

## **FEBRUARY 10**

### **Exodus 30:11-31:18**

Exodus 30:11-38

Vs. 11-16 In the whole scheme of things this mention of giving a ransom for the men 20 years and older for the coming census seems to be an element that is out of place. God has just told Moses about the altar of incense. My suggestion is that this atonement has to do with the men's sense of humility and need before God when they pray. In Israel, when the priest added the incense in the evening, the men (and women) would be standing outside praying. They would need to remember they were a people, humbled and ransomed before God. Their strength was not in their numbers, but in their God and His salvation.

V. 12 The element of humility was very important in Israel. Notice how this verse ends and then think about the plague that God brings against Israel when David numbers the people in order to glory in (be proud of) the size of Israel's army. (2 Sam. 24:10-25)

This ransom money was to be given when God took a census of the people. That didn't happen often. Between now and Joshua (40 years) there will be two censuses. These instructions may only have been given for this occasion.

The payment was a sign and reminder that all were guilty before God. The half shekel was a ransom payment, releasing them from God's punishment. In Jesus' day this seems to become the temple tax. In the NT we've read the story in Matthew 17:24-27, where Peter is confronted by the IRS about this tax and Jesus tells Peter to go fishing.

All the tithes and taxes were to pay for the ministry of the priests and Levites, and for maintenance. The priests represented the people before God. The Levites were to serve in the temple and to educate the people, becoming the first Sunday school teachers.

Vs. 17-21 This was another symbol. It was another provision and warning for Aaron and his sons. There was to be a huge basin of water between the altar and the tabernacle where they could wash before they entered the Holy Place and served the Lord. The symbolic emphasis was that they were to be holy inwardly. Symbolic though this was, nevertheless, it was a grave warning that God would judge them.

In our service as disciples, our holiness and cleansing is important also. The difference is that we don't do this out of fear of punishment, because this washing takes place in the love and grace of Christ as we read the Word and the Spirit touches our hearts. We need that "washing" every day. Actually, today's psalm has something to do with this.

Vs. 22-38 In this section God gives Moses the mixture for both the anointing oil and the incense. Here, God is introducing the concept of patent protection. No, just kidding, but God wasn't. The fragrance of this anointing oil and incense would only be associated with God and worship and sacrifice. God, as a good educator, is not only covering things conceptually, and not only culturally (the feasts, etc.), and not only visually, but now also through the association of this particular smell and God's holiness and their redemption in the activities in the tabernacle.

Exodus 31

Vs. 1-11 God not only sought out skilled men, but He skilled them to do this work. He gave them wisdom and creativity for this task. The same is true of us. Paul's words are as gripping today as when he said, *For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?* (RSV, *as if it were not a gift*) 1 Corinthians 4:7

Interestingly, the men who built the tabernacle and all of this also perished in the wilderness because of their rebellion. God isn't impressed with our work or our skill. He wants our hearts.

Vs. 12-18 More laws will follow, but this is an important spot. God gives them a sign of this covenant. This sign shows they, as a nation, were separated from all races for the Lord's special purpose. It was based on God's work in creation, recounting the six days of work and His rest and enjoyment on the 7th day. Oddly, this is evidence that the six days of creation were literal 24-hour days.

When it says they shouldn't do any work, it literally means work, or, that which you did to sustain your livelihood and take care of the cares of life. If you think of this in terms of what Jesus warns about as He teaches the disciples in the Beatitudes, you get the picture. They were not to care for their lives, but to seek first the kingdom of God. Jesus made it clear they could help others in showing mercy. It was to be a day of reflection on the creation, glory and goodness of God. There was plenty they could do on the Sabbath, but it was a day of trusting God and kicking back in thankfulness.

As disciples, whether on Sunday or some other day, we need to stop and chill and reflect on the creation, glory and goodness of God in Christ. From the outside, Israel keeping the Sabbath looked silly, but reflection made them stronger. The same is true for us.

### **Matthew 26:47-68**

Vs. 47-56 This is Judas' betrayal, Peter's attempt to be an action hero and Jesus' arrest. There is a lot packed into these verses. Enjoy what you get out of them.

V. 48 It was dark, so Judas identified Jesus by a sign, a kiss, which meant, "When I embrace this guy, grab Him!"

V. 51 Luke, thankfully, tells us Jesus healed the ear.

V. 53 Jesus could have gotten out of this. *Twelve legions of angels* would have been about 72,000. I'd say that might have done the job.

Vs. 55-56 Jesus took command of the situation and created a distraction, so Peter & Co. were not whacked.

Vs. 57-68 We find out in John, that Peter was let into the courtyard because John knew the high priest.

V. 63 *But Jesus remained silent.* This is what Isaiah said would happen in Isaiah 53:7.

This is utterly ironic and sad. *And the high priest said to him, "I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God."* Did he really want a true answer?

V. 64 *Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven."* "You have said so," meant yes. If this was poker, you would say that Jesus "sees and raises" him, on this challenge, not only admitting He is the Son of God, but He also says He is the Son of Man, from Daniel 7.

Vs. 67-68 I remember when I read this the first time. When they put the potato sack over Jesus' head and hit Him and taunted Him it made me cringe. I would not have wanted to have been one of those guys. The sobering thing is that at one time, before I knew Christ, I could have seen myself doing something like this.

### **Psalms 32**

Vs. 1-2 In these verses David declares the truth of being blessed. In the rest of the psalm, David tells you how to get there. David is teaching, in the form of this blessing, what he personally discovered in his relationship with the Lord. He had a lot for which to be forgiven; in fact, David

was guilty of a crime for which there was no offering. He was pardoned by God's grace and mercy. Paul quotes this psalm in Romans 4:6. What I find interesting is the link between receiving God's forgiveness or deliverance, and teaching it to others. That is just like a disciple.

Vs. 3-5 This was David's personal battle with his own unconfessed sin. I think we can all feel the weight of this. This was probably something that happened before his sin with Bathsheba.

V. 6 is an exhortation and a warning.

V. 7 This is one of the hallmarks of David's relationship with God. He sought God to dwell with God.

Vs. 8-11 Based on David's personal experience, he is advising those who follow God to do the same.

### **Proverbs 8:27-32**

If we marvel at the creation, we are also marveling at the wisdom of God. In the German Bible, when it says that God gave skill to the men who made the tabernacle, it says that God gave them wisdom. Deep within everything God does creatively is an incredible, unfathomable wisdom. This same wisdom is available to us as God appeals to us to live our lives in following and obeying Him.