

Exodus 37:25

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he made the incense altar of shittim wood: the length of it was a cubit, and the breadth of it a cubit; it was foursquare; and two cubits was the height of it; the horns thereof were of the same.

Analysis

The incense altar (מִזְבֵּחַ קֶטֶר, mizbach ketoret) of shittim wood—continuing the pattern of acacia overlaid with gold—demonstrates that prayer and worship (symbolized by incense, Psalm 141:2, Revelation 5:8) also require humanity clothed in divinity. This altar's position before the veil, between Holy Place and Most Holy Place, represents prayer's access to God's presence through the mediator. Christ is our incense altar—His intercession carries believers' prayers to the Father like fragrant smoke ascending.

Historical Context

The golden incense altar stood in the Holy Place directly before the veil separating it from the Most Holy Place. Its position emphasized prayer's proximity to God's presence. The high priest burned incense on it twice daily (morning and evening, Exodus 30:7-8), filling the Holy Place with fragrant smoke.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does the incense altar's position (before the veil, between Holy Place and God's presence) illustrate prayer's access through mediation?
2. In what ways does Christ as our incense altar transform believers' prayers into acceptable worship before God?

Interlinear Text

וַיַּעַשׂ	אֶת	מִזְבֵּחַ	הַקֶּטֶר	עֵץ	שִׁטִּי	וְאֵמֶת
And he made		altar	the incense	wood	of shittim	and two cubits
H6213	H853	H4196	H7004	H6086	H7848	H520
אָרְכוֹ	וְאֵמֶת	רֹחְבוֹ	וְהָיָה	רָב	וְאֵמֶת	
the length	and two cubits	and the breadth	it was four	square	and two cubits	
H753	H520	H7341	H7251		H520	
קִמְתּוֹ	וְהָיָה	וְהָיָה	קִרְיָתוֹ			
was the height			of it the horns			
H6967	H4480	H1961	H7161			

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 7:25 (Parallel theme): Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

1 Peter 2:5 (Sacrifice): Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 13:10 (Sacrifice): We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.

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.

Matthew 23:19 (Sacrifice): Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?

2 Chronicles 26:16 (Sacrifice): But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the LORD his God, and went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense.

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