

Tabernacle Treasures - The Altar of Incense - Prayer - Exo. 30:1-10

As we have been studying, the Tabernacle had 3 basic divisions: The Outer Court (94%), the Inner Court (The Holy Place, 4%), and the Holiest Place (The Holy of Holies, 2%). The Outer Court had natural light coming in, but the Holy Place is enclosed by a curtain, and needed some type of light. The only way the priests could see anything inside the Holy Place was due to the light shining from the **Golden Candlestick**, which represents **Perception**. The other side had the **Table of Shewbread**, which represents **Provision**. Tonight, we are looking at the center of the Holy Place, before the veil, at the **Altar of Incense**, which represents **Prayer**.

1. The Purpose of the Altar - Verse 1 - To burn incense

This altar was for burning incense in the Holy Place. The priest took a censer full of burning coals from the Brasen Altar and placed them on the Altar of Incense and sprinkled the incense over the coals. This created a pleasing odor in the Holy Place. A thick cloud of smoke curled upward, filling the Holy Place, which is symbolic of Israel's prayers to God! Rev. 8:4. The incense was a picture of **THE PRAYERS OF ALL SAINTS**, which ascended up before God! Psa. 141:2, "*Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense...*"

2. The Place of the Altar - Verse 6 - Before the veil

When the high priest was passing through the veil into the holy of holies, the eyes of all were fixed on him as their mediator, in hopes that he would be able to intercede for them. **HOW MUCH MORE should our eyes be fixed on the Lord Jesus Christ as our Advocate and Intercessor!** It is only in His Name (John 16:23-26) that we can offer our supplications, and it is only through His intercession that we can pray with acceptance before God. 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 7:25. An earthly priest can NOT save you and confessing your sins to him can NOT forgive you. 1 John 1:7-2:2. We pray to God the Father, in JESUS NAME, Amen.

3. The Practice with the Altar - Verses 7-8 - Perpetual incense

Aaron was to burn incense on the altar every morning and every evening. Perpetual means without ceasing! 1 Thes. 5:17; Heb. 13:15. Daniel knelt three times a day, Dan. 6:10. Even when he knew it may cost him his life, it didn't prevent Daniel from serving God as he always had. Phi. 1:20; Luke 10:38-42. We must fall on our knees! 2 Chr. 7:14; Mat. 7:7-8; Mat. 21:22. **The thick cloud of smoke that filled the Holy Place caused the priests' eyes to water!** Psa. 126:5-6; Jer. 9:1; James 5:16-17. *Fervent* and *earnestly* are two adjectives to describe prayer. How passionate are you in your prayer closet when you approach the throne room of Heaven? The fragrance of that altar would be on the priests' clothes and when he would get around others they could smell him. Acts 4:13. The Bible speaks of people praying while standing, praying while kneeling, and praying with their face on the ground. Praying is about being reverent and submissive. Gen. 17:3, "*And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him...*" **There is no better picture anywhere in the bible of the right place for man and God:** God was on His throne speaking, and Abram was on his face listening!

4. The Prohibition about the Altar - Verse 9 - Offer no strange incense thereon

Only the compound that was prescribed by God was to be used! Heb. 10:22; James 1:6; Psa. 139:23-24; Psa. 66:18. The word strange means "foreign; not belonging." There are many things in Christian people's lives that don't belong there. **It is only when we are in a proper relationship with God that we can have the full assurance that He will answer our prayers!** We ought to first pray for cleansing, and then offer thanksgiving unto God, before we ever mention any of our requests to Him. Get clean, give thanks, and then PRAY!

5. The Privilege of the Altar - Verse 10 - Most holy unto the LORD

Besides the Ark of the Covenant, the Altar of Incense was the most sacred piece of furniture in the Tabernacle, which illustrates the tremendous importance that God puts on our communion with Him in prayer. Luke 18:1. William W. Walford was a blind English preacher, who didn't have a formal education, but was known as the walking Bible. He could quote much Scripture with great precision. Although he was unable to see the beauty of this world, the glories of Heaven were opened to him through the privilege of prayer. After many sacred hours that he spent in his prayer closet, he penned the beloved hymn, Sweet Hour of Prayer, in 1842.