

UNIT 54: THE CONSECRATION OF THE PRIEST (Exodus 29: 1-46)

Chapter 29 is a rather long, involved discussion of the consecration of Aaron the Priest. It is similar to the Leviticus material on the ordination of the priests (Lev. 8). In fact, the execution of what is given here is narrated there. But these instructions must have been given after Leviticus 1-7 were in force, for they presuppose a lot of terminology from Leviticus. This chapter may be charted as follows:

- The Consecration of the Priests (1-35)
 - Preparation for consecration (1-3)
 - Ritual of consecration (4-35)
 - Washing the body (4)
 - Investiture and anointing (5-9)
 - Sacrifices:
 - sin-offering (10-14)
 - burnt-offering (15-18)
 - installation [peace] offering (19-26, 31-34)
 - (Statutes for wave and heave offerings [27-30])
 - The duration of the ritual (35)
- The Consecration of the Altar (36, 37)
- The Consecration by Morning and Evening Oblations (38-46).

There are several possibilities for the exposition of this material. One could concentrate only on verses 1-35 for ordination or consecration. But the latter part seems to belong with the first, that is, the consecration of the tabernacle, altar, people, and priests. God was beginning the holy operations with sacral ritual. *Every one who ministers, everyone who worships, and everything they use in the presence of the Lord, must be set apart to God by the cleansing, enabling, and sanctifying work of the Lord.*

- I. *God requires that those who minister before him*

be cleansed, enabled, and sanctified for the work (1-35).

This point refers to ministers; point II (vv. 36, 37) refers to the place, and point III, a summary (vv. 38-46) refers to the congregation and the service. All must be sanctified.

In dealing with the first part, obviously the longer and most important part, I would arrange it under the topics and then develop each idea. Verses 1-3 need not receive separate special attention. But washing with water (v. 4), clothing with the garments (v. 5), anointing with oil (vv. 6-9), and consecrating with blood (vv. 10-34) are basic concepts. The washing represents purity, removal of impurity. The clothing represents being prepared for work, outfitted for function, the anointing represents empowerment by the Spirit, and the blood signifies sanctifying atonement. In the sacrifices, we may discern humility with the sin offering, acceptance with the burnt offering, and communion with God with the peace offering. This peace offering is the ordination offering, the “having the hands full.” This blood was actually put on the ear, thumb; and toe of Aaron, according to Leviticus.

This material can be used to focus in on Jesus Christ, our High Priest, especially in view of the use of “perfection” (= ordination) in the Book of Hebrews, based on the LXX translation of “filling.” Jesus was made perfect, i.e., consecrated our High Priest, through the things He suffered. But before you get to that point, stress these as required preparations for any who minister: cleansing, equipped for ministry, spiritual power, and sanctification---all a part of being set apart for service.

*II. God requires that the central feature
of worship be set apart to him (36, 37).*

The next point, if you take the whole chapter, is the consecration of the altar (vv. 36, 37). God requires that the central feature of worship be set apart for that purpose alone.

Summary/Conclusion

The final part is rather problematic. In fact, some would prefer to make it a separate section entirely. However, verse 44 ties it back in to the consecration material, and so it belongs here. It requires continual sanctification of worship and worshipper. Here you can discuss the morning and evening oblations and the

symbolism that goes with them. But the point in the context is that there was to be a continual burnt offering at the door of the Tent-perpetually. This is because it was the appointed meeting place with God--He says, "there I will be sanctified by my glory" (v. 43). The LORD's glorious presence sanctifies the place and the people so that He may dwell (1:39) among them and be their God.

Verses 43-46 quite likely provide a conclusion to chapters 25-29. In the sanctuary thus instructed, the LORD will appear in glory and dwell with His people. The end of the book will portray this.