

EXODUS 30-32

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Exodus chapter 30 as we continue our study through the Word of God.

Starting back in Exodus chapter 25, and really through the end of the book of Exodus, we are looking at the Tabernacle or this portable worship structure that God told Moses how to build, down to the tiniest detail!

And this evening we will continue looking at the implements of the Tabernacle.

With that said, let's begin reading in Exodus chapter 30, beginning in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word.

EXODUS 30**VERSES 1-10*****THE ALTAR OF INCENSE***

Here we have the Altar of Incense, a 1½ foot square and 3 feet high box made of acacia wood overlaid with gold.

This altar stood between the Table of Showbread on the right side and the Seven-Branched Oil-Burning Lamp on the left side, in front of the veil in the Holy Place.

And in the morning and the evening Aaron was to place sweet incense upon it before the Lord and I get the idea that this incense burned all day and all night.

Symbolically speaking, incense is a picture of prayer. In Psalm 141:2 we are told, **“Let my prayer be set before You as incense, The lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.”**

And in Revelation 5:8 we are told, **“Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.”**

Also, in Revelation 8:3-4 we are told, **“Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel’s hand.”**

And the idea is that our prayers, like incense, are sweet before the Lord and they should be part of our daily activity as we spend time with the Lord, beginning in the morning, throughout the day, and before we go to bed at night.

Now, the Altar of Incense was not a place for atonement as we read in Exodus 30:9, **“You shall not offer strange incense on it, or a burnt offering, or a grain offering; nor shall you pour a drink offering on it.”**

That is interesting to me because once a year, on the Day of Atonement the blood of the sacrifice is placed on the horns of the altar. Why is that?

Because, apart from the sacrifice God will not hear our prayers. Thus, the blood cleansed the Altar of Incense so that the sweet smell would be accepted before God!

The one prayer that I know God will answer for the unsaved is the prayer for salvation. Does God answer the prayers of the unsaved at times? I think so, but He doesn’t have to, but He does show them grace to draw them to Him.

It is as one pastor put it, *“Prayer is not the place sacrificial atonement is made; it is the place sacrificial atonement is enjoyed. We don’t save ourselves through prayer; we pray because of Jesus’ saving work on the cross.”* Exactly!

By the sacrifice of Jesus, we can boldly come before the throne of Grace and lay our prayers at His feet! (Hebrews 4:16, I Peter 5:7)

VERSES 11-16

THE RANSOM MONEY

The Lord tells Moses that everyone 20 years old and above must pay ½ shekel. Now, is this speaking of just men or everyone?

It does say in Exodus 30:12 **“every man”** and I think that is what it means. For when you look at when they took a census, it was the men they counted and not the women.

We also see that the rich were not to give more, and the poor were not to give less, all were to be equal before the Lord.

It is as Clarke wrote, *“The rich were not to give more, the poor not to give less; to signify that all souls were equally precious in the sight of God, and that no difference of outward circumstances could affect that state of the soul; all had sinned, and all must be redeemed by the same price.”*

The silver sockets were made up of the atonement money given by the children of Israel who were 20 years old and up, ½ shekel each, the ransom money!

And, in Exodus 38:25-26 we see that almost five tons of silver was collected from 603,550 men who were twenty and above.

And this silver was used in the construction of the Tabernacle, much of it going to make the silver base plates that the golden wall boards of the Tabernacle set in, and the rest was used for other Tabernacle expenses.

I think the picture here is that this ransom money spoke of how we owe God, and that debt could never be paid in full.

Thus, it is looking ahead to the atoning work of Jesus as Peter tells us in I Peter 1:18-19, and this is from the New Living Translation, **“For you know that God paid a ransom to save you from the empty life you inherited from your ancestors. And the ransom he paid was not mere gold or silver. It was the precious blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God.”**

Spurgeon summed it up like this, *“The Lord commanded that every male over twenty years of age should pay half a shekel as redemption money, confessing that he deserved to die, owning that he was in debt to God, and bringing the sum demanded as a type of a great redemption which would by-and-by be paid for the souls of the sons of men.”*

Also, *“Later, the ‘half-shekel’ became an annual temple tax (Matthew 17:24).”* (Cole)

VERSES 17-21

THE BRAZEN LAVER

This Brazen or Bronze Laver was located in the outer court just past the Brazen Altar.

What is interesting to me is that there are no dimensions given to us regarding the Brazen Laver and we don’t know how much water it could hold. What we do know is that it was used to wash the hands and the feet of Aaron and his sons before they ministered to the Lord.

According to Exodus 38:8 we are told what this laver was made of, **“He made the laver of bronze and its base of bronze, from the bronze mirrors of the serving women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.”**

So what does that mean to us as Christians?

First of all, we are washed as white as snow in the blood of Jesus, positionally speaking.

But then we need that daily cleansing from that dirt of this world, not for salvation, but for sanctification.

How is that done?

Jesus said in John 17:17, **“Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.”**

And in Ephesians 5:26 Paul tells us, **“that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word.”**

So it is God’s Word that shows us our sin but it does not end there. You see, it is the Holy Spirit working with the Word of God in our lives that cleanses us or helps us to live accordingly.

Paul put it like this in Titus 3:5-6, **“not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior.”**

You see, the Word is like a mirror, and it exposes our sin, the dirt in our lives and it is the Holy Spirit working in our lives that washes that dirt from us!

Now, in saying that, remember that there are no dimensions given to us regarding the size of the Brazen Laver.

The reason, I believe, is that each person has to decide how much of the Word of God that they want to take into their lives. Not only that, but we also know that the work of the Holy Spirit is immeasurable, you can't limit the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, nor do you want to!

Thus, the Word of God and the Spirit of God working in our lives wash us and it is then that we can proceed on to fellowship and service with the Lord!

VERSES 22-33

THE HOLY ANOINTING OIL

Here Moses is told how to make the Holy Anointing Oil and how it was to be used.

It was to be placed on the articles of the Tabernacle that were used in service for the Lord and on the priests who were also to serve the Lord.

Why is it not allowed to be poured out on all people, on the flesh?

Because we are not to enhance or glorify the flesh but crucify it!

This oil also represents the Holy Spirit and His work in using us for His service.

Also, this fragrance would remind them of God, wherever they went in the Tabernacle, there was this beautiful fragrance.

Folks, as children of God, empowered by the Spirit of God, we should have the fragrance of God flowing from our lives. You see, as you spend time with Him, His fragrance will rub off on you!

Paul put it like this in II Corinthians 2:14-16, **“Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things?”**

If you are not leaving the fragrance of God behind, then you need to repent and draw close to Him for as you do, you will emanate His fragrance to those around you! If you spend time around a campfire you will smell like smoke. And, if you spend time around Jesus then His fragrance will permeate your life!

Also, think about this for a minute. None of the spices that went into this Holy Anointing Oil were bitter, it was all sweet spices.

What does that mean?

If we are leaving a bitter taste wherever we go, then we are misrepresenting God!

If we are leaving the works of the flesh wherever we go, then we are misrepresenting God.

Here’s the thing. When you are representing God wherever you go, then you will leave His fragrance behind, and it will be sweet!

That is what Jesus said of the Holy Spirit’s work in our lives in John 16:13-14. He said, **“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.”**

You see, the Holy Spirit is to glorify Jesus and thus, as the Holy Spirit is working in our lives Jesus will be glorified or the fragrance of Jesus will follow us wherever we go, and that fragrance will remain when we leave as well!

VERSES 34-38

THE HOLY INCENSE

Here we see that God instructs Moses on how to make the incense and He does not want anyone to use this for personal use, it was for the Lord and if you did use it for yourself, you would be excommunicated!

You see, incense symbolized the sweetness of prayer before God and He did not want them to cheapen this intimate relationship!

One person said, ***“Prayer is a mighty instrument, not for getting man’s will done in heaven, but for getting God’s will done on earth.”***

Also, ***“We have no right to ask God for anything that will dishonor His name, delay His kingdom, or disturb His will on earth.”***

His will be done, not ours and that is always the best way to approach prayer. And yes, there are many times we don’t know what God wants to do and thus, we pray – ***“Lord, Your will be done!”***

EXODUS 31**VERSES 1-6**

This is very important for us to understand. God called and empowered these men with the Holy Spirit to oversee and construct the Tabernacle. It was not just Moses and Aaron but these craftsmen who were Spirit filled, to do this work of God.

Folks, I don't care how insignificant you think your gift or talent is, because it is important to God, He gave it to you!

But, if you try to accomplish it in the power of your strength, you won't do it! If you try to do it for your own selfish gains or ambitions, it won't come to pass!

And thus, whatever God has given to us, may we use for His glory and do it well! Paul put it like this in Colossians 3:23-24, **“And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.”**

The Amplified Bible puts these verses like this, **“Whatever may be your task, work at it heartily (from the soul), as [something done] for the Lord and not for men, Knowing [with all certainty] that it is from the Lord [and not from men] that you will receive the inheritance which is your [real] reward. [The One Whom] you are actually serving [is] the Lord Christ (the Messiah).”**

One more point here. If you are not using your gifts or talents, then you are not only robbing God of what He has given to you but also the body of Christ you are robbing of the blessings you would bring to them!

We are not all going to have the role of a pastor or teacher or use instruments or voices to lead in the worship of God. But we have all been gifted somehow to bless the body of Christ.

And I am so blessed to see people just serve. They are not told to do this or that, but there is a need, and it is getting done and I can't tell you how blessed that makes me feel because you are doing what God has called you to do!

Make no mistake about it, we are to use the gifts, the talents the Lord has given to us to edify, to build up the body of Christ and to glorify Him.

VERSES 7-11

God is very specific in how the Tabernacle and its furnishings were to be built. These gifted men couldn't do whatever they wanted, build it the way they wanted, but to use what God had given them for the work of God, according to His plan and purpose!

I think that is important. When you look at worship today, when you look at what is being taught in the pulpits of America today, is it truly what the Lord wants? I don't think so because when worship becomes about us and not the Lord, when the teaching is about what the pastor wants to make the Bible say and not what the Word of God actually is saying, then we are not following the Lord!

VERSES 12-17

This section dealing with the Sabbath Day or the day of rest almost seems out of place, but it is not. Think about it. They were to work six days, including working on the construction of the Tabernacle and its furnishings, but on the seventh day they were to rest in the Lord, spend time with Him.

Just as God created the heavens and the earth in six days and rested on the seventh, so too was man to follow this pattern but his rest was to be in the Lord.

Now some like to say that we must keep the Sabbath Day and they will tell you that if you don't, you are damned to Hell! First of all, this was given to Israel and not the church, that is very clear in these verses.

Secondly, if a person wants to keep the Sabbath, fine, but if you make it into a Law where you must keep the Sabbath Day, then you are wrong.

How can I be so sure that we are not obliged to keep the Sabbath Day? Because Paul tells us in Colossians 2:16-17, **“So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.”**

In other words, don't hold onto the type but the substance, who is Christ! We are to rest in His finished work.

Yes, we do gather together on the first day of the week, on Sunday, Resurrection Day as the early church did, but our worship of the Lord should be every day!

And let me say this. If the work you do for Jesus is more important than Jesus Himself, then you are going to burn yourself out!

Take that time with Him and ministry, work and service will flow out of that relationship and not the other way around.

VERSE 18

Now, as we will see, these are not the tablets that were placed in the Ark of the Covenant, for Moses will break these. And we will see in a few minutes why these tablets were broken. But the second set of tablets that were written with the finger of God will be placed in the Ark of the Covenant.

Let's think about this for a minute. The Old Covenant was written on stone, and it was put in place to change the outward behavior of a person. It could never change the heart! That is the problem for those who try to live by the Law, they will fail because the heart is not changed.

We see this with the Pharisees who looked good outwardly, they looked righteous before people but inwardly Jesus said that they were like white-washed tombs. In other words, they looked great outwardly but inside were the bones of dead men!

This is why religion fails because it only works on outward behavior and the heart of man is unchanged, it is still wicked!

But now we have Jesus and the New Covenant that changes our heart and thus, what God is doing on the inside of our lives will overflow into our actions!

The Old Covenant dealt with externals but not the root cause of man's problem. The New Covenant deals with the root of the problem, our defiled heart!

And please understand that there is nothing wrong with these Laws of God. In fact, they are very good. And as we obey them it is what is best for our lives.

But we don't keep them for salvation, we can't keep them for salvation, but we do keep them out of love and obedience to Him.

Are they for us today? I believe so, everyone except the keeping of the Sabbath, which is for the children of Israel, but that principle does apply.

Think about it like this. I am sure you have heard this phrase before, “*It is not written in stone*” or it can be changed.

Guess what, these Laws of God are written in stone, and they are not to be changed!

EXODUS 32

VERSE 1

Here we see the children of Israel become restless. Moses has been up on Mount Sinai for almost forty days and forty nights, and they don’t know if he is even coming back down. They are not even sure if he is still alive!

So they request an idol to be made that will represent the **LORD!**

Please don’t think that they were worshiping all kinds of different gods. That is not the case here. I know it says “**gods**” but the Hebrew word is **ELOHIM**, and it speaks of the Triune God.

What they are asking for here is to worship God, but they wanted an idol to represent Him and that is something that God forbid them to do.

Also, keep in mind that God was still visible to them on the top of the mountain. They could see the fire and smoke and hear the thunder. But they were tired of waiting and instead of trusting in the Lord, they succumbed to the desires of the flesh.

Now, before we are too harsh on the children of Israel here, and yes, they were wrong, how do you respond to God’s delays?

When things don’t go like you thought do you drift away, do you fall into sin, do you respond in anger or do you run ahead of God?

You see, it truly is a time of spiritual growth as you wait upon the Lord, trusting in Him. God allows delays to help us to grow in Him. God allows delays because He has perfect timing!

Paul put it like this in Galatians 6:6-10, **“Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches. Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.”**

Don't give up, walk by faith because what we see as God's delays are also His perfect timing, as I have said!

VERSES 2-4

Notice that it says, **“he [Aaron] fashioned it”** and thus, it was a work of the flesh and not a Spirit inspired work of God. Also, keep that in mind because as we move farther on and Moses asks him how this happened, Aaron is going to say this just happened!

Now, for those of you who are into this seeker-friendly, purpose driven, people pleasing type of church mentality, heed the warning that the Holy Spirit is making here.

While Moses was up on Mount Sinai Aaron was in charge. In fact, he was to be the High Priest! But instead of representing God, he tried to please the people and he made them this god, this golden calf.

Folks, he should have said, ***“REPENT of your SIN! This is IDOLATRY! This is wrong. Remember that you told the Lord that you would do all that He has spoken and now you are going in the other direction! I will not make for you a golden calf!”***

But Aaron does the exact opposite of what a godly leader is to do. Why? Because he tried to please the people and in so doing, he displeased the Lord!

In Proverbs 29:25 we are told, **“The fear of man brings a snare, But whoever trusts in the Lord shall be safe.”**

And Paul put it like this in Galatians 1:10, **“For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.”**

The warning is simple. Obey the Lord, please Him, in spite of what others may say or think!

Are you going to let the fear of man drive you or the fear of God guide you? It is something you are going to have to decide but you do understand that we are to obey the Lord and not be driven by man!

Make no mistake about it, that is my heart’s desire, to be a God pleaser because if I do, then it will be a benefit to those around me even though they may not like it.

If I don’t, I may make them feel good about living in sin, but it would truly show that I love myself more than I love them because I am risking their eternal destiny or their relationship with the Lord because I want them to like me!

Be a God pleaser and bless those around you even if they don’t like it!

VERSES 5-6

Here is why I believe they were not trying to worship another god, they wanted to worship the **LORD** but by their own ways, through this golden calf. In a sense, they tried to make Him more modern and less demanding.

And isn't it interesting that when immorality was in play, they were able to rise up early to engage in these activities that included eating or gluttony, drunkenness and sexual immorality.

Cole makes this comment regarding what they were doing in this section, "***The verb translated play suggests sex-play in Hebrew . . . and therefore we are probably to understand drunken orgies.***"

Now, try to get up early for church and it is a struggle, but to engage in some other activity, not so difficult, is it?

Why do you give in to sin instead of striving against it and forging ahead in the Lord?

The flesh is willing, but the spirit is weak!

This is so important. We can't worship God anyway we want! We must worship Him in accordance with the Word of God and not apart from it!

Not with candles, with idols or icons, or labyrinths, or incense, or chants but according to God's Word!

You see, God is not going to accept this kind of false worship and He never will accept it!

VERSES 7-8

I like this. God tells Moses to get down from the mountain because **HIS** people are acting corruptly; they are involved in idolatry and immorality! "***Moses, go take care of your people!***"

We are going to see why the Lord did that in a few minutes, but I will give you a big clue

– ***INTERCESSION!***

VERSES 9-10

God told Moses He is going to destroy the children of Israel and He will start all over with Moses!

Now, was God justified to judge them like that?

Absolutely, they broke the Law of God and thus, death is the penalty for sin! And the Lord is basically saying here, ***“Moses, get out of the way, I am going to destroy them!”***

We see this phrase in the Bible relating to the children of Israel, that they are a **“stiff-necked people!”** Of this we are told, ***“This phrase, common in the Bible, is a farmer’s metaphor of an ox or a horse that will not respond to the rope when tugged.”*** (Cole)

And the clear impression that the Lord is giving to Moses is that if Moses did not do something, then this would come to pass! The children of Israel will be destroyed and the Lord will start over with Moses!

What will Moses do?

Let’s read on and see!

VERSES 11-13

Moses jumps in now and he tells the Lord, ***“Wait a minute, they are not MY people, they are YOUR people! You brought them out of Egypt. If You destroy them then the Egyptians will mock You. If You destroy them then Your promise of the seed of Abraham filling the earth will not come to pass. You can’t do this Lord for Your namesake!”***

What we see here is that Moses is interceding for the children of Israel!

Look at how Moses approached this situation before God. He did so in four ways.

First, he gave the people back to God.

Secondly, he appealed to the grace of God as they did not deserve to even be brought out of Egypt and yet God did bring them out.

Thirdly, he appealed to the glory of God and how He will be discredited in the eyes of the other nations if He destroys them.

And fourthly, he appealed to the goodness of God, that He would do what is right, He will keep His promises that He made to Abraham, Isaac and Israel!

What I see here is this. Moses is a type of Jesus. Man is man and God the Father is God the Father.

Man is sinful, he misses the mark of perfection and thus, he deserves death.

God is righteous and just to destroy sinful man.

But along comes Jesus and He intercedes for us, ***“Father, this is one of Mine and his sin is covered by My blood, the debt has been paid in full!”***

What a beautiful picture the Holy Spirit has painted for us with Moses as a type of Jesus the intercessor!

We see this in Hebrews 7:25 where Paul wrote, **“Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.”**

And in Romans 8:34 Paul wrote, **“Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.”**

Now, we too should intercede for those around us just as Moses was doing here!

Look at how God responds to this plea by Moses.

VERSE 14

Now this is difficult for some to understand. How could God “**relent**” or “**change His mind**”?

Here is the problem. God does not change His mind. In Numbers 23:19 we are told, **“God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?”**

Also, in Malachi 3:6 we are told, **“For I am the Lord, I do not change . . .”**

Then what is going on here?

We are trying to describe the activities of God in human terms and that does not always work. God was not going to destroy Israel, but He was stirring the heart of Moses to intercede, to develop a heart of love and compassion for these people.

Cole put it like this, ***“We are not to think of Moses as altering God’s purpose towards Israel by this prayer, but as carrying it out: Moses was never more like God than in such moments, for he shared God’s mind and loving purpose.”***

Moses was acting upon the will of God as the Lord worked on his heart and we see God’s grace extended to the people!

Keep in mind that the Lord knew how this would all play out and it was according to His plan and His purpose. This was not done for God but for Moses to stretch his faith.

VERSES 15-18

As Moses headed down the mountain with the Tablets of the Law in his hand, he picked up Joshua who was waiting for him part way up the mountain.

Joshua was not restless but waited upon the Lord to bring Moses back down. But he is a little worried at the noises that he is hearing in the camp of Israel, that it sounds like war!

But Moses tells him it is not the sounds of war he is hearing but a party is going on, a celebration of immorality and idolatry!

Well, I guess you could say a war was going on here in the camp, not a physical war but a spiritual war to destroy the people of God!

VERSES 19-20

Remember back in Exodus 19:8 when the children of Israel said, “**... All that the Lord has spoken we will do ...**”

Moses didn't even get down from the Mountain with God's Laws before the people had already broken them! I guess talk is cheap!

Now when you read this you may wonder how Moses could break the Law of God that was written on these tablets of stone?

Well, he really didn't break them, but the people did, and his actions only reflected their breaking the covenant they had made with God already!

Why did Moses burn the golden calf, grind it to powder, scatter it in the water and then make the people drink it?

He wanted them to see how easily their god could be destroyed and also to taste the bitterness of this god they were worshiping!

It is as Psalm 135:15-18 tells us, **“The idols of the nations are silver and gold, The work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they do not speak; Eyes they have, but they do not see; They have ears, but they do not hear; Nor is there any breath in their mouths. Those who make them are like them; So is everyone who trusts in them.”**

And as you look at the gods people worship today; they are just as foolish!

VERSE 21

Moses seemed a little harsh towards Aaron. That is not the way you win friends and influence people!

Folks, he just calls it like he saw it, sin is sin and Aaron was to be the spiritual leader, the one in charge and he allowed them, he helped them in this idolatry and immorality!

Thus, the question Moses asked Aaron was this, **“... ‘What did this people do to you that you have brought so great a sin upon them?’”**

How would he respond?

Let's read on and see.

VERSES 22-24

Isn't it interesting, it wasn't his fault but the evil people, it was their fault.

It is like the old Flip Wilson saying, for those of you who are old enough to remember Flip Wilson. He would say, ***“The Devil made me do it!”***

And yes, the Devil can influence us, but it is a choice on our part who we are going to listen to, the Lord or the Devil. Obviously Aaron was not listening to the Lord in what he was doing and he was not taking responsibility for what he did!

In what way did Aaron not take responsibility for what he did?

He let the people tell him what to do instead of leading them in righteousness and it deteriorated into a drunken sex party!

And now, he has the nerve to say to Moses, ***“They wanted a god, so I told them to take their gold and throw it into the fire and presto-changeo, a golden calf came out!”***

You would think he could come up with a better lie than that, but a lie is still a lie.

The Bible tells us that Aaron received the gold, fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made the golden calf! It didn't just happen!

And for what he had done, Aaron should have been put to death. But, according to Deuteronomy 9:20, God was going to destroy Aaron, but Moses interceded, and God spared his life!

VERSES 25-26

Make no mistake about it, this is what happens when people are allowed to do what they want and not what God desires!

You see, when there is no restraint, people will do whatever they want.

The bottom line is this and we saw it during the period of the Judges in the Old Testament, and it is no different today, **“In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.”** Judges 17:6.

When man does not follow God but follows his own ways, his own instincts, his own inclination, it will destroy him!

In Proverbs 14:2 we see this spoken of, **“He who walks in his uprightness fears the Lord, But he who is perverse in his ways despises Him.”**

And in Proverbs 14:12 we read, **“There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.”**

God has given to us restraints to protect us and not to rob us of joy. May we not forget that.

And we do see this today, even in the church. When Christian leaders are soft on sin, when they are men pleasers, then the whole church will get soft on sin, and they will become unrestrained!

And what happens as the world looks at the church, looks at Christians is what we are told in II Samuel 12:14, **“... by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme ...”**

In other words, we give the enemies of God a field day to mock our God!

Moses is not going to allow this to continue, and he basically tells the children of Israel, ***“Who is on the LORD’s side?”***

Notice, not who is with Moses but with the Lord. And since Moses is with the Lord, then they need to stand by him!

Sadly, only the tribe of Levi rose up to stand with Moses and the Lord! And God will honor them for their standing with Him, they will become the priests for the nation!

VERSES 27-29

Isn’t that interesting. There are times when you side with the Lord and it will mean you are siding against your brothers and sisters, your friends and so on. As a follower of Jesus, standing up for righteousness is not going to make you popular, the world will not embrace you.

Jesus put it like this in John 15:18-20, **“If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also.”**

We are not to fit into this world for we are not of this world. And, if we want to draw people to Jesus, we must shine the light of Christ and not hide it under a bushel so we are popular!

And here we see that with the establishment of the Law 3,000 people died, and they were probably the most wicked ones in the camp.

But, in Acts chapter 2, as the Spirit was poured out on the day of Pentecost, 3,000 people were saved!

It is as Paul said in II Corinthians 3:6, **“who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.”**

VERSE 30

Moses didn't say to them that they had a disease or an addiction but they **“committed a great sin!”**

Don't water sin down for this deadly poison will still kill you!

But don't we do that today, water down sin?

You bet we do because we don't want to hurt people's fragile self-esteem.

How wrong that is because we make people comfortable with living in sin.

Think about it.

Adultery becomes an affair!

Alcohol and drug abuse becomes an addiction!

Stealing or even murdering has become a disease!

But sin is sin, and it is an abomination before God, and it should make us feel bad.

My grandson Liam, who is now seventeen years old, when he was small and they lived in Two Rivers, once in a while he was bad.

And when this happened, Kara had Liam call me to tell me what he did wrong.

Well, I think he thought he was talking with God. He would call and he would try to tell me what he did, but he was crying so much because he felt so bad, I had no idea what he was saying.

The point is that he knew he sinned, he knew he was wrong, and he felt it. Today, we don't want to feel that our sin is wrong, and we don't want our kids to feel that way either and we are reaping what we have sown, and it is not good!

I have had people tell me that what I have said could hurt people's feelings and my response was simple. Maybe they are feeling bad because they are being convicted by God. But we want to remove that feeling so people can continue doing what they want instead of what God wants!

And after Moses saw this sin, he saw the penalty for this sin of idolatry; he once again goes before the Lord to intercede for the people!

Moses had a heart for the people, and he was going to need it as he was going to spend some forty years wandering in the wilderness with them!

VERSES 31-32

Moses is appealing to the grace and mercy of God for the people. And look at the heart of Moses for his people; if God could not forgive them then he wanted to be destroyed.

What does Moses mean when he says that he wanted to be blotted “**out of Your book which You have written**”?

I believe it is speaking of the Book of Life that is spoken of in Revelation 20:15, where we are told, “**And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.**”

Others feel that what Moses is speaking of here is that he was calling for a premature death and not to spend eternity apart from God if the children of Israel were not going to be spared.

The reason I lean towards the Book of Life is that we see Paul do a similar thing in Romans chapter 9 as he wants his people, the Jews, to come to saving faith.

In Romans 9:3 Paul said these words, “**For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh.**”

What Paul is saying here is that he would be damned to Hell if His people, the Jews as a nation could be saved by his actions.

Obviously they couldn't, but that was the heart of Paul.

I think that was the heart of Moses. If his people were not going to be saved, neither would he!

I will be honest with all of you. I love you guys and would do anything for you, but I can't honestly say that I would risk my eternity with the Lord for you!

But Moses was willing and so was Paul and that truly is **LOVE!**

Now, as we read on, we will see the reality for our sin, that we are responsible for our actions and no one else!

VERSES 33-35

God was going to spare the nation as a whole but He would also judge the individual sinners.

Here is the heart of God folks, one that is filled with compassion and love and the God of the New Testament is the God of the Old Testament, don't forget that.

In Ezekiel 18:20-23 we are told, **“The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself. But if a wicked man turns from all his sins which he has committed, keeps all My statutes, and does what is lawful and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die. None of the transgressions which he has committed shall be remembered against him; because of the righteousness which he has done, he shall live. Do I have any pleasure at all that the wicked should die?” says the Lord God, ‘and not that he should turn from his ways and live?’”**

Today people like to blame others for what they have done or are doing. God says ***“No”*** to that and He is telling us that each individual is responsible for their own actions.

Moses could not die or pay the penalty for the sins of the people. He himself was a sinner. And thus, no man could!

Well, let me clarify that one. There is only one Man, the God-Man, Jesus Christ that God the Father allowed to die for the sins of others!

It was the Lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world who could pay the penalty for man's sins because He was without sin, without spot or blemish and thus, He could die for the sins of mankind!

But make no mistake about it, God will hold the guilty for their sin, but His desire is that they will turn to Him, turn from their sin and live!

That is what God is saying today as well, **“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.”** John 3:16-21.

May we not forget His love for us and receive His grace and mercy that is found in Jesus Christ!

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