

Instructions for the Altar of Incense

Exodus 30:1-16

Pastor Arlyn

Message Transcript

Exodus chapter 30.

We are still, believe it or not, studying the conversation between God and Moses up on Mount Sinai, it is a 40 day conversation where Moses is receiving instruction from the Lord. We've been studying it for many chapters now, as Moses is receiving the commandments, the law, and now instructions for how to build the tabernacle and everything that the Lord wanted in the tabernacle. We have two more chapters of information that the Lord is going to give Moses, two more chapters to study through. And that's going to take us three weeks. Because as you can see from our title screen tonight, we're going to chop up this chapter a little bit, because that's the way the Lord did it. Or that's the way Moses wrote it for us. It's chopped up sort of, we have in verses one through 16, predominantly information about the altar of incense. And then we also in that, that clump of verses have instructions for the taking up of a ransom offering. We'll talk about that tonight. And then in verses 17 through 33, we're on to another topic, that is the instructions for the creation of the brass laver or the basin. And then down to verse 34. And through verse 38, the finishing out of the chapter, we come back to the topic of incense, that's those, those last handful of chapters, the recipe for the incense and instructions, about the incense for the altar of incense. So I want to include that in our study. So that we can just talk about the altar of incense tonight, including the last section of the chapter, verses 34 through 38. And then next week, we'll come back and we'll get the section that we missed in between verses 17 through 33. And talk about the brass laver there. And everything else that we find in those sections.

A lot of this is going to be quick recap, where I just can concisely state to you the principles that we find in here based on the truths that we find in here, you know, the pictures, and then the principles, because a lot of this is stuff that we've covered as we've studied through the instructions for the tabernacle. We see a lot of the same symbolism, we see a lot of the same meaning behind it all so I can hit it kind of fast. And then especially because tonight we're talking about the altar of incense, who has heard that taught about recently in this church? Three times in the book of Revelation, the book of Revelation has forced us to come back to this passage, grab some things concerning the altar of incense, and then pluck them out and bring them into that revelation study. So we have actually learned a great deal about the altar of incense, that's going to help me tonight, it's going to let us move through this a little more quickly. I can just state those truths, those pictures, and concisely state the principles that are behind them, you'll know exactly what I'm talking about. Because you all retain the large majority of what I teach in here on Sundays and Wednesdays I just know it. And then Lord willing, we'll be able to get through this chapter and the next chapter within the next three Wednesday surfaces so that this isn't a three parter. I mean, it's okay if it's a three parter, or I should say more than a three parter. It's okay if it's more than a three parter, but I think we should be able to handle this in just a three part message. So with that said, we should probably get going because even though we're going to move a little faster, there is still lots of stuff to get through here. So verse one let's read.

You shall make an altar to burn incense on. You shall make it of acacia wood, verse two a cubit, 18 inches, shall be its length and a cubit, another 18 inches, its width. It shall be square 18 inches by 18 inches, and two cubits or 36 inches shall be its height. Its horns, shall be of one piece with it. So there were two altars in the Old Testament tabernacle. We studied that first altar already in our Exodus studies. That was the Brazen Altar.

That's Exodus 27. If you're looking for it, it was located at the outermost door of the outer courtyard. It's where sacrifice for sin was made, you couldn't get into the tabernacle unless you came through there. It had to all begin with sacrifice for sin. And here in Exodus 30, we're given the second altar, which is the altar of incense or the golden altar. And it was the innermost altar. That inner altar that was inside the Holy Place situated right there between the holy place, and the Holy of Holies. It was a much smaller altar, as you can see, does anyone remember the measurements of the of the brass altar or the Brazen Altar?

Seven feet by seven feet, that ring a bell? This was 18 inches by 18 inches, so it is quite a bit smaller. It is extremely simple in its construction, because it doesn't need to be big, and it doesn't need to be gaudy in order to be effective.

And that is worth applying, that lesson right there to your prayer life. What is the altar of incense? We know it, we have to know by now if you don't know that by now I'm retiring. The altar of incense represents prayer. That's what it's all about. That's the symbolism behind that altar. And this altar is small and it's not fancy. And I suggest to you that's the way that the Lord intends prayer to be. Prayer doesn't have to be big, just as the prayer altar isn't big. And prayer doesn't have to be gaudy, or shouty, showy, godly or showy. As as this altar is not.

Solomon reminds us in Ecclesiastes, chapter five, verse two, that actually when we approach the Lord in prayer, we ought to be very cautious with our words. And Solomon, his sermon to you about prayer would be this: Sometimes, sometimes, less is more. Watch your mouth, watch what you say, Here's what he says, Do not be rash with your mouth, and let not your heart utter anything hastily before God, for God is in heaven and you on earth. Therefore, Solomon says, let your words be few and right in perfect keeping with that, when Jesus was teaching his disciples how to pray in Matthew chapter six, verses seven through eight, Jesus instructed them that when you pray, do not use vain repetitions, excuse me, do not use vain repetitions, as the heathens do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. I like the King James version on this one, they think they will be heard for they're much speaking.

But the Lord says, Do not be like them for your father knows the things you have need of before you ask him. So apply that to prayer. Do not let yourself be weighted down with that burden, that man if I don't get in there, and stay there in prayer for at least two hours, I'm wasting my time. The Lord wants time from me. No, he wants sincerity from you. And the same is true for worship those who think man in my time of worship, if my worship is really going to touch the heart of God, I need to engage my emotions. I need to put on a good show. I need to run the aisles and jump the pews or if you don't have pews, the chairs.

I've got to do something to get the Lord's attention. No, I'm telling you, that's not Yaweh worship, that's baal worship. I would point you to a New Testament section for study first Kings chapter 18. And hopefully when you read that passage about the prophets of baal, running around acting like fools, jumping and screaming and cutting themselves trying to get their God's attention to no avail, I would hope that that would convict you if you're embracing that type of belief concerning your own worship. I hope that would bring you back down to earth to realize the Lord is not into showy-ness, he's not into length, he's not into your fancy words. You don't even have to use fancy words when you pray. Here's what the Lord wants sincerity, sincerity of heart.

Now, do keep in mind that though all these tabernacle topics certainly speak to us about our salvation and our worship, there's a more important first principle behind all of it. And that is that all of these pictures that we're seeing in tabernacle worship is to first and foremost, show us pictures of Jesus Christ. And none could be clearer than the pictures of Christ, we get from these two altars, they picture two aspects of the ministry of

Jesus. And in a sense, it's the full spectrum of his work, the Brazen Altar, the brass altar, the sin altar, it pictures what Jesus has done for us on Earth. And then the prayer altar, the altar of incense, the golden altar, it pictures for us what he is doing presently for us in heaven. The writer of Hebrews speaks about that. Hebrews, chapter seven, verse 25. So what did the Lord do for us past tense on the earth?

Of course, he laid down his life as a sacrifice for our sins. That's the picture of the Brazen Altar, the altar of sacrifice. What is the Lord doing for us now, He ever lives to make intercession for us. And that is pictured by the altar of incense. So that's not just a picture of the prayers of the saints, although it is that but it's also to show us that ministry role of Jesus that he actually intercedes for us. He ever lives to make intercession for those that love and serve Him, what does intercession mean? Prayer, he prays for us, he literally does, I know that that can be difficult to wrap the mind around and get the intellect to accept that the Lord would actually pray for us, Jesus in heaven, at the right hand of the Father, praying to the Father about you, but he does. It's true. He modeled that for us in Luke chapter 22. As he gave that news to Simon Peter, Peter, Simon, Satan has desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for your faith. And Jesus would say, that's how I know your faith is not going to fail. You are going to be converted, and then I'm going to use you. Yes. He said, He showed that to us on Earth. He's praying for the faith of Peter. He's praying for his disciples. And now, he reveals that truth to us in the Book of Hebrews. That's what he's doing for us right now, the altar of incense. And since you guys are well acquainted with that truth, that the Lord prays for us intercedes for us to the Father, that's going to allow me to go ahead and scoot right along. But notice one more thing here in verse two, before we do move on.

The Brazen Altar had horns. And the Bible in verse two, the Lord just called for the same thing with the golden altar, the Lord wanted horns on the golden altar. Horns always speak of, and this is a repeat lesson, horns always speak of power, so to concisely put it to you, here's the message of the horns on the golden altar, there is power in prayer, remember that we're going to come right back to it.

Verse three, and you shall overlay its top, its sides all around, and its horns with pure gold. And you shall make for it a molding of gold all around, verse four, two gold rings, you shall make for it under the molding on both its sides, you shall place them on its two sides, and they will be holders for the poles with which to bear it, verse five, you shall make the poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold. So these are the same spiritual truths that we have learned elsewhere in our Old Testament tabernacle studies, as was the case for most of the furniture that you're going to find in the in the tabernacle, you would generally, not always, but generally have the furniture, the framework of it to be constructed of acacia wood, and that is to picture for us the humanity of all of this. And then with each piece of tabernacle furniture, it was to be overlaid, in a metal. Now what it was overlaid with, and sometimes that was a solid work as in the case with with the, the lampstand. But if it was in an item of furniture that was to be constructed in its framework with wood, it was to be overlaid with a metal and the metal that it would be overlaid with would be completely dependent on where it sat in the tabernacle. It's real simple. If, if that piece of furniture was sitting in the outer courtyard, then that structure was to be overlaid with brass because everything in the outer courtyard was to be brass. There's a reason for that, brass in the Bible is the metal of judgment and that's exactly what the outer courtyard was for. That was the place of judgment. That was where sin could be dealt with. Now the inner tabernacle structure was different, that wasn't just getting in and getting saved and having your sins washed and all that, the inner tabernacle structure was to represent us the presence of God, fellowship with Him, communion with Him, prayer in the holy place, deep into the very Shekinah glory of God in the Holy of Holies. So everything in that section, anything within the inner tabernacle structure, it would need to be made of wood, for the most part, and then overlaid with the metal of gold, because gold is the metal in the Bible of

kingship, or divinity, depending on on the picture. Or I should say, depending on the context of what we're reading.

Verse three, just like the table of showbread, the golden altar was to have a molding, around its top surface, we applied a spiritual principle to that when we studied the table of showbread, that spiritual principle holds true when it comes to the golden altar, same meaning here as there, that literally is a very practical reason for that, that's so that the incense doesn't fall off of the altar of incense. But spiritually, there's a lesson there as well. It gives us faith in our prayers, because what that teaches us through principle is that our prayers never fall off the table into the ground, but that the Lord keeps them the Lord hears all of them. And more importantly than that, the Lord's prayers never fall to the ground without being heard and responded to by the Father, that gives me the most confidence in my prayers. Or I should say, that gives me the most confidence in prayer. Because unlike what I just said, because I don't always have the most confidence in my prayers, but I have utmost confidence that the things that Christ is praying for me, well, the father is going to give them to him. He told us that, I have everything that I ask of my father, because I always ask, in his will. I always get asked, according to His will, never does Jesus pray and the father go, uh uh.

There's never a disconnect between the two of them. So that gives me great confidence that there's a molding there, there's security there, there's protection there for our prayers and for his. What I would say is this, sincere prayer, whether it's you, or Christ praying for you, regardless, sincere prayer always hits its target. In verses four and five, again, holding consistent with past lessons, we see that preparations are to be made so that this altar can be mobile, it's to have rings around the corners of it. And poles are to be made of acacia wood, overlaid in gold, and then put through those, those rings during those occasions where the tabernacle would need to move, everything needed to be mobile, you guys know that well, by now. They're making everything, as soon as Moses gets down from the mountaintop, everything is going to be made. And they're still a distance from the promised land. And they don't know this yet, but they're many years from the promised land and many unnecessary travels from the Promised Land, it's going to be made now. And then it's going to be carried around with them everywhere they go until they finally get to the promised land where it can then become a fixed thing. They set it up that one last time in Canaan, and they're done. That would be nice, I bet. It's like church planning. You know, you go all those years with setting out chairs every week and setting up the sound system and plugging in cables and trying to figure out why the things not working. And then once the service is over, then it's unplugging everything, tearing everything down, stacking everything up. And when you get to a fixed building like this, you get the minister in a place where you don't have to do that every week. You're just like, Oh, thank you, Lord. Well, they're getting to that, they're going to be there. But until then, everything needs to be able to be moved. And we might ask the question, Lord, why didn't you just maybe wait, you know, let them get to the promised land. Lord, let him get home so don't have to drag all this heavy stuff around in the desert. Why don't you just let them get home? And then once they get home, then you can call for a tabernacle? Why wouldn't the Lord do that? Why wouldn't the Lord just wait?

He likes to see us sweat is that it? No, I don't think so. It's real simple, fellowship with God can't wait. It can't be put off. You don't wait until you settle down to develop a relationship with God. Unfortunately, some people do that. Well, you know, maybe when I retire, I'll start going to church and maybe start working on my relationship with the Lord. And they put things off. It's sad to me that people want to settle down first, and then maybe consider a relationship with God, a relationship with God fellowship with God that can't wait. If you'll do that first, right where you are, that's going to help you with everything else that's going to help you to eventually settle down, it really will.

So verse six, and you shall put it, speaking of the altar of incense, you shall put it before the veil, that is before the Ark of the testimony, the Ark of the testimony or when you read that word testimony in this passage, it just means the Ark of the Covenant, before the Ark of the testimony, before the Mercy seat that is over the testimony where I will meet with you. Okay, now link this back to verse two, I told you, we were coming back to this, link this back to verse two. The horns of the altar are to teach us that there is power in prayer. And we might get to verse six and we might ask, why is there power in prayer? And the answer is this prayer is as close to God as you can get. That is pictured in the placement of the altar of incense, this, this altar, that symbolizes prayer to us. Where is the altar of incense? It's sitting almost right on the seam of the holy place, and the Holy of Holies. It's right there by the veil, the only thing you could do from that point, that position of prayer is to peek through the curtain and you would be in the deepest presence of God, where the Ark of the Covenant is. So that's how close prayer is to the presence of God. And as we studied in Revelation, Revelation, chapter nine, I believe it was verse 13, you see that the New Testament equivalent and fulfillment of the golden altar, is placed in the same exact spot. It says there in Revelation chapter nine, verse 13, that the golden altar and I quote was before God, it's right there. You can't get closer to the Lord, than then you are when you pray. So prayer cannot be something that the Christian neglects. You show me a person that doesn't have a strong prayer life. I'll show you a person that doesn't have a very strong passion to be close to God. Regardless of what people profess, even myself included, when we profess, oh, I just want to be close to the Lord. I just want to be deep in the presence of God. Are you praying? Well, no, but I don't have time, that's the only-, Yeah, if you're not praying, you're not all that passionate. You're not all that serious about being close to the Lord. You can't do it without a consistent prayer life. So show me a person that is serious and passionate about being close to God. And I'll show you a good prayer, a consistent prayer in the church.

Verse seven, Aaron shall burn on it sweet incense every morning, when he tends to the lamps, he shall burn incense on it. Eight, and when Aaron lights the lamp at twilight, he shall burn incense on it, a perpetual incense before the Lord, throughout your generations. And we covered this in Exodus chapter 29. We said what? Start your day with prayer, and then come back to it.

Said another way would be this, start your day with the Lord, and then end your day with the Lord. Twilight is between the evenings so that's anytime between afternoon and evening. That's when this incense the symbol of prayer was to be burned in the holy place. And it's just a good reminder that that's a good place to start your day. That's a good place to finish your day.

Basically, we get the privilege and blessing of enveloping all of the events of our days in prayer, just like a big old prayer sandwich, prayer at the beginning, all the events of your day in between, and then at the end of the day, just close it off, sandwich it off with prayer again to the Lord. That's a winning combination. I know maybe we don't all have the privilege of, of having the time to do that. But if you can, wow, it is a wonderful privilege to be able to do that. Verse nine, you shall not offer strange incense on it, or a burnt offering.

I mean, yeah, that makes sense, you're not going to get a cow on that little thing. 18 inches by 18 inches, or a burnt offering or a grain offering, nor shall you pour a drink offering on it.

Now, when you get down to the last chunk of verses here in verses 34, through 38, the Lord is going to give us his secret formula, He's going to give us his precise recipe for how these spices were to be made, that were going to be burnt on the altar of incense. And once the Lord gives us that recipe, he wants us to know that's it, that blend of spices, that recipe, that mixture, that is the only thing that God authorizes to be burned on the altar of incense, anything else is unauthorized, and could cause a priest a great deal of problem. We'll talk about that in the future. So you're not to sacrifice an animal on this altar. You're not to offer up showbread on this altar, no drink offerings. And you're not to bring any other mixture of spices to burn on this altar other

than what the Lord has called for. And that is such an important lesson for us that God wants our worship, but he also wants us to worship Him in a revealed prescribed way. Now he's God, so that's his right as God to determine how he will be worshipped. And some of us would say, well, let's go back to the Old Testament days here, well, sage, I like sage, I like burning sage. I love the smell of that. And I just know that if I bring this to the Lord and offer this to the Lord, the Lord probably would too. So I'm going to burn sage for the Lord.

As we take a New Testament look at that. It might look something like this: Well, I know the Lord's not really into idols. You know, it's kind of a bad word in Christian circles, but I know it's kind of a pagan thing, but I think that the Lord would be blessed if I, you know, sat there and rubbed my little Jesus statue as I prayed to him, because that blesses me. So I think that would bless him, we tend to do that. We tend to think because something would bless us, it would bless the Lord. But really all you're doing is you're worshipping the Lord the way you want to worship the Lord. And the Lord teaches us how to worship Him the way that he wants to be worshipped.

So it is not that he is trying to be restrictive and controlling or harsh. He genuinely wants us to come to him. And he's not trying to complicate that or make that more difficult. What he's actually trying to do is streamline, you're coming to Him in prayer, that's what he's actually trying to do. He's actually trying to eliminate the things that would be distractions, and detractions from true worship. So the wrong offerings that might get us off track the manners of worship that might get us more focused on the manners of worship, than the God of our worship. The Lord says, let's just get rid of that. And let me give you the right way to come and if you'll do that, if you honor God's way, oh major blessings behind it right?

Verse 10, and Aaron shall make atonement upon its horns once a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonement. Once a year he shall make atonement upon it. throughout your generations, it is most holy to the Lord again, this is stuff that we should already know because we've covered it in our revelation studies. Once a year, the golden altar was to be consecrated by taking blood from the brazen altar and sprinkling it on the horns of the altar of incense. And don't forget that, that anytime incense was being burnt on this altar, what they had to do was take live coals from that first altar, the sacrificial altar. And then they had to bring those live coals out to the, well I should say in, to the altar of incense, put the live coals from the Brazen Altar on the altar of incense, the golden altar, sprinkle the spices on top of those live coals and that was the only thing that was permitted. You are not permitted to start your own fire right there in the altar of incense. Very important. These, these two altars always needed to be connected. Now, once a year, they were connected in a special way, blood from a sacrifice on the brazen altar was brought to this altar and sprinkled on the horns. But more than just annually, this was a daily connection that had to be made. The fire on the altar of incense was the very fire from the Brazen Altar. It always had to be connected so that we understood the connection of blood sacrifice, the forgiveness of sins, sacrifice for sins, that what did we say just a few weeks ago, I believe in Revelation chapter nine, that enables and empowers our prayer life. It enables it and it empowers it. So that connection always had to be made. No new fires were to start right there on the altar of incense. Now if you are a good old Testament Bible student, as I'm sure you are, you know that Aaron's two sons, Aaron's priestly sons Nadab and Abihu, who got into trouble over this very issue right here.

What they did in Leviticus 10 Was, it would seem that the text is telling us that they took the sensor and they lit their own fire. And then they burnt incense before the Lord and the Lord calls it profane incense, profane offering, why? Because it wasn't what the Lord prescribed. Those two priests disconnected in that moment, that altar of prayer from that altar of sacrifice, it was a breaking of the symbolism that we are supposed to see. And when you break the symbolism in the Old Testament rituals, it's kind of all for naught, isn't it? The

whole point of it all, is to teach us the symbols. So connect that altar, it always has to be connected back to the altar of sacrifice. Why?

Just examine your prayer lives. There are times you come to pray, don't try to tell me it's not true, There are times when you come to pray. With unconfessed sin in your hearts and planks in your eyes. You come in a fleshly manner before the Lord, you come sinfully before the Lord, you're not properly prepared to be praying and being heard by the Lord. So there's that connect back to the altar of sacrifice where you can in that moment, before you get too far gone in your prayer. Confess those sins, pull that plank out of your eye. Get rid of the grudge that's in your heart, get rid of the anger and hatred. That's the purpose of the connection to that original altar. But then also, even sometimes when you come before the Lord in prayer, in a worthy manner, we would say sometimes it's real easy, as you're praying to veer off into the flesh. Anyone know what I'm talking about? None of you all? Alright, just me then.

Once again, it's real easy to veer off into the flesh and it may be the position of our heart when we came to prayer is right, but by the time we do our much speaking in prayer, Ecclesiastes five very important, by the time we do our much speaking in prayer, we veered off into the flesh and we're not only praying for things that go against the will of God, but we're actually praying for things that grieve the heart of God, we're asking for things amiss. In a sense, we're praying sinfully, so it is very important that that altar, the prayer altar, and that first altar, the altar of sacrifice, always be connected. It's very important.

Now beginning in verse 11, we are going to read about the tabernacle taxes. That's what this is, the tabernacle taxes. And this is eventually going to explain how some of this construction was financed and funded. So let's take a look, verse 11. Then the Lord spoke to Moses saying, verse 12, when you take the census of the children of Israel for their number, then every man shall give a ransom for himself to the Lord. I know it sounds like a hostage situation. It is not, the Lord is not holding them hostage. The Ransom offering was the same thing as a redemption offering. This was an offering for them to show their gratitude for God's deliverance. Okay, so ransom doesn't mean, the hostages need to pay up or someone needs to pay up so that the hostages can go free.

He says when you number them, that there may be no plague among them, when you number them. What? What is the Lord saying now? Where did that come from? Collect an offering, so that there's no plague among the people when you number them. Well, we can tell by the language here, that the Lord is particular, when it comes to numbering his people.

So we got to be careful with those fellowship headcounts. It's true, we do, you wouldn't think you could get in trouble with the Lord over something so small. He can. It's true. For you Old Testament buffs, I'm sure you're familiar with Second Samuel chapter 24, where we are told that David sinned against the Lord in what? Numbering the people, he sinned against the Lord in numbering the people. It was actually a test and a temptation for him. And he failed the test. The reason he got in trouble is because David did it from a place of pride. Here's why he did it. He wanted to know, how strong Am I right now? How many soldiers do I have marching behind me because that once I know that, if it's a big number, I'm gonna have a lot of confidence in war, because I'm strong. I got a lot of soldiers under me.

The Lord, boy he didn't care for that. And what happened? The Lord sent, well, if you know the story, the Lord gave David his choice. And David said, Please don't send the judgment through man. Let the judgment come from you God because it's better to fall into the hands of a of a living God, a merciful God than into the hands of men. And that's true. God is more merciful than man. If you ever given that option for judgment, pick God, not men.

But what happened was three days of plague that fell on the land of Israel, just as Exodus chapter 30. Has forewarned us about. Be careful how you number the people, so that the plague doesn't fall on the land. Is that what started COVID-19? Because man, I tell you.

You know why it's named numbers? It's called the Book of numberings or numbers because in the book of Numbers, God called for the nation to be numbered two times. When you get to the New Testament, you really get the, the idea that the Lord is okay with certain numberings. Acts chapter two, Peter preaches a sermon. We are given what? A headcount. 3000 people saved and added to the church. Couple days later, a couple chapters further on, Acts chapter four, another sermon, another what? Headcount. 5000 souls saved and added to the church. So there must be something here, there must be a fine line that differentiates between when a numbering when a headcount is okay and when it's not, what would that fine line be? I bet you every single one of you could guess this, well not guess this, answer this because you know this. Where's the fine line in that what makes a numbering sinful in the eyes of God or acceptable in the eyes of God?

It's all about our reason, and our motivation. It is all about our reason. And our motivation. Why is it that we are numbering God's people? Why is it that we are counting heads? What's the purpose for it?

Jesus taught us that a good shepherd is going to keep track of the number of his sheep. If he has 100 sheep, he's going to count them regularly. And on those occasions where it comes up with 99, he knows, time for a rescue mission.

That's a good reason to count. I do that with my chickens every night I count my chickens. I have eight chickens. I go in there and I count them, why? Because if I go to close the coop, and there's not eight of them in there, whoever's outside, they're Coyote food by morning. So I go there with good intentions. I count the number of chickens so that I make sure they're all safe. So that I know if I need to go out on a rescue mission. I don't do it to gloat over my neighbor. Yes, eight chickens. We got 8, our farm is bigger than the neighbors. Yes. And the shepherd doesn't count the sheep to go yes! Look how many sheep we got.

What a flock, amazing. Now, it's not out of pride or arrogance. It's out of care, and concern that those types of counts are made. So if our reasons and motivations for you know, like taking Sunday attendance are counting heads in our services, is because we take seriously the people that God has put under our care, and we want to make sure we notice, if someone turns up MIA for four or five, six weeks, and we need to send the rescue team after him. If that's our motivation, then I'm pretty certain that the Lord would be well pleased with that. But if I'm having the Sunday attendance taken, and I'm having someone count heads on Wednesday night so that I can say, Yes, we're growing. We're bigger than the church down the road. Look how many people are turning up to hear me speak. If that's my reason. I'm telling you, what I've done is I've struck a nerve with God, I've displeased God with the reasons and motivations for my numberings.

Verse 13, This is what every one among those who are numbered shall give: half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary, a shekel is 20 gerahs, Does that clear it up for you all?

The half shekel shall be an offering to the Lord, verse 14, everyone included among those who are numbered from 20 years old and above shall give an offering to the Lord. That is the age of accountability here in this section, 20 years of age, that will also be the same age of accountability that God sticks with, when he's trying to determine who goes into the promised land and who doesn't. That's the cutoff, 20 years. For those 20 years and younger they were not held responsible for the murmurings and complainings and sins of doubt that were committed by the older generation. They were not held responsible for that, they were allowed in, but those over the age of 20 years old, the Lord would say they should know better, they should know better, and I'm holding them accountable and responsible for their actions, and they're not going into the promised land. And

you could make an argument that this is the age of accountability for salvation. I would caution you against that. Because I I totally suspect that when it comes to accountability, the age of accountability for salvation, I'm completely convinced that the Lord can be way more concise with that than just like setting an age and letting that be the deal. I'm pretty sure the Lord would want to base that on personal individual growth and development and not a hard set age. But if we had to pick one, if we had to say pick an age that's that's sort of the the typical primo example of the age of accountability. We might do this. We might pick the age of 20.

It's a flat tax, it's the same thing across the board. Now, I don't know if you knew this. But a former president, I won't say who not the current president, but a former president had the idea that he thought a flat tax for the entire country would be a good idea. And I totally agreed with that. I thought that was absolutely fair, a flat tax the same rate for every single person because that just seems to be the fair thing to do. Unfortunately, you know, that the socialists among us are on this kick, and you hear them say constantly, I get so tired of it, it's time to make the rich pay their fair share. I want you to know, that is completely political rhetoric. And it is not based on anything that is truth. The wealthy have always paid more than their fair share. Now, I know sometimes they weasel out of it with some of the things that they do behind the scenes, and they don't pay their taxes. But it has always been the case that the wealthy are taxed at a higher rate than those in the middle and lower classes of income. It's true. Right now, the wealthy are taxed it I believe it's 37%. President Biden wants to make that 39% I'm sure he would like it to be even higher. But you and I, the majority of us are taxed way lower than that, nothing above 20%. And there's a temptation there. I understand it to say Yeah, but that guy has billions. So if you're taxing him at 40%, I mean, make it even higher 60% He's still got plenty of money. He doesn't need it. I know that's tempting if you're in the middle or lower class, but fair is fair, how would you feel if someone thought you were living good? And they said 40% of your income to the government? I don't know about you, I would have to readjust my life to be able to live on 60% of my income. That's a big cut. Fair is fair. I know that it's veiled in such a way to make something that would be unfair, appear to be fair, but here's what's fair, the way that God does things. It's the same for everyone. He says, and I like how he words this, he knows his audience, he says don't let the poor pay more.

Because that's what you're gonna be tempted to do. Oh, he's well off, let's let's charge him more. No, don't make the rich man pay more. But don't let the poor man pay less. Don't let the poor man get out of paying it altogether just because of your sympathy for the poor man. Everyone is to pay this ransom money which is going to be a temple or well, a tabernacle tax, it will eventually be a temple tax in the New Testament. But at this point, a tabernacle tax that would help to fund some of the things that the Lord wants to build here.

Verse 16, and you shall take the atonement money of the children of Israel in shall appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of meetings. So there you have it, this redemption money, this ransom money will serve as a tabernacle tax, everyone see that?

It'll keep the tabernacle services humming, so to speak. Reading on, that it may be a memorial for the children of Israel before the Lord to make atonement for yourselves. Now one more thing I want to address about verses 11 through 16, that is that a shekel was silver. Shekel was silver. And in Exodus chapter 38, we're going to see what they do with this silver. We're going to see what they do with this offering of silver. Here's what they do. They melt it down, and then they make the sockets of silver that are to be used in the tabernacle structure to do what, does anyone remember? To hold up the boards. Now, I don't know if you remember that study it this is an important connection. So let me just refresh your memory in that study, I told you that the boards were a picture of you and I, that symbolism holds consistent from Old Testament to New Testament. In the Old Testament, the believers are pictured as the boards in the walls of the tabernacle, you get to the New Testament, in the fixed form of the temple, the temple's made out of what? Stone. And the

Lord says, in the New Testament, we the church are lively stones, we're stones in the wall of the house of God. We're told in many different sections that we are the house of God, we're the household of God, we're part of the building as as a metaphor. So keep this in mind. And further develop that thought with what we just studied in verses 11 through 16. What happened with the boards? Where did they start?

As trees, they started as trees rooted in the earth. And what did the Lord do? Just follow that metaphor owl that speaks of you that speaks of me that speaks of the church, we started as trees rooted in the earth. And what did the Lord do? He saved us, He plucked our roots out of the earth and then he went to cutting and carving, he went to shaping us for his house. And then He set us in his house and the Old Testament picture is this, what did He set us on? He set us on sockets of silver. Now you know what bronze or brass represents in the Bible. It's the metal of judgment. You know what gold represents? It's the metal of kingship or divinity. Do you know what silver represents as a metal in the Bible?

Redemption, the redemption money is what? Silver. What's being made? Sockets of silver, for us, to be securely fastened to in this structure that the Lord is building. So we're, our roots are plucked out of the earth, we are shaped were scolded, we are set on sockets of redemption. We're no longer roots in the earth. That's New Testament doctrine there shown to us in an Old Testament picture. We are no longer of this world. We're in this world, but we are no longer of this world. We are secure. We're attached to one another as believers, and we're secure on a foundation of redemption. I love it.

Better yet? How about this? It's 7:43. Let's stop right here.

We'll just finish the rest of the chapter next week, Lord willing, we'll come back to the the spices in verses 34 through 38. There's a very powerful point that I need to pull out of there that I think is going to affect the way that you think about some things. So I hope you'll be here. If not, we'll come out to your house and pull it up on your internet and push play for you so you can watch it. But would you stand with me and let's close in a word of prayer.