

Day 107 - MONDAY: February 27th

Exodus 30

Exodus 30:1-38 NKJV

"You shall make an altar to burn incense on; you shall make it of acacia wood. A cubit shall be its length and a cubit its width—it shall be square—and two cubits shall be its height. Its horns shall be of one piece with it. And you shall overlay its top, its sides all around, and its horns with pure gold; and you shall make for it a molding of gold all around. Two gold rings you shall make for it, under the molding on both its sides. You shall place them on its two sides, and they will be holders for the poles with which to bear it. You shall make the poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold. And you shall put it before the veil that is before the ark of the Testimony, before the mercy seat that is over the Testimony, where I will meet with you. "Aaron shall burn on it sweet incense every morning; when he tends the lamps, he shall burn incense on it. And when Aaron lights the lamps at twilight, he shall burn incense on it, a perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations. You shall not offer strange incense on it, or a burnt offering, or a grain offering; nor shall you pour a drink offering on it. And Aaron shall make atonement upon its horns once a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonement; once a year he shall make atonement upon it throughout your generations. It is most holy to the LORD." Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: "When you take the census of the children of Israel for their

number, then every man shall give a ransom for himself to the LORD, when you number them, that there may be no plague among them when you number them. This is what everyone among those who are numbered shall give: half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary (a shekel is twenty gerahs). The half-shekel shall be an offering to the LORD. Everyone included among those who are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering to the LORD. The rich shall not give more and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when you give an offering to the LORD, to make atonement for yourselves. And you shall take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and shall appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of meeting, that it may be a memorial for the children of Israel before the LORD, to make atonement for yourselves." Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: "You shall also make a laver of bronze, with its base also of bronze, for washing. You shall put it between the tabernacle of meeting and the altar. And you shall put water in it, for Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet in water from it. When they go into the tabernacle of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister, to burn an offering made by fire to the LORD, they shall wash with water, lest they die. So they shall wash their hands and their feet, lest they die. And it shall be a statute forever to them—to him and his descendants throughout their generations." Moreover the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: "Also take for yourself quality spices—five hundred shekels of liquid myrrh, half as much sweet-smelling cinnamon (two hundred and fifty shekels), two hundred and fifty shekels of sweet-smelling cane, five hundred shekels of cassia, according to the shekel of the

sanctuary, and a hin of olive oil. And you shall make from these a holy anointing oil, an ointment compounded according to the art of the perfumer. It shall be a holy anointing oil. With it you shall anoint the tabernacle of meeting and the ark of the Testimony; the table and all its utensils, the lampstand and its utensils, and the altar of incense; the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, and the laver and its base. You shall consecrate them, that they may be most holy; whatever touches them must be holy. And you shall anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may minister to Me as priests. "And you shall speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'This shall be a holy anointing oil to Me throughout your generations. It shall not be poured on man's flesh; nor shall you make any other like it, according to its composition. It is holy, and it shall be holy to you. Whoever compounds any like it, or whoever puts any of it on an outsider, shall be cut off from his people.' " And the LORD said to Moses: "Take sweet spices, stacte and onycha and galbanum, and pure frankincense with these sweet spices; there shall be equal amounts of each. You shall make of these an incense, a compound according to the art of the perfumer, salted, pure, and holy. And you shall beat some of it very fine, and put some of it before the Testimony in the tabernacle of meeting where I will meet with you. It shall be most holy to you. But as for the incense which you shall make, you shall not make any for yourselves, according to its composition. It shall be to you holy for the LORD. Whoever makes any like it, to smell it, he shall be cut off from his people."

Daily Deep Dive:

We'll begin this chapter with a short excerpt from the UCG reading plan and sprinkle in this plan as we go along today: "In Exodus 30, we pick up the rest of the instruction for the furnishings that were to be placed in the tabernacle. In this chapter Moses was given the instructions on making an altar to burn incense upon. This altar was to be located just before the veil that separated the Most Holy Place from the Holy Place (verse 6). Sweet and compelling, the incense represented the prayers of God's people coming before His throne (compare Psalms 141:2; Revelation 5:8). He therefore wanted His typical throne room filled with this incense. But He certainly did not want "strange incense" (Exodus 30:9), for as the book of Proverbs explains concerning "one who turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination" (Proverbs 28:9)." [END]

Verse 2 – This altar of incense (also called “golden altar” – Compare Exodus 39:38, 40:26, Numbers 4:11) was approximately 1.6 feet by 1.6 feet on top and was

approximately 3.2 feet high. Like the bronze altar for the offerings, this altar also had horns on each corner.

Here is another video for those who would like to see how this may have looked:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=shHSzCQ-mao>

Verse 6 – John Gill’s commentary states: “That divides between the holy and the most holy place; not within the vail in the holy of holies, but before it at the holy place, for there the altar of incense stood: Josephus says, between the candlestick and the table, i.e. of shewbread, stood the altar of incense; now the candlestick and shewbread were in the holy place;”

Verse 7 – John Gill’s commentary says: “This in later times was done by a common priest, who obtained this service by lots as we find in the times of Zacharias, Luk_1:9”

Verse 9 – God was very clear in his instructions of what He wanted and did not want done. This was a matter of life and death as these objects were set apart and Holy. What is strange incense? This word for strange was first used in the previous chapter (Exo 29:33) for a “stranger”, which is

the most often way this word is translated. It commonly means “to be a stranger or to be strange”. John Gill’s commentary states: “Which had not the same, but was made of other materials, or had more or fewer; whatever was not exactly the same was not to be offered.” [END]

Verse 10 – Once a year, on the day of Atonement, the priest would take some of the blood of the day of Atonement sin offering and would once again cleanse and set apart this incense altar for service and dedication to God.

Verse 11 – The UCG reading plan states: “One other thing in Exodus 30 that is very interesting is the offering for atonement collected at the census, also known as the ransom money. Moses was instructed that when he took a census of those 20 years of age and older, an offering of one half-shekel was to be taken up from each person for the service of the tabernacle. The point here was that each person was paying a price for his life—acknowledging that his life was from God and that God was owed because of it. It is noteworthy that the same amount was required of everyone, be they rich or poor.” [END]

Verse 12 – Jamieson–Faucet–Brown commentary states: “Moses did so twice, and doubtless observed the law here prescribed. The tax was not levied from women, minors, old men (Num_1:42, Num_1:45), and the Levites (Num_1:47), they being not numbered.”

Verse 16 – Like any building or structure, the would be cost involved in maintenance/repair, and for the various costs that would be involved for the priests to be able to perform their duties.

Verse 17 – The UCG reading plan includes: “The bronze laver was placed outside of the Holy Place for Aaron and his sons to wash their hands and feet in water before entering to officiate—symbolic for spiritual cleansing.” [END]

JFB commentary states “No data are given by which its form and size can be ascertained; but it was probably a miniature pattern of Solomon’s – a circular basin.” Regarding the bottom of the laver, it states: “supposed not to be the pedestal on which it rested, but a trough or shallow receptacle below, into which the water, let out from a cock or spout, flowed; for the way in which all Eastern people

wash their hands or feet is by pouring upon them the water which falls into a basin.” [END]

Adam Clarke’s commentary adds this speculation: “There were doubtless cocks or spigots in it to draw off the water, as it is not likely the feet were put into it in order to be washed. The foot of the laver must mean the pedestal on which it stood.” [END]

Here’s a video of what this may have looked like:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LBeXPE9GoPw>

Verse 22 – The UCG reading plan adds “Also, instructions were given for making the holy anointing oil, which—like the incense—was not to be copied by others in the congregation for personal use. Only the priests could administer the holy anointing oil, just as only ordained elders today can anoint the sick with oil. Oil in such contexts is clearly representative of God's Holy Spirit.” [END]

Verses 23 – 24: Let’s quickly look at the ingredients of the Holy anointing oil God commanded:

Myrrh – a fragrant and medicinal gum from a little-known tree in Arabia (JFB). This is the first time we have seen this word in the bible but is found described as a liquid substance for fragrance 12 times in the OT.

Sweet cinnamon – produced from a species of laurel or sweet bay, found chiefly in Ceylon, growing to a height of twenty feet: this spice is extracted from the inner bark, but it is not certain whether that mentioned by Moses is the same as that with which we are familiar. (JFB) This is again the first time we see this word. It's used only three times and always in connection with other spices.

Sweet calamus – or sweet cane, a product of Arabia and India, of a tawny color in appearance; it is like the common cane and strongly odoriferous. (JFB) This is a common word often translated reed or branch.

Cassia – from the same species of tree as the cinnamon – some think the outer bark of that tree. (JFB) This word is only ever found in one other place (Ezekiel 27:19 in the lament of Tyre).

Hin of olive oil – a word of Egyptian origin, equal to ten pints. Being mixed with the olive oil – no doubt of the purest kind – this composition probably remained always in a liquid state, and the strictest prohibition issued against

using it for any other purpose than anointing the tabernacle and its furniture. (JFB).

Verses 34 – 35: Now let's quickly look at the ingredients of the Holy incense:

Stacte – the finest myrrh (JFB). This is the first time this word is used in the Bible and found only one other time.

Onycha – supposed to be an odoriferous shell (JFB). This is the only place this word is used in the Bible.

Galbanum – a gum resin from an umbelliferous plant (JFB). This is also the only place this word is used in the Bible.

Frankincense – a dry, resinous, aromatic gum, of a yellow color, which comes from a tree in Arabia, and is obtained by incision of the bark (JFB). We will explore frankincense more when we come to the offerings of Leviticus, as it was commonly used and associated with the offerings.

Jamieson–Faucet–Brown commentary states: “This incense was placed within the sanctuary, to be at hand when the priest required to burn on the altar. The art of compounding unguents and perfumes was well known in Egypt, where sweet-scented spices were extensively used not only in common life, but in the ritual of the temples.

Most of the ingredients here mentioned have been found on minute examination of mummies and other Egyptian relics; and the Israelites, therefore, would have the best opportunities of acquiring in that country the skill in pounding and mixing them which they were called to exercise in the service of the tabernacle. But the recipe for the incense as well as for the oil in the tabernacle, though it receives illustration from the customs of Egypt, was peculiar, and being prescribed by divine authority, was to be applied to no common or inferior purpose." [END]

Through both the anointing oil and incense, we are taught important principles that God is never to be treated as common (unholy). If the oil and incense were allowed to be used in everyday life, then their use for God would not be special, unique or Holy. In what ways may we treat God as common? In what way has God made something Holy, that we treat like anything else, or at least, not in the special way God designed? I think this warrants some consideration from each of us, especially as we move into chapter 31 and look at the Sabbath day.