

Worship God's Way – The Altar of Incense

Altar of Incense

Exodus 30:1-3;6-10 "You shall make an altar to burn incense on; you shall make it of acacia wood. ² A cubit *shall be* its length and a cubit its width—it shall be square—and two cubits *shall be* its height. Its horns *shall be* of one piece with it. ³ And you shall overlay its top, its sides all around, and its horns with pure gold; and you shall make for it a molding of gold all around. ... ⁶ And you shall put it before the veil that *is* before the ark of the Testimony, before the mercy seat that *is* over the Testimony, where I will meet with you. ⁷ "Aaron shall burn on it sweet incense every morning; when he tends the lamps, he shall burn incense on it. ⁸ And when Aaron lights the lamps at twilight, he shall burn incense on it, a perpetual incense before the Lord throughout your generations. ⁹ You shall not offer strange incense on it, or a burnt offering, or a grain offering; nor shall you pour a drink offering on it. ¹⁰ And Aaron shall make atonement upon its horns once a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonement; once a year he shall make atonement upon it throughout your generations. It *is* most holy to the Lord."

- 18 inches long and wide, 36 inches tall.
- Made of acacia wood overlaid with gold.
- Incense is burned every morning and every evening
- Ex 30:34-38 – spice formula – Only this spice formula is to be used. Nothing else can be burned or offered on this altar.

Made of Acacia wood and Gold

- Man and God together
- Incense represents the prayers of His people
 - **Psalm 141:2** Let my prayer be set before You *as* incense, The lifting up of my hands *as* the evening sacrifice.
 - **Revelation 5:8** Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the

Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

- **Luke 1:8-12** So it was, that while he was serving as priest before God in the order of his division, ⁹ according to the custom of the priesthood, his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. ¹⁰ And the whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of incense. ¹¹ Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. ¹² And when Zacharias saw *him*, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.
- Prayer is communion with God. That's why it is wood and gold together.

The Altar of Incense is about our prayers.

There is a specific way this altar is to be used.

Exodus 30:9 You shall not offer strange incense on it, or a burnt offering, or a grain offering; nor shall you pour a drink offering on it.

- **Exodus 30:34-38** And the LORD said to Moses: "Take sweet spices, stacte and onycha and galbanum, and pure frankincense with *these* sweet spices; there shall be equal amounts of each. ³⁵ You shall make of these an incense, a compound according to the art of the perfumer, salted, pure, *and* holy. ³⁶ And you shall beat *some* of it very fine, and put some of it before the Testimony in the tabernacle of meeting where I will meet with you. It shall be most holy to you. ³⁷ But *as for* the incense which you shall make, you shall not make any for yourselves, according to its composition. It shall be to you holy for the LORD. ³⁸ Whoever makes *any* like it, to smell it, he shall be cut off from his people."

Why this is important?

- Because God designed the way He is to be worshiped. To believe that we can worship Him however we want to is arrogant and prideful.

- **Leviticus 10:1-3** Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. ² So fire went out from the LORD and devoured them, and they died before the LORD. ³ And Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD spoke, saying: 'By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; And before all the people I must be glorified.' " So Aaron held his peace.

- This has been the basis for this series – Worship on His Terms.
- To worship God on our terms is to disregard the Fear of the Lord. It does not promote the Holiness of God. It does not promote the Awe of God and respect of God.
- Also, the things that belong to God should never be given to the world.
 - Lordship, worship, awe, prayers (direction, counsel, understanding)
 - To look for a physical solution to a spiritual problem will never solve the problem.

- This is why we can't just make up the rules.
- People keep trying to redefine Christianity. Redefine what is right and wrong. We don't get to set the rules. God does.
- This is God's creation. We are stewards of it. Not the designers of it.

- **James 4:2-3** You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. ³ You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend *it* on your pleasures.
 - Often our prayers are not answered because we are not asking according to His will. Because we want our will to be done, not His will.
 - We are forgetting about the Table of Shewbread.

Located right in front of the veil

Exodus 30:6 And you shall put it before the veil that *is* before the ark of the Testimony, before the mercy seat that *is* over the Testimony, where I will meet with you.

- Who we pray to – Father
- Every prayer that Jesus prayed He began with “Father”
- The purpose of prayer is to meet with God. And we come to Him on the basis of children to a Father.
- Prayer is how we commune with God. Our relationship with Him is based on prayer. There is no way into the manifest presence of God without it.

Blood from the Brazen altar was placed on the horns of the Incense altar

Exodus 30:10 And Aaron shall make atonement upon its horns once a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonement; once a year he shall make atonement upon it throughout your generations. It *is* most holy to the LORD.”

- Why we can pray – The Blood of Christ
- **Hebrews 10:19-20** Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh

Incense burned every morning and evening

Exodus 30:7-8 “Aaron shall burn on it sweet incense every morning; when he tends the lamps, he shall burn incense on it. ⁸ And when Aaron lights the lamps at twilight, he shall burn incense on it, a perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations.

- It was perpetually burning
- When we pray – Always
 - **1 Thessalonians 5:16-18** Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

- There is a connection between the incense and the lamps
 - Our prayers should be guided by the Holy Spirit
 - This is praying according to His will, or in His Name
 - **1 John 5:14** Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

Remember what the 7 Lampstands represent – the 7 spirits of God.

Therefore, our prayers in this place ought to reflect those attributes:

- The Spirit of the LORD, The Spirit of wisdom, The Spirit of understanding, The Spirit of counsel, The Spirit of might, The Spirit of knowledge and The Spirit of fear of the LORD.
- Authority, Understanding God’s ways, Discernment, revelations, knowing God’s will, wisdom, guidance, might and power, knowledge of spiritual things, and a reverence and awe of God. These are the landmarks of being filled with the Holy Spirit and dwelling in His presence.

Listen to some of the prayers of the Apostle Paul. Listen for those elements.

- **Colossians 1:9-14** For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; ¹⁰ that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing *Him*, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; ¹¹ strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; ¹² giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. ¹³ He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed *us* into the kingdom of the Son of His love, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.
 - Filled with all wisdom and spiritual understanding – Spirit of Wisdom, Spirit of Understanding
 - Walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him – Spirit of the Lord
 - Fruitful in good work – Spirit of the Lord

- Increasing in the knowledge of God – Spirit of knowledge
- Strengthened with all might – Spirit of might

Let's look at another prayer

Ephesians 1:16-21 do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: ¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, ¹⁸ the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what *is* the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power ²⁰ which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, ²¹ far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.

And also this one:

Ephesians 3:14-21 For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵ from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, ¹⁶ that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, ¹⁷ that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may be able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the width and length and depth and height— ¹⁹ to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. ²⁰ Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, ²¹ to Him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

What do our prayers look like?

- While we should pray for everyday, routine things, is this the hallmark of a mature believer?

Pray like an apostle – Pray I would know Jesus more. That I would be filled with wisdom and understanding. Deep Prayers.

- **1 John 5:14-15** Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.