

Exodus 40:26

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he put the golden altar in the tent of the congregation
before the vail:

Analysis

The golden altar's placement 'before the vail that is by the ark' positions prayer closest to God's presence (though still separated by the veil). The incense's fragrant smoke ascending symbolized prayers rising (Psalm 141:2; Revelation 5:8), teaching that prayer brings believers nearest to God. The golden material signifies prayer's preciousness; the position 'before the vail' indicates prayer's intimacy. Christ, our Intercessor (Hebrews 7:25), stands perpetually 'before the veil,' having passed through it (Hebrews 6:19-20; 9:24), bringing believers' prayers to the Father.

Historical Context

The incense altar stood directly before the veil (Exodus 30:6), closer to the Most Holy Place than any other furniture. The high priest burned incense twice daily (morning and evening), the smoke penetrating the veil into God's immediate presence. This altar's unique position emphasized prayer's priority in approaching God.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. What does the incense altar's closest position to God's presence teach about prayer's supreme importance in worship?
2. How does Christ passing through the veil as our Intercessor give believers confidence in prayer?

Interlinear Text

וַיִּשֶׂם	אֶת	מִזְבֵּחַ	הַזָּהָב	בְּאֵלֵי	מוֹעֵד	לִפְנֵי
And he put	H853	altar	the golden	in the tent	of the congregation	before
H7760		H4196	H2091	H168	H4150	H6440
הַפָּרֹקֶת:						
the veil						
H6532						

Additional Cross-References

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.