

A Better Sacrifice

What we all must be thankful for is that God Himself, in the Person of Yeshua, had a willing heart to offer Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of fallen humanity. As glorious as the wilderness Tabernacle, and First and Second Temples were—their service of sacrifices was not sufficient to provide us with permanent atonement, as detailed by the author of Hebrews:

“And according to the Law, *one may almost say*, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Messiah did not enter a holy place made with hands, a *mere* copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; nor was it that He would offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood that is not his own. Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this *comes* judgment, so Messiah also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without *reference* to sin, to those who eagerly await Him” (Hebrews 9:22-28).

Thankfully, Yeshua’s heart was stirred to the point that He was willing to be our sacrifice.

How about you? Is your heart being stirred to the point where you are willing to offer yourself up so that you can be useful in the Kingdom’s work? If you have offered yourself up, are you encouraging others to do the same? If you are not doing these things, pray that our Heavenly Father will stir your heart to the point that the cost does not matter. Take the opportunity to offer yourself before Him.

The chance to be a willing sacrifice comes only during your lifetime. Be like those who did not miss the chance to make the offering when their time came! **Pray for the stirring of your heart!**

Tetzaveh תצַוֶּה You shall command “Bloodied Garments”

Exodus 27:20-30:10
Ezekiel 43:10-27

Tetzaveh begins to stipulate many of the steps required of Ancient Israel, to become the kingdom of priests and holy nation that God wants it to be. He communicates through Moses many of the particulars that separate the Levites out from the other tribes. Aaron and his sons are specifically designated to perform some critical priestly tasks, including the consecration of the high priest. In our Torah reading for this week, we see the instruction,

“Then you shall take the other ram, and Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands on the head of the ram. You shall slaughter the ram, and take some of its blood and put *it* on the

lobe of Aaron's right ear and on the lobes of his sons' right ears and on the thumbs of their right hands and on the big toes of their right feet, and sprinkle the *rest of the* blood around on the altar. Then you shall take some of the blood that is on the altar and some of the anointing oil, and sprinkle *it* on Aaron and on his garments and on his sons and on his sons' garments with him; so he and his garments shall be consecrated, as well as his sons and his sons' garments with him" (Exodus 29:19-21).

While reading this portion a number of times, I was overwhelmed by the minute details that were listed for the various garments and implements used by the high priest in his ministerial functions.³² The variety of colors, different material types, precious metals and stones, and their locations on the specific garments, were very intriguing. Of course, all of the possible typology was not overlooked.

Much *speculation* has been given about how all of the colors and material types could be symbolic of the different aspects of the Messiah and His work as the High Priest. Some of this speculation might, however, take us away from the bigger Biblical picture—which is that in spite of such detail, the Levitical priesthood would be insufficient for offering people permanent atonement and forgiveness for sins (cf. Hebrews 9:9). The details of the Levitical priesthood, seen in *Tetzaveh* and throughout various Torah portions (notably in Leviticus and Numbers following), are to cause Believers to appreciate the priestly service of Yeshua the Messiah—which now **does offer permanent atonement and forgiveness for sins.**

It is quite beneficial for us to contemplate the symbols that we read about in *Tetzaveh*, and their foreshadowing of what was to come in the Messiah's ministry. Among the most notable of the symbols we encounter is the fact that the high priest went into the Holy of Holies once a year, with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel inscribed in two places on his apparel. First, the names of the twelve tribes were engraved on two onyx stones that were placed on the shoulders. Wearing these indicated that the high priest was bearing their weight on himself:

"You shall take two onyx stones and engrave on them the names of the sons of Israel, six of their names on the one stone and the names of the remaining six on the other stone, according to their birth. As a jeweler engraves a signet, you shall engrave the two stones according to the names of the sons of Israel; you shall set them in filigree *settings* of gold. You shall put the two stones on the shoulder pieces of the ephod, as stones of memorial for the sons of Israel, and Aaron shall bear their names before the LORD on his two shoulders for a memorial" (Exodus 28:9-12).

Secondly, the breastplate of judgment had twelve precious stones engraved with the names of the twelve tribes. This was placed over the high priest's heart and was a constant reminder of their presence before God:

"Aaron shall carry the names of the sons of Israel in the breastpiece of judgment over his heart when he enters the holy place, for a memorial before the LORD continually. You shall put in the breastpiece of judgment the Urim and the Thummim, and they shall be over Aaron's heart when he goes in before the LORD; and Aaron shall carry the judgment of the sons of Israel over his heart before the LORD continually" (Exodus 28:29-30).

In these two very symbolic ways, we are today reminded of the role of our High Priest, Yeshua. Yeshua the Messiah is the High Priest who is seated at the right hand of His Father in Heaven, interceding for all of those who have placed their trust in Him:

³² Exodus 28:1-43.

“Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. For it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the *sins* of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. For the Law appoints men as high priests who are weak, but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, *appoints* a Son, made perfect forever. Now the main point in what has been said is *this*: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man. For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; so it is necessary that this *high priest* also have something to offer” (Hebrews 7:25-8:3).

Further on in *Tetzaveh* we see a very dramatic event take place, when the high priest and his sons are anointed and then consecrated for their ministry service:

“You shall slaughter the ram, and take some of its blood and put *it* on the lobe of Aaron's right ear and on the lobes of his sons' right ears and on the thumbs of their right hands and on the big toes of their right feet, and sprinkle the *rest of the* blood around on the altar. Then you shall take some of the blood that is on the altar and some of the anointing oil, and sprinkle *it* on Aaron and on his garments and on his sons and on his sons' garments with him; so he and his garments shall be consecrated, as well as his sons and his sons' garments with him” (Exodus 29:20-21).

Here, the blood of the ram anoints not only the high priest and his sons, but they are also sprinkled by a mixture of the blood and anointing oil. This procedure should give us a vivid impression of the identification that the Holy One requires of the high priest and his sons, with the requirement for a blood sacrifice. As Believers, this reminds us of the Messiah's dual ministry—not just as High Priest when He ascended into Heaven—but also as *the bloody sacrifice* required to atone for the sins of fallen humanity. At the time of His crucifixion, perhaps it is possible that various disciples and followers of His were reminded of Exodus' images of the high priest and his sons being consecrated—among the many thoughts that were in their minds.

Only by appreciating the Levitical priesthood, and the sacrifices offered to consecrate Aaron and his sons—can we really appreciate the priestly service of Yeshua, and the sacrifice that He has offered for us. The author of Hebrews teaches what the blood of the Messiah is really all about, connecting it with the dedication of the Tabernacle that we read about in *Tetzaveh*:

“But when Messiah appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, *He entered* through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Messiah, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Hebrews 9:11-14).

May we all be thankful that Yeshua was willing to offer Himself up for us, atoning for our sins! He had much more than the bloodied garments of the high priest and his sons to contend with. It was His willingness to suffer and die for us, **that we can now have**

permanent forgiveness before the Father, which the previous Levitical service as important as it was could not provide.

***Ki Tisa* כִּי תִשָּׂא** **When you take** **“Signs of Life”**

Exodus 30:11-34:35
 1 Kings 18:1-39 (A); 18:20-39 (S)

Ki Tisa covers a wide variety of topics that range from describing the half-shekel tax collected,³³ to the infamous golden calf incident,³⁴ and to instructions regarding the Sabbath.³⁵ Additional instruction is given regarding hand washing,³⁶ anointing oil³⁷ and incense formulas,³⁸ and how the Tabernacle is to be used.³⁹ Moses also relates significant interchanges that he has with the Holy One as he received the tablets of testimony, pleaded for the people of Israel, and then eventually witnessed the very glory of God.⁴⁰ These, and other events described, give students of the Torah much to ponder this week.

As one meditates upon this selection from Exodus, a multitude of impressions can be generated. For this student, three seemingly unrelated passages in the *parashah* became linked. The first Scriptural mention of the Book of Life (Exodus 32:32-33) generated some curiosity that led to some reflections about how serious the Father is about His children and their actions. These thoughts were then coupled with the passage about *Shabbat* (שַׁבָּת) or the Sabbath being a sign between God and His people (Exodus 31:12-18). Finally, the passage about Moses desiring the Lord’s Divine presence struck a chord (Exodus 33:12-23). *Let me explain.*

Moses’ Intercession

Seeing the many things detailed in our *parashah* this week, the people of Israel are in serious trouble. Moses ascends Mount Sinai to receive God’s Instruction. While there, Moses is informed that the impatient Israelites have fashioned a golden calf and are riotously worshipping it. The Lord threatens extermination of these sinners:

“Now then let Me alone, that My anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them; and I will make of you a great nation” (Exodus 32:10).

Thankfully, as a result of Moses’ intercession, God decides not to do this:

“So the LORD changed His mind about the harm which He said He would do to His people” (Exodus 32:14).

³³ Exodus 30:11-16.

³⁴ Exodus 32:1-35.

³⁵ Exodus 31:12-17.

³⁶ Exodus 30:17-21.

³⁷ Exodus 30:22-33.

³⁸ Exodus 30:34-38.

³⁹ Exodus 31:1-11.

⁴⁰ Exodus 32:11-34:35.