

# Redeemed & Radiant

## Exodus 30:11-33

The theme of Exodus is twofold. First, it's the glory of God to redeem His people: "So I will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, his chariots, and his horsemen" (Ex. 14:17). And second, it's His glory to gather and send people: "And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex. 14:17; 19:6). This is the same kingdom Jesus announced and established—a redeemed and radiant people (Matt. 4:17).

### NOTES

#### Overview of the Text

God tells Moses to "lift up the head of the sons of Israel to muster them" (v12). This counting is for military purposes and not a general census, which becomes explicit in Numbers: "Take the headcount of...all who are able to go to war" (Num. 1:2-3). In the US we have a census every ten years to determine the number of seats each state has in the House of Representatives and so the feds know how to tax. The mustering in Israel counts men 20 years old and up (v20) to give a ransom/atonement payment (*kopher*) to the Lord so there is no plague (v12). Each mustered man must give half a shekel, an offering to the Lord, no more for a rich man and no less for a poor man (vv13-15). This money is to be used for the service of the tabernacle, a memorial for Israel before Yahweh to make atonement, indicating they belong to Him, and must pay a ransom for coming near. The laver of bronze is placed between the bronze altar and the tabernacle for Aaron and his sons to wash their hands and feet before going inside or offering anything, lest they die (vv17-20). In case you missed it, *in case they die* (v21). This statute would continue forever, meaning no priest would make varsity and no longer need cleansing (v21). Next, about 40 pounds of myrrh, sweet cinnamon, cane, and cassia would be combined, added to a gallon of oil, and likely strained under direction of a skilled perfumer, to make holy anointing oil (vv22-25). With it Aaron will anoint the tabernacle, ark, table and utensils, lampstand and utensils, altar of incense, altar of ascension offering with its utensils, and the laver with its base (vv26-28). These things are made most holy, so the one who touches them also must be holy; Aaron and his sons will be anointed and sanctified in order minister to God as priests (vv29-30). This holy oil is God's and may not be replicated or applied to anyone He has not called, lest they be cut off from His people (vv31-33).

#### Bought with a Price

God is forming a people, including an army ready for holy war: "This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that are mustered" (v13, KJV). This "passing" or "crossing over" is coming near to God, which requires a special covering accomplished by half a shekel. This might seem crass, like an ancient version of Tetzl raising money for St. Peter's Cathedral ("As soon as a coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs"), but a shekel is a unit of weight and to this audience probably less like currency than animals. To actually atone for sins, money is no better than the blood of bulls and goats (Heb. 10:4). While you can't buy or sacrifice for atonement, you can trust and obey God and look Him to provide the one whose blood will atone for you: "For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. 6:20). Men, representing households, are crossing over into God's army and need be to especially set apart and sanctified. The need for atonement was ubiquitous and equal; rich and poor alike, all had to be covered. Just when men are tempted to trust in their might, they are reminded of their sinful condition and need for God's cleansing and discipline. David forgot this when he mustered Israel, and a plague broke out, killing seventy thousand men

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(2 Sam. 24:15). Coming into God's army cost something, but coming into God's household, to His throne as an adopted child with every right of inheritance, cost everything: "And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear knowing you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. 1:17-19). He "gave Himself for us, that he might ransom us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works" (Tit. 2:14). Jesus paid our penalty and took our plague upon Himself, all because of His good purposes and not because of anything in us (Tit. 3:5).

### Constantly Cleansed

Priests come even nearer to the Lord than soldiers. They're consecrated once with water, blood, and oil (29:1-37), but sin continues and so cleansing must be ongoing. Whenever offering a sacrifice or going into the holy place, the priest must wash his hands and feet, lest he die (vv20-21). "Who may ascend into the hill of the Yahweh? Or who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn deceitfully" (Ps 24:3-4). Paul says we are not saved by works of righteousness, "but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit" (Tit. 3:5). The word for "washing" in Titus is the same for "laver" in verse 18 in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament. Baptism signifies and seals our union with Christ—complete cleansing and forgiveness from sin. But we have ongoing sin, so how can we be cleansed on a regular basis? Should we be baptized all the time? No, we should act like we're baptized and confess our sins in real time: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 Jn. 1:8-9). It's easy to see that being cleansed on the outside doesn't mean you are clean on the inside. Jesus said start on the inside, but don't stop there (Matt. 23:26). Cleanliness is next to godliness, which is why hypocrites make the effort. Sin doesn't nullify our union with Christ, but it breaks fellowship so we can't enjoy it. Confess your sins and be cleansed of all unrighteousness.

### Oil of Gladness

God instructed Moses to make a lampstand shine with oil, lighting up the holy place where He watches His people (25:31-40). Oil is liquid light, and this sweet anointing oil consecrates the whole tabernacle including those serving there (vv26-30). God gives "oil to make [man's] face shine" (Ps. 104:15), that is, He blesses and strengthens him. Oil makes your skin soft, your hair the right sheen and shape, and in the priestly context it equips you to reflect the glory of God minister to Him (v30). The word "messiah" means "anointed one" (*mashach*). Jesus is the anointed one: "Therefore God your God has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than your companions" (Heb. 1:9; cf. Ps. 45:7). This is why no one could stop Jesus from doing good and healing the oppressed (Acts 10:38). In Jesus, we are redeemed, cleansed, and anointed to go out and shine in the world (Eph. 5:26; 2 Cor. 1:21-22).