

Message Six

The Altar of Burnt Offering

Scripture Reading: Exo. 27:1-8; Heb. 9:14; 13:10

I. The two altars—the altar of burnt offering and the golden incense altar—are for the carrying out of God’s economy—Exo. 27:1-8; 30:1-10; Heb. 13:10; 9:4; Rev. 8:3:

- A. God’s work is to complete His economy, and in His economy God desires to have an enlarged, universal, divine-human incorporation—John 14:20:
 - 1. God has come out of the tabernacle in order to bring us into the tabernacle, to bring us to the very place where He dwells.
 - 2. The Lord Jesus went to the cross with the intention that we, fallen sinners, might be brought back to Himself in the place where He dwells—vv. 3, 10-11, 20; 17:21, 24.
- B. The two altars are related to God’s complete salvation—Rom. 5:10:
 - 1. The altar of burnt offering is related to God’s judicial redemption accomplished in the physical realm by Christ in His earthly ministry—v. 10a; 8:3; Heb. 9:14; 7:27; 10:10.
 - 2. The golden altar of incense is related to God’s organic salvation carried out in the divine and mystical realm by Christ in His heavenly ministry—Rom. 5:10b; 8:34; Heb. 7:25; 9:24.
- C. We need to see that the two altars (Exo. 40:5-6) are connected by the anointing (30:26-28), by the blood of the sin offering (Lev. 16:18; 4:7), and by the fire that burned the offerings (6:13; 16:12).

II. The altar of burnt offering typifies the cross of Christ—Exo. 27:1; 38:1; 40:6, 29; Heb. 13:10:

- A. The cross is the base, the ground, of all spiritual experience; all spiritual experience begins from the cross—Gal. 6:14; 1 Cor. 2:2; Gal. 2:20.
- B. The cross is the center of God’s operation in His economy—3:1; 1:4; 2:19-21; 3:13; 5:24; 6:14:
 - 1. In His economy God gives us one person—Christ—and one way—the cross—Col. 1:12, 20, 27.
 - 2. The cross is the center of God’s government; God governs everything by the cross and deals with everything by the cross.

III. The altar of burnt offering was made of acacia wood overlaid with bronze—Exo. 27:1-2:

- A. The basic substance of the altar of burnt offering was acacia wood:
 - 1. The acacia wood signifies the humanity of the Lord Jesus, who was judged by God on the cross as our Substitute—1 Tim. 2:5.
 - 2. The cross is not merely a thing; the cross is related to a person, and this person is Christ.
 - 3. The saving element is not in the cross as a thing but in a person, in the One who was crucified for us—Gal. 2:20.

4. The effectiveness of the cross is not in the cross itself; it is in that humanity, which is related to the cross and which was crucified on it.
- B. The bronze signifies God's righteous judgment on Christ as our Substitute—Exo. 27:2; Num. 16:37-39; Rom. 8:3.
- C. The acacia wood overlaid with bronze signifies that Christ became a man to die on the cross to bear the judgment of God for us—1 Pet. 3:18.

IV. The grating is the most important part of the altar, for it depicts the mystery of Christ's redemption—Exo. 27:4; Rom. 3:24; Col. 1:14:

- A. The grating signifies Christ the Redeemer in His redemptive work—Exo. 27:4; Eph. 1:7.
- B. The bronze grating, with its rings and poles, is the content of the altar, signifying the inner content of Christ's redemption—Exo. 27:4.
- C. The bronze grating within the altar signifies that God's judgment reached the inward parts of Christ—Psa. 22:14.
- D. That the grating was within the altar signifies that God's judgment (bronze) upon Christ as our Substitute was not merely outward but reached the inward parts of Christ—v. 14:
 1. The holy fire of God's judgment was not only outside of Christ but also burned within Him.
 2. When Christ bore God's judgment, that judgment reached His heart, His inward parts; His heart melted in His inward parts—v. 14.
 3. God's judgment upon Christ was experienced more inwardly than it was outwardly:
 - a. Actually, Christ suffered more inwardly than He did outwardly.
 - b. The grating—the place where the holy fire of God's judgment burned—was in the Lord Jesus, in His inward parts.
 - c. The significance of the grating being within the altar is that Christ bore God's judgment with His heart and not only on His body.
- E. Redemption is not merely a matter—it is a person, Christ Himself; therefore, Christ and His redemption cannot be separated—Heb. 9:12.

V. The four rings of bronze at the four ends of the grating typify the eternal Spirit—Exo. 27:4; Heb. 9:14:

- A. The all-inclusive Christ died an all-inclusive death through the eternal Spirit; thus, the efficacy of Christ's redemption depends upon the eternal Spirit:
 1. Christ's blood is effective because He offered Himself to God through the eternal Spirit—1 John 1:7.
 2. Christ offered Himself as the sacrifice, but the efficacy and power of Christ's redemption depend on the eternal Spirit; it is crucial that we see this—Heb. 9:14.
- B. The rings forming one piece with the grating indicates that the redeeming Christ issues in the Spirit—John 7:39; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Gal. 3:1-2.

VI. The poles upon the two sides of the altar signify the move of the cross by the coordination of the believers as a testimony—Exo. 27:6-7:

- A. Those who preach the cross, proclaiming Christ crucified, must do so in coordination as a testimony—1 Cor. 1:23.
 - B. If we are living persons preaching the cross by bearing a testimony in coordination, we will be qualified to carry the altar in its journey on earth.
- VII. With the altar of burnt offering, we have a picture of the entire New Testament—the redeeming Christ, the Spirit, and the church—Rom. 8:3, 9-11; 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 15:3-4, 45b; 12:12-13; Gal. 1:4; 3:1-2, 13-14; 6:10, 15:**
- A. In the Gospels we see Christ as the redemptive grating and the rings in the process of being formed—John 1:29; 3:14; 12:24; 19:34; 7:37-39; 14:16-18.
 - B. In the book of Acts we have the Spirit as the four rings—1:8.
 - C. In the Epistles we have the definition of the four rings—Heb. 9:14; Rom. 8:9-11; 1 Cor. 15:45b; 6:17; Gal. 3:1-2, 14; Rev. 5:6.
 - D. The Body of Christ carries the redeeming Christ throughout the earth by the all-inclusive Spirit—1 Cor. 12:12-13; Rev. 1:12-13a; 2:1, 7a.
 - E. The Body of Christ bears the testimony of Jesus throughout the earth by the all-inclusive Spirit; this is the revelation of the New Testament—2 Cor. 4:5, 7.