

Friday, January 20, 2023 ▫ Read Exodus 30:1–10

Questions from the Scripture text: What are they to make (v1)? To do what upon it? Out of what? With what dimensions (v2)? What will be of one piece with it? With what will it be overlaid (v3)? What else will border it? What will go under this molding (v4)? How many on each side? To hold what? For what purpose? Of what are the poles to be made (v5)? And overlaid with what? Where will this incense altar go (v6)? What is behind the veil? What is on top of the ark? What happens there? What will the high priest do on it (v7)? When? What else will he do at that time? And When else (v8)? What else will he do at that time? So, when will incense be going up? What four things must they not offer on it? What will the high priest do upon its horns (v10)? How often? Until when? Why?

What does God highlight by putting the instructions for the incense altar at this point in Exodus? Exodus 30:1–10 looks forward to the p.m. sermon on the coming Lord's Day. In these ten verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **God does not only meet with His people to speak with them, but also even to hear them.**

The Lord now commands the construction of another altar. It is similar in shape and materials (though smaller in size) to both the ark and the table. The Lord does not tell us exactly why He places its description here, rather than with the other furniture. But simply by its isolation here, the incense altar is highlighted. And, coming after the ordination of the priesthood and the instruction for the morning and evening sacrifices, the text intensifies the focus on the high priest's service at this altar at those times (cf. v7–8).

This altar is strictly for incense, and strictly for God's incense. No other recipe or other manner of offering incense is permitted on it (v9a). No other type of offering is permitted on it (v9). We understand that this most holy (v10) incense altar is for burning sweet incense (v1, 7, 8).

From other passages (cf. Lk 1:8–11, Ps 141:1–2, Rev 8:3–4) we know that this communicates the commending of our prayers to God with the sweet aroma. Apart from atonement, our prayers are offensive to God (cf. Isa 1:14–15; Isa 59:1–3; Mic 3:4; Psa 66:19; Pro 28:9). But with it, they go up to Him and are received as pleasing and sweet.

Although the high priest will only go into the Holy of Holies once a year, he is to go right up to the front of it twice a day. Just as the light of the lamp is never to go out, so also the sweet smoke of the incense is never to stop going up. Aaron makes the lamps good in the morning (v7) and causes them to rise in the evening (v8) as a reminder that the light of the favor of God never stops shining down upon His people. And every time that Aaron goes in there to do that, he is to replenish the burning of the incense as a reminder that God never stops receiving Christ-atoned prayer as a sweet aroma.

Where does this take place? Right in front of the veil. This is significant because v6 teaches that this connects the altar rather directly to the veil, and to the ark, and to the mercy seat, and to the Testimony. The favorable receiving of His people's prayers, then, is an emphasized feature of God's dwelling among His people. Not only does He meet with His people to speak to them (cf. 29:42), but so great is His grace that He also meets with His people to hear them!

In the Revelation of John, there is a golden altar before the throne (cf. Rev 8:3). This corresponds not to the bronze altar, which pointed forward to the cross of Christ and His once-for-all sacrifice, but to this golden altar upon which incense was offered. The prayers of the saints continuously go up to God, and have a central role in the Lord's great work upon the earth. In Jesus, the throne has become the location of our praying itself (cf. Heb 4:14–16), so that we may confidently join our plea with the Psalmist, "Let my prayer be set before You as incense" (cf. Ps 141:1–2)!

Where is the "ark" now? Where is the "golden altar"? Who has access to it, and how? What use are you making of that access? How are you responding to the access that you have?

Sample prayer: Lord, we thank You and praise You for atoning for our sins in Christ. And for bringing us near in Christ. And for receiving our prayers as sweet and pleasing to you in Christ. Now, grant that Your Spirit would conform us to Christ, so that like He, we would continually lift our prayers to You, we ask in His Name, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP141A "I Call You, Lord" or TPH522 "Behold, the Throne of Grace!"

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Exodus 30 verses 1 through 10. These are God's words. You shall make an altar to burn incense on. You shall make it a vacation wood. A cubit shall be its length and a cubit it's width. It shall be square. And two cubits shall be its height. It's horn shall be a one piece with it.

And you saw, overlay its top, it sides all round, and it's horns with pure gold. And you shall make for it a molding of gold all round. Two ring, two, gold rings. You so make for it under the molding. On, both its sides. You shall place them on its two sides and they will be holders for the poles with which to bear it.

You shall make the poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold. And you shall put it before the veil that is before the ark of the testimony before the mercy seat, that is over the testimony where i We'll meet with you. Aaron shall burn on it. Sweet incense every morning when he tends the lamps, you shall burn incense on it.

And when Aaron lights the lamps at the twilight, he shall burn incense on it to perpetual incense Before you all play throughout your generations. You shall not offer strange incense on it or a burnt offering or a green offering. Nor shall you pour a drink offering on him? And Aaron shall make atonement upon its horns once a year with the blood of the thin offering of atonement.

Once a year here shall make a tonment upon it throughout your generations. It is most holy, To your way. So, for the reading of gods inspired and they work,

The lord had taken us through the furniture of the tabernacle, but he hadn't given us. At that time, the building of the incense altar, the incense altar very important thing. It goes in the holy place, it goes right in front of the veil. That's attended to twice a day.

But he gives it to us instead of, in the context of the building of all the other pieces. He gives it to us following upon the heels. Of the ordination of the priesthood. And especially upon the heels of the twice daily sacrifices. The sacrificing of the lambs. Uh, day by day, one in the morning.

And one at twilight. And by giving it in the context of The ordinance ordination of the priesthood and especially of the twice-day sacrifices. Uh, he emphasizes the activity that is going to be taking upon taking place upon the incense altar. Even though it is a an integral piece of the furniture even though, There's much that we could have said about it being, Of similar construction tube.

The. Arc. And Uh, the table. And then, And also the bronze alter that it's outside with its horns that are of one piece with it. The horns of Uh, the incense ultra being one piece with it. Uh, being covered with gold and so heavenly and having to be carried upon Poles.

Which Indicates to some extent, how holy it is. And Um, There's much that we could say about that, but we won't focus on all of those things because where the lord has put it in how he gives us the construction of the tabernacle and the instructions for the operation of the tabernacle.

Emphasizes instead, the priestly activity. That takes place. With the incense altar. And that is a preset activity in which In the morning in a twilight. There's the offering of the lambs.

The emphasizes the priestly activity. That takes place at the incense altar and that is a priestly activity, in which a morning in twilight with the offering of the lamb. And at morning in twilight with the tending of the lamps. At morning and twilight. You will also the high priest will offer The incense that goes up.

And the high priest. Of course, wearing the names of the children of israel. On his shoulder. And on his chest and offering up incense, which we know from other passages. Communicates the commending of our prayers to god. Um, With the sweet aroma. And so when zechariah and luke 1, Uh, eight to 11.

Is doing is taking the turn of the Of the incense. He's not, i priest and lukewana just realized that but it was Aaron in our passage when Zechariah is taking his turn of his. A time of prayer. It's connected to prayer. Psalm 141, which will come back to Uh, leads the solvent, introduces the psalm, but the idea of letting our prayer we set before the lord is incense.

And then of course the most Uh, well known, perhaps example of this, in Revelation, 8 and the prayers of the saints. Going up. Uh, like incense. And so we're to understand from scripture as a whole that the incense is communicating That our prayer does actually go up to god.

It does reach him. In fact, one of the ways that god communicates that in this passage is by the placement. Of the incense alt of the prayers of his people are the closest thing to the holy of holies from outside. The holy of holies. He does not put the altar of incense out where The bronze altar is but brings it.

All the way in commands it to be set right in front of the veil. And then he gives us this as it were Uh, chain of custody of where the The. Thing, that is being communicated by this incense goes the prayers. Go. You shall put it verse 6 before the veil.

That is before the ark of the testimony. Okay. So there's incense altar and then there's male and right behind the hill, there's A box called an arc. Inside the box, there's a testimony on the lid of the box. Uh, still in verse 6 before the mercy seat, that is over the testimony.

The mercy seat is the atonement cover with the blood from the day of atonement on it. And a one-piece with it, is the turbine which are built into and part of the mercy seat and the Uh, the climax of course for six. Uh, where i We'll meet with you.

So, the lord has Already said that, he would meet. With israel and meet with his people, especially 2942, this will be a continual burnt offering through your generate throughout your generations at the door. The tabernacle of meeting before y'all way where i will meet you to speak with you.

And now, Uh, not outside at the door of the tabernacle. But right there at the door as it were the veil of the holy of holies, he meets with us not to speak with us. But to hear us to consider us, And, Our condition and especially our cries, our prayers and to consider us favorably.

Pleasantly even as the indication of a suite aroma. Tells us. We often think of ourselves as Auditorily and visually stimulated, but the sense of smell is very special. Uh, for me. Uh my earliest memories and i don't know if this is true for everyone else, but my earliest memories are smells And the smell of.

A good meal, cooking. Or the familiar comfortable smell. Uh, of a mommy to her baby or a husband or and wife to one another. Um, We are very strongly. Affected by smell. Not god. Of course, doesn't have my nose. He's not affected by anything. He's got. And yet he takes such pleasure in himself.

And he has ordained and planned to take such pleasure in his people. By redeeming them by himself. By means of himself in christ. So that we are united with him and when we come to god as christians, we come in union with jesus indwelt by the holy spirit and how great then is the pleasure of god.

Uh, with as it were The smell of his son. On him. And perhaps you remember, Isaac, who was? Uh, In his declining years was so sensorily motivated. And he has, Um, jacob, whom he thinks is, he saw bring him the good food by which he is motivated, but when he comes to bless him, he smells Esau's clothes on jacob, and it smells like Esau.

And he says, ah, The smell. Of my son. So, there is something very strong. Uh, communicated here about how much pleasure God. Has in his people and has ordained to have in his people. About what he has planned and what he does. And this is a great comfort. To believers because we know, That are praying in itself.

Cannot Make us commendable to god. In fact, there are many places. Um, i say a one versus 14 to 15 isaiah 59 versus one through three, mica three verse four, psalm 66 19, proverbs 28, verse 9 and others. There are many places. Where we read about people's prayers, being offensive to god.

And so, how can a sinner come to god? If he knows? That his sinfulness makes us praying offensive. What you can come. In the priest. In the sacrifice. And the priest's mediation. Behalf of that sacrifice. And so, the incense altar in the offering of the incense Uh, communicates to us and intended to communicate to us very strongly.

That we may know. Clinging to christ. We may know that God is pleased with our prayers. On christ's account. Instead of offended by her prayers. On our account. And he's even designed us with a sense of smell. And good smells to affect it. So that we might have some sort of some point of reference.

To help stir up our dull hearts to enjoy. The graciousness of our god and his favorite towards us and is pleasure in us and our praying. In christ. And so, this is something that is to be embraced continuously. Um, which the lord gives us in our weakness. Uh, morning and evening and we do something morning and evening, it is asked, it is a way of being continuous.

This isn't just a Hebrew way of speaking. It is, hebrew is speaking where you take the book and you know, the first and the last the The. All up on the top although it's not i guess it is that way in someone 18 or the alpha and the omega, but the beginning and the end Morning and evening, light and dark.

Uh, Whether in light or in dark. Um, You, you have all of these ways of saying the whole At the beginning of the end and everything in between, but it's also a reality that we live. That the thing that we do, if we follow god's instructed pattern, whether it's day by day, in our home, And beginning the day with him and ending the day with him.

When we Rise up. And when we lay down, Quite explicit in scripture. Um, or whether we're talking about the morning and evening sacrifices. Um, That we're day by day. In. The previous passage. Um, and throughout the life of Israel war and they were talking about evening worship and morning worship.

Uh, evening, especially being emphasized and Uh, as far as the new testament worship services that we see in the first day of the week, Uh, we see almost exclusively, maybe exclusively evening services, but we mustn't think that that somehow precludes that which was looked forward to By the morning and evening pattern.

In the In the old testament. So, Let's not. Have any movements towards the canceling? Good morning services anytime soon. Let's just have movements for the recovery of and institutional evening services. Uh in in all of the lord's churches. But there are three things that we've heard about In fairly short order that happened morning and evening.

Uh, one we heard about immediately in the preceding passage. And that is the sacrifice. Of the lamb. Of course, embracing. The ones for all sacrifice of the lamb of god. Who is slain from the foundation. Of the world. Our lord jesus. And all of our worshiping. Every time we come in a morning, every time we come in an evening, every time we come as a family, every time we come as a congregation, every time you come to him, Do not skip to come embracing.

The atonement of christ for you. The completion of of his wiping away, your guilt by his blood. The perfection of his righteous obedience in your behalf. That's how you come to god. And that's a big part of the worship that he wants morning and evening as indicated to us by the lamb.

Uh sacrifice it was morning and evening in the previous passage at the end of chapter 29. A second one which was the first in the order given in the book of Exodus is his tending of the lamps. He reminds us. Of that connection in verse 8 when Aaron lights.

Um, or when he sorry, in verse 7, 8, when he tends the lamps in the morning and then Uh, verse 8 when Aaron lights the lamps, Uh, At twilight. Aaron. Literally in verse 7, makes the lamp good. In the morning, and in verse 8, causes the lamp to rise.

Uh, in the evening. It's a little bit more. Um, Vivid. Here in his priestly activity and we remember what the lamp is for. The lamp reminds us that the light of the favor of god shines upon his people. That it's not so much a candle, or a lamp or that looks like a tree from the garden of Eden that that shines on the people.

But as number six, says, may he make his face to shine upon you And so, when you come to worship god, morning and evening, whether in our family or by yourself or congregationally in the lord's day, become not only embracing christ as through the lambs with a b. Uh, but we come knowing the favor of god towards us.

Through the lamps. With a p. Uh, so we come. Uh, knowing the favor of god toward us, especially In his. Speaking to us. When you have that tied, especially as we already said, in verse 42 of chapter 29 with moses speaking, or we always speaking to to Moses and to the people At the time of the offerings morning and evening.

Uh, but finally, you also come To be heard by god. Not just to to embrace christ and have his favor and have the lord speak to you. But to know that the lord hears you, That this is one of the great ways in which he's glorified as he is such a gracious and generous and compassionate creator.

That he has designed a way. Um, of worship that communicates that he listens to the voices and the hearts Of the children of men and the The sweet incense that goes up. Now, the The intercession ministry of Aaron was uneven. He couldn't just sit there all day and shovel incense onto the incense altar than perhaps it even run out.

Uh, but he's uh, he's weak. Um, In his season of humiliation. Not so the lord jesus now. The scriptures, tell us that he Always lifts to intercede for us. Uh, by the power of his indestructible life, he's able to save us to the other most He now sits on the throne of grace and the as you know revelation tells us the prayers of the saints.

Go up continually And that words, that idea. Also is here in the end of verse 8. And when Aaron lights the lamps, the twilight, you shall burn incense on it.

A Perpetual incense. Before you all play throughout your generations. Well, that which was Uh, was prefigured and pictured to us. By the priestly ministry then is actually literally done by the lord jesus now. So that The prayers are the saints can come continually through Christ his prayer. Remember he is our high priest, he's not only the lord who receives prayers from the church.

She is the son over the house. Who leads the prayers of the church. And so he prays for us continually in the spirit intercedes for us continually and as he saves more and more people from all over the world, the amount of prayer that goes up continually from his people on earth.

Increases. And so there's something of that ministry. Of our lord. Jesus, that is pictured to us here. Our lord has given to us then much to value prayer. To value prayer much. Our lord has given us, then to value prayer of much. And, Um,

And to know that he is glorified. By our prayer coming up to him and our prayer. Being pleasing to him. For the sake. Of his son. And so, we may join our Plea with the psalmist and psalm 141. Let my prayer be set before you. As incense. Let's pray and ask god, to bless this portion of his word to us.

Probably, thank you for the perfection of your son on the earth.

Probably, thank you for the perfection of your son. The perfection of your plan in him. To take pleasure in us and our praying. For his sake. We calm knowing that there's Nothing in ourselves. Apart from him.

Apart from him, that would please you. And we ask that you would keep our hearts and minds stayed upon the Lord Jesus Christ. And that you would encourage and strengthen our hearts with the joy comes, From knowing that. You have elected to be chosen you to decide it. You have decided to be worshiped.

By making us to embrace Christ, by making us to know your favor. And even by making us to know. That you hear our prayers. And so will God since you are the speaking of God, make us a hearing people. But since you are also, the hearing God make us, I'm praying people.

Who lift up our hearts to you? Yeah, sees things in Jesus name. Amen.