

(Exodus) Exodus 30:34-38

by J. Vernon McGee

The altar of incense speaks of Christ's work in heaven as our great intercessor, and reminds us that worship must be in spirit and in truth.

Duration: 5:48

Scripture: Exodus 30, Psalm 141:2, Matthew 6:33, Hebrews 9:3-4

Topics: "Worship In Spirit", "Christ Our Intercessor"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the significance of the altar of incense in the tabernacle. The altar of incense represents prayer and worship, where believers offer their praise, thanksgiving, and requests to God. The speaker emphasizes that worship cannot be made pleasing to the natural man and should be done in spirit and truth. The altar of incense also symbolizes Christ as our intercessor, who prays and worships on our behalf. The sermon highlights the importance of settling the sin question before approaching God in worship and emphasizes the centrality of the word of God in church services.

Transcript

Now, the incense that was to be put on it, we'll have to turn to the last of the chapter to find out about it, and I'd like to turn there. Verse 34, And the Lord said unto Moses, Take unto thee sweet spices, stactus, anica, galbanum, these sweet spices, with pure incense, of each shall there be a like weight. Thou shalt make it a perfume, a confection, after the art of the apothecary, tempered together, pure and holy.

And anyone was not permitted to offer any other kind than this here. Now, the stactus was a resinous gum that oozed from trees on Mount Gilead. It was called the balm of Jericho.

And then the anica came from a species of shellfish, sort of a crab. And the galbanum was taken from the leaves of a Syrian plant. Now the frankincense, no one knows what it was.

It was a secret formula, and no one knows what it was. And all of this gave a sweet incense, and it was not to be duplicated. Verse 38, the last verse of the chapter, Whosoever shall make like unto that, to smell thereto, shall even be cut off from his people.

In other words, if anybody made an incense to smell to God, then they'd smell, let me tell you. God wouldn't accept them at all. Now, what does this mean? This altar speaks of prayer, speaks of worship, the place where we offer our praise, our thanksgiving, and our requests.

It is not to be duplicated, and the formula was not to be used. In other words, this is an attempt of trying to make worship pleasing to the natural man. And you can't do that.

You can't make worship pleasing to the natural man. We are to worship God in spirit and in truth. And so today, all sorts of things are used to try to attract people to church, to get them to come.

Nothing should be used but the Word of God. Now, if there's a little ritual with it, fine. But let's make sure the Word of God is the center, and everything else centers around the Word of God.

Now, that was the incense that was to be offered on it. And we have said that incense speaks of prayer. Let my prayer be set before thee as incense, said David.

And it speaks of the fact that our Lord Jesus is our great intercessor in heaven. It's a picture of Christ, our intercessor. It's where Aaron ministered, the high priest.

We told that Aaron shall burn their own sweet incense every morning when he dresseth the lamps. He shall burn incense upon it. And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the Lord throughout your generations.

It's a place where he ministered. Now, we have here, therefore, a picture of Christ, our great intercessor. And there are two articles in the tabernacle that speak of Christ's work in heaven.

One is this altar of incense, and the other is the brazen leva. Now, there were two altars. We've seen the brazen altar outside.

That's where all sacrifice was offered. And then this altar of incense, and no sacrifice was to be offered there at all, nor burnt offering. Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt sacrifice, nor meal offering, neither shall ye pour drink offering thereon.

Now, there were these two altars. The altar of incense is where God deals with a saint. The burnt altar is where God deals with a sinner.

And the burnt altar speaks of the earth and the sin of man. The incense altar speaks of heaven and of holiness. The burnt altar is what Christ did for us on earth, and the incense altar is what Christ is doing for us in heaven today.

But it also speaks of our prayers. It speaks of our part in worship. And you recall last time I made the statement that we don't actually know where the altar went.

After the death of Christ, we find it in the Holy of Holies. That's where it is today. We are told that after the second veil, the tabernacle, which is called the holiest of all, which had the golden censer, the golden altar.

That's in Hebrews 9, 3, and 4. And it speaks, therefore, of Christ's praise for us. And He's the one who truly praises God and prays for us. He's the one who genuinely worships God for us.

He's our intercessor. And how are we to learn to worship? Well, not at the bloody altar. You go as a sinner there, and you take Christ as your Savior.

And then you enter the holy place, and there you come to this golden altar, and there's no sacrifices. The sin question has to be settled outside. And when you worship God, the sin question has to be settled.

And the very basis, though, of our prayers rests upon the fact that this altar, once a year, is consecrated with blood. And therefore, we are accepted before God not because of ourselves, but it's because of what and who Christ is, what He did and who He is.

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