

Sunday School Lesson (September 18, 2022)

The Priesthood, Exodus 28-31

In the Old Testament, God prepares us for the first coming of Jesus Christ; His sacrifice for forgiveness of our sin and living in relationship to Jesus; His second coming will restore His Kingdom on earth.

The Old and New Testaments reveal God is in the process of restoring His relationship with us and between. Today, we are continuing to study God's commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai. John led us last week in chapters 25-27 about the instructions God gave Moses for building the portable tabernacle.

Clothes Make The Man (or Priest)

Ch 28 The priesthood: appearance and function (Calling of Aaron; holy garments)

Previously, the master of the house had acted as priest to his family. Priests were common in early cults and religions of the near east. Some had power to appoint and remove kings.

Israel is now being formed into a nation, a new way of living in community, worshiping and serving God. Moses had served the function of priest, prophet, theologian and judge. Now, God establishes a new priesthood, commanding Moses to relinquish his role to his brother, Aaron.

Why might God have chosen this time to begin the priesthood? _____

Selecting Aaron and his sons.

Highlights of Aaron's life: Egyptian slave; assisted Moses in bringing plagues to pharaoh: gave in to people's demands for golden calf (coming in Chapter 32); devoted high priest of God. **Read Exodus 28:1-4**

“Then bring near to you Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the people of Israel, to serve me as priests—Aaron and Aaron’s sons, Nadab and Abi’hu, Elea’zar and Ith’amar. ² And you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty. ³ And you shall speak to all who have ability, whom I have endowed with an able mind, that they make Aaron’s garments to consecrate him for my priesthood. ⁴ These are the garments which they shall make: a breastpiece, an ephod, a robe, a coat of checker work, a turban, and a girdle; they shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother and his sons to serve me as priests.

The Ephod and shoulder pieces. **Read Exodus 28:5-12.**

⁵ “They shall receive gold, blue and purple and scarlet stuff, and fine twined linen. ⁶ And they shall make the ephod of gold, of blue and purple and scarlet stuff, and of fine twined linen, skilfully worked. ⁷ It shall have two shoulder-pieces attached to its two edges, that it may be joined together. ⁸ And the skilfully woven band upon it, to gird it on, shall be of the same workmanship and materials, of gold, blue and purple and scarlet stuff, and fine twined linen. ⁹ And you shall take two onyx stones, and engrave on them the names of the sons of Israel, ¹⁰ six of their names on the one stone, and the names of the remaining six on the other stone, in the order of their birth. ¹¹ As a jeweler engraves signets, so shall you engrave the two stones with the names of the sons of Israel; you shall enclose them in settings of gold filigree. ¹² And you shall set the two stones upon the shoulder-pieces of the ephod, as stones of remembrance for the sons of Israel; and Aaron shall bear their names before the Lord upon his two shoulders for remembrance.

The Breastpiece of Judgment. **Read Exodus 28:15-21, 30.**

¹⁵ “And you shall make a breastpiece of judgment, in skilled work; like the work of the ephod you shall make it; of gold, blue and purple and scarlet stuff, and fine twined linen shall you make it. ¹⁶ It shall be square and double, a span its length and a span its breadth. ¹⁷ And you shall set in it four rows of stones. A row of sardius, topaz, and carbuncle shall be the first row; ¹⁸ and the second row an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond; ¹⁹ and the third row a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; ²⁰ and the fourth row a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper; they shall be set in gold filigree. ²¹ There shall be twelve stones with their names according to the names of the sons of Israel; they shall be like signets, each engraved with its name, for the twelve tribes. ³⁰ And in the breastpiece of judgment you shall put the Urim and the Thummim, and they shall be upon Aaron’s heart, when he goes in before the Lord; thus Aaron shall bear the judgment of the people of Israel upon his heart before the Lord continually.

The Turban. **Read Exodus 28:36-37.**

³⁶ *“And you shall make a plate of pure gold, and engrave on it, like the engraving of a signet, ‘Holy to the Lord.’* ³⁷ *And you shall fasten it on the turban by a lace of blue; it shall be on the front of the turban.*

Bells on the skirt of the Ephod. **Read Exodus 28:33, 35.**

³³ *On its skirts you shall make pomegranates of blue and purple and scarlet stuff, around its skirts, with bells of gold between them,*

³⁵ *And it shall be upon Aaron when he ministers, and its sound shall be heard when he goes into the holy place before the LORD, and when he comes out, lest he die.*

The priest represents God. He is the bridge between the people and God.

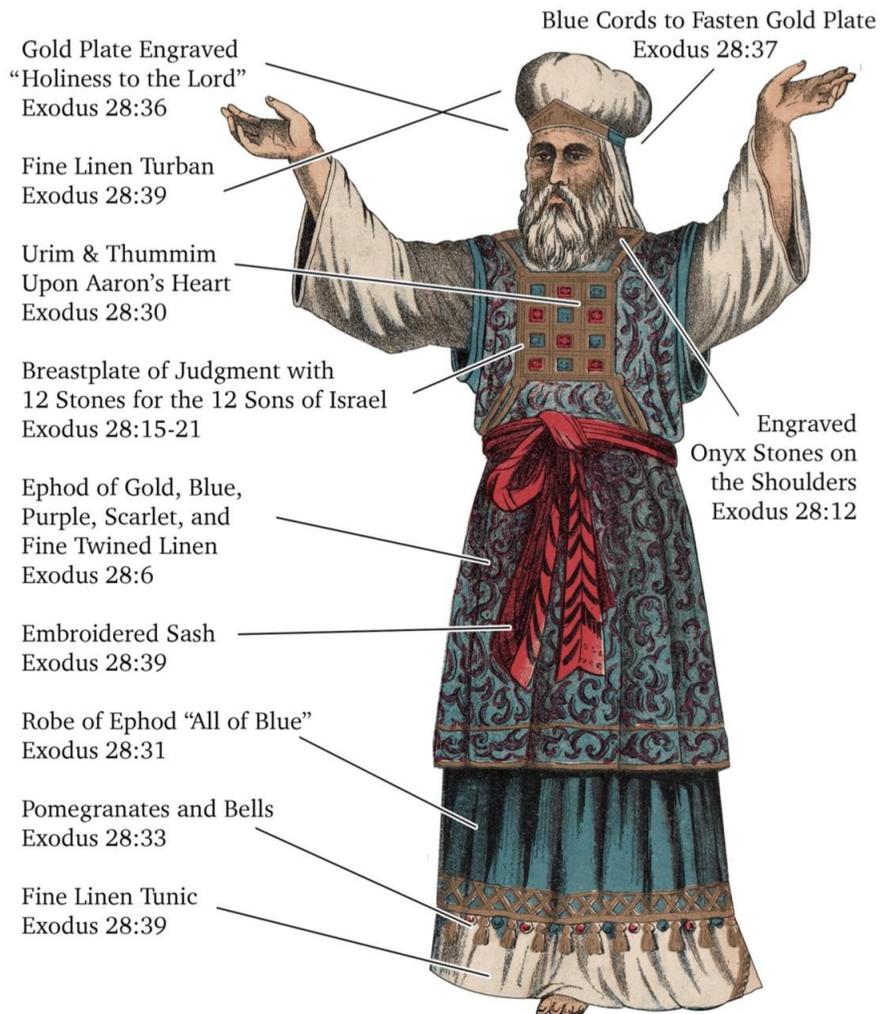
Priest's garments were highly symbolic. They are to set apart the priest, to reflect God's holiness and to signify the priesthood of Christ. The garments described in Exodus are inadequate to comprehend the priest's appearance.

Four sons of Aaron: Eleazor and Ithmar were important to priestly function.

Eleazor was successor to Aaron. In Leviticus we learn that Abihu and Nadab died in a fire when they offended God.

GARMENTS OF THE HIGH PRIEST

EXODUS 28



TimeWarpWife.com

Ephod - short linen sleeveless coat. Intended to enhance authority. Decorated in gold, stones & color.

Two stones name 12 tribes of Israel---remembrance

Breastpiece - worn over the heart. Includes 12 precious stones naming each tribe.

Intricately woven band - belt around waist

Turban - headdress with gold plate and words "Holy to the Lord".

Tunic - blue linen garment under Ephod.

Robe - undergarment to cover the flesh. No foot covering because the priest walks on hallowed ground.

Urim and Thummim (light and perfection): oracle and truth (divine communication). These terms predated Moses. They are pebble-like objects worn in a pouch over the high priests heart. This suggests the priest is to appeal for God's wisdom and justice for the Jewish people,

What might be the impact of the priesthood on Aaron and others with such enormous power? _____

Positive: reminded of our awesome God; dignity of priest's position; reveal Godly behavior; point Jews to the coming Messiah; motivate Jews to honor God in service.

Negative: Absorbed with enormous power; make his own rules with selfish purposes; self preservation; corrupt. Use power as tool for control and manipulation. The later institution of kings had similar impact.

Ordination and Consecration of priests (setting apart for the Lord's work)

"Now this is what you shall do to them to consecrate them, that they may serve me as priests. Take one young bull and two rams without blemish,² and unleavened bread, unleavened cakes mixed with oil, and unleavened wafers spread with oil. You shall make them of fine wheat flour.³ And you shall put them in one basket and bring them in the basket, and bring the bull and the two rams.⁴ You shall bring Aaron and his sons to the door of the tent of meeting, and wash them with water.⁵ And you shall take the garments, and put on Aaron the coat and the robe of the ephod, and the ephod, and the breastpiece, and gird him with the skilfully woven band of the ephod;⁶ and you shall set the turban on his head, and put the holy crown upon the turban.⁷ And you shall take the anointing oil, and pour it on his head and anoint him.⁸ Then you shall bring his sons, and put coats on them,⁹

and you shall gird them with girdles and bind caps on them; and the priesthood shall be theirs by a perpetual statute. Thus you shall ordain Aaron and his sons.

- Exodus 29:1-9

Verses 10-46 describe the required sin offering and ordination offering (a bull, 2 rams, 2 lambs, unleavened baked items and oil) for the ordination ceremony. Ordination and consecration sacrifices repeat daily for 7 days; morning and evening.

What might be God's purposes for this ordination? _____

Lead people to have exalted view of priest. Impress priest with his magnitude and importance.

Sacrifices remind us of the coming Messiah.

Consider the relevance for today:

Exodus 6:2-7 Reminder: "I will take you as my people and I will be your God". A strong revelation of God's love for us.

Jesus: Luke 9:23: " And he said to all, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."

Paul reminds us he is the worst of sinners. He doesn't do what he wants to do. He does what he does not want to do.

Paul: II Cor 5:17: (In the original Greek, Paul uses future tense.) If anyone be in Christ. he is becoming a new (Kainos) creation; the old things are passing away; behold all things are becoming (ginomai) new.

What is God revealing about our sacrifice today? _____

When we receive Jesus Christ as Savior, we receive his forgiveness and enter eternal life with Him. However, our old nature does not suddenly go away. Dying to self and getting rid of old nature is a lifelong process.

We still carry the burden of our old nature-jealousy, saving ourselves, lust, inadequacy, fear, insecure, covetous, self will and determination; whatever is damaging.

Instead of frequent animal sacrifices that God ordained in Exodus, God invites us to die daily to ourselves. Take ourselves off the throne. Take up our cross (our old nature) and surrender our brokenness to God.

The Altar of Incense:

[*Daffynition: Altar: The place where a bachelor loses control of himself.*

The bride was escorted down the aisle and when she reached the altar, the groom was standing there with his golf bag and clubs at his side.

She said: "What are your golf clubs doing here?"

He looked her right in the eye and said, "This isn't going to take all day, is it?"]

Moses is given specifications for an altar. **Read Exodus 30:1-6.**

"You shall make an altar to burn incense upon; of acacia wood shall you make it. ² A cubit shall be its length, and a cubit its breadth; it shall be square, and two cubits shall be its height; its horns shall be of one piece with it. ³ And you shall overlay it with pure gold, its top and its sides round about and its horns; and you shall make for it a molding of gold round about. ⁴ And two golden rings shall you make for it; under its molding on two opposite sides of it shall you make them, and they shall be holders for poles with which to carry it. ⁵ You shall make the poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold. ⁶ And you shall put it before the veil that is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy seat that is over the testimony, where I will meet with you.

But wait!! Moses already had specs for an altar. **Read Exodus 27:1-8.** What is different??

"You shall make the altar of acacia wood, five cubits long and five cubits broad; the altar shall be square, and its height shall be three cubits. ² And you shall make horns for it on its four corners; its horns shall be of one piece with it, and you shall overlay it with bronze. ³ You shall make pots for it to receive its ashes, and shovels and basins and forks and firepans; all its utensils you shall make of bronze. ⁴ You shall also make for it a grating, a network of bronze; and upon the net you shall make four bronze rings at its four corners. ⁵ And you shall set it under the ledge of the altar so that the net shall extend halfway down the altar. ⁶ And you shall make poles for the altar, poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with bronze; ⁷ and the poles shall be put through the rings, so that the poles shall be upon the two sides of the altar, when it is carried. ⁸ You shall make it hollow, with boards; as it has been shown you on the mountain, so shall it be made.

In Rabbinical tradition a "cubit" was 144 grains of barley, side-by-side. In common measure (Deuteronomy 3:11 and 2 Chronicles 3:3) 1 cubit = 0.45 m = 17.72 inches. A newer, larger cubit, referred to as a "big cubit," or "Royal cubit"

was used to build the Temple in Ezekiel 40:5 & 43:13, and was one old cubit plus a hand's breadth, or 0.525 m = 20.66 inches.

Appearance:

Exodus 27	Exodus 30
Square	Square
Acacia Wood (thorn wood, like locust; member of Memosa)	Acacia Wood
5 cubits x 5 cubits x 3 cubits high	1 cubit x 1 cubit x 2 cubits high
Bronze covered	Gold covered
4 rings for carrying	2 rings for carrying
4 horns => praise of God from 4 corners of the world	4 horns => praise of God from 4 corners of the world

Purpose:

Exodus 27	Exodus 30
Burnt offerings	Burning incense ONLY, twice a day in perpetuity, and one annual blood of the sin offering
Bronze for sin	Gold for worship

What is significant about the incense offering? _____

It shows deference to an important person; it creates a pleasing environment; and it requires commitment & sacrifice to continue it forever, regardless of circumstances.

Location:

Exodus 27	Exodus 30
	⁶ You shall put it before the veil that is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy seat that is over the testimony, where I will meet you.

Atonement Money – Exodus 30:11-16

¹¹ The Lord said to Moses, ¹² “When you take the census of the people of Israel, then each shall give a ransom for himself to the Lord when you number them, that there be no plague among them when you number them. ¹³ Each who is numbered in the census shall give this: half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary (the shekel is twenty gerahs), half a shekel as an offering to the Lord. ¹⁴ Every one who is numbered in the census, from twenty years old and upward, shall give the Lord’s offering. ¹⁵ The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less, than the half shekel, when you give the Lord’s offering to make atonement for yourselves. ¹⁶ And you shall take the atonement money from the people of Israel, and shall appoint it for the service of the tent of meeting; that it may bring the people of Israel to remembrance before the Lord, so as to make atonement for yourselves.”

When does one pay?

With each census.

How much?

Everybody pays 1/2 shekel.

In this period the weight of money was more important than the stamped value. One shekel was ~ 2/5 oz.

What is it for?

- 1) To be counted among the redeemed
- 2) It is an act of remembering
- 3) It supports the “machinery” of the cult

Bronze laver (wash basin) – Exodus 30:17-21

¹⁷ The Lord said to Moses, ¹⁸ “You shall also make a laver of bronze, with its base of bronze, for washing. And you shall put it between the tent of meeting and the altar, and you shall put water in it, ¹⁹ with which Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet. ²⁰ When they go into the tent of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister, to burn an offering by fire to the Lord, they shall wash with water, lest they die. ²¹ They shall wash their hands and their feet, lest they die: it shall be a statute for ever to them, even to him and to his descendants throughout their generations.”

What is it for?

For the priest to be clean and pure before approaching God.

Why so ominous (..that they will not die)?

Warning that you should not approach God casually.

See also John 13:8

“Unless I wash you, you have no part in me.”

Anointing Oil – Exodus 30:22-33 (provides the formula)

(formula & measures)

1 log ≈ 1 pint

12 logs = 1 hin ≈ 1.5 gal

6 hins = 1 bath ≈ 9 gal

10 baths = 1 homer or cor ≈ 90 gal

<i>Myrrh</i>	<i>500 shekel = 200 oz</i>	} /128 oz per gal => 4.7 gal
<i>Cinnamon</i>	<i>250 shekel = 100 oz</i>	
<i>Cane</i>	<i>250 shekel = 100 oz</i>	
<i>Cassia (“Chinese Cinnamon”)</i>	<i>500 shekel = 200 oz</i>	

The formula creates about 6 ¼ gallons

** Here is what God told Moses to do with this special oil: Exodus 28:41

And you shall put them (coats, girdles & caps) upon Aaron your brother, and upon his sons with him, and shall anoint them and ordain them and consecrate them, that they may serve me as priests.

This is what Moses did: Leviticus 8:10-12

Then Moses took the anointing oil, and anointed the tabernacle and all that was in it, and consecrated them. And he sprinkled some of it on the altar seven times, and anointed the altar and all its utensils, and the laver and its base, to consecrate them. And he poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron’s head, and anointed him, to consecrate him.

Anointing of David: 1 Samuel 16:1, 11-13 (Samuel anointed David as King)

¹ *The LORD said to Samuel, “How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your*

way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king.”

¹¹ So he asked Jesse, “Are these all the sons you have?”

“There is still the youngest,” Jesse answered. “He is tending the sheep.”

Samuel said, “Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives.”

¹² So he sent for him and had him brought in. He was glowing with health and had a fine appearance and handsome features.

Then the LORD said, “Rise and anoint him; this is the one.”

¹³ So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon David. Samuel then went to Ramah.

Incense - Exodus 30:34-38

Purpose? _____

<i>To create a pleasant smell that is special to worship.</i>

Appointment of workmen – Exodus 31:1-11

Important notes: 1) While most of Exodus is about Moses and Aaron, here, two skilled craftsmen are specifically named. 2) These artisans are completely skilled in all the crafts required for the construction. 3) Josephus wrote that Oholiab was Miriam’s grandson (Miriam was Moses’ sister).

Observance of the Sabbath – Exodus 31:12-17

¹² And the Lord said to Moses, ¹³ “Say to the people of Israel, ‘You shall keep my sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I, the Lord, sanctify you. ¹⁴ You shall keep the sabbath, because it is holy for you; every one who profanes it shall be put to death; whoever does any work on it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. ¹⁵ Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a sabbath of solemn rest, holy to the Lord; whoever does any work on the sabbath day shall be put to death. ¹⁶ Therefore the people of Israel shall keep the sabbath, observing the sabbath throughout their generations, as a perpetual covenant. ¹⁷ It is a sign for ever between me and the people of Israel that in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.’”

What does observance of the Sabbath do for Israelites? _____

- 1) *It breaks the cycle of production & consumption. Worship is not of primary importance here, rather stoppage from work.*
- 2) *It makes them holy – fitted and qualified to enter the realm beyond realms, to participate in the joy, well-being, and power of God’s own life. (Not predicated on clean/unclean.)*

Note: the first thing God “hallows” is time; not a person nor a place. Violating the Sabbath means to withhold for yourself something that rightfully belongs to God.

Very interesting point: The Interpreter’s Bible is astonished that on the seventh day of Creation God rested and was refreshed! Being refreshed was not mentioned in the Genesis story. They interpret this to mean that during the six days of Creation, God worked very hard and was somewhat diminished, but resting on the seventh day restored Him.

Summary:

What part of my old nature am I being called release to God?
What might God be directing me in my next step to grow in my relationship with Him?
Have I placed the lordship of my life on Christ's shoulders? Think of a time I experienced in my gut the governance of Jesus.

Why are we studying these details of the Tabernacle in Exodus?

1. It is exciting (Jeremiah 15:16 “When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart’s delight, for I bear your name, LORD God Almighty.”)
2. It is there – a part of our Bible
3. Because there is so much coverage (40 – 50 chapters)
 - Exodus 13 chapters -Deuteronomy 2 -plus verses in Psalms & Revelation
 - Leviticus 18 -Hebrews 4 -Numbers 13

4. Because God claims to be the architect of this.
 - Unique
 - Prefabricated
 - Portable building
5. From everything available on earth, God chose this color scheme, size, furniture, materials.
6. Because it was a national treasure: Gold, silver, bronze, jewels, tapestry, special garments. It was a work of art in the middle of the desert; a wonder to behold, especially from the inside.
7. Because it had meaning for the Israelites – it was God dwelling in their midst.

Ponder in quiet times with our Lord:

We need a priest (intermediator) when we are broken, distant, feel God is not with us, etc.

Peter said we are priests to one another. We can be a priest to another when that person ordains us in trust.

Example of priest: Chaplain went to patient's room. The door was closed. The patient was pouring out her heart to another in the room. The Chaplain waited outside. When the cleaning lady left, the chaplain went in. Only the patient remained. The patient had trusted the cleaning lady, ordaining her to be the patient's priest.

Jesus came to lift the burden of sin, running our own lives, trying to control others and worrying over our problems.

God placed in us the desire to connect with Him - because He wants an intimate relationship with us. Without Him, we are incomplete.

When we are needy and weak (poor in spirit), we become more aware of our need for Jesus. We are on a daily pilgrimage of trusting Him with our lives and our soul. Sin is anything, and the only thing, that walls us away from God.

References:

1. Candell, Lloyd, Notes from his Trinity Sunday School class lesson on Exodus 28-29, September 30, 2011.
2. Collins Gem Dictionary of the Bible, Rev. James L. Dow, M.A., editor, Collins of London and Glasgow, 1964.
3. Dunnam, Maxie, Mastering the Old Testament: Exodus, Lloyd J. Ogilvie, General Editor, Word Publishing, Dallas, TX, 1987.
4. Harper Study Bible, Revised Standard Version, Zondervan Bible Publishers, Grand Rapids, MI, 1985.
5. Internet images of Priests:
<https://images.search.yahoo.com/search/images?p=picture+of+Exodus+priest+Aaron&fr=mcafee&type=E210US105G91713&imgurl=https%3A%2F%2Fak0.pinimg.com%2F736x%2F82%2F68%2Fd1%2F8268d1cb3882c82db181d8a0097271f6.jpg#id=50&iurl=https%3A%2F%2Fi.pinimg.com%2Foriginals%2F01%2F6c%2F40%2F016c40649b2a732622f5676818a1d401.png&action=click>
6. NIV Bible on-line: www.Biblegateway.com

Bible Readings:

1) Exodus 28:1-4	2) Exodus 28:5-12
3) Exodus 28:15-21, 30	4) Exodus 28:36-37
5) Exodus 28:33, 35	6) Exodus 30:1-6
7) Exodus 27:1-8	8)