

EXODUS 30 SWEET AROMA AT THE TABERNACLE

We continue with our ongoing study of the Tabernacle in Exodus which focuses on worship. By using these objects and priests, God gives a physical illustration of what it truly means to worship Him. We get to use our five senses as we see the furniture, and hear the sounds, taste the food, and smell the aromas of the Tabernacle. The reality of God's presence is there, for His main purpose is to dwell among His people.

In the Tabernacle, we see repeatedly the need for atonement. God stresses that often in this section of the Tabernacle. Sacrifice for sin is something that God keeps making the point very clearly. We have to get our sins taken away. We must be purified before we can have the right standing before the Lord. Because of the work of our Great High Priest, we can stand confidently in the presence of the Lord and worship and enjoy Him. The reason, is that Christ was our offering and sacrifice that was perfectly accepted by the Father.

This week we delve further into more articles and furniture of the Tabernacle.

1. PRAYER OF THE TABERNACLE 30:1-10

This is the altar of incense, which is a place of worship. It stood in the Tent of Meeting, just before the Most Holy Place, just before the veil. This is not the altar of the burnt offering, and it does something different. Ultimately it has a deep symbolic function. The altar of incense could not be used until the altar of sacrifice had been done. It represented the need for atonement. The altar of incense represented the prayers of the people that go up to the Lord. But a priest could not get to that altar until the sacrifice had been made and the priest being washed at the laver. This is why Moses waited to this time to explain the altar of incense and laver.

There is a difference between the altars, then. The brazen altar is for the sacrifices and was out in the courtyard. The altar of incense was inside the Tent of Meeting before the veil that went into the Holy of Holies. No animal sacrifices went on it. It was only incense that was put on it.

A. INCENSE OF HEAVEN

The whole tabernacle is a microcosm of the universe. The outer courtyard represents the earth and the sanctuary represents the two spheres of heaven. There is the heaven of sky and the heaven of the Most Holy Place. Imagine a two room tent and how easy it would be for the incense to seep out of a room made of fabric. The smell can get out of concrete, it would be even easier to get out of the one room into the whole sanctuary and courtyard and going to the heavens to the presence of the Lord. It made its way to heaven.

B. FROM EARTH TO HEAVEN

So what's the point? The answer is that sacrifices are being burnt every morning and evening here on earth. What was happening in heaven at the same time? Incense is burned and going towards heaven. What is the incense meant to show God's people? We will get to that

next week. Just kidding. Here it is: The altar of incense represents what happens to the smoke of sacrifice as its burned on the earth. The incense offering was a transfiguring of the burnt offering.

The altar of sacrifice was overlaid with bronze and the altar of incense was overlaid with gold. One is the courtyard (bronze) and the other is the Holy Place (gold) in the sky. The closer you get to the Holy Place the more expensive the furniture.

When the people saw the smoke rising, it meant that God received and accepted the peoples offering. This was a vivid illustration to demonstrate His acceptance of their worship. The smell and smoke proved that the burnt offering had been transfigured into an acceptable act of worship. The NT identifies the rising incense with the prayers of the saints.

Rev 5:8, 8:3-4

C. THE CONNECTION OF THE TWO ALTARS

How do the writers make the connection? The altar of incense shows what happens to the smoke of burnt offering as it makes its way to God. It is transfigured into the sweet fragrance of incense. God takes pleasure in accepting the sacrifice. The offerings are acts of worship. There are offerings for forgiveness of sins and prayers for forgiveness of sin. There are offerings of adoration and prayers of adoration. There are offerings of intercession by the priests for the people, There are prayers of intercession by priests for the people. Whenever the priests burned the incense, it was a call to the people for a time of prayer.

Psalm 141:1-2, Luke 1:8-11

Without the sacrifice on the brazen altar, there is no acceptable prayer. Prayer is not acceptable to God unless Christ is sacrificed. True prayer is based upon the work of Christ on the cross.

God hears the prayers of the believers and not for the unbeliever.

This altar also makes us think of the prayer of the mediator. This pointed to the intercession of the priests for the people. We also intercede for others. The ultimate of course is the intercession of Christ for His people.

Note that there is never to be strange fire on the altar. God is demanding them to follow His instructions perfectly. In the future, Aarons sons, Nadab and Abihu offered up a different mixture and they went up in smoke. That shows how seriously we must take God when He speaks. This is about His holiness.

2. PAYMENT FOR THE TABERNACLE 30:11-16

This is about a census to be taken and then ransom money was to be collected from all.

A. PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Everybody was to be involved in helping to pay for the support of the Tabernacle. It was a very small amount. It would be something that all could pay and was the same amount for rich or poor. It would help in the ongoing work of the Tabernacle.

B. SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The first born belonged to God. This is a principle of redemption. God had said the first born are mine. Of course if they offered the sacrifice, they would keep them.

All Israel was considered God's first born and so in this passage we have the explanation of the principle of redemption

Everyone needs atonement, needs ransom, needs redemption. One is always reminded of atonement that is needed.

There can be no fellowship without atonement or ransom money.

3. RENEWAL OF THE TABERNACLE 30:17-21

This is about renewal that comes from the presence of God and a renewal is required to enter. If they didn't wash they were in danger of death.

A. THE SACRED SINK

The laver stood in the courtyard between the brazen altar and The Tent.

There needed to be a basin to hold the water. The priests had to wash before going into the tent and before approaching the brazen altar, they had to wash. Their feet became dirty as they walked barefeet in the courtyard. Their hands were defiled as they handled the sacrifices and sprinkled the blood.

B. CONTINUAL CLEANSING

Because of all the defilement there was a constant need of washing. This was more than just physically cleaning the hands. It is about keeping ourselves clean on the inside. Even though there has been a cleansing the first time, that was like a bath, there is the ongoing continual cleansing. This symbolized a day by day renewal.

Psalm 24:3-4

C. RENEWAL FROM ABOVE

As it was in the courtyard, it represented being on earth under the heavens. We have two sources of water here on earth. One source is the lakes, rivers, streams. The other source is the rain that comes from the heavens. The laver symbolized rain that came from God. He is the source of water that comes to earth with its life giving and renewing power. This is renewal that comes from the presence of God. It is also a renewal that is required to enter God's presence.

D. HOW ARE WE RENEWED TODAY?

How does this relate to us today? We have been washed by spirit baptism once, but we are renewed daily. We need a continual cleansing from defilement of sin.

The renewal we need to enjoy God comes from God. He is the source.

1 Jn 1:9, 2 Cor 7:1, Titus 3:4-7—God saved us on the basis of mercy.

He poured out His Spirit on us. That was at the beginning, but there is the daily ongoing cleansing that we need. We can't cleanse ourselves.

We have probably asked "Why do I keep sinning over and over again?"

How can I continue to behave like this? I'm a Christian.

The marks of a Christian are confession and repentance. When you

confess, you know God's renewal in your life.

The Word of God keeps us clean along with the conviction of the Spirit. Water for drinking was a picture of the Spirit of God (Jn 7:37-39)

Water for washing is a picture of the Word Of God.—Ps 119:9, Jn 15:3

Eph 5:25-27, Jn 17:17

In the OT, there were three ways to achieve ceremonial cleansing.

By water, fire, or by blood.

We are cleansed from the guilt of sin by the blood of Jesus. It also cleanses us when we confess.

4. FRAGRANCE OF THE TABERNACLE 30:22-38

All of the blood had to make the place putrid. Maybe it needed a lot of perfume. That is not the biggest reason God gave fragrances for the tabernacle.

A. GOD IS PRESENT WITH HIS PEOPLE

When one has a scent about them, they are recognized by that scent when they enter a room. They are identified by that smell. God wanted His scent permeating the whole place and that people would know that that aroma was His. Every object and priest had the same smell. That aroma was made from a recipe that God gave them. The whole sanctuary smelled like the same scent. When this fragrance was put on everything it was to make them holy. They were being set apart for God's use.

This aroma made one aware and alert to the fact that God is here.

It was not to be made and used anywhere else, lest one die. That is right, God is holy and this was not to be used for the profane.

Hosea 11:9—This is a sacred smell.

B. EXTRAVAGANT

God is worthy and valuable. Spices and perfume were rare and considered to be hard to get and hard to make. It was very costly to create the incense and oil. God wanted the very best for worship of Him. One cannot do too much for Him. He is to be treated as very valuable.

C. THE SOURCE OF LIFE

Good smells meant life and health. God is life and that makes Him the source. He is really where we get life.

D. CHRIST, WORTHY OF ALL PRAISE

Ex 15:11

All these instructions were meant to prepare God's people for the ultimate manifestation of God's presence among them.

Worship is about what we value. You can measure somebody by what they value the most. What is most important to you?

What do you value the most? What motivates you? What are you living for? We were made to enjoy God. He is who we should value and adore and praise. The fragrance of the Tabernacle alerts us to the presence of a holy God of supreme value. No matter where you went, you would be aware of the presence of God because of this aroma.

The aroma and sweet fragrance of the Tabernacle alerts us to the presence of the holy God of supreme worth.