

21. Preparation for consecration

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When we look for a definition of the word 'consecration' from a dictionary, it says "ordination to a sacred office." In other words, consecration is not to be used to describe any person starting a new job. We all are familiar with inauguration ceremonies of the President of the United States. But that is not consecration.

Consecration is limited to priest-to-be. With that in mind, you are wondering, "If so, why are we studying about the consecration of the OT priesthood?" I am glad that you are thinking about that.

It is because those who are born-again Christians are God's royal priesthood we've learned in our previous studies. So as His royal priesthood, shouldn't we know about what is required of us and what we need to do?

1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

Consecration for a believer is nothing that he does for himself. It is something that God does for him. It rests upon the finished work of Christ.

God commanded that Aaron the high priest and his sons participate in a public consecration service that would set them apart as God's servants. There were at least seven stages in this service.

A. THE PRIESTS WERE WASHED

Exodus 29:1-4 "And this is what you shall do to them to hallow them for ministering to Me as priests: Take one young bull and two rams without blemish, 2 and unleavened bread, unleavened cakes mixed with oil, and unleavened wafers anointed with oil (you shall make them of wheat flour). 3 You shall put them in one basket and bring them in the basket, with the bull and the two rams. 4 And Aaron and his sons you shall bring to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and you shall wash them with water.

When Aaron and his sons were washed all over, it was symbolic of complete cleansing from the Lord. Sin is pictured by many images in the Bible, such as disease, darkness and even death, but frequently it's also pictured as dirt and defilement.

The process of consecration began with cleansing. Aaron and his sons did not wash themselves, rather they received a washing.

This was humbling, because it took place publicly at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. Just like that we cannot be cleansed from our sin without being humbled first. Like these ancient priests, every Christian is washed by the work of God's Word, by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. This cleansing work was accomplished by the death of Jesus for us and appropriated by faith.

B. THE PRIESTS WERE CLOTHED

Exodus 29:5-6 Then you shall take the garments, put the tunic on Aaron, and the robe of the ephod, the ephod, and the breastplate, and gird him with the intricately woven band of the ephod. 6 You shall put the turban on his head, and put the holy crown on the turban.

After being cleansed, the priest had to be clothed – but not in his own clothes, but in clothes given by God. Like these ancient priests, every believer is clothed in Jesus Christ and in His righteousness. These are clothes that are given freely by Jesus, but must be received and “worn” by faith at His own cost, out of His boundless love.

C. THE PRIESTS WERE ANOINTED

Exodus 29:7-9 And you shall take the anointing oil, pour it on his head, and anoint him. 8 Then you shall bring his sons and put tunics on them. 9 And you shall gird them with sashes, Aaron and his sons, and put the hats on them. The priesthood shall be theirs for a perpetual statute. So you shall consecrate Aaron and his sons.

In the Old Testament, prophets, priests and kings were anointed. It was a symbol that God had granted them the Holy Spirit for power and service. Those who trust Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord have received an anointing of the Spirit of God.

1 John 2:20 But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things.

2 Corinthians 1:21-22 Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, 22 who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

D. THE PRIESTS WERE FORGIVEN

Exodus 29:10-14 “You shall also have the bull brought before the tabernacle of meeting, and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands on the head of the bull. 11 Then you shall kill the bull before the Lord, by the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 12 You shall take some of the blood of the bull and put it on the horns of the altar with your finger, and pour all the blood beside the base of the altar. 13 And you shall take all the fat that covers the entrails, the fatty lobe attached to the liver, and the two kidneys and the fat that is on them, and burn them on the altar. 14 But the flesh of the bull, with its skin and its offal, you shall burn with fire outside the camp. It is a sin offering.

Being washed at the door of the tabernacle was only one aspect of the symbolic cleansing from sin. There had to be the punishment of the guilty, and this happened. As Aaron and his sons put their hands on the head of the bull with a confession of sin, they symbolically transferred their sin to the bull.

The idea behind the ancient Hebrew word for ‘altar’ is essentially, “killing-place.” The ancient altar – a place of death – was made holy and was consecrated to God. Like that ancient altar, the altar of the New Covenant – the cross of Jesus – is transformed from a place of death to a place set apart to bring life.

E. THE PRIESTS WERE COMPLETELY DEDICATED TO GOD

Exodus 29:15-18 “You shall also take one ram, and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands on the head of the ram; 16 and you shall kill the ram, and you shall take its blood and sprinkle it all around on the altar. 17 Then you shall cut the ram in pieces, wash its entrails and its legs, and put them with its pieces and with its head. 18 And you shall burn the whole ram on the altar. It is a burnt offering to the Lord; it is a sweet aroma, an offering made by fire to the Lord.

In the sacrifice of the burnt offering, the animal was completely given to the Lord, a picture of total dedication. Our Lord Jesus gave Himself fully and without reservation, not only in His ministry before the cross, but in His willing sacrifice of Himself on the cross. The high priest and his associates were expected to devote themselves

wholly to the work of the ministry and to make it the uppermost concern of their hearts.

Some Christians think that since they accepted Jesus into their hearts that is all of it. Far from the truth. That is just the start of this wonderful adventure with Jesus. As the followers of Jesus Christ, we no longer can be conformed into the mold of this carnal world, but we should be transformed into the image of our Lord.

Does it mean that we have to stop doing the carnal things we used to do? Yes. Not to earn brownie points from God, because we love God and we want to please Him.

A British committee that was considering inviting evangelist D.L. Moody to their London for evangelistic outreaches in late 19th Century. When a pastor spoke excitedly about Moody's ministry, a member of the committee asked rather flippantly, "Why must we have Moody? Does he have a monopoly on the Holy Spirit?" "No," replied the pastor, "but the Holy Spirit has a monopoly on him."

We need to be exclusive to our God, no one else including ourselves.

F. THE PRIESTS WERE MARKED BY THE BLOOD

Exodus 29:19-22 "You shall also take the other ram, and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands on the head of the ram. 20 Then you shall kill the ram, and take some of its blood and put it on the tip of the right ear of Aaron and on the tip of the right ear of his sons, on the thumb of their right hand and on the big toe of their right foot, and sprinkle the blood all around on the altar. 21 And you shall take some of the blood that is on the altar, and some of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it on Aaron and on his garments, on his sons and on the garments of his sons with him; and he and his garments shall be hallowed, and his sons and his sons' garments with him. 22 Also you shall take the fat of the ram, the fat tail, the fat that covers the entrails, the fatty lobe attached to the liver, the two kidneys and the fat on them, the right thigh (for it is a ram of consecration),

To express the idea of consecration, blood from the ram is placed on the ear, thumb, and toe of the priest. It was blood from the ram – not the wool, nor the fat. God wanted the "life" of the sacrificial victim to mark His consecrated priests.

This was a token reminder that they must listen to God's Word, do God's work, and walk in God's way. The blood speaks of sacrifice, so the priests became "living sacrifices" in the service of the Lord.

I asked you guys to underline v21. God wanted blood mixed with oil, and to have the mixture sprinkled on the priests. There was to be a combination of both the sacrifice and the spirit. This represents the justification work of the atoning sacrifice of Jesus on the cross as well as the daily sanctification work of the Holy Spirit in our daily lives.

G. THE PRIESTS WERE FED

Exodus 29:23-33 one loaf of bread, one cake made with oil, and one wafer from the basket of the unleavened bread that is before the Lord; 24 and you shall put all these in the hands of Aaron and in the hands of his sons, and you shall wave them as a wave offering before the Lord. 25 You shall receive them back from their hands and burn them on the altar as a burnt offering, as a

sweet aroma before the Lord. It is an offering made by fire to the Lord. 26 Then you shall take the breast of the ram of Aaron's consecration and wave it as a wave offering before the Lord; and it shall be your portion. 27 And from the ram of the consecration you shall consecrate the breast of the wave offering which is waved, and the thigh of the heave offering which is raised, of that which is for Aaron and of that which is for his sons. 28 It shall be from the children of Israel for Aaron and his sons by a statute forever. For it is a heave offering; it shall be a heave offering from the children of Israel from the sacrifices of their peace offerings, that is, their heave offering to the Lord. 29 "And the holy garments of Aaron shall be his sons' after him, to be anointed in them and to be consecrated in them. 30 That son who becomes priest in his place shall put them on for seven days, when he enters the tabernacle of meeting to minister in the holy place. 31 "And you shall take the ram of the consecration and boil its flesh in the holy place. 32 Then Aaron and his sons shall eat the flesh of the ram, and the bread that is in the basket, by the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 33 They shall eat those things with which the atonement was made, to consecrate and to sanctify them; but an outsider shall not eat them, because they are holy.

Waving the food basket was an act of presentation to God. Then these portions were burnt on the altar as an act of complete devotion.

We find the priests were told to eat the portion of the sacrifice. In the Middle East, sharing food with someone is a very sensitive thing. They don't extend an invitation for sharing a meal to anyone except to the ones whom they'd like to have fellowship. That is exactly what God is doing here. He was extending His fellowship with these priests and ultimately to all the followers of Jesus Christ now.

Eating is personal. No one can eat for you, and no one can have a relationship with Jesus on your behalf. Eating is inward. It does no good to be around food or to rub food on the outside of your body – you must take it in. We must take Jesus unto ourselves inwardly, not merely in an external religious way.

H. DAILY OFFERINGS

Exodus 29:38-46 "Now this is what you shall offer on the altar: two lambs of the first year, day by day continually. 39 One lamb you shall offer in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer at twilight. 40 With the one lamb shall be one-tenth of an ephah of flour mixed with one-fourth of a hin of pressed oil, and one-fourth of a hin of wine as a drink offering. 41 And the other lamb you shall offer at twilight; and you shall offer with it the grain offering and the drink offering, as in the morning, for a sweet aroma, an offering made by fire to the Lord. 42 This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the Lord, where I will meet you to speak with you. 43 And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by My glory. 44 So I will consecrate the tabernacle of meeting and the altar. I will also consecrate both Aaron and his sons to minister to Me as priests. 45 I will dwell among the children of Israel and will be their God. 46 And they shall know that I am the Lord their God, who brought them up out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them. I am the Lord their God.

Now the Lord began to describe the ministerial duties of the priests, beginning with the burnt offerings that were to be offered morning and evening each day.

The first responsibility of the priests each morning was to remove the old ashes from the altar, get the fire burning, and then offer a lamb to the Lord, a symbol of total devotion to God. This is a beautiful picture of what our morning "devotional time" ought to be like. How easy it is for the fire to get low on the altar of our hearts so that we become lukewarm and even cold!

The tabernacle was sanctified by God's glory when the glory of God moved into the holy of holies. Israel was the only nation that had "the glory of God". Now that God's Spirit lives within us and we should be a separated people who bring glory to God.

I don't know how you start your day. Do you start with music, TV news or sports? Why not start the day with what really matters in our lives? How about spending time with God in reading the Bible and prayers. Then how do you end your day? With late night shows or newspaper to catch up with all the bad things happening around the world? How about thanking God for the day even if you had just a plain lousy day, because you are still alive by His grace, mercy and love.

I. APPLICATIONS

- 1) **As the followers of Jesus Christ, we no longer can be conformed into the mold of this carnal world, but we should be transformed into the image of our Lord.**
- 2) **We can not go wrong if we listen to God's Word, do His work and walk in His way.**
- 3) **Start and end your days with God's Word, prayer and thanksgiving.**