

Exodus 30:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

The golden altar for burning incense, made of acacia wood overlaid with gold—again the pattern of humanity (wood) and deity (gold) united. This altar stands in the Holy Place before the veil, representing prayer and worship ascending to God. The Hebrew קֶטֶר (qetoret, incense) symbolizes prayer (Psalm 141:2, Revelation 5:8). Christ, our intercessor, causes our prayers to ascend acceptably to God, adding His incense (perfect prayer) to ours.

Historical Context

Unlike the bronze altar (for sacrifice) in the outer court, this golden altar stood inside the Holy Place, closest to the Most Holy Place. Its position emphasized that prayer follows sacrifice—we pray based on atoning blood.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does Christ add His 'incense' to your prayers, making them acceptable to God?

2. Why must the sacrifice altar (atonement) precede the incense altar (prayer)?

Interlinear Text

וְתַעֲשֶׂה ה	מִזְבֵּחַ	מִקְטָר	קֵטֹרֶת	עֵצִי	שִׁטִּים
And thou shalt make	an altar	to burn	incense	wood	upon of shittim
H6213	H4196	H4729	H7004	H6086	H7848
וְתַעֲשֶׂה ה	אֹתוֹ:				
And thou shalt make					
H6213	H853				

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 8:3 (Sacrifice): And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

Exodus 40:5 (Sacrifice): And thou shalt set the altar of gold for the incense before the ark of the testimony, and put the hanging of the door to the tabernacle.

Leviticus 4:7 (Sacrifice): And the priest shall put some of the blood upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the LORD, which is in the tabernacle of the congregation; and shall pour all the blood of the bullock at the bottom of the altar of the burnt offering, which is at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.