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## Exodus 28-30

### God's Exodus People: Jesus Bears Your Name

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Something I've learned from living near Boston is that we love people from here. We take immense pride in claiming our native Bostonians. If you think this is a recent phenomenon, it's not. [Boston Magazine](#) calls "John and Abigail Adams "Boston's original power couple." Closer by, the locals in Concord remind everyone [Ralph Waldo Emerson](#) is one of them. The Kennedys, John and Ted, they're Beacon Hill royalty. [Robert Frost](#) grew up in Lawrence. Conan O'Brien, a tall red-headed comedian on late night, is from Brookline. Aerosmith's Steven Tyler is from here, but we try to forget that...

In a video about this phenomenon a guy from Revere jokingly lists his top 5 favorite actors; "Matt Damon, Ben Affleck, Mark Wahlberg, Casey Affleck... Donny Wahlberg." And if you ask anyone who the greatest quarterback of all time is they will all agree it's Peyton Manning... Just kidding, Tom Brady. Goat!

Almost to a fault, we claim these people as our own. We ignore things like deflate-gate because, "They're one of us." Intentionally, or unintentionally, because of this, these people come to represent us. When people think of Boston, they think of Brady, Kennedy, Wahlberg, Affleck, and Damon. *They wear our name with pride so we bear their name with pride.*

It's not so different for the people of Israel. They're the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God renamed Jacob to Israel. That's why they're called the Israelites. Jacob had twelve sons and those twelve sons became the twelve tribes of Israel, which are now camped at Mount Sinai to hear from God. At Sinai, God gives them another type of representative, not a geopolitical representative, but a spiritual representative. He will represent the people before God. This is the high priest.

### **The High Priest bears the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. (Ex 28:1-21)**

In Exodus 28, God describes what the new Israelite priests should wear. What starts out as a seemingly boring chapter on fashion, tells us how people can have a relationship with God through the high priest. The high priest intercedes for the people to God. To **intercede** is "to speak on someone else's behalf." He does this by clothing himself in holy garments, offering sacrifice, and entering into God's holy presence.

#### **A Holy Outfit**

Verse 2 tells us the garments the high priest wears are "sacred" or "holy". He wears these garments so he can enter into the tabernacle, which has a holy place and a most holy place inside. The most holy place is where God presence resides over the ark. In order to go inside, the high priest needs to be symbolically clothed with holiness. And so every piece of the garment is designed for this purpose:

- 1) Underneath it all the priests wear **linen undergarments** (underwear). Foreign cults worshipped their gods with nakedness, but *God expects a different kind of worship* (Ex 20:26, 28:42).

- 2) Over this they wear a checkered **linen tunic** (think argyle-ish) and an **embroidered sash** made of blue, purple, and scarlet needlework yarn, which matches the **tabernacle's** curtains (Ex 26:1, 28:39, 39:29). *For the priest to work in the tabernacle, he needs to reflect the tabernacle's design.*
- 3) Most priests wear the undergarments, tunic, sash, and a cap (Ex 29:3-9), but only the high priest wears a **blue robe** (Ex 29:31). Later blue is used to symbolize God's commandments (Num 15:37-40). *The blue connects obedience and holiness, they go together.*
- 4) Woven in the robe's hem are yarn **pomegranates** and **gold bells** (Ex 28:33). King Solomon decorates the temple with 400 pomegranates (1 Kg 7:42), *reminding us of original holiness in Eden.* Just like you know fundraising is taking place when you hear the bellringers at Christmas, when they heard the high priest's bells jingling, they knew *worship of God was taking place, and to be reverent.*
- 5) The high priest wears an **ephod**, which is a gold, blue, purple, and scarlet apron (Ex 28:6). On his shoulders are two black **onyx stones** (Ex 28:9), inscribed with the **names** of the tribes to be a "memorial before the Lord" (Ex 28:12). *He bears their names because he represents them to God.*
- 6) On the ephod, the high priest wears a **square gold breastpiece**. It holds four rows of three stones, 12 total. On each stone is engraved the name of one of the twelve tribes (Ex 28:21). **Row #1** carnelian, chrysolite, beryl. **Row #2** turquoise, lapis lazuli, emerald. **Row #3** jacinth, agate amethyst. **Row #4** topaz, onyx, jasper. *These stones also demonstrate the role of the high priest to represent the people.*
- 7) Inside this breastpiece, he carries the **Urim and Thummim**, which we don't know exactly what they are, perhaps parchment or white and black stone *used for discerning God's will for the tribes.*
- 8) Finally, the priest wears a **linen turban** with a **gold plate**, on which is engraved "HOLY TO THE LORD." (Ex 28:36) *The high priest's garments literally call out God's holiness.* Notice there are **no sandals**, recalling Moses's first encounter with God at the burning bush he took off his sandals because he was standing on holy ground (Ex 3:5).

Each part of the priest's garments show *God cares how we worship him and that we must approach him in holiness.* Just like surgeons and nurses follow a certain procedure to sterilize themselves before entering the **operating room**, the priests have to prepare themselves before entering God's room. But God isn't interested in just what the priests look like on the *outside*, he cares about what they look like on the *inside*.

## Personally

*The high priests is to represent the Israelites personally.* He bears their names twice, on his shoulders and chest. We carry something on our **shoulders** in a backpack or shoulder bag because it's heavy. There's a weightiness to presenting the Israelites before God in the holy of holies. He's coming before the throne.

You carry something on your **chest**, near your heart, if you care about it, right? This is where we store lockets with pictures of loved ones or necklaces that they've given us. **Exodus 28:29** says, "Whenever Aaron enters the Holy Place, he will bear the names of the sons of Israel over his heart on the breastpiece of decision as a continuing memorial before the Lord." (NIV®) *This job requires strength, but also heart.*

Pastor and author Murray Capill writes, "In Hebraic thought, the heart is the core of our entire being. It is the center and soul of who we are, comprising the seat of all our thoughts, feelings, and actions. The heart is the

real us.”<sup>1</sup> *God wants the High Priest to not just represent the Israelites with the right actions, but out of a real love and compassion for the people he serves. The heart needs to motivate the task. It's personal.*

As a teacher, Monica get's to have **parent teacher conferences** with the parents of her students. When these parents come in, they don't come in representing someone they don't care about. They come in representing their children. They feel the burden of seeing them succeed, and they also want what's best for their children because they love them. That's the kind of representative the high priest is supposed to be. A personal one.

## **Sacrificially**

*The high priests is to represent the Israelites sacrificially.* Chapter 29 describes the sacrifices Moses has to make to consecrate the priests so they can serve God. He sacrifices a young bull and two rams, putting their blood on the right ear lobe, thumb, and big toe of Aaron and his son (Ex 29:20). For the next seven days the keep sacrificing bulls and then ever morning and evening going forward they're to sacrifice a year-old lamb in the morning and the evening (Ex 29:35-43). *It's costly to represent the people to God.*

*But then the sacrifice get's personal.* The turban says, “HOLY TO THE LORD”, but this holiness comes at a cost. **Exodus 28:38a** says, “It will be on Aaron's forehead, and he will bear the guilt involved in the sacred gifts the Israelites consecrate, whatever their gifts may be...” (NIV®) *Being a priest isn't a sinless job. Just by serving in the sanctuary, he's going to incur guilt* (Lev 22:16, Num 18:1).

To put out a fire, **firefighters** have to get near to the **flames**, and sometimes they get burned. It wasn't a great job being the high priest, because you're dealing with people's sins all the time. Sin is like a burning flame that can spread. But just like firefighters take that risk everyday, so the high priest did too. *The high priest personally and sacrificially bore the names of the twelve tribes of Israel before God.*

But this isn't a good long term solution, because as many fires as the high priests put out, they are going to start more. *Sacrificing an animal just doesn't put out the flame of human sin.* The Israelites, and all people, you and me included, need a better high priest. This is why God sent us Jesus.

## **Jesus bears your name into God's presence.**

When Jesus came into this world, he worked as a carpenter then taught as a Rabbi, but he also came to become our final high priest. **Hebrews 8:1b-2** says, “We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by a mere human being.” (NIV®). After Jesus died and rose again, he **ascended** into heaven and sat down in heaven's throne room, in God's sanctuary, at the right hand of God the Father (Acts 1:9, 7:55-56). Just like the high priest interceded for the Israelites, **Jesus intercedes for us** (Heb 7:25-26).

## **Personally**

Jesus represents us personally. If you've confessed your sins and put your faith in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, Jesus now represents you in heaven. This is why you'll get to spend eternity in heaven. Christ has struck a deal with his Father for you. *Jesus bears your name into God's presence.*

In Revelation there's a vision of the very foundations of heaven. The foundations are made almost entirely of the same stones as those on the priest's breastpiece: jasper, sapphire, agate, emerald, onyx, ruby, chrysolite,

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<sup>1</sup> Capill, Murray. *The Heart is the Target: Preaching Practical Application From Every Text*. 2013. P&R Publishing. Phillipsburg, NJ. page 97.

beryl, topaz, turquoise, jacinth, and amethyst (Rev 21:19-21. Cf. 2:16, 21:14). *Heaven bears your name.* At the very core of Jesus' being, at his heart, in the very essence of God, is a love for his people. Your name is on Jesus' heart. That means your name is on God's heart. *Jesus represents us personally in God's very being.*

I want you to imagine with me that you get tickets to the first game of the upcoming Patriot's season. **Tom Brady** is playing for the first time with five Superbowl wins. Everyone is excited, they're pumped, they're just waiting for Brady to come running out with the team. The stands are roaring, people are on their feet, and out runs Tom Brady. The jumbotron zooms in on the greatest quarterback of all time; and that's when you see Tom Brady is wearing the wrong jersey. Right above number 12 it doesn't say "Brady"—it says... your name. Can you imagine if Tom Brady bore your name? *Jesus bears your name on his heart.* He's not a quarterback. He's the high king of heaven. *Jesus, the Son of God, represents us personally.*

## Sacrificially

*Jesus represents us sacrificially.* **1 Peter 2:24** says, ““He himself bore our sins” in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; “by his wounds you have been healed.”” (NIV®) Jesus bears our sins in his own body and blood. I hear Tom Brady's jersey is worth about **\$500,000**. You're worth much more than that to God. You're worth the life of his Son.

Through the cross, Jesus is our **sacrificial substitute**. He bears our guilt and we bear his holiness. He bears our sinned-stained names and we bear his holy name. Christ is judged as a sinner and sinners are judged as Christ. We're not called sinners anymore, but Christians. This holiness isn't symbolic like it was for the high priest, it's real, it's true. On my **worst day**, when I play my worst game ever, when I sin and hurt others, God counts Jesus' day as my day. If you were playing a round of tag football, you'd want Tom Brady to play quarterback for you, wouldn't you? Jesus plays quarterback for us. He wins the game, and we get the credit. It's like Brady gives us his Superbowl rings, and his jersey, and we ride with him in the parade and the confetti. *But we don't ride with Brady, we ride with Jesus, the one who sits at God's right hand.*

You know what the **benefits** of this are? Because Jesus bears your name, you can approach God anytime you want. When you feel dirty and sinful, Jesus bears your name. When you feel hopeless and depressed, Jesus bears your name. When your parent or friend dies, Jesus bears your name. When you're struggling financially, Jesus bears your name. When you're afraid of being homeless, Jesus bears your name. When you're asking God the hard questions, Jesus bears your name. When you need to ask God forgiveness, Jesus bears your name. When you're angry with your husband, wife, or child, Jesus bears your name. When you're going through an ugly divorce, Jesus bears your name. When you're struggling with sexual temptation, Jesus bears your name. When you don't know who you are or what you should do with your life, Jesus bears your name. No matter what you're going through, good or bad, Jesus bears your name. Jesus bears your name. Jesus bears your name. Jesus bears your name.

If you don't know Jesus yet, I invite you to confess your sins and believe in Jesus. If you do, you can know Jesus is bearing your name right now before God in heaven. This is the **gospel**. But the gospel always calls for a **response**, first belief, then action. Remember how Exodus 19:6 calls the Israelites a “kingdom of priests”? They were called to represent God to the nations. As Christians, we represent Christ (Eph 5:12).

## Whose name do you bear?

As Christians, we bear the name of Christ. If Jesus is our high priest, we serve as mini-priests. We represent Christ to the world and the world to Christ. We're called to **pray** and to **intercede** for others.

## Personally

We represent others personally. Whose name are you bringing before the throne? Are you bearing your child's name? Your mom's? Your dad's? Your brother's or sister's? Your boss's name? Your coworker? Those people in office, your government? Are you praying for them? Are you bearing their name before the throne?

At Cornerstone, one of the ways we do ministry is as a "Priesthood of All Believers." This means all of us bear Christ's name in our ministries here at church and to our Westford community. If you're not actively bearing the name of Christ here at Cornerstone, it's time to sign up and serve. Join a ministry. But what about bearing Christ in Westford? I want to encourage you to make a list of ten people who don't know Jesus, who you can bear their names before God. We call this our **Top Ten Most Wanted**. Please bear their names before Jesus at least once a week, and pray for God to stir their hearts. *We represent others personally.*

## Sacrificially

*We represent others sacrificially.* It's a sacrifice to bring others before God, but one God is calling us to make. This Easter, sacrifice a bit of your time before bed or on your ride to work in the morning. Instead of watching Netflix or listening to sports radio, pray through your Top Ten Most Wanted. If you didn't participate in the frontline ministry weekend, sacrifice an evening on your calendar to invite a neighbor, coworker, friend, or family member over for dinner, just to get the opportunity to get to know them better, and hopefully share a little about Jesus. Sacrifice this Friday night and bring a friend to **As We Forgive**. Think of someone who doesn't normally go to church, and sacrifice a bit of your pride to invite them to our **Big Day on** Easter weekend. A Big Day is a special service geared to newcomers where we all introduce ourselves and I kick off a new, easy to understand, sermon series (Conflict & Peacemaking). *It's a great time to invite a friend. I know it's hard, sacrifices always are. So why do we do this?*

## *Jesus bears your name.*

I'm not much of a sports fan, but I love watching the Olympics. Last summer Brazil hosted the Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro. Did you know we had an Olympian from Massachusetts? Aly Raisman is a gymnast who was raised in Needham and attended Needham High School. She did so well she won the silver medal on the women's floor exercise, the individual all-around, and was part of the women's team who won gold. Isn't it great when someone represents the athletic ability we all have in Massachusetts?

Her success came at a personal and sacrificial cost. She's been doing gymnastics since she was two, has been injured, and has dedicated thousands of hours of her life to this sport. Leading up to the Olympics she trained four hours in the morning and two and a half in the afternoon. She only ate veggies, lean meats, and whole grains, no processed foods, a huge sacrifice.

Because of this personal sacrifice, she represented us at the Olympics. When she stumbled, we stumbled. When she did a double backflip, we did a double back flip. When she won gold, we won gold. When she stepped up onto the Olympic podium, we stepped up. Her victory became our victory. She represented us.

When Aly Raisman represents us, she may slip and fall, but Jesus never will. When he died on the cross, we died. When he rose, we rose. When he ascended, we ascended. When he sits next to the Father in heaven, we do too. His victory is our victory. He represents us. *Jesus bears your name.*

*Pastor Jonathan Romig wrote and preached this message for the people of Cornerstone Congregational Church. [Click here to listen to more sermons](#) or [click here to read our story](#).*

