

**SYMBOLS OF THE LORD**

**PLEASE do not read these comments until you have read the Scripture for this lesson. First let the Holy Spirit teach you directly from His Word.**

In order that the tabernacle might function as a clear illustration of the atonement, God instituted the office of the priesthood. Since their duties were sacred as well as symbolic it was necessary that they be duly consecrated to this office. In the continuous line of priestly succession, it would be the duty of priests to consecrate other priests. However, although Moses was not a priest himself, he was privileged to install the first priests by virtue of his office as mediator of the covenant. God gave Moses the procedure to follow in consecrating Aaron and his sons. This very impressive and awesome ceremony was repeated daily for seven days.

Following these instructions for the official installation of the priests, God revealed to Moses His demand for a perpetual burnt offering. Certainly this sacrifice, offered twice daily, would serve as a continual reminder to Israel that their covenant fellowship could only be maintained through sacrifice. This burnt offering was to be given to the LORD on behalf of the nation as a daily renewal of their dedication to Him.

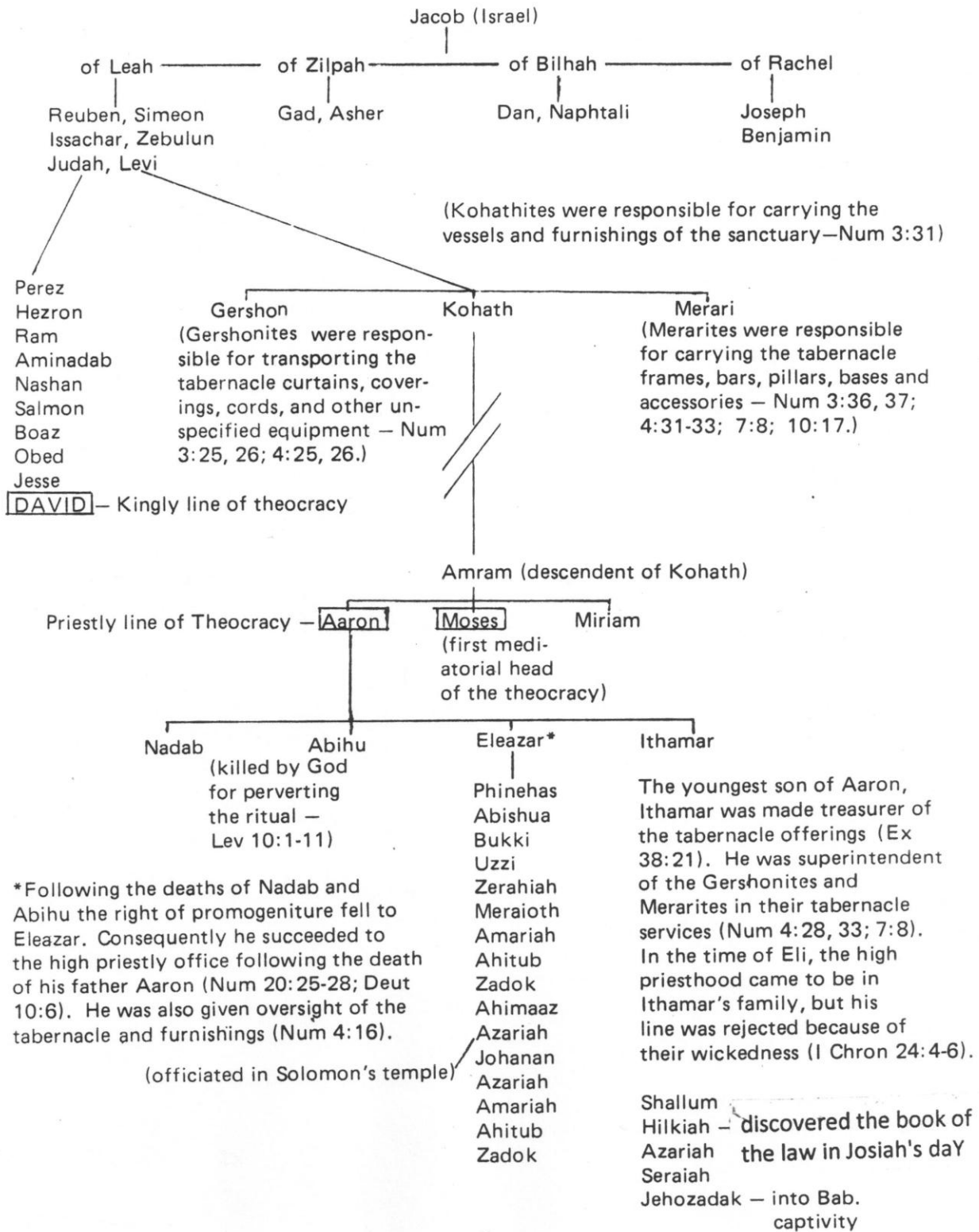
God's instructions concerning the tabernacle furnishings were not complete until He revealed to Moses His plans for the altar of incense and the laver. The golden altar of incense was to be situated in front of the veil which separated the holy place from the holy of holies. It was exclusively dedicated to the offering of the incense that was prescribed by God (30:9, 34-38). The smoke ascending from this altar represented in part the intercessory prayers of Jesus Christ rising as a sweet smelling savor. The laver was a basin filled with water placed between the brazen altar and the entrance to the tabernacle. The priests were required to wash their hands and feet at the laver before entering the tabernacle so they would not violate the holiness of God.

In order that the tabernacle might be constructed in all of its prescribed beauty and intricate detail, God gave special wisdom to the two builders that He chose. Bezaleel and Aholiab were appointed to be the chief craftsmen and they were filled with the spirit of wisdom, understanding, and knowledge in order that they might have skill above their native ability. Having thus concluded His instructions for the building of the tabernacle, God reminded Israel to observe the law of the Sabbath. This was to be a perpetual sign of the everlasting covenant between Him and Israel.

**I. Genealogy of the Priesthood**

A diagram to show the genealogy of the priesthood is given on the next page

## I. Genealogy of the Priesthood



\*Following the deaths of Nadab and Abihu the right of promogeniture fell to Eleazar. Consequently he succeeded to the high priestly office following the death of his father Aaron (Num 20:25-28; Deut 10:6). He was also given oversight of the tabernacle and furnishings (Num 4:16).

(officiated in Solomon's temple)

**II. Consecration of the Priests — 29:1-37****A. Cleansing — 29:4**

The first step in setting apart Aaron and his sons to this sacred office was a washing at the door of the tabernacle. This act probably took place at the laver which was situated between the door of the tabernacle and the brazen altar. This bodily purification no doubt bespoke the urgency of moral and spiritual perfection on the part approaching God or representing God.

**B. Clothing — 29:5, 6, 29, 30**

The priest or high priest donned his sacred vestments only after he was duly cleansed. It was necessary that these beautiful and costly garments be put on prior to the anointing since they also were to be dedicated to the service of God.

**C. Anointing — 29:7; Lev 8:10-12, 30**

Persons or objects anointed with the oil of the sanctuary were consecrated to the service of God. This act was used to initiate one into the office of prophet, priest, or king. Oil in scripture is often typical of the Holy Spirit. This is seen in the anointing of Christ Himself (Acts 10:38).

**D. Offering — 29:10-25; Lev 8:14-29****1. Sin offering — 29:10-14; Lev 8:14-17**

Those who would mediate at the altar for others must themselves first be cleansed. Details of the ritual connected with the sin offering will be found in Leviticus.

**2. Burnt offering — 29:15-25; Lev 8:18-29**

Two rams were involved in this ceremony. The first ram was offered as a whole burnt offering, representing the total dedication of each priestly candidate who had laid his hand on the ram's head. The second ram was the ram of consecration. It was to be slain and its blood applied to the right ear of the priest to sanctify it to hear God's word. Then the blood was applied to the right hand to sanctify it to do God's work. And finally the blood was applied to the large toe of the right foot to sanctify it to walk in God's way as an example to the nation.

**3. Sacrificial meal — 29:26-37; Lev 8:31-32**

God instituted here a procedure which was to be a perpetual statute. The best parts of the sacrificial ram, along with two loaves of bread, were to be offered to God as a burnt offering. The ram symbolized the consecration of his labor. Once this complete consecration was demonstrated, the man was fit for fellowship with God. Therefore, God allowed him to eat the remaining portion of the animal and bread in a fellowship meal. This would be the procedure observed in the peace offering. On this occasion, God permanently reserved the breast and right shoulder as food for the priests. They were to be waved toward God in recognition of his ownership, but then back to the priest acknowledging the fact that God had given it to them.

**4. Meal offering — Lev 6:19-23**

This was to consist of two baked loaves wholly burnt unto the LORD. The entire process involved seven days of setting apart unto the LORD before their priestly duties were initiated on behalf of the nation.

### III. The Function of the Priesthood

#### A. In the Holy Place - The priests were to . . . .

1. Clean and maintain it - Ex 27:21
2. Trim the lamps and burn incense morning and evening - Ex 30:7-8
3. Prepare bread for the table of shewbread each Sabbath - Lev 24:5-8

#### B. In the Courtyard - The priests were to . . .

1. Maintain a perpetual fire on the altar of burnt offering - Lev 6:9, 13
2. Clean the altar - Lev 6:10-11
3. Offer morning and evening sacrifices - Ex 29:38-44
4. Pronounce a benediction on the nation following the daily sacrifice - Lev 9:22; Num 6:23-27
5. Special duties pertaining to festivals: blowing trumpets, jubilee horn, etc.

#### C. In the Congregation - They were to . . .

1. Make declarations regarding ceremonial cleansing - Num 6:22ff
2. Evaluate the worth of dedicatory offerings - Lev 27:2ff
3. Make judgments pertaining to the law - Deut 17:8-13
4. Arbitrate legal disputes - Deut 19:17; 21:5
5. Encourage and advise Israel in times of war - Deut 20:2-4
6. Teach the law to the congregation - Mal 2; Hos 4:1-10

### IV. The Burnt Offering for the Nation — 29:38-46

The basic idea of the burnt offering was twofold. First, blood was shed which was to placate the wrath of God and atone for sin. Second, this sacrifice indicated the complete consecration and devotion of the one who offered the sacrifice. The ritual included details concerning the flaying and dissection of the animal. The entire animal was consumed on the altar to be a pleasing odor "going up" to the LORD. Only the skin of the animal was kept for the priest so that the whole animal could be burnt as a picture of total dedication. Individuals could bring this offering to God, but the mandate here is for a national observance. This offering was to be offered twice each day: one lamb in the morning and another in the evening.

### V. Completion of Worship Instructions — 30:1-38

#### A. Altar of Incense — 30:1-10

This altar was one cubit in length and width and two cubits high. This altar had horns and was completely covered with gold. Perpetual sweet smelling incense was offered on it night and morning and on the Day of-Atonement the high priest sprinkled blood upon it. This altar was symbolic of the prayers of the LORD ascending to God on behalf of His people. Note what happened to Korah and his followers when they violated the law in this regard (Num 16:36-40).

#### B. Money for Atonement — 30:11-16.

The tabernacle was to be built initially by means of the free will offerings of the Israelites. Its operating expenses, however, were to be defrayed by a one half shekel poll tax, which was assessed each male of the commonwealth over 20 years of age. This tax was to be levied each time a census was taken and was to be the same amount for all, regardless of wealth or poverty. It was to be given to "ransom" or "make atonement for your souls," literally, for the lives. This was another reminder to Israel that they owed their very existence and livelihood to the mercy and grace of God.

### **C. Laver of Brass — 30:17-21**

The Scripture does not indicate the shape, size, decoration, or method for transporting of the laver. It was to be made of bronze which was provided from mirrors donated by the women who dedicated themselves to serve at the door of the tabernacle (38:8). The laver contained the water for the ceremonial cleansing for the hands and feet of the priests before they ministered in the presence of God. The guilt of the priest's sin had been cared for at the brazen altar, but this symbolized the necessity for the priest's acts and walk to be clean before he carried on reconciliation for the congregation (30:21). In New Testament thought, it would correspond to daily sanctification of a believer's hands and feet for fellowship with God, and service for God. It is appropriately placed between the brazen altar and the tabernacle proper.

### **D. Oil of Anointment — 30:22-33**

God prescribed a certain recipe for the sacred anointing oil that was to be used in anointing the priests and the consecrated objects. The basic ingredient was olive oil which was common in Palestine and used for fuel, cooking, and for medicinal purposes. Added to the olive oil were four very valuable and aromatic fragrances:

#### **1. Myrrh**

This is actually a resin which exuded from a low thorny shrub in Arabia. It was used for the anointing oil, but also for cosmetics and perfumery (Est 2:12; Ps 45:8; Prov 7:17) and for medicine (Mk 15:23). It was very costly, being available only to the very wealthy (Mt 2:11). This product was one of the spices that enriched the Arabs through trade.

#### **2. Cinnamon**

This was a very highly prized spice for perfumery and for cooking. It was raised on the islands of Ceylon and Java, making it a very costly import (cf. 30:23; Prov 7:17; Song. of Sol 4:14).

#### **3. Calamus**

Calamus is a sweet-smelling cane leaf from India (sometimes known as Indian grass) which gave a fresh gingery aroma when the leaf was broken. It was from a far country (Jer 6:20); hence, Tyre exchanged her merchandise with traders from Arabia for calamus (Ezk 27:19). When processed, this material was a sweet-scented volatile oil.

#### **4. Cassia**

Cassia is a spice native to India, Ceylon, and Malaya which has an aroma similar to cinnamon though less delicate. It also was an exotic trade item of ancient Tyre (Ezk 27:19).

### **E. Incense for the Altar — 30:34-38**

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God also gave Moses the formula for the incense which was to be burned on the altar of incense. Like the anointing oil, it was not to be duplicated by the Israelites for personal use; it was reserved for sacred purposes. It was to consist of equal parts of the following four costly elements:

#### **1. Stacte**

Stacte is a resin derived in driplet form from the starax tree. The resin was collected by making a small incision in the tree. It was a rare substance and highly prized because of its use as a perfume.

#### **2. Onycha**

Onycha is aromatic oil obtained by burning the shells of a certain mollusk found in the Red Sea.

#### **3. Galganum**

Galganum is another aromatic resin which was taken from a rare plant of the carrot family.

#### **4. Frankincense**

This familiar but costly resin was derived from several species of shrubs and trees. In most cases these spices obtained their value because of the difficulty with which they were collected even in small amounts.

### **VI. Craftsmen of the Tabernacle — 31:1-11**

One must continually bear in mind the fact that Israel was not an ordinary nation under human government. Israel was a theocracy (God-ruled), and therefore, her standards, morals, religion, etc. were on a much higher plane than other nations. In order that Israel might function in this elevated sense, God specially equipped its leaders and various individuals via a theocratic anointing of the Holy Spirit (Num 11:17, 26-29). In the case of Bezaleel, and Aholiab, and the other craftsmen involved in the tabernacle construction, the Spirit enabled them to perform their tasks with a skill quite distinct from their training, experience, and native ability.

### **VII. Connotation of the Sabbath — 31:12-18**

The observance of the Sabbath had already been officially enjoined (20:9-11). With this reminder, the LORD gave a two-fold purpose of the Sabbath and declared for the first time, the penalty for profaning it. As circumcision was the sign of the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen 17:11) and the rainbow the sign of the Noahic Covenant (Gen 9:13), so the Sabbath was to be a perpetual sign to Israel for all generations that God had set them apart to be His covenant people. Second, it was a sign to Israel that in six days God had created the heavens and the earth and on the seventh day He rested (31:17). He ceased to create because His work was finished and it was done very well. The new revelation given in this passage about the Sabbath is the warning that if anyone profaned the Sabbath by working on it, he would be put to death (cf. Num 15:32-36; Jn 5:16-18). The Sabbath was symbolic of a believer's rest in Jesus' finished work on the cross. He cannot add his good works to Jesus' finished work for salvation. If he does, he does not trust in the finished work for his salvation, so he must die and be sent to Hell.