

Ex. 30:1 And thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon: *of shittim wood shalt thou make it.*

Ex. 30:2 A cubit *shall be* the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof; foursquare shall it be: and two cubits *shall be* the height thereof: the horns thereof *shall be* of the same.

Ex. 30:3 And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, the top thereof, and the sides thereof round about, and the horns thereof; and thou shalt make unto it a crown of gold round about.

Ex. 30:4 And two golden rings shalt thou make to it under the crown of it, by the two corners thereof, upon the two sides of it shalt thou make *it*; and they shall be for places for the staves to bear it withal.

Ex. 30:5 And thou shalt make the staves *of shittim wood*, and overlay them with gold.

Ex. 30:6 And thou shalt put it before the veil that *is* by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy seat that *is* over the testimony, where I will meet with thee.

Instructions are now given to make an altar for burning incense out of shittim wood. The altar is to be a square that measures a cubit (18 inches) on each side and is to be 2 cubits (3 feet) tall. It is also to have horns made of shittim wood. The top, sides and horns are to be overlaid with pure gold. They were also to make a “crown” of gold about its border. There are to be golden rings positioned under the crown of gold at the four corners (the two corners of two sides). These are to be used for the staves (bars) for moving it. The staves are also to be made with shittim wood and overlaid with gold. This altar is to be placed in front of the veil that separates the holy of holies from the rest of the tabernacle—the place where the ark of testimony that supports the mercy seat is located, the place of God’s presence.

Observations:

1. As we think of incense as representative of our prayers, it is interesting that they rise up to God from a level source, equal footing. Reminds me of the saying, “All ground is level at the foot of the cross.”
2. Again, purity before the presence of God is important (The wood is overlaid with pure gold. We, as believers, are overlaid with the blood of Jesus.)
3. This altar is in front of the veil of the holy of holies, the place of God’s presence. (That veil is no longer necessary and was ripped apart when Jesus died on the cross.)

Ex. 30:7 And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it.

Ex. 30:8 And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations.

Ex. 30:9 Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt sacrifice, nor meat offering; neither shall ye pour drink offering thereon.

Ex. 30:10 And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonements: once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations: *it is most holy unto the LORD.*

Aaron (the high priest) is to burn sweet incense on the altar every morning when he is maintaining the lamps and every evening when he is lighting the lamps. This ritual is to be continued for all the generations to come. No strange incense is to be offered on this altar. (The directions for making the incense come later in the chapter.) It is not to be used to offer burnt sacrifices or meat or drink offerings. Once a year Aaron is to

make atonement (cleansing, reconcile) on the horns of the altar with the blood of the sin offering (I would assume on the Day of Atonement). This is an act of obedience that is most holy to the LORD.

Observations:

1. Still considering the incense as representative of our prayers, they should be offered every morning as we begin our day and every evening as we complete our day.
2. We should be teaching our children to do the same (perpetual....through generations).
3. The place of prayer is only available after offering the sacrifices and offerings. Jesus opened that door once for all for all who believe.
4. The altar of incense had to be cleansed once a year. Our position of righteousness/cleanliness for prayer before the LORD has been provided *once for all* through Jesus' death, burial and resurrection.

Ex. 30:11 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Ex. 30:12 When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the LORD, when thou numberest them; that there be no plague among them, when *thou* numberest them.

Ex. 30:13 This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary: (a shekel *is* twenty gerahs:) an half shekel *shall be* the offering of the LORD.

Ex. 30:14 Every one that passeth among them that are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering unto the LORD.

Ex. 30:15 The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when *they* give an offering unto the LORD, to make an atonement for your souls.

Ex. 30:16 And thou shalt take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and shalt appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of the congregation; that it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before the LORD, to make an atonement for your souls.

Now the LORD gives Moses directions regarding taking a census/count/sum of the children of Israel. Each person that is counted is to give a ransom (redemption) for his soul. I think the next phrase is saying that obedience to this command would protect them from plague, since they are recognizing God as their protector through obedience to His command. The ransom is to be a half of the sanctuary shekel, equal to 20 gerahs (the smallest piece of Hebrew money). Each man that is 20 years old or older is to give this offering to the LORD. Rich and poor alike are to give the same amount of money as atonement for their souls. This money is to be used for maintaining the tabernacle. It is to be a memorial to the children of Israel regarding the atonement of their souls. (Like we partake of the LORD's Supper as a memorial of Jesus' atonement for our souls through His death, burial and resurrection.)

Observations:

1. Each individual is accountable to the LORD.
2. There is evidently a time of accountability in each person's life established by God.
3. Each soul is of equal value to God; one's position in society doesn't matter.

4. God alone is our source of protection and security.
5. Our actions are important in teaching our children God's truth.

Ex. 30:17 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Ex. 30:18 Thou shalt also make a laver of brass, and his foot *also of brass*, to wash *withal*: and thou shalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein.

Ex. 30:19 For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat:

Ex. 30:20 When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the LORD:

Ex. 30:21 So they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not: and it shall be a statute for ever to them, *even to him and to his seed throughout their generations*.

The LORD next speaks to Moses concerning a laver (washbowl) with a foot (pedestal, stand) that is to be placed between the tabernacle and the altar (for burnt offerings) and filled with water. Aaron and his sons are to wash their hands and feet with the water from this laver before entering the tabernacle or ministering at the altar through burned offerings. If they don't, they will die. This is a statute (law, requirement) that is to be followed for all the generations of priests to come.

Observations:

1. Cleanliness before the LORD is emphasized over and over again.
2. Those in ministry are held especially accountable for their cleanness/purity before God.
3. Their example in action is highly visible.
4. Misrepresentation of God's truth or disobedience by His representatives is a very serious offense.

Ex. 30:22 Moreover the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Ex. 30:23 Take thou also unto thee principal spices, of pure myrrh five hundred *shekels*, and of sweet cinnamon half so much, *even two hundred and fifty shekels*, and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty *shekels*,

Ex. 30:24 And of cassia five hundred *shekels*, after the shekel of the sanctuary, and of oil olive an hin:

Ex. 30:25 And thou shalt make it an oil of holy ointment, an ointment compound after the art of the apothecary: it shall be an holy anointing oil.

Next, God gives Moses the recipe for making the holy anointing oil to be used in connection with service at the tabernacle. It was to contain equal amounts of myrrh and cassia with half as much cinnamon and sweet calamus.

Myrrh – Associated with bitterness, used in embalming as well as perfumes, used in combination with wine to relieve pain.

Cassia – from the inner bark of a tree that resembled cinnamon, probably came from India, difference in strength and flavor from cinnamon.

Cinnamon – from a tree that grows only in India, Ceylon and China. (Maybe the fact that it is specified as sweet infers the main difference between it and the cassia.)

Calamus – very aromatic, used in the most precious perfumes, imported from Arabia and India, also called "sweet cane."

These spices are to be combined with olive oil. The NLT specifies these measurements as 12.5 pounds of myrrh and cassia, 6.25 pounds of cinnamon and calamus, and a gallon of olive oil.

The apothecary was the one who made perfumes.

Observations:

- 1) God continues to be very specific regarding what is acceptable for use in service to Him.
- 2) This oil (representative of the Spirit in our life) included spices that represent:
 - a) Bitterness - He is our gift as a result of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus.
 - b) Sweetness - He is the source of the fruits of the Spirit in our lives.
 - c) being highly desired or considered of great value – His gifting to us represents our position of value and worth before God.
- 3) The apothecary is representative of the Father who put together all the things necessary to make our prayers acceptable before Him.
- 4) Two more important observations by Mr. Guzik: “Since oil is emblematic of the Holy Spirit, we see that the Holy Spirit is not poured out to enhance our flesh....the work of the Holy Spirit is never to be imitated.”

Ex. 30:26 And thou shalt anoint the tabernacle of the congregation therewith, and the ark of the testimony,

Ex. 30:27 And the table and all his vessels, and the candlestick and his vessels, and the altar of incense,

Ex. 30:28 And the altar of burnt offering with all his vessels, and the laver and his foot.

Ex. 30:29 And thou shalt sanctify them, that they may be most holy: whatsoever toucheth them shall be holy.

Ex. 30:30 And thou shalt anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that *they* may minister unto me in the priest's office.

Ex. 30:31 And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, This shall be an holy anointing oil unto me throughout your generations.

Ex. 30:32 Upon man's flesh shall it not be poured, neither shall ye make *any other* like it, after the composition of it: it *is* holy, *and* it shall be holy unto you.

Ex. 30:33 Whosoever compoundeth *any* like it, or whosoever putteth *any* of it upon a stranger, shall even be cut off from his people.

This holy anointing oil was the oil to be used to anoint:

- The tabernacle of the congregation
- The ark of the testimony
- The table and all the vessels used on it
- The candlestick and vessels used with it
- The altar of incense
- The altar of burnt offering and all the vessels used at it
- The laver and its pedestal
- Aaron and his sons (the priests)

The purpose of the anointing was to sanctify (clean, purify, dedicate, consecrate) these items and these men to God's service and declare them holy before Him. The people of Israel are to be instructed that this particular mixture of oil and spices is to be a holy anointing oil for all the coming generations. It is not to be used as a simple perfume for man. They are not to try and make something similar to it. Anyone who misuses this oil is to be "cut off" (the Hebrew indicates destroyed/consumed) from his people.

1. Everything that is used in service before God is to be dedicated, clean and pure.
2. Holy things are separate and distinct from the things of this world.
3. We are not to take away from the importance of the holiness and righteousness of God's directives by making changes that would appear to be same but are different. Holiness demands purity.

Ex. 30:34 And the LORD said unto Moses, Take unto thee sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum; *these* sweet spices with pure frankincense: of each shall there be a like *weight*:

Ex. 30:35 And thou shalt make it a perfume, a confection after the art of the apothecary, tempered together, pure *and* holy:

Ex. 30:36 And thou shalt beat *some* of it very small, and put of it before the testimony in the tabernacle of the congregation, where I will meet with thee: it shall be unto you most holy.

Ex. 30:37 And *as for* the perfume which thou shalt make, ye shall not make to yourselves according to the composition thereof: it shall be unto thee holy for the LORD.

Ex. 30:38 Whosoever shall make like unto that, to smell thereto, shall even be cut off from his people.

Now the LORD gives directions to Moses regarding the recipe for the incense that is to be used at the altar of incense. Equal amounts of the following spices are to be used:

Stacte – a sweet spice (Some say it is distilled myrrh; others that it is the gum of the storax shrub, which was highly valued by the Syrians for use in medicines.)

Onycha – from a shellfish, gives off an odor like "castoreum." (used in perfumes and in medicines as an anti-spasmodic)

Galbanum – from a gum resin, produces an unpleasant odor when burned, possibly added to the incense to help it burn, used as a condiment and for medicinal purposes.

Frankincense – a white substance that produces a fragrant odor; it is associated with prayer. This is not the same frankincense of modern commerce.

Observation:

1. Again, what is acceptable in service to God is very specific and is a response in obedience to God's directions.