

WILL THE BELLS RING

Mark Beard 11/2005

Text: Exodus 28:29-35 and Hebrews 13:11-16

"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. Also put the Urim and the Thummim in the breastpiece, so they may be over Aaron's heart whenever he enters the presence of the LORD. Thus Aaron will always bear the means of making decisions for the Israelites over his heart before the LORD."

"Make the robe of the ephod entirely of blue cloth, with an opening for the head in its center. There shall be a woven edge like a collar around this opening, so that it will not tear. Make pomegranates of blue, purple and scarlet yarn around the hem of the robe, with gold bells between them. The gold bells and the pomegranates are to alternate around the hem of the robe. Aaron must wear it when he ministers. The sound of the bells will be heard when he enters the Holy Place before the LORD and when he comes out, so that he will not die."

Secondary text: Hebrews 13:11-16, "The high priest carries the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place as a sin offering, but the bodies are burned outside the camp. And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood. Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore. For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.

Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased." NIV

The requirements of offering a sacrifice to God were very specific and had to be followed closely or the sacrifice would be rejected. The sound of the ringing bells on the garment of the priest assured those outside of God's presence that all was well and that the sacrifice and the priest were accepted.

We no longer depend on a high priest to offer a blood sacrifice for us. Jesus is our great High Priest and we are a part of a new holy priesthood. 1 Peter 2:9 says, "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy

nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

Just as with the High priest, the way we live and prepare our heart determines our effectiveness in the kingdom. The moving or working of the Holy Spirit is a sign that the presence of God is at work among us. However, our actions we undertake for God will only “ring true” if our hearts and motives are right.

As we offer our sacrifice let us ask ourselves these questions...

I. WHAT IS BEING OFFERED?

..... praise, good deeds, and works of love and charity ... or pride, ambition, etc...

A.

B.

II. HOW IS IT BEING OFFERED?

A.

B.

Requirements of the high priest...

III. WILL IT BE ACCEPTED?

A.

B.

MT 7:21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' ²³ Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'"

CONCLUSION

When our life is put to the test, will the bells ring? Will the works of our life bear God's approval?

STUDY NOTES

15 The verse begins with an emphatic "through him" (NIV apparently tries to add force by substituting "Jesus" for "him"). It is through Jesus and not the Jewish priests (or any other priests) that men offer to God acceptable sacrifice. The verb *anaphero* is the technical one for the offering of sacrifices of animals and the like. The author uses it of the only sacrifices Christians offer, spiritual sacrifices. So he urges them to offer "a sacrifice of praise" (the expression occurs in LXX in [Lev 7:13, 15](#) and with the definite articles in [Lev 7:12](#)), i.e., a sacrifice consisting of praise. The thought that the sacrifice Christians offer is spiritual occurs elsewhere, as in [Romans 12:1](#) (cf. the similar thought that the essence of religion is ethical and spiritual, [James 1:27](#)). This sacrifice is to be offered "continually." In systems like Judaism sacrifices were offered at set times, but for Christians praise goes up all the time. Since a loving God is working out his purposes all the time, there are no circumstances in which praise should not be offered (cf. [1Thess 5:18](#)). The sacrifice is further explained in an expression from [Hosea 14:2](#) (LXX [14:3](#); cf. [Prov 18:20](#)), "the fruit of lips that confess his name." In the light of the Cross, there is no room for sacrifices such as those the Jews offered. Now believers offer the sacrifice of praise and acknowledge Christ.

16 The writer gives two more examples of the sacrifices Christians offer. "To do good" (*eupoiia*, only here in the NT and not in the LXX) is a general term, while "fellowship" or "sharing" (*koinonia*) is more specific. It signifies sharing with others such things as we have: money, goods, and, of course, those intangibles that make up "fellowship." Animal sacrifices were the almost universal religious practice. Christians had nothing of the sort, but the writer is making the point that this did not mean they had nothing to offer. They had their sacrifices, some of which he has listed, and it is "with such sacrifices" that God is well pleased. Christ's suffering "outside the camp" has altered everything. Now God looks to people to take Christ's way. And that means they offer no animals but make their response to what Christ has done for them in praise, good deeds, and works of love and charity.