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**C0709 – March 7, 2007 – Ex 30:1-38 – The Recipe For Oil & Incense**

**10. The Altar of Incense (30:1-10)**

We've already studied the golden altar of incense when we studied the other articles in the Holy Place. Remember, it was there along with the golden table of showbread and the golden menorah. All the furniture matched.

The altar was stationed directly in front of the entrance to the Most Holy Place and Aaron tended to it each morning and evening adding incense to be burned continually. The continual burning of incense symbolizes prayers going up before the God of the universe.

**11. The Atonement Money (30:11-16)**

**Exodus 30:11-16** The LORD also spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>12</sup>“When you take a census of the sons of Israel to number them, then each one of them shall give a ransom for himself to the LORD, when you number them, so that there will be no plague among them when you number them. <sup>13</sup>“This is what everyone who is numbered shall give: half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary (the shekel is twenty gerahs), half a shekel as a contribution to the LORD. <sup>14</sup>“Everyone who is numbered, from twenty years old and over, shall give the contribution to the LORD. <sup>15</sup>“The rich shall not pay more and the poor shall not pay less than the half shekel, when you give the contribution to the LORD to make atonement for yourselves. <sup>16</sup>“You shall take the

**atonement money from the sons of Israel and shall give it for the service of the tent of meeting, that it may be a memorial for the sons of Israel before the LORD, to make atonement for yourselves.”**

Remember, we are still on Mt Sinai with Moses and YHWH. And here He instructs **Moses**, “**When you take a census of the sons of Israel to number them**”. The **census** takes place in the Book of Numbers. Numbers is about the numbers **of the sons of Israel** (cf Numb 1:1ff). Who will be numbered? The **sons of Israel** which refers to the males over the age of 20. This was the age a man had to be to enter the military. So, basically this is a military census. When and where will the census take place? In the wilderness before they cross the Jordan and enter the Promised Land? That is, before they enter the land for Military Conquest and Settlement. How many men were there? When they left Egypt the Bible says they numbered ~600,000, aside from children (Exod 12:37). When the actual **census** was taken they numbered exactly 603,550 men. That being the case there were probably at least 2 million Israelites who departed from Egypt and were camping at the base of Mt Sinai.

So, each of these 603,550 men was to **give a ransom** for himself (Numb 31:50). Apparently what they did was draw a line in the sand and every man that was 20 years old or older would cross that line and **give a...half a shekel (twenty gerahs)** which is ~0.2 oz. The **shekel** was a piece of silver. At this time it was not a coin but a weight. It became a coin in ~500BC. The 0.2 oz of silver would be **a contribution to the Lord** that would be used in the construction of the Tabernacle and also for **atonement money**. This **contribution** was required **so that there will be no plague among them**. Probably the **plague** here refers to a disease that could break out upon them as they were being numbered. Why did God require this and warn of divine discipline if they did not? For **atonement**. It was **atonement money**. Since **atonement** refers to “purification” then the money was for ceremonial purification. Apparently, as some commentators note, there was some sin in taking a census.<sup>i</sup> The atonement money would ceremonially purify them so they would be fit for military service. Verse 15 highlights that it was a flat contribution of **a half shekel** for each man whether rich or poor. This is because they were all equal in standing before the Lord regardless of economic status (cf James 1:9-11). Verse 16, the **atonement money** was

**given for the service of the tent meeting, that it may be a memorial.**

To serve as a **memorial** the silver would have to be used for some permanent structure in the Tabernacle so that generation after generation of Israelites could be reminded. To see how the silver became a memorial turn to Exod 38:25ff.

**Exodus 38:25-28** The silver of those of the congregation who were numbered was 100 talents and 1,775 shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary; a beka a head (*that is*, half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary), for each one who passed over to those who were numbered, from twenty years old and upward, for 603,550 men. The hundred talents of silver were for casting the sockets of the sanctuary and the sockets of the veil; one hundred sockets for the hundred talents, a talent for a socket. Of the 1,775 *shekels*, he made hooks for the pillars and overlaid their tops and made bands for them.

So, it was used for the silver sockets (i.e. pedestals) which the boards that made up the walls of the Tabernacle sat in.

Also the silver was used for the pillars in the courtyard which had silver hooks, tops and bands (Exod 27:9ff).

Of course, they received this silver from Egypt on the night of the Exodus (Exod 11:2).

It is important to show the Bible's accuracy at this point. 603,550 men were to contribute a half a shekel each which would equal 301,775 shekels. 100 talents equals 300,000 shekels plus the 1,775 shekels which would total 301,775 shekels, the precise amount of silver the Bible records. Apparently the 100 talents were used for the 100 sockets (i.e. pedestals). One talent per pedestal. The remaining 1,775 shekels were used for the silver hooks, tops and bands of the courtyard pillars.

$$\begin{aligned} 603,550 \times \frac{1}{2} &= 301,775 \\ 100 \text{ talents} &= 300,000 \text{ shekels} \end{aligned}$$

Even down to the numbers here the Bible is accurate and agrees with itself. When the Bible says something it means it and we need to pay attention to it.

Some people don't take the Bible that seriously. They don't take seriously what I do here which is look at the original languages which cast light on the English text. But it is the word of God and we need to know precisely what God says so we can know precisely what God means and we can then know precisely how to apply God's word accurately. This is not funny business. It is the word of God I am handling and if someone is going to stand up here and say "This is what God says" they need to make sure they are saying what God says and not something else.

## 12. The Bronze Laver (30:17-21)

**Exodus 30:17-21** The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>18</sup>"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. <sup>19</sup>"Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet from it; <sup>20</sup>when they enter the tent of meeting, they shall wash with water, so that they will not die; or when they approach the altar to minister, by offering up in smoke a fire *sacrifice* to the LORD. <sup>21</sup>"So they shall wash their hands and their feet, so that they will not die; and it shall be a perpetual statute for them, for Aaron and his descendants throughout their generations."

The **laver of bronze**, everything in the courtyard was made of **bronze**, the third most precious metal used in the Tabernacle. As you moved away from the Most Holy Place the metals decreased in preciousness: gold, silver and bronze. So, the **laver** is made of bronze and will be placed in the courtyard **between the tent of meeting and the bronze altar**.

According to Exod 38:8 the **bronze** was supplied by the women's "mirrors". In that day they did not have glass mirrors but bronze mirrors. The bronze mirrors would reflect the light so the priests could see the dirt and blood on their feet. The purpose of the laver was for washing these impurities off before offering a sacrifice by fire or before entering the Tabernacle.

Water is a cleansing agent in the Bible. Application of water to the body removes physical impurities. It is therefore an adequate figure to describe the results of spiritual cleansing. Application of the blood of Christ to the spirit

removes spiritual impurities. You might remember that when the priests were ordained into the priesthood they washed their bodies (Exod 29:4). That was a picture of the first cleansing: regeneration. That was a once for all cleansing when they entered the priesthood. The picture here is of the priests daily cleansing of the hands and feet. The hands and feet picked up impurities as they went about their daily work. If the priest needed to sacrifice by fire or walk into the tent of meeting he would need to be cleansed from his physical impurities prior to the task. This took place at the bronze laver where he would wash his hands and feet. After washing he could fulfill his task. If he did not do this he would **die**.

**PRINCIPAL:** The washing of the hands and feet at the bronze laver typifies the daily cleansing believers need. Jesus illustrated this daily cleansing in the foot washing episode of John 13. As you know there are two cleansings in the NT. Both are associated with water. *First*, we are cleansed once for all at the moment of faith alone in Christ alone. This cleansing results in “regeneration” (*paliggenesia*).

**Titus 3:5** He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,

Jesus equated this cleansing with taking a bath (John 13:5-11). *Second*, we need to be cleansed daily by means of confession of known sin. This cleansing results in “fellowship” (*koinonia*).

**1 John 1:9** If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Jesus equated this cleansing with washing the feet (John 13:5-11).

So, just as entry into the priesthood required washing the body with water so the NT priest has been regenerated. And just as the OT priest would pick up impurities as he went about his daily work and would thus need daily cleansing by the water at the laver so the NT priest picks up impurities as he walks through life and needs daily cleansing by the blood of Christ through confession (1 John 1:7).

So, the priests necessity of washing his hands and feet each day at the bronze laver pictures the believers need to confess his sins and be cleansed each day by the blood of Christ. Failure to examine ourselves and judge ourselves rightly can result in physical death (1 John 5:16-17).

### **13. The Anointing Oil (30:21-33)**

These are the ingredients for making the anointing oil. Remember, the anointing oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. In the OT it was limited to priests, prophets, and kings. In the NT all believers are priests and are therefore anointed. No believer today has a special anointing. All believers have the Spirit of God. Therefore John could say, "But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things" (1 John 2:20). This does not mean that they have all knowledge, that they are omniscient. What it means is that there was a specific body of doctrine that believers were supposed to learn in completeness from the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. John says these believers knew it, they knew a specific body of doctrine and did not need the teachings of the antichrists. I hear a lot today in the seminaries about the need to listen to what other say. They say we need to dialogue with Scholars of other religions because they have insights into how we might know and worship God more effectively. That we need to open our minds to the fact that other religions have meaningful experiences and contact with God. Friend, this is a bunch of hooey. We don't need to open our minds to what other religions have to say. We need to open our minds to what the Spirit has to say. (We may study them in an effort to understand and refute such teachings that are contrary to God's word but we don't need their insight to know more about God.) There is one Spirit from God and we should not listen to other spirits (1 John 4:1-6). That was what John was warning his readers against! He was saying you don't need to listen to other religions. But today it is all backwards. We're doing exactly what John and others warned against. I watched a documentary recently on Bonhoeffer, a 20<sup>th</sup> century German theologian who was a part of the resistance against Nazism and a part of the plot to assassinate Hitler. Now, I agree with his attempts to assassinate that man but he was a pacifist. He was strongly anti-war and he believed in peaceful negotiation. He even went to India to learn from the Buddhists about peaceful resistance. Now, he was opening his ears to other religions and he brought them into Christianity and it wasn't Christian at all, it was a whole new orthodoxy and we're paying the price today for Christians

opening their ears to other religions rather than to the Holy Spirit. Today it is just as true as it was when John wrote, if you are a believer “you have an anointing” and you need to learn from Him. Look down at verse 27, “As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him” (1 John 2:27). He’s not saying you don’t need human teachers, he’s saying they don’t need to be taught by the antichrists he warns about in this letter! You don’t need to open your ears to non-Christian teachers as if they can somehow enhance your spirituality. You need to abide in Him and listen to His teachings and abide in His teachings. That’s all that is needed. We seriously need a back to the Bible movement. That’s why Bible Churches started but today you don’t know what a Bible Church is teaching. Satan is always trying to take our eyes off the word of God or convince us that we need some new hermeneutic to interpret the word of God right and we are told we are old fogies and fundies if we don’t adopt the new hermeneutics. Well, you can just shove the new hermeneutics, genre and the whole bit because the old one used from the time of Adam works just fine and presents a harmony of the complete word of God.

Here we are simply looking at the unique recipe used to make the anointing oil. If you are interested in cooking or chemistry then the Bible speaks to that area of life and obviously God was quite concerned that it be done right.

**Exodus 30:22-33** <sup>22</sup>Moreover, the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>23</sup>“Take also for yourself the finest of spices: of flowing myrrh five hundred *shekels*, and of fragrant cinnamon half as much, two hundred and fifty, and of fragrant cane two hundred and fifty, <sup>24</sup>and of cassia five hundred, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, and of olive oil a hin. <sup>25</sup>“You shall make of these a holy anointing oil, a perfume mixture, the work of a perfumer; it shall be a holy anointing oil. <sup>26</sup>“With it you shall anoint the tent of meeting and the ark of the testimony, <sup>27</sup>and the table and all its utensils, and the lampstand and its utensils, and the altar of incense, <sup>28</sup>and the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils, and the laver and its stand. <sup>29</sup>“You shall also consecrate them, that they may be most holy; whatever touches them shall be holy. <sup>30</sup>“You shall anoint Aaron and his sons, and

consecrate them, that they may minister as priests to Me.

<sup>31</sup>“You shall speak to the sons of Israel, saying, ‘This shall be a holy anointing oil to Me throughout your generations. <sup>32</sup>‘It shall not be poured on anyone’s body, nor shall you make *any* like it in the same proportions; it is holy, *and* it shall be holy to you.

<sup>33</sup>‘Whoever shall mix *any* like it or whoever puts any of it on a layman shall be cut off from his people.’”

The **finest** ingredients were used. **Moses** would gather **the finest spices**. *First*, 500 shekels weight of **flowing myrrh** (>10 pounds). This was a resinous liquid from a tree which, like sap, would run down the tree and bead up. It looked like a pearl. *Second*, 250 shekels weight of **fragrant cinnamon** (>5 pounds). This was from the inner bark of the cinnamon tree. *Third*, 250 shekels weight of **fragrant cane** (>5 pounds). *Fourth*, 500 shekels weight of **cassia** (>10 pounds). These are the flowers from the cinnamon tree. *Fifth*, a **hin** of **olive oil**. A **hin** was almost one gallon (~8 pounds). These five ingredients were mixed together to make the **anointing oil**. It was very fragrant and therefore called a **perfume mixture**. The one who should carry this work out would need to be a **perfumer** because it required a distillation process to make. You may have noticed that the oil was very small volume compared to the spices that were mixed with the oil. If these were just mixed together in a bowl it would form a thick gooey mess, hardly able to be used for anointing. What is meant in the text therefore is that a **perfumer** would actually take the spices through several days of distillation. When the distillation process was over only the aromatic fragrance remained in the smooth dripping oil. When it was finished every article was anointed. They would not cover the article but only take a couple of drops of oil for each article and also for the edge of the tent. The Talmud says they would drip the oil in the form of the Greek *chi* (X). The remaining oil would be used for the ordination of **Aaron** and **his sons** into the priesthood. It was a **holy anointing oil**. It was set apart for these specific purposes and was never to be made and used for any other purpose. Anyone who made it or poured it on a layman was cut off from the people of Israel. The penalty of being **cut off** meant “death by execution” (cf Dan 9:26).

#### 14. The Incense (30:34-38)

The incense was burned on the golden altar of incense just before the Most Holy Place so that its pleasing aroma went up before the Lord. It pictures the prayers of the saints which go up before God and are pleasing to Him. Here the unique recipe is described for the incense to be burned in the morning and at twilight in the Holy Place.

**Exodus 30:34-38 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Take for yourself spices, stacte and onycha and galbanum, spices with pure frankincense; there shall be an equal part of each. <sup>35</sup>“With it you shall make incense, a perfume, the work of a perfumer, salted, pure, *and* holy. <sup>36</sup>“You shall beat some of it very fine, and put part of it before the testimony in the tent of meeting where I will meet with you; it shall be most holy to you. <sup>37</sup>“The incense which you shall make, you shall not make in the same proportions for yourselves; it shall be holy to you for the LORD. <sup>38</sup>“Whoever shall make *any* like it, to use as perfume, shall be cut off from his people.”**

Four **spices** would be combined. What the Hebrew is expressing is that there are two basic parts to the incense. Part 1, **stacte, onycha and galbanum** combined into one portion and an equal portion of Part 2 **pure frankincense**. So, the main ingredient was the **frankincense**. The amounts are not specified because they could make it in any quantity they needed. The anointing oil specified a quantity because it was only to be made once. But this incense was needed daily and so you could make a batch and use it until it was gone and then make another batch. The minor ingredients include **stacte** which is a balsam that “drips” from resinous trees. The **onycha** is either from a plant or from a mollusk that, when burned gives off a pleasant aroma. The **galbanum** was a gum given off by different plants. It does not smell very good alone but with other spices is pleasant. The **frankincense** was a white resin that came from various plants.

Verse 35, this also would be **the work of a perfumer** who would add **salt** to the mixture. It would then be **pure and holy**.

Verse 36 says **You shall beat some of it very fine and put part of it before the testimony in the tent of meeting where I will meet with you**. Now, this incense was burned daily on the golden incense altar but also

on one special occasion during the year, the Day of Atonement. Probably this very fine grinding was reserved for that special occasion.

Verse 37, anyone else who made incense could use these ingredients but not in the same **proportions**. This was a special recipe only to be used for burning before the Lord on the golden incense altar. If anybody made any like it to use it as a **perfume** he too would be **cut off from his people** which refers to physical death.

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<sup>i</sup> Cassutto.

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