

The Art of the Apothecary

Exodus Chapter Thirty

~ We began observing the pre-construction specifications for the altar of incense in our last report and, in this report, we have the complete manual for it. The altar of incense speaks of prayer, and it is a very small altar overall. I feel its small size speaks of the fact that when we come to God in prayer, we don't have room to be heard above someone else. When two pray about a matter but in disagreement, the Lord Jesus judges from Holy Writ. This is another reason I believe Moses made a huge mistake in his ministry by appointing the seventy that would later become the Sanhedrin. No friends, we are only heard by our Father in Heaven when we have the proper position in Christ - on His shoulders - lifted up - carried - brought into the Throne Room - by Him. The size of this altar also speaks of an extremely personal space we occupy in fellowship with Him.

King David said, "... let my prayer come before Thee as sweet incense." So, we can know this altar speaks of prayer. It also speaks of the Lord Jesus as our Great Intercessor in prayer in Heaven. This is the place where the high priest, Aaron, will minister. Two of the articles of furniture in the tabernacle speak of Christ's work as our Intercessor in Heaven: the altar of incense and the brazen laver. The altar of incense was to have no sacrifices made on it. Further, it was to only have one kind of incense put upon it. Any other type of incense was prohibited. We have the recipe for this incense laid out in verse thirty-four. The 'stacte' is a resinous gummy substance that was harvested from oozing trees on Mount Gilead. It was called the balm of Jericho. Onycha comes from a species of shellfish like a crab; galbanum is from the leaves of a plant common to Syria. Nobody knows what the frankincense was. Well, it was all a very sweet, combined substance and it was not to be duplicated. So, let's not make any incenses we can smell to God, or we will be the ones that end up smelling - very bad - because God doesn't accept it.

This altar speaks of prayer and worship in a place that the children of Israel can offer their thanksgiving, praise and requests through the chosen family

of Levi. The recipe for the incense was not to be duplicated in any manner and the formula was not to be used anywhere outside of this application. Doing so would be an attempt at making worship pleasing to the flesh. Paul said, "... make no provision for the flesh." We're also told to worship in spirit and in truth - which is not naturally pleasing - but today, all sorts of gimmicks are used to attract people to a certain church or program. God says nothing should be used to attract people to Him except the Word of God! Putting a little ritual with it is fine, but we better make sure the Lord Jesus Christ and the Word of God are at the center of it all; everything revolves around the Word of God in a ministry or, friends - it's not being used by Him.

Alright, as we return into the tabernacle we go past the brazen altar, where the sacrifice was made. This is the altar where God dealt with the sinner through the priest! Then, it's off to the altar of incense where God dealt with the saint - through the priest. The burnt offering speaks of the earth and the sins of man. The altar of incense speaks of the pleasantness of Heaven and the Holiness there. The burnt offering is what Christ did for us here on earth and the altar of incense is what Christ is doing for us up in Heaven today.

But the altar of incense also speaks of our prayers and our part in worship. After the death of Christ, we find the altar of incense relocated inside the Holy of Holies, according to the writer to the Hebrews. That's where it is today. Christ is praying for us in that inner chamber right now; which is good - because He is the only one that truly praises God. Candidly and reverently, there are many times when I think He was the only One praying for Andrew C. Hunt. Christ genuinely worships God for us while we learn to worship.

We don't learn to worship at the bloody altar, either. You're just a sinner there trusting Christ as your Savior. When you get to the Holy of Holies there is no altar for sacrifice there, so your sin question will necessarily have to have been settled previously outside! When we worship God at the altar of incense, this matter of sin has to have been dealt with completely and without question. The very basis for our prayers is that this altar is consecrated with His blood. We're not accepted because of who we are -

but because of Who the Lord Jesus Christ is and because of what He offered for us down here.

Paul says, "... to the praise of the glory of His grace wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved." The Father said, "this is my Beloved Son; hear ye Him." Well, we're to hear Him alright; and we are also to pray to the Father through Him and in His Name! What are you asking for when you pray in the Spirit today? Do your prayers have anything in the world at all to do with His Word? Do your prayers have anything in the world at all to do with His will? Do your prayers have anything to do with your will? Those are important questions to answer privately with Him.

Notice the altar of incense is singled out and separated from the other articles of furniture. The consecration of the priests had to take place before this altar is brought before them. Only the priests could worship at this altar; remember, even King Josiah was smitten with leprosy when he intruded into the priest's office and came to this altar. That's a stinging spiritual message. Only a priest can pray today. There is a huge misconception that any person under the sun can lead any sort of sinful life and continue to reject Christ, and then get down on their knees in time of trouble and ask God to help them out. That is sentimental, foolish and ignorant rot. God says He doesn't answer that type of prayer. Frankly, most people are absolutely wasting their time in prayer today. Don't be a phony because what you're doing in your own goodness is going to be burned to ashes, and your foolishness is bringing the Word of God into disrepute!

My beloved, I keep it real in this so-called Spiritual Safari. The only prayer any sinner might have heard by God is for God to be merciful to their eternal destiny. You're just going to have to start there as a sinner or praying is not only a futile waste of time - it is an abomination to God - and it might get you into more trouble with Him! Any intrusion into the priestly office can get you struck dead, friends. We have simply got to stop playing religious games and figure out what the Bible really teaches!

Of course, we are to pray morning and evening without ceasing. The high priest went in and the incense saturated his garments to the point where you could smell him a long way away. The high priest smelled good. Saints

today don't usually have such a great spiritual odor; because they don't spend any appropriate time in prayer. If your prayer is ascending to God like sweet incense it will get in your garments, friends. How much time do you really spend in meaningful prayer?

We hear a great deal about public worship and prayer today but, actually, there's no such thing. Only the redeemed can pray and worship. As Christians, we really need to recognize this. I can understand people want God to do them a favor and some people really want to acknowledge His greatness and goodness – but – if you're not redeemed, you're neither recognized nor heard in prayer by God. Frankly, we're not even as careful as we should be out here on safari. I ask for comments and support for my program, but I am only talking to believers. If you're an unbeliever then I am not asking you for anything because I don't think you can worship God, personally; and speaking of God and giving to His work are acts of worship. I am happy that you want to read along, whoever you are; and there's a good chance you'll turn to the Lord and be saved – but – until you are, the only prayer of yours that will ever be heard is for the Holy Spirit to make His Word real to your life and heart! And the wonder of wonders in studying the Word of God is that God WILL make this real and applicable to your life! All you have to do is ask.

Not only must a priest be redeemed, but he must also be cleansed before he can worship or serve in the tabernacle; and that brings us to the brazen laver where that washing takes place. The laver was in the outer court of the tabernacle, and it was made of brass. This is one of two articles of furniture in the outer court. As we have seen, the brazen altar is where God deals with us and our sin collectively as sinners; but here at the brazen laver is where God deals with our sins as saints! After all, saints sin sometimes. I've been with them a long time and the saints I know are not very Heavenly today – not yet.

*~ To dwell above with the Saints of love
That will sure be glory....
~ But to dwell below with these saints I know
Well, that's a different story! ~*

The priest was required to wash at the laver before he could serve in that particular offering of sacrifice for that individual. When you read a message or hear a sermon, and it sounds dull, it may very well be that YOU are dirty! Being dirty dulls our hearing dramatically. Now if you combine a dull preacher and a dirty saint then you just don't have anything very exciting in service. You cannot worship God until you have been cleansed. We get dirty in our walk with the lord and that's the reason Jesus washed the disciple's feet. Christ is still doing that today, friends. The priest washed before and after a sacrifice and before and after they went into the Holy Place. Washing was all important at this time, too. I think the priests got very tired after about a dozen sacrifices in a day! The Lord commands them to wash so they will know that they have to be holy to serve Him and be clean to worship Him and be clean in His presence. You and I are going to have to get cleaned up before we can serve Him or be used by Him.

The pure water spoken of by which they were to wash speaks of the Word of God. Of course, the brazen laver was made out of brass; specifically, the mirrors of the woman. Highly polished brass was used as mirrors. The Word of God is what reveals the sin in their lives to them. The Word of God is the mirror we are looking into. The laver even has a little foot basin to wash your feet. Now, that laver today is in Heaven; we do NOT make public confessions today. I think every single day we need to go to God in confession; probably in our evening prayers would be best; confessing privately everything on us and in us that got dirty during that day.

Perhaps the number two problem in our church today - but number one as far as repelling people from even coming there in the first place - is simply too much spiritual body odor! Some of those people haven't had a spiritual washing in decades and they stink, friends, they stink! They need to go to God in prayer and get washed today before they try to serve or worship because He doesn't accept either one until we have a cleansed heart. This is all tried and proven.

Then, there's also some anointing that goes along with this. A holy ointment is what is to be manufactured. John also says we have an anointing and that speaks of the Holy Spirit Who enables us to understand and comprehend the Word of God. This is the reason the Bible is being

made real to so many people today. It has nothing to do with me and nothing to do with these reports; it is the Word of God and the Word of God only being used by the Holy Spirit of God that can teach, save or anoint. Some man pouring oil on you is absurd; go to God Who can anoint you with the spiritual oil of wisdom. Do you want God to open your mind to His Word and teach you truth and wisdom? Why don't you ask Him to do so before you read on? ~

1 And thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon: of shittim wood shalt thou make it.

2 A cubit shall be the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof; foursquare shall it be: and two cubits shall be the height thereof: the horns thereof shall be of the same.

3 And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, the top thereof, and the sides thereof round about, and the horns thereof; and thou shalt make unto it a crown of gold round about.

4 And two golden rings shalt thou make to it under the crown of it, by the two corners thereof, upon the two sides of it shalt thou make it; and they shall be for places for the staves to bear it withal.

5 And thou shalt make the staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold.

6 And thou shalt put it before the vail that is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy seat that is over the testimony, where I will meet with thee.

7 And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it.

8 And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations.

9 Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt sacrifice, nor meat offering; neither shall ye pour drink offering thereon.

10 And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonements: once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations: it is most holy unto the LORD.

11 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

12 When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the LORD, when thou numberest them; that there be no plague among them, when thou numberest them.

13 This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary: (a shekel is twenty gerahs:) an half shekel shall be the offering of the LORD.

14 Every one that passeth among them that are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering unto the LORD.

15 The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the LORD, to make an atonement for your souls.

16 And thou shalt take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and shalt appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of the congregation; that it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before the LORD, to make an atonement for your souls.

17 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

18 Thou shalt also make a laver of brass, and his foot also of brass, to wash withal: and thou shalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein.

19 For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat:

20 When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the LORD:

21 So they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not: and it shall be a statute for ever to them, even to him and to his seed throughout their generations.

22 Moreover the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

23 Take thou also unto thee principal spices, of pure myrrh five hundred shekels, and of sweet cinnamon half so much, even two hundred and fifty shekels, and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty shekels,

24 And of cassia five hundred shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, and of oil olive an hin:

25 And thou shalt make it an oil of holy ointment, an ointment compound after the art of the apothecary: it shall be an holy anointing oil.

26 And thou shalt anoint the tabernacle of the congregation therewith, and the ark of the testimony,

27 And the table and all his vessels, and the candlestick and his vessels, and the altar of incense,

28 And the altar of burnt offering with all his vessels, and the laver and his foot.

29 And thou shalt sanctify them, that they may be most holy: whatsoever toucheth them shall be holy.

30 And thou shalt anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office.

31 And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, This shall be an holy anointing oil unto me throughout your generations.

32 Upon man's flesh shall it not be poured, neither shall ye make any other like it, after the composition of it: it is holy, and it shall be holy unto you.

33 Whosoever compoundeth any like it, or whosoever putteth any of it upon a stranger, shall even be cut off from his people.

34 And the LORD said unto Moses, Take unto thee sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum; these sweet spices with pure frankincense: of each shall there be a like weight:

35 And thou shalt make it a perfume, a confection after the art of the apothecary, tempered together, pure and holy:

36 And thou shalt beat some of it very small, and put of it before the testimony in the tabernacle of the congregation, where I will meet with thee: it shall be unto you most holy.

37 And as for the perfume which thou shalt make, ye shall not make to yourselves according to the composition thereof: it shall be unto thee holy for the LORD.

38 Whosoever shall make like unto that, to smell thereto, shall even be cut off from his people ~

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