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Anointing of aaron

Leviticus 81 The LORD said to Moses,2 "Bring Aaron and his sons, their garments, the anointing oil, the bull for the sin offering, the two rams and the basket containing bread made without yeast,3 and gather the entire assembly at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting."4 Moses did as the LORD commanded him, and the assembly gathered at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting.5 Moses said to the assembly, "This is what the LORD has commanded to be done."6 Then Moses brought Aaron and his sons forward and washed them with water.7 He put the tunic on Aaron, tied the sash around him, clothed him with the robe and put the ephod on him. He also tied the ephod to him by its skillfully woven waistband; so it was fastened on him.8 He placed the breastpiece on him and put the Urim and Thummim in the breastpiece.9 Then he placed the turban on Aaron's head and set the gold plate, the sacred diadem, on the front of it, as the LORD commanded Moses.10 Then Moses took the anointing oil and anointed the tabernacle and everything in it, and so consecrated them.11 He sprinkled some of the oil on the altar seven times, anointing the altar and all its utensils and the basin with its stand, to consecrate them.12 He poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron's head and anointed him to consecrate him.13 Then he brought Aaron's sons forward, put tunics on them, tied sashes around them and put headbands on them, as the LORD commanded Moses.14 He then presented the bull for the sin offering, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on its head.15 Moses slaughtered the bull and took some of the blood, and with his finger he put it on all the horns of the altar to purify the altar. He poured out the rest of the blood at the base of the altar. So he consecrated it to make atonement for it.16 Moses also took all the fat around the inner parts, the covering of the liver, and both kidneys and their fat, and burned it on the altar.17 But the bull with its hide and its flesh and its offal he burned up outside the camp, as the LORD commanded Moses.18 He then presented the ram for the burnt offering, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on its head.19 Then Moses slaughtered the ram and sprinkled the blood against the altar on all sides.20 He cut the ram into pieces and burned the head, the pieces and the fat.21 He washed the inner parts and the legs with water and burned the whole ram on the altar as a burnt offering, a pleasing aroma, an offering made to the LORD by fire, as the LORD commanded Moses.22 He then presented the other ram, the ram for the ordination, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on its head.23 Moses slaughtered the ram and took some of its blood and put it on the lobe of Aaron's right ear, on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot.24 Moses also brought Aaron's sons forward and put some of the blood on the lobes of their right ears, on the thumbs of their right hands and on the big toes of their right feet. Then he sprinkled blood against the altar on all sides.25 He took the fat, the fat tail, all the fat around the inner parts, the covering of the liver, both kidneys and their fat and the right thigh.26 Then from the basket of bread made without yeast, which was before the LORD, he took a cake of bread, and one made with oil, and a wafer; he put these on the fat portions and on the right thigh.27 He put all these in the hands of Aaron and his sons and waved them before the LORD as a wave offering.28 Then Moses took them from their hands and burned them on the altar on top of the burnt offering as an ordination offering, a pleasing aroma, an offering made to the LORD by fire.29 He also took the breast--Moses' share of the ordination ram--and waved it before the LORD as a wave offering, as the LORD commanded Moses.30 Then Moses took some of the anointing oil and some of the blood from the altar and sprinkled them on Aaron and his garments and on his sons and their garments. So he consecrated Aaron and his garments and his sons and their garments.31 Moses then said to Aaron and his sons, "Cook the meat at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting and eat it there with the bread from the basket of ordination offerings, as I commanded, saying, [1] 'Aaron and his sons are to eat it.'32 Then burn up the rest of the meat and the bread.33 Do not leave the entrance to the Tent of Meeting for seven days, until the days of your ordination are completed, for your ordination will last seven days.34 What has been done today was commanded by the LORD to make atonement for you.35 You must stay at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting day and night for seven days and do what the LORD requires, so you will not die; for that is what I have been commanded."36 So Aaron and his sons did everything the LORD commanded through Moses. In a hot, dry climate such as that found in the Middle East, anointing one's hair and head with olive oil was as much a part of everyday life in Bible times as was washing (Deut 28.40; Ruth 3.3; 2 Sam 12.20; Ps 104.15), and a typical blessing was, "Let thy head lack no ointment" (Eccl 9.8). Anointing rendered the skin soft, smooth, shining, and supple since it stopped excessive moisture loss. Only the very poor did not anoint themselves (2 Chr 28.15), and to purposely forgo such anointing was seen as an act of deliberate self-neglect demonstrating deep emotion, as for instance at a time of mourning for the dead (Dan 10.3; 2 Sam 12.20; 14.2, Is 61.3; Mic 6.15), while re-commencement of anointing marked the end of mourning (2 Sam 12.23; Dan 10.3). On the other hand, at special times of joy and celebration, fresh oil was used to mark the occasion (Ps 92.10; Amos 6.6), when it was noted that "Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart" (Prov 27.9). To be anointed by one's host was a mark of respect (Ps 23.5), and its neglect was taken as a great dishonour (Lk 7.38,46). Tending a wounded person also involved anointing with oil (see Is 1.6; Ezek 16.9; Lk 10.34). However, the act of anointing was also invested with a greater significance, demonstrating, as it did, the divine and public declaration of choice, sanctification, consecration and empowerment of prophets, priests and kings. This act of anointing, smearing or pouring on of the special oil or ointment, was also used for inanimate objects in order to set them apart, so that, for instance, such sanctified vessels were exclusively for divine service. The perfumed oil used for this purpose was itself special and carefully prepared (Ex 25.6; 30.22-32; 35.8) and was not for common, everyday use. (The word ointment in the Authorised Version described any oil-based substance with added perfume and spices, which could make it very expensive (Mk 14.5; Jn 12.5.) Unlike our modern idea of an ointment, these ointments flowed readily (Ps 133.2). Inanimate objects The very first special anointing recorded in the Bible is of the simple stone pillar which Jacob had set up to sanctify the place where he had met with God (Gen 28.18; 31.13; 35.14). He appears to have used the ordinary oil that he was carrying with him. Later, when instructions were given for the preparation and functioning of the tabernacle, all the structure and its contents were to be anointed by Moses (Ex 30.26; 40.9; Lev 8.10). Special mention was made of anointing the altar and all its vessels (Ex 29.36; Lev 8.11; Ex 40.10); the ark (Ex 30.26); the laver and its foot (Ex 40.11; Lev 8.11); and the unleavened wafers (Ex 29.2; Lev 2.4; 7.12; Num 6.15). The dedication of the brazen altar was a special event marked by anointing it, and it was a day of great sacrificing and the presentation of many gifts for divine service (see Num 7.10,84,88). Some of the sacrifices also had oil poured on them, such as the meal offering of fine flour (Lev 2.1,6). The priests' garments were also anointed in order to be consecrated (Ex 29.29). The holy oil for the work of the tabernacle (and for later special purposes such as anointing kings) had to be prepared to the highest specifications and with the best ingredients which were precisely identified by God (Ex 25.6; 35.8). It was to be manufactured with the greatest care, "after the art of the apothecary: it shall be an holy anointing oil" (Ex 30.22-32), as a concentrated mixture of pure myrrh, sweet cinnamon, sweet calamus, and cassia, made up in a base of oil olive. (The finest oil was from olives that were plucked before being fully ripe, and then beaten or squeezed.) Its preparation was to be carried out to the same high standard as the rest of the tabernacle (Ex 31.11, 35.8), and originally it was the personal responsibility of Eleazar, Aaron's son (Num 4.16). Having been made up, it had to be used only for these holy purposes, and was not to be imitated (Ex 30.32,33). Aaronic priests The first special anointing of a person mentioned in the Old Testament was with reference to Aaron the high priest. According to the divine instructions (Ex 29.7), Moses "poured of the anointing oil upon Aaron's head, and anointed him, to sanctify him" (Lev 8.12), as later described in Psalm 133.2 - "...the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments". This described the sanctifying purpose of the anointing. The same kind of anointing was also carried out on Aaron's sons, the priests (Ex 28.41; Lev 8.30). It was necessary for their service: "And thou shalt anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office" (Ex 30.30; 40.13); "for the consecration of the anointing oil of his God is upon him" (Lev 21.12, JND). This anointing of priests was to go on throughout the history of Israel, "for their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations" (Ex 40.15). See Leviticus 6.22, where we read about "...the priest of his sons that is anointed in his stead", and see Numbers 35.25 and 1 Chronicles 29.22 for the anointing of the high priests. There was a special offering associated with the priests' anointing: a "tenth part of an ephah of fine flour for a meat offering perpetual, half of it in the morning, and half thereof at night" (Lev 6.20). There was also a special portion of the offerings for Aaron and his sons: "This is the portion of the anointing of Aaron, and of the anointing of his sons, out of the offerings of the Lord made by fire" (Lev 7.35), and this was promised for ever, "by a statute for ever throughout their generations" (Lev 7.36). The priests were always linked thereafter with their initial anointing, even when they sinned, so, "If the priest that is anointed do sin according to the sin of the people; then let him bring for his sin, which he hath sinned, a young bullock without blemish unto the Lord for a sin offering" (Lev 4.3-5). Then in their service the priest's anointing is remembered - "And ye shall not go out from the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: for the anointing oil of the Lord is upon you" (Lev 10.7). In very specific terms they were told by the Lord that "I also have given thee the charge of mine heave offerings of all the hallowed things of the children of Israel: unto thee have I given them by reason of the anointing, and to thy sons, by an ordinance for ever" (Num 18.8). Even the priest's holy garments — the linen clothes — were connected with his anointing (Lev 16.32), and, "he that is the high priest among his brethren, upon whose head the anointing oil was poured, and that is consecrated to put on the garments, shall not uncover his head, nor rend his clothes" (Lev 21.10). These sanctified garments were passed on to the next generation (Ex 29.29). To be continued. Within the outer courtyard of the Tabernacle of Moses was the bronze laver (see Exodus 30:17-21). It was here at the laver where Aaron and his sons were washed, clothed, and anointed prior to becoming a priest. The laver was also used by the priests for daily ritual washing prior to serving at the Tabernacle. The washing at the laver can symbolize our need to be spiritually cleansed through the atonement of Jesus Christ. Only the tribe of Levi, and in particular the family of Aaron, could officiate at the Tabernacle; therefore, the Lord commanded that Moses first consecrate them for this sacred service here at the laver. In Exodus 40 it reads, "And thou shalt bring Aaron and his sons unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and wash them with water. And thou shalt put upon Aaron the holy garments, and anoint him, and sanctify him; that he may minister unto me in the priest's office." (Exodus 40:12-13). This consecration of the priests included three important and symbolic acts: washing, clothing, and anointing. These gestures were to demonstrate and teach Israel that the priests were authorized to act on their behalf. In ancient times, washing with water often symbolled becoming ritually clean, allowing the person to perform sacred acts such as prayer or sacrifice. Though we are not given any details about the washing process, many scholars speculate that it would include the washing of the full body. [1] The scriptures include many references to ritual washing including one from Psalms "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin" (Psalms 51:2). After the washing with water, the high priest and priests were clothed with the holy garments. Unlike today, clothing in ancient times was very costly and difficult to make. The hand spinning and looming process could take possibly hundreds of hours for a single piece of clothing. Thus, the giving of clothing, especially ceremonial clothing, represented a significant bestowing of authority and power. Interestingly the word atonement in Hebrew, or kaphar, actually means to cover, possibly connecting the sacred priestly clothing, which covered the priests, with the atonement of Jesus Christ. Moses anointing Aaron with oil, the oil is stored in the horn of a bull Next, Moses was to anoint Aaron and his sons with sacred anointing oil and blood from the sacrifice. The oil was a special combination of pure olive oil with liquified myrrh and other spices (see Exodus 30:22-30). Several stories in the Bible state that anointing oil was stored in an animal's horn (see for example 1 Samuel 16:13 and 1 Kings 1:39), the horn often being a symbol of power and strength. [2] The scriptures again do not provide any details how the priests were anointed with oil, but we are told about the process of anointing with blood which may give us hints to the full process. [3] Moses would first kill a ram and then save the blood in a dish. He would then place the blood on the right ear of the priest, then on his right thumb, and then the right toe of his foot. (Exodus 29:20 and Leviticus 8:23-24). Moses dabbing blood on the right ear of Aaron Moses placing blood on the right thumb of Aaron This act of covering with blood certain parts of the body might seem strange to modern readers of the Bible, but understanding its significance can help us learn several powerful lessons. First, again the meaning of the word atonement in Hebrew means to cover. Second, each of the body parts could represent the service at the Tabernacle and to the Lord. The ear can symbolize the need to hear and follow the word of God. The thumb can represent our actions and ability to labor in the work of the Lord. The toe often is a symbol of our daily walk possibly teaching the priests that they were to walk in the paths of righteousness. By anointing with blood these parts of the body, it could serve as a reminder to the priests that all their actions and deeds should bring others to the Lord. According to one scholar, it could also symbolize that the priest, who represented Israel, was taking upon him the tokens of the death of the sacrifice. Thus, reminding him that it is only by the blood of the sacrifice that he is worthy and able to enter the Lord's presence. [4] After being consecrated just once in their life before becoming a priest, the priests then would ritually wash their hands and feet daily at the laver before performing sacrifices and entering the Holy Place (Exodus 30:19-21). This served as a constant reminder that they were to be spiritually clean prior to coming before the Lord. The priest ritually washing his hands at the laver After completing these sacred cleansing rituals, the priests were authorized to serve at the Tabernacle and in particular, enter the presence of the Lord into the Holy Place, and in the case of the high priest, the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement. Though Israel would not participate in these sacred cleansing acts individually, the priests represented them all as if they too were able to be washed themselves. This would hopefully be a reminder to ancient Israel that as they watched the priest physically and spiritually prepare to act on their behalf, they knew they likewise had to be prepared to enter albeit symbolically through the services of the priests. These powerful symbolic acts at the laver can teach us of our own need to be cleansed by the waters of baptism, clothed in the power of the atonement, and anointed by the blood of the Lamb of God having our sins covered over or blotted out. These rituals can be an outward representation of the truth that it is only through the atoning power of the Savior that we can ultimately be worthy and able to enter the presence of the Lord! [1] The Gate of Heaven, by Matthew B. Brown, pg. 79. [2] The Lost Language of Symbolism, by Alonzo Gaskill, pg. 49-50. [3] The Gate of Heaven, pg. 79-80. [4] The Anchor Bible, Exodus 19-40, by William H. C. Propp, pg. 530-531.

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