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**Altar
of
Incense**

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Altar of Incense.

A Brief overview of the golden altar of incense: the golden altar of incense stood in the Holy Place of the temple, with the table of shewbread and lampstand. It was around one and a half feet square and three feet high, and made of acacia wood overlaid with pure gold. It had a molding of gold around its top and four golden horns at each corner made of one piece of gold. Two golden rings were on each side to place two golden poles in for carrying it, and used to burn incense on to the LORD.

The ingredients of the incense: the incense was made of an equal part of four precious spices (stacte, onycha, galbanum and frankincense) and was considered holy. (Exodus 30:34-38).

Following are some of the things the altar signifies:

- It was made of acacia wood, which is incorruptible and has long duration, signifying the perpetuity of Christ's intercession.
- The altar was covered with gold signifying the glory and excellency of Christ.
- Every morning and evening, the priests were to burn incense on the golden altar at the same time the daily burnt offerings were made, and were to be kept continually burning throughout the day and the night as a pleasing aroma to the LORD, signifying those in Christ should continually keep their love and passion for Christ alive every day and endeavour to live a lifestyle that brings a good testimony to his name.
- It is symbolic of the true altar, which is Jesus crucified, for he is the altar that truly sanctifies and cleanses those who come to him, and the High Priest that makes our intercession to God acceptable.
- The altar was covered with gold signifying the glory and excellency of Christ.
- The altars shape was foursquare, as is the city of the new Jerusalem, signifying that Christ's intercession avails for all his people in the four corners of the world (i.e., north, south, east, and west)
- On the altars four corners were four horns, signifying strength, and power, but may also represent Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and the Gospel sent into the four corners of the world, which is the strength and power of God for salvation.

Blood poured on the altar: the high priest carried some of the blood of the animal that was sacrificed on the altar of sacrifice in the court of the temple into the Holy Place and poured it on the four horns of the golden altar of incense to cleanse and purify the altar from the sins of the Israelites (Lev. 4:7).

- Then he (the priest) shall go out to the altar (of sacrifice) that is before the LORD and make atonement for it, and shall take some of the blood of the bull and some of the blood of the goat, and put it on the horns of the altar all around. (Lev. 16:18).

This means the altar cannot signify Christ (as some believe), for he was without sin and in no need of cleansing, rather the focus should be upon the blood and its cleansing power, with this in mind, I would suggest the altar signifies the faithful church and the faithful believer being cleansed by the blood in the hands of the high priest, signifying, the blood of the

Lord Jesus Christ, our perfect High Priest cleansing all who come to him, and denoting that no matter how holy those in Christ maybe, they still require the blood of Christ to cleanse them.

The golden altar of incense also signifies the following:

- Jesus is the true sacrifice and the true High Priest, and it is only through his blood that God accepts us and we are saved.
- The power of Jesus blood washes clean, those who confess their sins and ask for His forgiveness.
- Suffering accompanies the work of the Gospel and the Christian walk.

In Revelation chapter six we read:

- When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne. ¹⁰ They cried out with a loud voice, “O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” (Rev. 6:9–10).

The words, “I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar,” signify the following:

- The martyrs' cry for the avenging of their blood, and by extension the cry of all the faithful for Christ to return to bring justice to our world.
- The cry and prayers of the faithful from the four corners of the world (i.e., north, south, east, and west).
- Christ interceding for his people.
- The prayers of the faithful ascending as a sweet fragrance from earth to the Throne of God and the Lamb in heaven. The picture of the prayers of the faithful ascending up to heaven like incense is beautifully captured in the following words of David.
 - Let my prayer be counted as incense before you, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice! (Psalm 141:2).

And, also in John’s vision in Revelations.

- Another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer, and he was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar before the throne, ⁴and the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God from the hand of the angel. (Rev. 8:3-4).

SNAPSHOT: most altars were made of stone or brass, the fact the altar of incense was made made of acacia wood overlaid with pure gold, and the prayers of the faithful are spoken of as being in a golden censer on the golden altar, signifies how precious the prayers of the faithful are to God. In the book of Leviticus, we read:

- And he shall take a censer full of coals of fire from the altar before the LORD, and two handfuls of sweet incense beaten small, and he shall bring it inside the veil ¹³ and put the incense on the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is over the testimony, so that he does not die. (Lev. 16:12–13).

The altar stood in front of the veil that separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. The priest would take the censer/bowl full of hot coals off the golden altar and carry it behind the veil, and then drop the handful of incense onto the hot coals which created a cloud of sweet-smelling smoke that covered the mercy seat that sits over the Law inside the ark

of the covenant, signifying that God's mercy covers and protects the faithful from the condemnation of the law, when they come before Him in prayer and repentance.

Putting all these things together, the golden altar of incense signifies the fulness of Jesus intercession before God, for all his people, in the four corners of the earth, as well as Christ's power to protect and defend them, and scatter and destroy his and their enemies.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

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