

Women's Bible Study Handout

Exodus 27:20–30:10

Today we will be looking at Exodus 27:20-30:10. This is a large body of scripture that reviews the details of the priestly garments, the consecration of the priests, the sacrifices needing to be made and on one book end, we will look at the Lampstand made of pure gold, burning with pure oil and giving continuous light, while on the other end the altar of incense that brought a sweet aroma before the Lord.

I remember watching the royal wedding of Lady Diana Spencer and Prince Charles on July 29, 1981. It was the middle of the summer and we had to wake up pretty early to see the televised wedding ceremony. People were discussing the details of the dress for months before the wedding and many details were kept secret, only to be revealed on the wedding day. Well, on that day of the wedding, we were blown away by the beauty of the gown and the jewels Lady Diana wore as she stepped out of the horse drawn glass coach.

Have you ever thought about the perfect dress for a wonderful occasion? Think about it for a few seconds . . . Maybe it was your prom, your graduation or your wedding dress. When you were in the throws of choosing a dress, you were paying attention to ALL the details because that is what made it so significant for you. I remember sewing my own graduation dress. It was to be white fabric and I used a “Gunne Sax” dress pattern (remember those? Jessica McClintock?). It had puff sleeves and pearl buttons and a ruffle at the hem. I was SO proud of that dress, and I thought I looked amazing in it. That dress was more for my glory than anything else. *Today, we will learn of the details of the priestly garments that were not intended to bring glory to the priest but to the Lord.* They also are symbols for the coming Great High Priest, Jesus Christ.

In Exodus 28, we read the details of the priestly garments that were fashioned by men with God-given talents, with wears that were given or plundered from the Egyptians simply by asking just before they left Egypt. In Exodus 12:35-36: “The Israelites did as Moses instructed and asked the Egyptians for articles of silver and gold and for clothing. The LORD had made the Egyptians favorably disposed toward the people and they gave them what they asked for, so they “plundered” the Egyptians.” God was providing before the people even understood what those supplies would be needed for in the future. In Exodus 25: 1-7, the Lord says to Moses, “Tell the Israelites to bring me an offering. You are to receive the offering for me, from each man whose heart prompts him to give. These are the offerings you are to receive from them: gold, silver and bronze; blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen; goat hair; ram skins dyed red and hides of sea cows; acacia wood; olive oil for the

light; spices for the anointing oil and for fragrant incense, and onyx stones and other gems to be mounted on the ephod and breastpiece.”

In Exodus 28:2 we read that, The LORD told Moses “And you shall make holy garments for you brother Aaron, for glory and beauty.” This was to reflect the glory and beauty of the Lord.

“In the Bible, clothing is often used as a symbol to express outwardly what the wearer IS, or OUGHT to be, inwardly, in character and also, in intention. The fact that the same colors, fabrics and gold were used for the garments as for the tabernacle itself, shows how the high priest was regarded as the appropriate and prepared person to perform the duties that were to take place within the tent. ~ J. Alec Motyer in *The Message of Exodus*

Let’s look at the details of the garments:

The ephod was made of gold with blue, purple and scarlet yarn and finely twisted linen, the work of a skilled craftsman. It had 2 shoulder pieces attached to 2 of the corners so it could be fastened. There were gold fasteners that attached the onyx stones, beautifully and skillfully engraved with the names of the sons of Israel, six on each. These stones were fastened on the ephod as a symbol of the priest bearing the names of the people on his shoulders as stones of remembrance for the sons of Israel.

The breastpiece was made of gold, with blue, purple and scarlet yarns and fine twisted linen fashioned in a square with four rows of precious stones that were set in filigree of gold, twelve stones in all, representing the names of the twelve tribes. This was attached to the ephod with the stones over Aaron’s heart, so that he “shall bear the names of the sons of Israel in the breastpiece of judgment when he goes into the Holy place to bring them to regular remembrance before the LORD.” (Exodus 28:29)

In the breastpiece of judgement they were to place the Urim (meaning Light) and the Thummim (meaning truths or perfections) and they were on Aaron’s heart when he went before the Lord. The Urim and Thummim appear here in Exodus 28:30, but they were also used by Joshua to determine national direction in Numbers 27:21 (“He is to stand before Eleazar the priest, who will obtain decisions for him by inquiring of the Urim before the Lord.”) and by King Saul to determine fault in I Samuel 14:41 (the Hebrew Septuagint “Why have you not answered your servant today? If the fault is with me or my son Jonathan, respond with the Urim but if the men of Israel are at fault, respond with Thummim.”) We don’t have a full understanding of the Urim and the Thummim or how they worked but they were significant for decision making.

The robe of the ephod made of blue cloth and similar to a poncho, with a hole for the head and pomegranates (*is that where the word “pom-poms” came from?*) and gold bells along

the hem so that the priest could be heard while serving before the LORD and in case he were to die, they would know when they no longer heard the bells. There is some commentary about rope being tied around the ankle of the priest so that he could be pulled out of the tabernacle if he died in the presence of God, however there is no biblical reference that matches that statement.

The turban made of fine linen with a plate of pure gold engraved with the words: “Holy to the LORD” which was worn on Aaron’s forehead that Israel would be accepted before the LORD.

The Tunic of fine linen made for Aaron and his sons to give them **dignity and honor**. In John 19:23 it is mentioned that Jesus wore a seamless garment beneath the outer garments, “When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. “Let’s not tear it,” they said to one another, “Let’s decide by lot who will get it.”” This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled which said, “They divided my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing (Psalm 22:18). Some scholars suggest that this tunic symbolizes Jesus’ priesthood, the transfiguration of the Levitical priesthood.

The Linen undergarment reaching from waist to thigh (Exodus 28:42-43) that Aaron and his sons **MUST** wear whenever entering the Tent of Meeting or approaching the altar to minister in the Holy Place, so that they will not incur guilt and die. **In Exodus 20:26, the LORD told Moses not to go up by steps to his altar to prevent indecent exposure of the private parts, emphasizing modesty and reverence before the Lord.** The undergarment is the provision for the priests to prevent this from occurring.

In Exodus 29, we learn about the consecration and ordination of the priests:

The sacrifices were ceremonial, including an unblemished bull and 2 rams without blemish, unleavened bread, cakes and wafers. Aaron and his sons, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, were washed with water. They were dressed in the priestly garments and anointed with oil. Then coats were put on them and they were gird with sashes and caps were bound on them. The priesthood was declared to be theirs by statute forever. Aaron and his sons, were ordained.

Did you know that being a priest also required the skills of a butcher and/or a surgeon. They were required to kill the bull at the entrance of the tent of meeting. The blood was drained and part of the blood was put on the horns of the altar with their finger and the rest of the blood was poured at the base of the altar. They took the organs (kidneys and liver) and the fat and burned it on the altar, but the flesh/skin and dung was burned outside the camp as

a sin offering. You would definitely need to understand anatomy to identify these particular parts that had to be divided for specific sacrifices.

With the rams, they killed one and drained the blood and threw the blood on the sides of the altar, then cut the ram in pieces and burned the whole ram on the altar as a **burnt offering to the Lord**, considered a pleasing aroma, food offering to the Lord.

With the 2nd ram, they killed it and took the blood and put the blood on the tip of the Right ear, the thumb of the Right hand and the great toe of the Right foot of Aaron and his sons, then threw the rest of the blood on the sides of the altar. They took part of the blood with anointing oil and sprinkled it on the priest's garments so that they would be holy. The significance of the blood on the ear was for life's listening and hearing of divine truths, the hand represents life's actions and the foot represents life's directions. These areas of the lives of the priests need to be brought under the blood.

The ram was then sacrificed in a specific way and the bread, cake and wafers were placed in the hands of the priest who waved them before the Lord as a **wave offering**. They were then burnt on the altar. The priests would eat the flesh of the 2nd ram and the bread that was in the basket. These with which atonement was made for their ordination and consecration (Exodus 29:33) but no outsiders could partake. All of this took 7 days to ordain the priests and consecrate the altar.

Daily offerings would be 2 spotless lambs, a year old. One in the morning and the other at twilight as a burnt offering throughout the generations of the tent of meeting before the Lord where He would meet with them to speak to them there. "There also I will meet with the Israelites, and the place will be consecrated by MY glory. So I will consecrate the Tent of Meeting and the altar and will consecrate Aaron and his sons to serve me as priest. Then I will dwell among the Israelites and be their God. They will know that I am the Lord their God who brought them out of Egypt so that I might dwell among them, I am the LORD their God" (Exodus 29:43-46) ~ the purpose of the tabernacle and the consecration of the priests was so that the people of Israel would know that God dwelt among them.

Our bookends:

The beautiful lampstand that was made of pure gold with beautiful detail of almond flowers and branches, that was to burn on pure olive oil as an eternal flame before the Lord. It was the job of Aaron and his sons to keep the lamps burning from evening till morning as a lasting ordinance.

The altar of incense was a beautiful piece overlaid with gold, this was used to burn fragrant incense on the altar every morning when tending the lamps and again every evening when lighting the lamps.

What does all of this mean to us today? This is an elaborate process to make atonement for sin. It's literally a blood bath. Even as a former Operating Room Nurse, I cannot imagine having this as a daily ministry. (surgery is actually pretty bloodless!) WHO would go to such lengths for a bunch of sinners and complainers? Aaron and his sons DID, they faithfully performed their duties. They will sin and make major errors in judgment as we will see in coming weeks because they are human.

They did not know that in 1500 years, JESUS WILL become the final sacrifice for sin, once for ALL. This portion of Exodus teaches us that we need a SAVIOR. We are sinners and because of our sin, we cannot have a relationship with God. We need the blood of a perfect, spotless lamb to cover our sin and make us clean.

Element	Problem	God's Provision	Fulfillment
Lamp	Darkness	Continual light	Christ
Priest	Separation	Mediator	Christ
Sacrifice	Sin	Blood atonement	Christ
Incense	Distance	Intercession	Christ

John 1:4 "In Him was life and that life was the LIGHT of men. The LIGHT shines in darkness , but the darkness has not understood it."

John 1:14 reminds us that, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling (tabernacled) among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." He came with a purpose, John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life."

1 Timothy 2:5,6 tells us: For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all people.

Jesus became the Great High Priest, “We have such a high priest who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty of heaven and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the LORD, not by man. (Hebrews 8:1-2)

For we are not redeemed with perishable things such as silver or gold, we were redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. (I Peter 1: 8-9)

As we come to Him, the living Stone, rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him – you also, like living stones are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Christ Jesus (I Peter 2: 4-5)

You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His GLORIOUS light! Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; (I Peter 2:9-10)

II Corinthians 2:15 reminds us, “For we are to God the sweet aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing.”

In Revelation 5 we read: I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, “Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll? But no one in heaven or in earth, or under the earth could open the scroll and look inside it. I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. Then one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep! See the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.” Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. . . He came and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne. And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls of incense which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song: “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals because you were slain, and with your blood, you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God and they will reign on the earth. Then I looked and heard the voices of many angels numbering thousands upon thousands and ten thousand times ten thousands. They encircled the throne and . . . sang: Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise! . . . To Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb, be praise and honor and glory and power for ever and ever!”

The tabernacle, the priests, the sacrifices were all for the sins of the people of Israel. Jesus came to save ALL people, every tribe, language, people and nation!

You may have been wondering why it mattered what the priests wore.

“Every piece of the priest’s garments had a specific purpose. The ephod was made to carry the names of the tribes of Israel before the LORD. The breastpiece was designed to help the priest make decisions and he carried the twelve tribes symbolically over his heart. The robe would be lined with bells so the priest could be heard at all times and retrieved if he died in God’s presence. The turban, worn on the head was to present an offering “Holy to the LORD” (Exodus 28:36) for the sins of ALL of Israel. Every thread and stitch was designed for a reason – for glory and for beauty (Exodus 28:2) ~ *Lindsey Jacobi of She Reads Truth*

Maybe you grew up singing songs like, “Come just as you are” or listened to Crowder sing “Come as you are” - focusing on Grace rather than a conditional love of God. God looks at the heart, right? I grew up in a time when we were always in our “Sunday Best” at church. It was not always an accurate reflection of where my heart was on any given Sunday. The clothes that I wore did not always reflect the inner me.

The priestly garments are a beautiful example of bringing the BEST before the LORD, not because HE needs it but because we want to “Ascribe to the Lord the glory due His name (Psalm 29:2). The priest’s calling was a holy calling and every piece of the garments they wore were a reflection of the holiness of the LORD, it was not to glorify themselves but to point to the glory and beauty of their God. However, “A problem occurs when we take God-given gifts that are supposed to point to Him and use them to shine a spotlight on ourselves. If we’ve adorned ourselves with the gifts and glory that were never ours to begin with, and we’ve longed to be beautiful to the world instead of reflecting back to God His own beauty that He put within us.” ~ *Lindsey Jacobi of She Reads Truth*

How can we put on the right garments when we come before the Lord? I really loved reading the book *The Fitting Room* by Kelly Minter. In chapter 1 she reminds us, “The garments we drape on our backs, the hats we don on our heads, the jewelry that dangles from our necks and wrists all tell a little of who we are. Our dress is an expression of ourselves, a statement of our personalities or moods. We dress up, we dress down, we dress for comfort, we kill ourselves in high heels to dress for style, we dress for weather, we dress for others, we dress for ourselves. But what about the dress of our souls? What about the way our character clothes us? . . . If only it were as simple as hiring a stylist for an extra bag of peace or another color of honesty. Could I get some denim patience for under \$100?

Colossians 3:12 ~ Therefore as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Earlier in Colossians 3: 9-10 Paul writes, “you have taken off your old self with its practices and have

put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge, in the image of its Creator.” The image of clothing, the picture of slipping out of the old and sliding into the new.” Something we do every day! ~ Kelly Minter, *The Fitting Room: Putting on the Character of Christ*.

Are we putting on the character of Christ every day? Do we choose compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience? Each and every one of those characteristics have one thing in common: SELFLESSNESS. It requires us to think more highly of others, to put them first and to think about our own comfort, convenience or ourselves less. Think about the job of the priests, their job was not “pleasant”, it was MESSY, they chose to do this job out of selflessness for the people of Israel, to make a way for forgiveness of sine and to bring honor and glory to the Lord.

So, I ask you, what will you choose to put on as you serve the Lord today?