Message Five
The Golden Incense Altar

RK *Hymns:* 505, 779

Scripture Reading: Exo. 30:1-10; Heb. 7:25; Rom. 8:34, 26-27; Rev. 8:3-4

Exo 30:1 And you shall make an altar on which to burn incense; you shall make it of acacia wood.
Exo 30:2 Its length shall be a cubit, and its width, a cubit; it shall be square, and two cubits its height; its horns shall be of one piece with it.
Exo 30:3 And you shall overlay it with pure gold, its top and its sides around it and its horns; and you shall make a rim of gold around it.
Exo 30:4 And you shall make for it two rings of gold under its rim; on its two sides, on its opposite sides, you shall make them; and they shall be as holders for poles with which to carry it.
Exo 30:5 And you shall make the poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold.
Exo 30:6 And you shall put it before the veil that is over the Ark of the Testimony, before the expiation cover that is over the Testimony, where I will meet with you.
Exo 30:7 And Aaron shall burn on it fragrant incense; every morning when he dresses the lamps he shall burn it.
Exo 30:8 And when Aaron sets up the lamps at twilight, he shall burn it, a perpetual incense before Jehovah throughout your generations.
Exo 30:9 You shall not offer any strange incense on it, or a burnt offering or a meal offering; and you shall not pour a drink offering on it.
Exo 30:10 And Aaron shall make expiation on its horns once a year; with the blood of the sin offering of expiation once a year he shall make expiation for it throughout your generations. It is most holy to Jehovah.
Heb 7:25 Hence also He is able to save to the uttermost those who come forward to God through Him, since He lives always to intercede for them.
Rom 8:34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ Jesus who died and, rather, who was raised, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.
Rom 8:26 Moreover, in like manner the Spirit also joins in to help us in our weakness, for we do not know for what we should pray as is fitting, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.
Rom 8:27 But He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to God.
Rev 8:3 And another Angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and much incense was given to Him to offer with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.
Rev 8:4 And the smoke of the incense went up with the prayers of the saints out of the hand of the Angel before God.

I. We need to see a vision of the golden incense altar—Exo. 30:1-10:

Exo 30:1 And you shall make an altar on which to burn incense; you shall make it of acacia wood.
Exo 30:2 Its length shall be a cubit, and its width, a cubit; it shall be square, and two cubits its height; its horns shall be of one piece with it.
Exo 30:3 And you shall overlay it with pure gold, its top and its sides around it and its horns; and you shall make a rim of gold around it.
Exo 30:4 And you shall make for it two rings of gold under its rim; on its two sides, on its opposite sides, you shall make them; and they shall be as holders for poles with which to carry it.
Exo 30:5 And you shall make the poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold.
Exo 30:6 And you shall put it before the veil that is over the Ark of the Testimony, before the expiation cover that is over the Testimony, where I will meet with you.
Exo 30:7 And Aaron shall burn on it fragrant incense; every morning when he dresses the lamps he shall burn it.
Exo 30:8 And when Aaron sets up the lamps at twilight, he shall burn it, a perpetual incense before Jehovah throughout your generations.
Exo 30:9 You shall not offer any strange incense on it, or a burnt offering or a meal offering; and you shall not pour a drink offering on it.
Exo 30:10 And Aaron shall make expiation on its horns once a year; with the blood of the sin offering of expiation once a year he shall make expiation for it throughout your generations. It is most holy to Jehovah.

A. The incense altar signifies Christ as the Intercessor to maintain the relationship between God and His people—Heb. 7:25; Rom. 8:34:

Heb 7:25 Hence also He is able to save to the uttermost those who come forward to God through Him, since He lives always to intercede for them.

Rom 8:34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ Jesus who died and, rather, who was raised, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

1. The incense altar is a type of the person of Christ—Exo. 30:1-3.

Exo 30:1 And you shall make an altar on which to burn incense; you shall make it of acacia wood.

Exo 30:2 Its length shall be a cubit, and its width, a cubit; it shall be square, and two cubits its height; its horns shall be of one piece with it.

Exo 30:3 And you shall overlay it with pure gold, its top and its sides around it and its horns; and you shall make a rim of gold around it.

2. The incense altar signifies Christ praying, Christ interceding—John 17.

John 17:1 These things Jesus spoke, and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son that the Son may glorify You;

John 17:2 Even as You have given Him authority over all flesh to give eternal life to all whom You have given Him.

John 17:3 And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Him whom You have sent, Jesus Christ.

John 17:4 I have glorified You on earth, finishing the work which You have given Me to do.

John 17:5 And now, glorify Me along with Yourself, Father, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

John 17:6 I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world. They were Yours, and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word.

John 17:7 Now they have come to know that all that You have given Me is from You,

John 17:8 For the words which You gave Me I have given to them, and they received them and knew truly that I came forth from You, and they have believed that You sent Me.

John 17:9 I ask concerning them; I do not ask concerning the world, but concerning those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours;

John 17:10 And all that is Mine is Yours, and Yours Mine; and I have been glorified in them.

John 17:11 And I am no longer in the world; yet they are in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, which You have given to Me, that they may be one even as We are.

John 17:12 When I was with them, I kept them in Your name, which You have given to Me, and I guarded them; and not one of them perished, except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

John 17:13 But now I am coming to You, and these things I speak in the world that they may have My joy made full in themselves.

John 17:14 I have given them Your word, and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world even as I am not of the world.

John 17:15 I do not ask that You would take them out of the world, but that You would keep them out of the hands of the evil one.

John 17:16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

John 17:17 Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.

John 17:18 As you have sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.

John 17:19 And for their sake I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.

John 17:20 And I do not ask concerning these only, but concerning those also who believe into Me through their word,

John 17:21 That they all may be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that You have sent Me.

John 17:22 And the glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, even as We are one;

John 17:23 I in them, and You in Me, that they may be perfected into one, that the world may know that You have sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me.

John 17:24 Father, concerning that which You have given Me, I desire that they also may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory, which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

John 17:25 Righteous Father, though the world has not known You, yet I have known You, and these have known that You have sent Me.

John 17:26 And I have made Your name known to them and will yet make it known, that the love with which You have loved Me may be in them, and I in them.

B. The incense altar is the place from which the activities at all the other places in the tabernacle and the outer court are motivated; Christ's interceding life motivates us to experience the altar, the laver, the table, the lampstand, and the Ark—Heb. 7:25.

Heb 7:25 Hence also He is able to save to the uttermost those who come forward to God through Him, since He lives always to intercede for them.

C. The executing center of God's administration in the universe is the incense altar in Revelation 8:

Rev 8:1 And when He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

Rev 8:2 And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them.

Rev 8:3 And another Angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and much incense was given to Him to offer with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

Rev 8:4 And the smoke of the incense went up with the prayers of the saints out of the hand of the Angel before God.

Rev 8:5 And the Angel took the censer and filled it with the fire of the altar and cast it to the earth; and there were thunders and voices and lightnings and an earthquake.

Rev 8:6 And the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to trumpet.

Rev 8:7 And the first trumpeted, and there was hail and fire mingled with blood, and it was cast to the earth; and the third part of the earth was burned up, and the third part of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.

Rev 8:8 And the second angel trumpeted, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea; and the third part of the sea became blood,

Rev 8:9 And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea and had life died, and the third part of the ships were destroyed.

Rev 8:10 And the third angel trumpeted, and a great star fell out of heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers and upon the springs of waters.

Rev 8:11 And the name of the star is called Wormwood; and the third part of the waters became wormwood, and many of the men died from the waters because they were made bitter.

Rev 8:12 And the fourth angel trumpeted, and the third part of the sun and the third part of the moon and the third part of the stars were smitten, so that the third part of them would be darkened and the day would not appear for the third part of it, and the night likewise.

Rev 8:13 And I saw, and I heard an eagle flying in mid-heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to those who dwell on the earth because of the remaining trumpet sounds of the three angels who are about to trumpet!

1. The book of Revelation is a book of God's administration, a book of divine execution:
   a. This book reveals the throne of God and the administration of God throughout the universe—4:1-2, 5; 5:6.

Rev 4:1 After these things I saw, and behold, a door opened in heaven, and the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, Come up here, and I will show you the things that must take place after these things.

Rev 4:2 Immediately I was in spirit; and behold, there was a throne set in heaven, and upon the throne there was One sitting;

Rev 4:5 And out of the throne come forth lightnings and voices and thunders. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God;

Rev 5:6 And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures and in the midst of the elders a Lamb standing as having just been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

b. In the book of Revelation, a book of God's executing, we see that the divine administration, the divine executing, is always carried out by the incense altar—8:3-4.

Rev 8:3 And another Angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and much incense was given to Him to offer with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

Rev 8:4 And the smoke of the incense went up with the prayers of the saints out of the hand of the Angel before God.

2. In Revelation 8:3 the incense altar is directly in front of the throne of God's authority:

Rev 8:3 And another Angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and much incense was given to Him to offer with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

a. Christ as another Angel comes and adds His incense to the prayers of the saints—v. 3.

Rev 8:3 And another Angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and much incense was given to Him to offer with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

b. This incense then ascends to God at the throne of administration, and God answers the saints' prayers—v. 4:

Rev 8:4 And the smoke of the incense went up with the prayers of the saints out of the hand of the Angel before God.

1) When the prayers of the saints ascend to God with the incense of Christ, God executes the policies of His administration.

2) As a result, fire comes down to earth to execute the divine judgments—v. 5.

Rev 8:5 And the Angel took the censer and filled it with the fire of the altar and cast it to the earth; and there were thunders and voices and lightnings and an earthquake.

D. Christ's interceding life, His prayer life, is the center of the divine administration and of the execution of His government on earth—Rom. 8:34; Rev. 8:3-4:

Rom 8:34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ Jesus who died and, rather, who was raised, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

Rev 8:3 And another Angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and much incense was given to Him to offer with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

Rev 8:4 And the smoke of the incense went up with the prayers of the saints out of the hand of the Angel before God.

1. The executing of God's administration is motivated by the prayers offered to Him from the incense altar.
2. The prayers offered at the incense altar govern the universe.
3. This is a picture of the incense altar being the administrating throne of God for God to execute His judgments in His administration.
4. It is crucial for us to see that the execution of God's administration is motivated by the prayers offered to Him from the incense altar.

E. After His resurrection and ascension, the individual Christ has become the corporate Christ; thus, today before God not only is the individual Christ interceding, but the corporate Christ, the Head with the Body, is interceding as well—1 Cor. 12:12; Acts 12:5, 12:

1 Cor 12:12 For even as the body is one and has many members, yet all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is the Christ.

Acts 12:5 So then Peter was kept in the prison; but prayer was being made fervently by the

church to God concerning him.

Acts 12:12 And when he became aware of this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John, who was surnamed Mark, where there was a considerable number assembled together and praying.

1. Today the intercessor is not merely Christ Himself but is Christ with His Body.
2. Christ the Head is interceding in the heavens, and the church the Body is interceding on earth.
3. As the members of Christ and parts of the Body-Christ, we cooperate with Christ in His ministry of intercession, carrying out His intercession in our prayers of intercession—Rom. 8:34, 26-27; 1 Tim. 2:1.

Rom 8:34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ Jesus who died and, rather, who was raised, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

Rom 8:26 Moreover, in like manner the Spirit also joins in to help us in our weakness, for we do not know for what we should pray as is fitting, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

Rom 8:27 But He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to God.

1 Tim 2:1 I exhort therefore, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings be made on behalf of all men;

F. If we have a clear view of the incense altar, our prayer life will be revolutionized, and we will pray for the executing of God's purpose, for the carrying out of the divine administration, and for the dispensing of God's supplying grace.

II. We need to experience the golden incense altar—Exo. 30:1-10; Rom. 8:26-27; 1 Tim. 2:1:

Exo 30:1 And you shall make an altar on which to burn incense; you shall make it of acacia wood.

Exo 30:2 Its length shall be a cubit, and its width, a cubit; it shall be square, and two cubits its height; its horns shall be of one piece with it.

Exo 30:3 And you shall overlay it with pure gold, its top and its sides around it and its horns; and you shall make a rim of gold around it.

Exo 30:4 And you shall make for it two rings of gold under its rim; on its two sides, on its opposite sides, you shall make them; and they shall be as holders for poles with which to carry it.

Exo 30:5 And you shall make the poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold.

Exo 30:6 And you shall put it before the veil that is over the Ark of the Testimony, before the expiation cover that is over the Testimony, where I will meet with you.

Exo 30:7 And Aaron shall burn on it fragrant incense; every morning when he dresses the lamps he shall burn it.

Exo 30:8 And when Aaron sets up the lamps at twilight, he shall burn it, a perpetual incense before Jehovah throughout your generations.

Exo 30:9 You shall not offer any strange incense on it, or a burnt offering or a meal offering; and you shall not pour a drink offering on it.

Exo 30:10 And Aaron shall make expiation on its horns once a year; with the blood of the sin offering of expiation once a year he shall make expiation for it throughout your generations. It is most holy to Jehovah.

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Rom 8:27 But He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to God.

1 Tim 2:1 I exhort therefore, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings be made on behalf of all men;

A. We need to participate in Christ's interceding life—Eph. 6:18-19; Col. 4:3; 1 Thes. 5:25; 2 Thes. 3:1; Heb. 13:18.

Eph 6:18 By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints,

Eph 6:19 And for me, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make

known in boldness the mystery of the gospel,

Col 4:3 Praying at the same time for us also, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ (because of which also I am bound),

1 Thes 5:25 Brothers, pray also for us.

2 Thes 3:1 Finally, brothers, pray concerning us, that the word of the Lord may run and be glorified, even as it is also with you;

Heb 13:18 Pray for us, for we are persuaded that we have a good conscience, desiring in all things to conduct ourselves honorably.

B. The kind of prayer we have depends on the kind of person we are—Luke 9:54-55; 1 Tim. 2:8; Eph. 6:18; Col. 1:9:

Luke 9:54 And seeing this, the disciples James and John said, Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?

Luke 9:55 But turning, He rebuked them and said, You do not know of what kind of spirit you are.

1 Tim 2:8 I desire therefore that men pray in every place, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and reasoning;

Eph 6:18 By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints,

Col 1:9 Therefore we also, since the day we heard of it, do not cease praying and asking on your behalf that you may be filled with the full knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,

1. Our prayers represent ourselves and reveal our person, revealing who we are, what we are, and where we are.
2. Whether we are in God or outside of God is indicated by the way we pray.

C. If we would intercede with Christ at the incense altar, we need to see three crucial matters:

1. When we pray, we should be in the tabernacle; that is, we should be in God—John 1:14; 14:2-3, 20, 13-14; 15:4a, 7; 17:24, 26:

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and reality.

John 14:2 In My Father's house are many abodes; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.

John 14:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I am coming again and will receive you to Myself, so that where I am you also may be.

John 14:20 In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.

John 14:13 And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

John 14:14 If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.

John 15:4a Abide in Me and I in you. …

John 15:7 If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you.

John 17:24 Father, concerning that which You have given Me, I desire that they also may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory, which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

John 17:26 And I have made Your name known to them and will yet make it known, that the love with which You have loved Me may be in them, and I in them.

   a. The picture of the tabernacle portrays Christ as the incarnated God—1:14.

      John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and reality.

   b. Because the incense altar is in the center of the tabernacle, which signifies the incarnated God, to be at the golden incense altar is to be in the incarnated God.

   c. Whenever we pray, we should experientially be in God; then we will not only pray to God but also pray in God.

2. When we are about to pray, we should first be satisfied by eating holy food; that is, we should pray with God within us as our energizing supply—v. 29; 6:53-56:

John 1:29 The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, Behold, the Lamb of God,

who takes away the sin of the world!

John 6:53 Jesus therefore said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you do not have life within yourselves.

John 6:54 He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up in the last day.

John 6:55 For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink.

John 6:56 He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me and I in him.

a. We need to feast upon Christ as the bread of the Presence—Exo. 25:30.

Exo 25:30 And you shall set the bread of the Presence upon the table before Me always.

b. If we would come to the incense altar, we must be persons who are in God and who have God in us; that is, we should be one with God and mingled with Him—John 14:20; 1 Cor. 6:17.

John 14:20 In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.

1 Cor 6:17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.

3. When we pray, we should offer incense to God; that is, we should pray with Christ as the incense—Exo. 30:34-38; Rev. 8:3-4.

Exo 30:34 And Jehovah said to Moses, Take fragrant spices-stacte and onycha and galbanum-fragrant spices with pure frankincense; there shall be an equal part of each;

Exo 30:35 And you shall make of it incense, a fragrant compound according to the work of a compounder, seasoned with salt, pure and holy.

Exo 30:36 And you shall beat some of it very fine, and put some of it before the Testimony in the Tent of Meeting, where I will meet with you; it shall be to you most holy.

Exo 30:37 And the incense which you shall make, you shall not make for yourselves according to its composition; it shall be holy to you for Jehovah.

Exo 30:38 Whoever shall make any like it, to smell it, shall be cut off from his people.

Rev 8:3 And another Angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and much incense was given to Him to offer with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

Rev 8:4 And the smoke of the incense went up with the prayers of the saints out of the hand of the Angel before God.

D. When we pray at the incense altar, there will be neither strange fire nor strange incense in our prayer—Lev. 10:1; Exo. 30:9a:

Lev 10:1 And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer, and put fire in them and laid incense on it, and they presented strange fire before Jehovah, which He had not commanded them.

Exo 30:9a You shall not offer any strange incense on it, or a burnt offering or a meal offering; …

1. To have strange fire in our prayer is to have some kind of motive that is natural and that has not been dealt with by the cross.

2. To have strange incense in our prayer is to have prayer that is not related to Christ.

E. If we would pray in the tabernacle at the incense altar, we need to be burned to ashes, reduced to nothing—Lev. 6:13; Psa. 20:3; Gal. 2:20; 1 Cor. 1:28b:

Lev 6:13 Fire shall be kept burning on the altar continually; it shall not go out.

Psa 20:3 May He remember all your meal offerings / And accept your burnt offering. Selah.

Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

1 Cor 1:28b … things which are not, that He might bring to nought the things which are,

1. To be in the tabernacle is to be in God, and the requirement for being in God is that we become nothing—John 15:4a, 5b.

John 15:4a Abide in Me and I in you. …

John 15:5b … He who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.

2. If we are burned to ashes, we will no longer be natural—1 Cor. 2:14-15:

1 Cor 2:14 But a soulish man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him and he is not able to know them because they are discerned spiritually.

1 Cor 2:15 But the spiritual man discerns all things, but he himself is discerned by no one.

a. Our conduct, our sight, and our virtue equal our natural being, which is versus Christ as God's testimony.

b. If we would pray at the incense altar, we must no longer have our natural conduct, our natural sight, and our natural virtue.

c. If we would pray at the incense altar, we must have Christ as our life supply for proper conduct, as our light for proper sight, and as our virtue for us to have a sweet fragrance ascending to God.

F. When we pray at the incense altar, it is very difficult for us to be occupied with ourselves—Rom. 8:34, 26-27:

Rom 8:34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ Jesus who died and, rather, who was raised, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

Rom 8:26 Moreover, in like manner the Spirit also joins in to help us in our weakness, for we do not know for what we should pray as is fitting, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

Rom 8:27 But He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to God.

1. The reason self is not involved at the incense altar is that in order to pray at this altar, we must first become ashes.

2. At the incense altar we pray for God's economy, for God's dispensing, for God's move, and for God's recovery.