

## The Altar Of Incense Exodus 30 Verses 1-10

**Ex 30:1 ¶** "And thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon: of shittim wood shalt thou make it. 2 A cubit shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof; foursquare shall it be: and two cubits shall be the height thereof: the horns thereof shall be of the same. 3 And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, the top thereof, and the sides thereof round about, and the horns thereof; and thou shalt make unto it a crown of gold round about. 4 And two golden rings shalt thou make to it under the crown of it, by the two corners thereof, upon the two sides of it shalt thou make it; and they shall be for places for the staves to bear it withal. 5 And thou shalt make the staves of shittim wood and overlay them with gold. 6 And thou shalt put it before the vail that is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy seat that is over the testimony, where I will meet with thee."

We have in these verses the instructions on building the altar of incense. The altar of incense was built of the same materials as the ark of the testimony and the mercy seat; shittim wood overlaid with pure gold. As with the ark of the testimony, it was to have rings on the two sides and staves with which they would bear it on their journeys. It was placed in the holy place, just before the entrance into the most holy place, where God met and spoke to the High Priest and to Israel. All of the tabernacle, and its furnishings, speak to us of Jesus.

This altar of incense is also called the golden altar, seen in: **Nu 4:11** "*And upon the golden altar they shall spread a cloth of blue, and cover it with a covering of badgers' skins, and shall put to the staves thereof.*" This is the commandment of God concerning the preparation of moving the altar of incense. It was covered with this cloth of blue so that none ever looked upon it but the priests. It was not to be shown to the world. The same is true today. What do you mean? None can see the risen and exalted Christ, for who he truly is, but the priests of God, who are the children of God.

**7** "And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it. **8** And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations. **9** Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt sacrifice, nor meat offering; neither shall ye pour drink offering thereon. **10** And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonements: once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations: it is most holy unto the LORD."

The high priest was to burn sweet incense on the golden altar in the morning, and the evening, when he dressed and lit the lamps of the lampstand. Nothing was to be offered upon it, but sweet incense as prescribed by God; except once a year, when the high priest was to enter the most holy place; the high priest was to put the blood of the sin offering of atonements on the horns of it, before he went into the most holy place. This reminds us: our eternal remission of sins, and eternal life, are solely dependent upon Jesus, without the addition of anything else.

In the tabernacle worship: we see our Saviour prophetically, and positionally, on earth. Man fell in sin and there had to be an eternally acceptable sacrifice of blood, for the remission of the sins of God's people. As we enter the tabernacle, we come first to the laver for washing the hands and feet: Jesus washing us in the waters of regeneration. Next, we come to the brazen altar upon which all sin and thanksgiving offerings were made: Christ on the cross making the eternally acceptable sacrifice of blood for sin offering. Then, we enter the holy place, where is the table of the shewbread: Jesus the bread of life; the lamp for light: Jesus the light of the world; and the altar of incense: Jesus, the sweet incense, making the stench of our sin sacrifices into a sweet savor before God. Once you pass the altar of incense you enter the most holy place where the ark of the testimony is covered by the mercy seat. Again, we see Jesus in the mercy seat, because the mercy seat covered the ark of the testimony which contained the law ordinance that reveal our sins to us, and the eternally acceptable sacrifice of blood, of Jesus, is what has covered our sins, and has given us acceptance in the beloved to God the Father.

You can rest assured that the high priest would have first come to the laver and washed, making confession of his, and the sins of Israel as a nation, then offering the sin offering as required for all Israel and himself. Now, entering the holy place, as he approaches the altar of incense, he would be bringing the exact incense, which

God prescribes later in this chapter, along with the blood of the sin offering, for he knew that if he came any other way, he was a dead man.

This reminds us that if we worship God today, we must do it in the way God has prescribed, seen in: ***Joh 4:23-24; 23 "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. 24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."*** How careful we should be about offering up our prayers, and sacrifices of praise, to God. Our prayers, to God for his blessings, must be in accordance with his will and purpose, which will bring glory to his name. How often have we entered the most holy place, and fell dead, because the intent of our heart was not true to God? We were not fervent in prayer, we were just mouthing words and deserved to be struck dead. Jesus takes our feeble attempts to pray, filters out all the trashy stuff, and presents our true prayers to God, along with the sweet aroma of Jesus's finished work on the cross, which is why we are not killed.

The application of the blood of the sin sacrifice being applied to the horns of the altar of incense, before the high priest entered the most holy place, is the prophetic picture of Jesus coming to earth in a body of flesh. The blood of Christ had to be shed before the vail of the temple could be rent in twain, and the mercy seat revealed. It also gives us the picture of the child of God being born again. The blood of Christ must be applied first in the new birth, to the dead and alienated sinner, before Christ can be revealed to us with the vail being rent. The Old Testament revelation, of the coming of Jesus to earth in a prepared body to be the sacrifice for the sins of all of God's people, was veiled, to the sight of those living under the law service, but is revealed to us in this age of grace.

The application of the blood, on the horns of the altar of incense, before the high priest entered the most holy place, reminds us that the mercy seat could not be seen as the high priest offered incense. He was entering the most holy place by faith, trusting in the acceptance of the sin offering, and the application of the blood on the horns of the altar of incense, which has already been offered on the brazen altar. Neither can we look upon Jesus physically as we offer our prayers and sacrifices of praise to God. We enter the most holy place by faith, to plead before the mercy seat, trusting in the finished work of Jesus Christ. It also reminds us of what a true prayer would be like as described in: ***Jas 5:16 "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."*** Do you see the relationship of the tabernacle worship being a prophetic picture of the way we are to worship God on earth today? Just as Israel and the priest had to confess their sins before the sin offering was made and before the high priest could make intercession for them, so we are commanded as seen above to confess our faults and pray for one another.

Surely, the high priest would want all of his, and Israel's, sins confessed, and counted as accepted by the shed blood, and he would be in the "***effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man***" lest he be found unworthy and die when he entered the most holy place. This gives us the picture of how, in the morning and evening, our approach to prayer should be meditated upon, and that we recognize what God has commanded us to pray for. We enter the most holy place in the morning, in reverent fear, seeking to hear the voice of God giving us the leading of the Holy Spirit for each day. We enter the most holy place in the evening, in reverent fear, to give thanks for the blessings of God, which have protected and kept us safe in Christ through that day.

We must come to God the Father in prayer; leaning solely upon the shed and atoning blood of Jesus Christ, and asking of God in the name of Jesus, as commanded by Jesus in the bible. Do you remember that when Christ died upon the cross; the vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom? The ceremonial and sacrificial law being completed with Jesus sacrificing himself on the cross, the vail being rent, now the mercy seat, a picture of Christ, is revealed and open to all the priests. Before the rending of the vail, the communication of God to man was from above down to the mercy seat and then out to the priest and people. The rent vail reveals this way of communication to all the priests. Thus, we see that every child of God has the way open to see the law ordinances which reveal our sins, and the mercy seat, Jesus our Saviour, who revealed us of our sin debt eternally. Here, we offer up our prayers before the mercy seat, and to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ preached, with the spiritual vision of Jesus in their heart and mind.

As the brazen altar is picture of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross interceding for God's people; the altar of incense is a picture of Christ intervening for us from heaven and bringing our prayers before God in an acceptable manner. We see this picture in: ***1Jo 2:1-2; 1 ¶ "My little children, these things write I unto you, that***

*ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."*

The burning of the incense is as if we are offering our prayers to God as seen in: *Ps 141:1-2; 1 "LORD, I cry unto thee: make haste unto me; give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto thee. 2 Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice."* In application to our own lives today, we must come to God in prayer in the manner he has prescribed, not offering to God some strange incense, by offering up ungodly wants and wishes.

In the New Testament we are given some greater insight into the burning of incense, seen in: *Lu 1:9-10; 9 "According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. 10 And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense."* This gives us the picture that when the public prayer is being offered in our worship services, everyone is to be praying to God, for the acceptance of the public prayer, and the one offering the public prayer, that they be not slain for entering the most holy place in an unacceptable manner. Thank you, King Jesus, for making intercessory prayer on our behalf and making us accepted in the beloved to God the Father. Hallelujah! Amen!

Sing Jesus Paid It All, Old School Hymnal, hymn 149.

- 1 I hear the Saviour say, "Thy strength indeed is small. Child of weakness, watch and pray, Find in Me thine all in all." Chorus: Jesus paid it all, All to him I owe: Sin had left a crimson stain, He washed it white as snow.
- 2 Lord, now indeed I find Thy power and Thine alone, Can change the leper's spots, and melt the heart of stone. Chorus: Jesus paid it all, All to him I owe: Sin had left a crimson stain, He washed it white as snow.
- 3 For nothing good have I, Whereby Thy grace to claim, I'll wash my garments white, In the blood of Calvary's Lamb. Chorus: Jesus paid it all, All to him I owe: Sin had left a crimson stain, He washed it white as snow.
- 4 And when before the throne, I stand in Him complete, "Jesus died my soul to save," My lips shall still repeat. Chorus: Jesus paid it all, All to him I owe: Sin had left a crimson stain, He washed it white as snow.