

THE TABERNACLE IN THE WILDERNESS

Part 7: 'The Altar Of Incense'

Reading: *Exodus 37: 25 - 29*

Introduction

- The altar of incense resides at the far end of '*the holy place*' in front of the veil.
- It was at this piece of sacred furniture Aaron's two eldest sons were slain by the Lord.
- It was alleged that they had offered '*strange fire*' on the altar.

1 The Altar's Pattern

- This was the 5th of 6 pieces of sacred furniture associated with the Tabernacle.
- It was made of acacia wood and overlaid with pure gold.
- It stood 2 cubits tall and measured 1 cubit in length and 1 cubit in width.
- A horn of gold on each of 4 corners.
- A gold ring on two opposite sides through which a pole of acacia wood overlaid with gold for transportation.
- A crown (moulding) of gold decorated the edge of the top surface.

2 The Altar's Practice

- The priests would enter morning and evening with coals from the outside altar in a firepan and place them on the surface of this second altar.
- A specially prepared '*sweet incense*' was sprinkled on the hot coals giving of a beautiful smell that ascended heavenwards.
- Once a year the high priest would put blood on the horns of the altar.
- This altar is mentioned in [Isaiah 6:6 - 7] and [Luke 1: 8 - 11].

3 The Altar Pre-Figuring

- The altar speaks again of both the Person and work of Jesus.
- The acacia wood speaks of His humanity and the gold speaks of His deity.
- The crown of gold speaks of Christ's Kingship.
- Standing at the altar with incense speaks of His high priestly ministry. [Psalm 141:2].

4 Connection Between The Two Altars

- One was outside the tent and the other was inside.
- One was made of brass/bronze whilst the other was made of gold.
- One was approached by the sinner but the other was approached only by the priest.
- One speaks of the Saviour dying for us and the other of His praying for us.
- One speaks of Christ's work in the past and the other of His work in the present.
- Because of one the sinner is saved and because of the other the believer is kept.

5 Christ As The Believer's High Priest

- Consider the verses, [Hebrews 9:24] and [Hebrews 7:25].
- He stands praying for us that we be kept, be sanctified, be as one and ultimately be with Him.
- We are saved by His sacrifice and kept by His prayers.

6 The Believer Priest Pre-Figured

- [1 Peter 2:9] identifies every true believer as a '*believer priest.*'
- Our sacrifices/incense are our intercessions for others and praises to Him.
- The priest performed this exercise twice a day.
- It would help us greatly if we were thus disciplined.

7 The Strange Fire [Leviticus 10:1 - 3]

- What was the strange fire offered by Nadab and Abihu?
- Some have suggested they offered their own mixture of spices as incense.
- Others suggest that they were intoxicated. (See Lev 10:9).
- Strange fire is typical of false worship or worship that God has not proscribed.
- This is a warning to the casual approach of many to God in the contemporary church.
- Even though we are this side of Calvary our God is still a consuming fire and the fear of the Lord is still the beginning of wisdom.

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