

Exodus 30:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

The golden altar of incense stands before the veil, closest to God's presence. Daily incense offerings represent prayer ascending to God (Psalm 141:2, Revelation 5:8, 8:3-4). The altar's position—after the bronze altar (sacrifice) but before the Most Holy Place (God's throne)—teaches that prayer is based on atonement and leads to intimacy. Christ, our intercessor, causes our prayers to ascend acceptably, adding His perfect intercession to our imperfect petitions.

Historical Context

The high priest burned incense on this altar twice daily (morning and evening) when tending the lampstand. The fragrant smoke ascending into the Holy Place symbolized prayers rising to God's throne.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does Christ's intercession make your prayers acceptable to God?
2. Why must sacrifice (bronze altar) precede prayer (golden altar)?

Interlinear Text

לֹא	תַעֲלֶה וְ	עַל יָד	קֶטֶר הַ	זָר הַ	וְעַל הַ
H3808	Ye shall offer	H5921	incense	no strange	thereon nor burnt sacrifice
	H5927		H7004	H2114	H5930
	וּמִנְחָה הַ	וְיֵסֶךְ	לֹא	תִסַּךְ וְ	עָלֶיךָ:
	nor meat offering	drink offering	H3808	neither shall ye pour	H5921
	H4503	H5262		H5258	

Additional Cross-References

Leviticus 10:1 (Parallel theme): And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not.