

9.

MESSAGE 6

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PRIESTS CONCERNING THEIR HOMAGE-OFFERING ON THE DAY OF THEIR ANOINTING

Leviticus 6:19-23

Introduction

In the Hebrew text, this passage is numbered Leviticus 6:12-16. This MESSAGE is unusually brief. It concerns a special kind of homage-offering that was to be offered by a priest on the day he was hallowed or set apart to the priesthood. This offering had not been mentioned in the instructions concerning the hallowing ceremonies for the priests (Ex. 29:1-37), nor is it mentioned in the description of the carrying out of those ceremonies (Lev. 8:1-36). The reason was that this offering was a private and personal one, expressing a priest's individual commitment. It was not to be a part of the public ceremonies of hallowing a priest. It was to be conducted by the priest privately. In it, he was to recognize that all he had came from Jehovah and to commit to giving it all back to Jehovah. He was returning his possessions to Jehovah, not that he would not own them any more, but so he could use them in Jehovah's work through his service in the holy office to which he was being set apart.

This MESSAGE has no sub-topics.

Critical Note

Verse 20 states that a priest was to offer an homage-offering "in the day when he is anointed," but that verse also calls the offering "a continual homage-offering." Driver and White made the dogmatic assertion that "continual" had to mean "daily." Then they declared that the passage was in conflict with itself, because it could not be offered "in the day when he is anointed" and also "daily." Based on that declaration, they concluded that the words "in the day when he is anointed" were a gloss or redaction and then proceeded to discredit them in their interpretation of the text. In doing so, they eliminated the key words that reveal the purpose of the whole MESSAGE. An easy solution to the seeming contradiction is that on the day of the priest's anointing the priest's personal offering of commitment was to serve also as the continual homage-offering for that day (see comments on v. 20 below under the heading a continual homage-offering). If interpreters would expend their genius on seeking interpretations that reconcile problems in the text instead of magnifying every seeming discrepancy, their time would be spent much more productively and our times would be much more enlightened. When it is possible to find an interpretation that gives consistent meaning to the words as they exist, no excuse should be sought for insisting on an interpretation that creates a conflict.

The word rendered "grillings" in verse 21 below occurs only three times in the whole Old Testament. Thus, its meaning is unknown to us. Because its meaning is unknown, Driver and White said that little doubt exists that the passage is corrupt. Their statement means that, since we do not know the meaning of the word, something has to be wrong with the text. Such an assumption is totally unwarranted. Instead of finding fault with the text, they should have assumed something was wrong with their knowledge. It would be much more reasonable to assume that, if we knew the meaning of the word, the passage would be quite clear. Making destructive accusations based on ignorance is a most un scholarly performance, and using one's lack of knowledge to find fault with the Bible is true arrogance.

Interpretation

CHAPTER 6

Verse 19. **And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying,**

These words signal the beginning of a new MESSAGE given to Moses audibly by Jehovah from The Tabernacle.

Verse 20. **This is the offering Aaron and his sons, must offer to Jehovah in the day of his being anointed, a tenth of an ephah of fine flour, a continual homage-offering, half of it in the morning and half of it in the evening.**

This is the offering Aaron and his sons must offer to Jehovah in the day of his being anointed. In Exodus 29:1-37, Jehovah gave instructions to Moses about how Aaron and his sons were to be hallowed or set aside for service in their high offices. Leviticus 8:1-36 describes how those instructions were carried out. Neither of those passages mentions the offering that is described in this MESSAGE. Those ceremonies were public observances to officially install the priests in their offices. The offering described in this MESSAGE was a private offering in which the priest made a personal dedication of all he possessed and owned to Jehovah God. His personal, private commitment was necessary before he could be useful publicly.

Those who conclude that only the high priest was anointed seek to apply this verse to the high priest only. They point to the words “in the day of his anointing” and conclude that the pronoun “his” means only the high priest. However, in comments on MESSAGE 2, evidence has been cited that shows that all the priests were anointed (see comments on Lev. 4:3 in MESSAGE 2 under the heading If the anointed priest). Therefore, this verse much more likely means that all the priests (Aaron and his sons) were to be anointed publicly but that each priest thereafter was to offer this private offering individually on the day of his anointing.

The hallowing of a priest took place over a seven-day period (Ex. 29:35; Lev. 8:33-35; see

comments on Lev. 8:33 in MESSAGE 10 under the heading And you must not go away from the entrance to The Tabernacle of Meeting), but the anointing ceremony in which he was anointed with oil to show that the power of the Spirit was given to him took place on the first of those seven days (Ex. 29:7; Lev. 8:12; see comments on Lev. 8:12 in MESSAGE 10). Thus, the first day of the hallowing ceremonies was the day in which the new priest was to offer his special homage-offering.

the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour for a homage-offering. Like all homage-offerings, this offering was to be made of fine flour, that is, wheat flour (see comments on Lev. 2:1 in MESSAGE 1 under the heading his offering may be [of] fine flour). This statement is the first mention in the book of Leviticus of an amount of fine flour to be used in an homage-offering; however, Exodus 29:40-41 had specified the amount to be used in a continual homage-offerings as “one tenth,” meaning a tenth of an ephah. In Numbers 15:1-10 Jehovah gave rules for the amount of oil and wine to be used with fire-offerings, and the amounts differed with different offerings. Those rules specify that a tenth of an ephah of fine flour, a fourth of a hin of oil and a fourth of a hin of wine were to be offered as an homage-offering to accompany an offering of a lamb (vs. 3-5). Therefore, the mention of a tenth of an ephah of fine flour in this verse is an indication that in some way this homage-offering was connected with the continual homage-offerings that were to be offered on the altar each evening and morning (see comments on Lev. 6:14 in MESSAGE 5 under the heading And this is the law of the homage-offering.).

Exodus 29:40-41 also states that in a continual homage-offering a fourth of a hin of oil was to be mixed with the fine flour and, in addition, a liquid-offering consisting of a fourth of a hin of wine was to accompany it (concerning the size of an ephah, see comments on Lev. 5:11 in MESSAGE 2 under the heading But if his hand does not extend . . .; concerning the size of a hin, see comments on Lev. 23:13 in MESSAGE 31).. Other than that passage, the offering of wine in connection with the offerings has not been mentioned in Jehovah’s messages up to this point. Regulations concerning liquid-offerings were to be given later in Numbers

15:1-10. The purpose of the wine was for the alcohol in the wine to produce a beautiful flame without cooking the meat.

a continual homage-offering. The word translated “continual” is the noun used in Leviticus 6:13 which means “continuity” or “a continuum” (see comments on Lev. 6:13 in MESSAGE 5. under the heading continually). It specifically states what had already been implied, that the priest’s private offering of dedication was also to be the continual homage-offering for the day. The new priest was to have the privilege of offering the continual homage-offering on the day of his anointing. Thus, it served to represent his personal surrender of all he owned to God for His service and also to represent the nation’s continuing commitment to Jehovah.

A continual homage-offering required the service of two priests (see comments on Lev. 6:15 in MESSAGE 5). Since this verse contains instructions concerning the amount of the offering to bring, it seems obvious that the new priest was to be the one bringing the offering. Another priest received it and completed the ceremony. This understanding is appropriate because the new priest was to be the offerer showing his surrender of his possessions to God on the day of his anointing. It was natural from him to fill that same role in the continual-offering in behalf of the nation. For Aaron and his sons, Moses acted as the officiating priest on the day of their anointing (see comments on Lev. 8:15 in MESSAGE 10 under the heading And Moses took the blood).

half of it in the morning, and half of it in the evening. An equal amount of flour, oil, and wine was to be offered morning and evening. “Half of it” means half of the whole homage-offering. It does not mean that half of the tenth ephah was to be offered in the morning and the other one-twentieth in the evening, because Exodus 20:40-41 is specific in saying the amount was to be one tenth in the morning and an equal amount in the evening. The offering was to consist of a tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with a fourth of a hin of oil along with a fourth of a hin of wine in the morning and the same amounts again in the evening.

Since the priest who was being anointed was to offer both the morning and evening continual-offering on the day of his anointing, his public anointing with oil was to be enclosed within an offering expressing his personal recognition of the Lordship of Jehovah and the surrender of all of his possessions to the service of Jehovah. At the same time he was given his first opportunity to participate in the continual-offerings that were never to cease day or night indefinitely into the future.

Verse 21. **It must be made on a griddle, well-mixed with oil. You must bring it grillings of homage-offerings of pieces. You must offer it [as] a soothing fragrance to Jehovah.**

It must be made on a griddle, well-mixed with oil. Since this homage-offering was to be made on a griddle, obviously it was to be of the type described in Leviticus 2:5-6 (see comments on those verses in MESSAGE 1). However, Leviticus 6:15 had specified that continual homage-offerings were to consist of raw flour (see comments on that verse in MESSAGE 5 under the heading from it in his fist [some] of the fine flour of the homage-offering and its oil and all of the frankincense that [is] on the homage-offering, and he shall roast it on the altar, a soothing fragrance, its representative portion for Jehovah) The instructions in this verse either mean that the type bread to be used in the continual homage-offering for that day was different because of its double significance, or the instructions in Leviticus 6:15 were only an example of what should be offered when the continual homage-offering consisted of raw flour.

You must bring it grillings of homage-offerings of pieces. The meaning of this sentence is unclear to us today. It contains one word that occurs only three times in the Bible. Several suggestions have been offered concerning its meaning, all of which are guesses. KJV translation “baken” is surely mistaken, because a grill is not used for baking. If the word refers to cooking the bread used in the offering, “grillings” is a better rendering. The words “homage-offerings of pieces” also do not seem to produce a clear meaning. However, the significance of the phrase is not obscure. A comparison with instructions concerning an homage-offering of grilled bread in

Leviticus 2:5-6 leads to understanding that this sentence refers to the portions of the grilled bread that was to be broken into pieces before being mixed with oil. Portions of those broken pieces were to be separated out and roasted on the altar to signify that the offering was being made to Jehovah. It was the “representative” portion of the offering mentioned in Leviticus 2:2,9 (see comments on Lev. 2:2 in MESSAGE 1 under the heading Then the priest shall roast its representative portion on the altar and on Lev. 2:5-6 in MESSAGE 1).

You must offer it [as] a soothing fragrance to Jehovah. These words confirm that the “pieces” referred to in the previous phrase were the part of the offering that was to be offered on the altar. “Soothing fragrance to Jehovah” was always used to describe the pleasantness Jehovah experienced from fire-offerings offered to Him (see comments on Lev. 1:9 in MESSAGE 1 under the heading a soothing fragrance to Jehovah).

Verse 22. **And the anointed priest under him from among his sons must offer it. [It is] a statute [for] an age. All of it must be roasted to Jehovah.**

And the anointed priest under him from among his sons must offer it. The “anointed priest” in this clause has traditionally been interpreted to mean the high priest, and the word translated “under” has been distorted to mean “after.” Thus, the statement has been taken to refer to high priests who would succeed Aaron after his death. This interpretation creates serious problems, because verse 20 says that this offering was to be presented by “Aaron *and his sons* in the day of his being anointed.” Quite obviously the ordinary priests were included in those instructions. In addition, the word translated “under” does not mean “after.” It means “under” and logically refers to the ordinary priests serving under the direction of the high priest. This statement actually confirms the specification given in Leviticus 2:2 that ordinary priests, not the high priest, were to officiate over homage-offerings (see comments on Lev. 2:2 in MESSAGE 1 under the heading And he shall bring it to Aaron’s sons, the priests; see also comments on Lev. 4:3 in MESSAGE 2 under the heading If the anointed priest, on Lev. 6:14 in MESSAGE 5 under the

heading The sons of Aaron are to bring it, and on Lev. 8:13 in MESSAGE 10). Still, a problem remains because verse 20 does say that Aaron, the high priest, was to offer this offering on the day of his anointing. That statement seems to contradict the instructions that ordinary priests were to handle the continual homage-offerings. The solution is that the high priest was to offer the continual offerings on the day of his anointing, but as a daily practice those offerings were to be offered by ordinary priests. The confusion arises because this passage mingles instructions concerning the homage-offering that was to be offered by a priest on the day of his anointing with instructions concerning continual homage-offerings that were to be offered every morning and evening. Taking note of the distinction between the two resolves the problem.

[It is] a statute [for] an age. “Statute [for] an age” is the same expression that is found in Leviticus 6:18 (see comments on Lev. 6:18 in MESSAGE 5 under the heading It is a statute [for] an age . . . and on Lev. 3:17 in MESSAGE 1 under the heading [for] an age). The statement means that the practices described in this MESSAGE were to continue on through the age. It does not necessarily mean that they practices could never be changed if God chose to do so. However, the Israelites did not have the authority to change them on their own. They were to carry them out until and unless Jehovah Himself changed them, which He did in Jesus.

All of it must be roasted to Jehovah. After a representative portion of an homage-offering of an ordinary citizen was roasted on the altar, the remainder of the bread, which was the major portion, was to be eaten by priests (see comments on Lev. 2:3 in MESSAGE 1 under the heading And the remainder of the homage-offering [shall be] for Aaron and his sons; on Lev. 6:16 in MESSAGE 5 under the heading And Aaron and his sons shall eat the rest of it; and on Lev. 7:9-10 in MESSAGE 7). However, this verse reveals that a different rule applied for an homage-offering offered by a priest on the day of his anointing. In that case, the remainder of the offering was to be “roasted to Jehovah.” This provision was for the same reason that the sin-offering of a priest was not to be eaten by him but incinerated outside the camp in a clean

place. If a priest were to receive the remainder of the bread and benefit from his own offering, it would not be an offering for Jehovah but a gift to himself. Therefore, a different practice was called for in homage-offerings offered by a priest on the day of his hallowing to the priesthood. Many interpreters assume that “roasting to Jehovah” means that the portion that ordinarily went to the priests was to be offered on the altar. This assumption blurs the distinctions that are otherwise always maintained between the parts of the offering that were to be roasted on the altar and the parts that were to be given to the priests for their support. It would seem much more reasonable to assume that the parts that ordinarily went to the priests were to be handled in the same way as the portion of a sin-offering that was offered by a priest. It was to be incinerated outside the camp in a clean place. This procedure maintained the symbolism that the offering was given to Jehovah for use in His service, but it avoided a priest’s receiving benefit from his own offering (see comments on Lev. 4:11-12 in MESSAGE 2).

Verse 23. And every homage-offering of a priest, all of it, must be [incinerated]. It must not be eaten.

This verse adds that the same procedure applied to every homage-offering offered by a priest. In other words, handling of a priest’s homage-offering on other occasions was to be done in the same way as when he offered his special homage-offering on the day of his anointing. On all occasions, it was to be incinerated outside the camp in a clean place, and it had the same significance as giving an ordinary citizen’s homage-offering to the priests. It showed that Jehovah received his surrendered possessions for use in His service (see comments on Lev. 4:11-12 in MESSAGE 2). No more meaningful expression could be made by a priest on the day of his anointing than the thoughts contained in this offering. By it he symbolized that he was surrendering all his worldly goods to God for use in His work and that Jehovah was accepting those worldly possessions for a spiritual purpose. By giving all his worldly possessions to God, he would not be left helpless. He was trusting God to provide for his needs, and God made ample provisions for those needs through the fire-offerings, the contributions, first-fruits, and the tithes of the people they served.

Application.

When a Christian minister is ordained, the public ceremony of ordination is moving and meaningful. But, God looks to the man being ordained for something even more meaningful than the public ceremony. He looks for personal commitment in the life of the man being ordained. Personal commitment to God must precede and follow a public ceremony of ordination, if the public ordination is to be real. Only when that man recognizes the Lordship of Jesus Christ and surrenders all that he is and all that he has to God’s service is he ready for public ordination. If a minister is interested only in public show, he will fail, no matter how big a public display he may make at his ordination or afterward. If in his heart he surrenders all to God, God will not require him to live without earthly possessions. He will have made the inner surrender that is necessary for him to be able to continue to own possessions and not serve possessions. God will provide for his needs. God’s plan is that the people the minister serves will provide generously for his needs. If they do not, God will still take care of him. In one way or another, God will see to it that he is not left in need.