small, and put of it before the testimony in the tabernacle of the congregation, where I will meet with thee: it shall be unto you most holy."

Leviticus 16:12: "Incense beaten small". The ingredients named (in verse 34), were mixed together, and then apparently melted down into a solid mass. Small portions of this were broken off, from time to time. And beaten into a powder which was then placed ready for use every morning and evening (verse 7). Outside the veil, near the altar of incense; or "put" may mean, put upon the altar and burnt.

"Before the testimony": I.e. before the ark, (as Exodus 16:34; see note on Exodus 25:16).

"Meet with thee" (see note on Exodus 25:22).

"Most holy" (see note on Exodus 29:37). The anointing oil, not being brought into such close proximity to Jehovah, was only "holy" (verse 32).

This was to be outside the curtain, but very close to the presence of God. This was to be handy, ready at all times to be used. We are told to be instant, both in season and out.

2 Timothy 4:2, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine."

You see, we are to be ready all the time just like this incense.

James 5:16, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

Exodus 30:37 "And [as for] the perfume which thou shalt make, ye shall not make to yourselves according to the composition thereof: it shall be unto thee holy for the LORD."

As above directed.

"Ye shall not make to yourselves according to the composition thereof": That is, for their own use, for the scenting of their rooms, or to snuff up, or smell to, as in the next verse.

"It shall be unto thee holy for the Lord": Separated entirely for his service, to be burned upon his altar, and to be not otherwise used.

Exodus 30:38 "Whosoever shall make like unto that, to smell thereto, shall even be cut off from his people."

A man might make a perfume of the same ingredients, and of the same weight, and exactly like it, but not to burn for his own delight and pleasure. But if he made it and sold it to the congregation, as Jarchi observes, he was not guilty. But if it was for his own private use and pleasure, then he shall even be cut off from his people (see note on Exodus 30:33).

Here again, we see the importance of praying. Our prayers are so important to God that they are stored in heaven. I will close this Bible study with two Scriptures which tell what these odors were and where they were stored.

Revelation 5:8, "And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints."

Revelation 8: 3-4, "And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne." "And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand."

This leaves no doubt what the incense was.

Exodus Chapter 30 Continued Questions

1. What would the laver be made of?
2. Where was it to be placed?
3. What was the stand holding the laver made of?
4. What was the laver used for?
5. What 2 parts of their body had to be washed before they came into the holy place?
6. What did this indicate?
7. What is the spiritual meaning of this laver?
8. What would happen if they go in without washing?
9. Who was the only one who could be anointed with this special oil?
10. What was an apothecary like?
11. If we are to minister for God, what is almost imperative to do?
12. Name the things in the temple that were to be anointed.
13. What does anointing things in the tabernacle mean?
14. Our High Priest is Jesus, what are we Christians?
15. This oil shall not be poured on man's _____ .
16. The things of the Spirit are _____ from _____ .
17. What would happen to someone who compounds this, other than for the temple?
18. The things of the Spirit should not be _____ or _____ .
19. What was the perfume of incense made of besides the spices?

20. When we pray, what is the most important thing to remember to do?
21. What are we taught in 2 Timothy 4:2?
22. What kind of prayer availeth much?
23. What are the prayers of saints in heaven?