

Read the Whole Bible with Pastor

Monday (February 27) – Exodus 29

Ordinations in our churches today generally take place in a matter of hours. But according to God's prescription, the ordination of Aaron and his sons into the priesthood was a seven day affair. Even though none of the specific instructions in these chapters are binding on Christians today, the elaborate nature of the ordination rite for the priesthood shows us the importance of being rightly called and ordained into the pastoral office. Aaron did not wake up one morning and decide that he was now a minister. God called Aaron and his sons and placed them into the priestly office in a public and externally visible way. Beware of any so-called "pastor" who places himself into the office apart from the usual custom and order of the church. In verse 37 God commands that "Whatever touches the altar must be holy." If the altar for the blood of bulls and goats was holy, how much more the altar from which the blood of Christ is distributed! This is one reason we bow when approaching the altar today.

God also institutes a morning and evening service for every day of the week. The New Testament church retained these services (without animal sacrifices) in the form of Matins (morning) and Vespers (evening). If your local church does not currently offer daily services, you might consider asking your pastor to do so. He would likely rejoice at your interest.

Tuesday (February 28) – Exodus 30, 31

Note the detailed instructions and precise measurements given for the altar of incense. Incense was prescribed by God to be perpetually burning within His tabernacle, representing the prayers of the Church as they ascend before Him (see Psalm 141:2). Far from being a recent invention of the Roman Catholic church, incense has been part of Christian worship for thousands of years. The ransom money (vv. 11ff) is a reminder of the debt of sin that is owed by every sinner. God instituted this ransom to instill the need for a Savior within the hearts of His people. Likewise, the bronze laver for washing one's hands and feet symbolizes our need for the washing of baptism that removes sin from the heart. Consider how God gives exact recipes for the anointing oil and holy incense (the only recipes in the whole Bible), along with a strict warning against recreating these holy things for personal use.

In chapter 31 God fills Bezalel with the wisdom and artistic talent necessary to furnish and adorn the tabernacle. Likewise, it is fitting and proper for members of a congregation today to use their God-given talents to beautify the house of God. This is not a waste or irresponsible use of our resources.

Wednesday (March 1) – Exodus 32

The people of God, ever eager to be like the pagan nations that surround them, compel Aaron to make them a golden calf to worship. Aaron, like many spineless pastors, easily gives in to the people's demands. Note how engaging in false worship leads immediately to sexual immorality (v. 6). Afterwards, Aaron blames the people for his own cowardice (v. 22). Only the sons of Levi (the tribe of Moses and Aaron) are willing to stand with the Lord against the

sin of their brothers. Sadly, many people today are not willing to take this stand. When a family member falls into gross sin, many once-faithful Christians suddenly decide that God no longer condemns immorality. Moses, in Christ-like fashion, intercedes for the people, offering his own soul in exchange for theirs (v. 32).

Thursday (March 2) – Exodus 33, 34

In spite of His people's unworthiness, God reaffirms His promise to bring them into the Promised Land. Moses, great man that he is, is still a sinner. As a sinner, he can not look directly upon the face of God the Father and live. Yet God allows Moses to see part of His glory. St. John writes, "No man has seen God [the Father]. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him" (Jn 1:18). If we wish to see God the Father, we must look only where He has chosen to reveal Himself today—through God the Son.

In chapter 34 God directs Moses to cut a second set of stone tablets, because Moses had shattered the first set after Israel's idolatry. Even though the people of God had broken the Law before they had even received it, God renews His covenant with them out of sheer mercy.

Friday (March 3) – Exodus 35

Offerings are always to be given with a willing heart, for, as St. Paul writes, "God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7). The stewardship slogan, "time, talent, and treasure" is derived from this chapter, as the people willingly give of all these things.

Saturday (March 4) – Exodus 36

The people give so willingly, in fact, that they must be told to stop—it's too much! And yet, these are the very same people who had just rebelled against God by fashioning the golden calf. How is this possible? Jesus gives us the answer: "Those who are forgiven much, love much" (Luke 7:47).

Sunday (March 5) – Exodus 37, 38

Chapters 36–39 list in ornate detail the creating and furnishing of the tabernacle. Although this tabernacle no longer exists, it can still serve as a pattern (not a prescription) for our worship today. The tabernacle teaches us that God loves beauty in worship. (Yes, it is possible to worship God in a pigpen, but this is far from ideal.) Architecture is not neutral. As physical beings we are profoundly affected by our surroundings. A beautiful worship space speaks to us of the nature and majesty of God. A reverently adorned altar goes hand-in-hand with our confession that Jesus is bodily present upon that altar. The ornate robes of Christ's minister help our doubting hearts to believe that the words of Absolution spoken by the pastor are truly the words of God. Sometimes people speak disparagingly of the "smells and bells" associated with reverent and historic worship. But the tabernacle teaches us that these outward things follow from the pattern instituted by God Himself. We are earthly creatures with five senses. Therefore, our worship, according to God's pattern, should rightly include that which we can hear, see, touch, taste, and, yes, smell. God even wants His Gospel in your nose!