

Exodus 39:38

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the golden altar, and the anointing oil, and the sweet incense, and the hanging for the tabernacle door,

Analysis

The golden altar (מִזְבֵּחַ הַזָּהָב, mizbach haZahav, altar of incense), anointing oil (שֶׁמֶן הַמִּשְׁחָה, shemen haMishchah), and sweet incense (קֶטֶרֶת הַסַּמִּים, qetoret haSamim) enabled prayer and consecration. The incense's fragrant smoke ascending symbolized prayers rising to God (Psalm 141:2; Revelation 5:8). The golden material and Holy Place location (near the veil) emphasized prayer's preciousness. The anointing oil consecrated priests and implements (Exodus 30:22-33). Christ, our Intercessor (Hebrews 7:25), offers perfect prayer; believers' prayers ascend through Him (John 14:13-14).

Historical Context

The incense altar stood before the veil (Exodus 30:6), closest to God's presence except for the ark behind the veil. The high priest burned incense twice daily (morning and evening), filling the Holy Place with fragrant smoke. The anointing oil's unique recipe (Exodus 30:23-25) could not be replicated for common use.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does incense symbolizing prayer teach that prayer is precious, fragrant offering to God?
2. What does believers' prayers ascending through Christ reveal about the necessity of His mediation?

Interlinear Text

וְאֵת	מִזְבֵּחַ	וְאֵת	הַזָּהָב	וְאֵת	שֶׁן מִן	וְאֵת	הַמִּשְׁחָה	וְאֵת	תְּ
H853	altar		And the golden	H853	oil		and the anointing	H853	
	H4196		H2091		H8081		H4888		
קֶטֶר	וְאֵת	וְאֵת	וְאֵת	וְאֵת	וְאֵת	וְאֵת	וְאֵת	וְאֵת	וְאֵת
incense	and the sweet		and the hanging		door		for the tabernacle		
H7004	H5561	H853	H4539		H6607		H168		

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 30:7 (Parallel theme): And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it.