

Message Five

The Golden Incense Altar

Scripture Reading: Exo. 30:1-10; Heb. 7:25; Rom. 8:34, 26-27; Rev. 8:3-4

I. We need to see a vision of the golden incense altar—Exo. 30:1-10:

- A. The incense altar signifies Christ as the Intercessor to maintain the relationship between God and His people—Heb. 7:25; Rom. 8:34:
 - 1. The incense altar is a type of the person of Christ—Exo. 30:1-3.
 - 2. The incense altar signifies Christ praying, Christ interceding—John 17.
- B. The incense altar is the place from which the activities at all the other places in the tabernacle and the outer court are motivated; Christ's interceding life motivates us to experience the altar, the laver, the table, the lampstand, and the Ark—Heb. 7:25.
- C. The executing center of God's administration in the universe is the incense altar in Revelation 8:
 - 1. The book of Revelation is a book of God's administration, a book of divine execution:
 - a. This book reveals the throne of God and the administration of God throughout the universe—4:1-2, 5; 5:6.
 - b. In the book of Revelation, a book of God's executing, we see that the divine administration, the divine executing, is always carried out by the incense altar—8:3-4.
 - 2. In Revelation 8:3 the incense altar is directly in front of the throne of God's authority:
 - a. Christ as another Angel comes and adds His incense to the prayers of the saints—v. 3.
 - b. This incense then ascends to God at the throne of administration, and God answers the saints' prayers—v. 4:
 - (1) When the prayers of the saints ascend to God with the incense of Christ, God executes the policies of His administration.
 - (2) As a result, fire comes down to earth to execute the divine judgments—v. 5.
- D. Christ's interceding life, His prayer life, is the center of the divine administration and of the execution of His government on earth—Rom. 8:34; Rev. 8:3-4:
 - 1. The executing of God's administration is motivated by the prayers offered to Him from the incense altar.
 - 2. The prayers offered at the incense altar govern the universe.
 - 3. This is a picture of the incense altar being the administering throne of God for God to execute His judgments in His administration.
 - 4. It is crucial for us to see that the execution of God's administration is motivated by the prayers offered to Him from the incense altar.
- E. After His resurrection and ascension, the individual Christ has become the corporate Christ; thus, today before God not only is the individual Christ interceding, but the corporate Christ, the Head with the Body, is interceding as well—1 Cor. 12:12; Acts 12:5, 12:

1. Today the intercessor is not merely Christ Himself but is Christ with His Body.
 2. Christ the Head is interceding in the heavens, and the church the Body is interceding on earth.
 3. As the members of Christ and parts of the Body-Christ, we cooperate with Christ in His ministry of intercession, carrying out His intercession in our prayers of intercession—Rom. 8:34, 26-27; 1 Tim. 2:1.
- F. If we have a clear view of the incense altar, our prayer life will be revolutionized, and we will pray for the executing of God's purpose, for the carrying out of the divine administration, and for the dispensing of God's supplying grace.

II. We need to experience the golden incense altar—Exo. 30:1-10; Rom. 8:26-27; 1 Tim. 2:1:

- A. We need to participate in Christ's interceding life—Eph. 6:18-19; Col. 4:3; 1 Thes. 5:25; 2 Thes. 3:1; Heb. 13:18.
- B. The kind of prayer we have depends on the kind of person we are—Luke 9:54-55; 1 Tim. 2:8; Eph. 6:18; Col. 1:9:
 1. Our prayers represent ourselves and reveal our person, revealing who we are, what we are, and where we are.
 2. Whether we are in God or outside of God is indicated by the way we pray.
- C. If we would intercede with Christ at the incense altar, we need to see three crucial matters:
 1. When we pray, we should be in the tabernacle; that is, we should be in God—John 1:14; 14:2-3, 20, 13-14; 15:4a, 7; 17:24, 26:
 - a. The picture of the tabernacle portrays Christ as the incarnated God—1:14.
 - b. Because the incense altar is in the center of the tabernacle, which signifies the incarnated God, to be at the golden incense altar is to be in the incarnated God.
 - c. Whenever we pray, we should experientially be in God; then we will not only pray to God but also pray in God.
 2. When we are about to pray, we should first be satisfied by eating holy food; that is, we should pray with God within us as our energizing supply—v. 29; 6:53-56:
 - a. We need to feast upon Christ as the bread of the Presence—Exo. 25:30.
 - b. If we would come to the incense altar, we must be persons who are in God and who have God in us; that is, we should be one with God and mingled with Him—John 14:20; 1 Cor. 6:17.
 3. When we pray, we should offer incense to God; that is, we should pray with Christ as the incense—Exo. 30:34-38; Rev. 8:3-4.
- D. When we pray at the incense altar, there will be neither strange fire nor strange incense in our prayer—Lev. 10:1; Exo. 30:9a:
 1. To have strange fire in our prayer is to have some kind of motive that is natural and that has not been dealt with by the cross.
 2. To have strange incense in our prayer is to have prayer that is not related to Christ.

- E. If we would pray in the tabernacle at the incense altar, we need to be burned to ashes, reduced to nothing—Lev. 6:13; Psa. 20:3; Gal. 2:20; 1 Cor. 1:28b:
 - 1. To be in the tabernacle is to be in God, and the requirement for being in God is that we become nothing—John 15:4a, 5b.
 - 2. If we are burned to ashes, we will no longer be natural—1 Cor. 2:14-15:
 - a. Our conduct, our sight, and our virtue equal our natural being, which is versus Christ as God's testimony.
 - b. If we would pray at the incense altar, we must no longer have our natural conduct, our natural sight, and our natural virtue.
 - c. If we would pray at the incense altar, we must have Christ as our life supply for proper conduct, as our light for proper sight, and as our virtue for us to have a sweet fragrance ascending to God.
- F. When we pray at the incense altar, it is very difficult for us to be occupied with ourselves—Rom. 8:34, 26-27:
 - 1. The reason self is not involved at the incense altar is that in order to pray at this altar, we must first become ashes.
 - 2. At the incense altar we pray for God's economy, for God's dispensing, for God's move, and for God's recovery.