

WEEK 36 — OUTLINE

The Incense

Scripture Reading: Exo. 30:34-38; Psa. 141:2; Rev. 5:8; 8:3-5

« DAY 1 »

I. The holy anointing oil (Exo. 30:23-25) signifies Christ as the all-inclusive Spirit coming to us from God, whereas the incense (v. 35) signifies Christ going to God from us; this is a divine traffic in two directions:

- A. The anointing brings God to us in Christ and through Christ for our participation in the divine element.
- B. The incense is our going to God with Christ and as Christ in prayer for God's enjoyment (John 14:13-14; 15:16; 16:23-24, 26).
- C. This traffic has much to do with our Christian experience, which is a matter of God's coming to us in Christ and our going to God in Christ and with Christ.

« DAY 2 »

II. The incense consisted of five ingredients (Exo. 30:34-35):

- A. The three spices signify the Triune God in resurrection, and the addition of pure frankincense, making the number of ingredients four, signifies the humanity of Christ.
- B. Each of the three spices signifies the death of Christ (v. 34):
 1. Stacte, a kind of myrrh, a resinous gum produced by a tree, signifies the sweet death of Christ's generating life (signified by the plant life—John 12:24).
 2. Onycha, the shell of a small animal that grows in the marshes of the Red Sea, signifies the death of Christ with His redemptive life (signified by the animal life—1:29).
 3. Galbanum, also a resinous gum from a tree, signifies the powerful death of Christ's generating life.
 4. The second of the spices, being of the animal life, signifies that the second of the Godhead was slain to accomplish redemption.
 5. The three spices indicate that Christ's death in His generating life and His redeeming life has three functions: to generate us as sons of God, to redeem us from the fall, and to expel the serpent, the Devil (cf. 12:24; 1 Pet. 1:18-19; Heb. 2:14).
- C. The fourth ingredient, frankincense, is a white resinous gum, signifying the sweet resurrection of Christ (Phil. 3:10).

« DAY 3 »

- D. The three spices and the frankincense are seasoned with salt (Exo. 30:35), making the ingredients five, the number five signifying responsibility (Matt. 25:2):
1. In typology salt signifies the killing power and preserving power of Christ's death (Mark 9:50).
 2. The seasoning of the four ingredients of the incense with salt signifies that our prayer needs to be "salted" by the cross so that all the impurity and bias within us may be killed.
- E. According to Exodus 30:35-36, the incense must be salted, beaten, and burned:
1. Beating the incense and putting it before the Testimony in the Tent of Meeting signify the blending of Christ's sweet death and His fragrant resurrection and the offering of His death and resurrection to God on the incense altar as a base for the intercession of Christ and His members (Rom. 8:34).
 2. In order to have Christ as the incense to offer to God as a sweet-smelling fragrance, we need the genuine experiences of Christ with all the ingredients of the incense, and these experiences must be salted, beaten, and burned.

« DAY 4 »

III. In both the Old Testament and the New Testament, incense signifies our prayer (Psa. 141:2; Rev. 5:8):

- A. In particular, the incense refers to the resurrected and ascended Christ with all His work, fruits, and merit—all that He is, all that He has accomplished, and all that He does (Eph. 1:7, 19-23; Heb. 7:25).
- B. In Revelation 5:8 the bowls are the saints' prayers, whereas the incense is Christ added to the saints' prayers.
- C. In 8:3 incense signifies Christ with all His merit added to the prayers of the saints so that the saints' prayers offered upon the golden altar might be acceptable to God:
1. Prayer with Christ as the incense is actually Christ Himself ascending to God; this is a sweet-smelling fragrance to God.
 2. This kind of prayer simultaneously satisfies God with a sweet fragrance and carries out God's economy, God's administration (v. 3).
 3. The smoke of the incense indicates that the incense is burned and ascends to God with the prayers of the saints (v. 4):
 - a. This implies that the prayers of the saints become effective and are acceptable to God.
 - b. The smoke indicates that the saints' prayers are effective because Christ has been

added to them as incense; it is the incense, not the saints' prayers, that causes the smoke to rise.

- c. The smoke of the incense goes up with the prayers of the saints to the throne of God, and the prayers are answered (vv. 3, 5).

« DAY 5 »

4. The incense typifies the resurrected and ascended Christ, the unique One who is received by God and acceptable to Him; thus, He becomes a sweet savor to God (vv. 3-4).
5. Since the incense signifies Christ, to burn the incense means to pray Christ; God's desire is that when we pray, we pray Christ.

IV. The two altars—the bronze altar and the golden incense altar—are closely related in our spiritual experience (Exo. 40:5-6; 30:6-10, 26-28):

A. We need to see how the two altars—the bronze altar and the golden altar—are connected:

1. The two altars are connected by the anointing (vv. 26-28):
 - a. The anointing signifies God's move.
 - b. According to God's move, the golden altar and the bronze altar are connected.
2. The two altars are connected by the blood of the sin offering (Lev. 16:18; 4:7):
 - a. On the Day of Expiation, the most important sin offering was offered.
 - b. After the blood of this offering was shed, the blood was brought from the bronze altar and was applied to the four horns of the incense altar.
 - c. The expiating blood connected the two altars.
3. The two altars are connected by the fire that burned the offerings (6:13; 16:12):
 - a. The only fire that could be used to burn the incense was the fire from the bronze altar, the fire that had come down from the heavens.
 - b. No strange fire was allowed to be on the incense altar for the burning of the incense (10:1-11).

B. We need to have the burning and the ascending both from the bronze altar and from the golden incense altar (1:17b; 23:18; 16:12-13; Exo. 40:26-27):

1. Both from the burning on the bronze altar and from the burning on the golden incense altar a sweet savor ascends to God for His satisfaction.

« DAY 6 »

2. At the bronze altar we have the sweetness of Christ in His death for our redemption, termination, and replacement; at the golden incense altar we have the sweetness of Christ in His resurrection and ascension for our acceptance.

- C. When we pray at the golden incense altar, there should 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 (Lev. 10:1).
 2. To have strange incense in our prayer is to have prayer that is not related to Christ (Exo. 30:9a).
 3. When we are one with the Lord at the incense altar, interceding for others and for the Lord's interests, our prayer is a fragrant incense to God (v. 7; 40:26-27).

<< WEEK 36 — DAY 1 >>

Morning Nourishment

Exo. 30:34-35 ...Jehovah said to Moses, Take fragrant spices—stacte and onycha and galbanum—fragrant spices with pure frankincense; there shall be an equal part of each; and you shall make of it incense, a fragrant compound according to the work of a compounder, seasoned with salt, pure and holy.

Toward the end of the section concerned with the revelation of the tabernacle two things are described: the anointing oil and the incense. I believe that in the foregoing messages we have considered thoroughly the matter of the anointing oil. We have seen that this oil is a fine and all-inclusive type of Christ being the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit. As the life-giving Spirit, Christ not only comes to us from God, but He is also God coming to us. His coming is not only from God but also with God, for Christ comes as God. Eventually, this coming One passed through death and resurrection and has become the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit. There is a divine traffic in this universe that moves in two directions. The coming of God to us in Christ is the first direction of this divine traffic. With the incense we have the other direction of this divine traffic, Christ going from us to God. Therefore, the anointing oil is Christ as God coming to us from God, and the incense is Christ going from us to God. It is important that we all see this two-way traffic. (Life-study of Exodus, p. 1777)

Today's Reading

This traffic has much to do with our Christian experience. Do you know what our Christian experience is? It is God coming to us in Christ and our going to God in Christ and with Christ. God's coming to us is a matter of the anointing, and our going to God is a matter of prayer. This divine traffic is the proper Christian experience. In particular, our going to God in Christ requires experience.

If we would enter into God's presence, we must first come to the bronze altar. Then we must spend time at the showbread table and the lampstand. The lampstand will eventually guide us to the Ark, where God meets with us on the propitiatory cover. Now we are in the presence of God. The outcome of being in His presence is the prayer that is Christ ascending to God as incense.

Have you ever paid careful attention to these two pictures in Exodus 30, the one of the ointment and the other of the incense? The significance of these pictures is tremendous. The significance here is that of two-way traffic, the coming and the going. As we have pointed out, the ointment is coming to us, and the incense is going to God. Christ as the Spirit coming to us is the ointment, and Christ ascending from us to God is the incense. The ointment is toward us; the incense is toward God. The ointment is for us to enjoy, and the incense is for God's enjoyment. We should not think that the incense is for our enjoyment. If we try to enjoy it ourselves, we shall be cut off. Exodus 30:38 speaks clearly concerning this: "Whoever shall make any like it, to smell it, shall be cut off from his people." Incense is absolutely and entirely for God. However, there is an enjoyment for us, and this enjoyment is the ointment, the compound Spirit. We have emphasized the fact that with the ointment the priests and all the parts of the tabernacle were anointed. This is our portion. The incense is God's portion. The ointment is Christ for us; the incense is Christ for God.

In our experience we should not only have one-way traffic. This means that we should not only have Christ coming to us but also have Christ going back to God. We need to have two-way traffic, God coming to us through Christ and our going to God through Christ. We should complete the circuit by burning the incense. Therefore, we need the anointing ointment, and we need the burning of the incense as well. God anoints us with the ointment, and we burn the incense to God...We shall [now] consider in detail the elements of the incense. (Life-study of Exodus, pp. 1777, 1784-1785)

Further Reading: Life-study of Exodus, msg. 167; Truth Lessons—Level Three, vol. 1, Isn. 20

« WEEK 36 — DAY 2 »

Morning Nourishment

John 12:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

Phil. 3:10 To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.

Without adequate spiritual experience, we shall not be able to understand the type of the incense or interpret it. This type is actually very strange, more strange than that of the anointing oil. The incense is strange because its three spices—stacte, onycha, and galbanum—are unusual. Even the words themselves are not common. Rather, they are peculiar words used to refer to unusual things.

In [Exodus 30:34] the Lord twice speaks of fragrant spices. Stacte, the first of these spices, is a resinous gum used as the purest myrrh, a myrrh that is edible....In particular, it [is a kind of myrrh that] can heal the throat and reduce excess saliva. It is an edible medicine. However, the other two spices, onycha and galbanum, are not edible. (Life-study of Exodus, pp. 1777-1778)

Today's Reading

The three fragrant spices signify the Triune God in resurrection (the number three signifies both the Triune God and resurrection), and the addition of pure frankincense, making the number of ingredients four, signifies the humanity of Christ....The compounding of the four ingredients into one incense signifies the mingling of God with man, of divinity with humanity, in Christ as the incense. Each of the three spices signifies the death of Christ, as follows: (1) stacte, a kind of myrrh, a resinous gum produced by a tree, signifies the sweet death of Christ's generating life (signified by the plant life—John 12:24); (2) onycha, the shell of a small animal that grows in the marshes of the Red Sea, signifies the death of Christ with His redemptive life (signified by the animal life—John 1:29); and (3) galbanum, also a resinous gum from a tree, signifies the powerful death of Christ's generating life. The disagreeable and offensive odor of galbanum strengthened the fragrance of the other spices and caused the fragrance of the incense to remain and endure. Galbanum was used to repel noxious insects and poisonous reptiles, including serpents. The second of the spices, being of the animal life, signifies that the second of the Godhead was slain to accomplish redemption. Hence, the three spices indicate that Christ's death in His generating life and His redeeming life has three functions: to generate us as sons of God, to redeem us from the fall, and to expel the serpent, the Devil (cf. John 12:24; 1 Pet. 1:18-19; Heb. 2:14). The fourth ingredient, frankincense, is a white resinous gum, signifying the sweet resurrection of Christ. The three spices and the frankincense are seasoned with salt (Exo. 30:35), making the number of ingredients five, the number five signifying responsibility (Matt. 25:2). (Exo. 30:34, footnote 1)

With the ointment and incense we see the Triune God, divinity, humanity, and Christ's death and resurrection. In both we see divinity mingled with humanity. In both we see the Triune God in man passing through death and coming forth in resurrection. In both we have the numbers three and four signifying divinity and humanity. With the incense the three spices signify Christ's death for generating and redeeming, and the frankincense signifies His resurrection. This means that with the incense we have a picture of the wonderful person of Christ. The incense is nothing less than Christ Himself with all the process through which He has passed and with all He has accomplished.

With the composition of both the anointing oil and the incense the principle is nearly the same. However, the anointing oil is for God's coming to us, and the incense is for our going to God. In the anointing we have the Trinity, divinity, humanity, and the death and resurrection of Christ. In the incense we also have the Trinity, divinity, humanity, and Christ's death and resurrection. (Life-study of Exodus, pp. 1789-1790)

Further Reading: Life-study of Exodus, msg. 169; CWWL, 1969, vol. 1, "How to Meet," ch. 18

« WEEK 36 — DAY 3 »

Morning Nourishment

Exo. 30:36 And you shall beat some of it very fine, and put some of it before the Testimony in the Tent of Meeting, where I will meet with you; it shall be to you most holy.

Mark 9:50 Salt is good, but if the salt becomes unsalty, with what will you restore its saltiness? Have salt in yourselves and be at peace with one another.

The unlimitedness of Christ is indicated by the fact that no measurements are given for the stacte, onycha, galbanum, and frankincense. We are simply told that there were to be equal parts, or portions, of each element used to make the incense.

Salt in Exodus 30:35 signifies the effectiveness of Christ's death. This salt kills negative things and also functions as a preservative (Lev. 2:13). In salt there is corruption-killing power. In typology salt signifies the preserving power of the death of Christ and also its killing power.

The elements of the incense are tempered together with salt. The anointing ointment is tempered with the olive oil, the Holy Spirit. But the incense is tempered with salt, the cross of Christ. (Life-study of Exodus, p. 1800)

Today's Reading

If we would experience the Christian life in a finer way, we shall learn that our prayer must be thoroughly salted...[with the] element [of] the cross. God's coming to us is not a matter of the daily working of the cross. Rather, His coming is altogether in the oil, in the Spirit. However, our going to God requires the cross. We need the cross all the time. The salt here signifies the cross of Christ, His killing death. We need to experience the killing death of Christ in our prayer. I can testify that I have much experience of this. If my motive, intention, and heart are not pure, I am not able to pray. Furthermore, if my spirit has some kind of bias, I cannot pray either. In order to pray, my spirit must be without bias, and my motive and intention must be pure. To be pure in this way requires salt; it requires the cross.

Young people may realize that if they commit sins, they will find it very difficult to pray. But as we grow in the Lord and come to a finer stage in the spiritual life, we shall see that even a little bias in our spirit can keep us from praying properly. It is not necessary to sin in order to have your prayer hindered. Even a small amount of bias in your spirit can hinder your prayer. You may still pray if you have bias in your spirit, but deep within you may realize that this is not the kind of prayer the Lord desires. I dare not say whether or not the Lord will answer a prayer that issues from a biased spirit. However, I am assured that this is not the kind of prayer He desires.

I also know that such prayer does not have a pleasant fragrance to Him. Instead, He finds the odor of that kind of prayer very offensive. Many times our prayer has been altogether offensive and unpleasant to the Lord's sense of smell. I believe that those saints with experience can endorse this word and say amen to it. From their experience they know that prayer which issues from impure motives or from bias in our spirit is offensive to the Lord.

Do you intend to pray? As you are about to pray, you need to be crossed out. Your natural being, your natural way, your natural thought, your natural desire, your natural preference, your natural choice—all must be crossed out. (Life-study of Exodus, pp. 1792-1793)

According to Exodus 30:35-36, the incense must be salted, beaten, and burned. Beating the incense and putting it before the Testimony in the Tent of Meeting signify the blending of Christ's sweet death and His fragrant resurrection and the offering of His death and resurrection to God on the incense altar as a base for the intercession of Christ and His members. In order to have Christ as the incense to offer to God as a sweet-smelling fragrance, we need the genuine experiences of Christ with all the ingredients of the incense, and these experiences must be salted, beaten, and burned. (Exo. 30:36, footnote 1)

Further Reading: Life-study of Exodus, msg. 168; Lessons on Prayer, chs. 13, 16

« WEEK 36 — DAY 4 »

Morning Nourishment

Rev. 5:8 ...Each having a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which bowls are the prayers of the saints.

8:3-4 And another Angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and much incense was given to Him to offer with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense went up with the prayers of the saints out of the hand of the Angel before God.

Most Christians, including those who have been in the Lord's recovery for many years, still do not have much knowledge of what genuine prayer is. Furthermore, we may not have much experience of genuine prayer. We thank the Lord that sometimes our prayer is genuine....For the most part, our prayers have been natural.

Both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament incense signifies our prayer. In the Psalms the saints' prayer is likened to incense that is offered to God and ascends to Him (Psa. 141:2). However, incense is not actually for offering; it is for ascending....According to the Bible, prayer is not an offering; it is an incense that ascends to God. (Life-study of Exodus, pp. 1778-1779)

Today's Reading

Some say that the incense in Revelation 8 refers to the merits of Christ. This is so, but it refers even more to the resurrected Christ. It includes His merits, all that He is, all that He has accomplished, and all that He does. The resurrected Christ with all His work and fruits is the incense. As long as we receive the redemption of the blood and are in the termination of the cross, the Christ in us is joined with us. Then when we pray, it is Christ who prays. At such a time our prayer is the expression of Christ. As a result, before God these prayers are the incense which is acceptable to God and will be answered by God. (Lessons on Prayer, p. 163)

In Revelation 5:8 the bowls are the saints' prayers brought to God by the angelic elders (cf. 8:3-4), whereas the incense is Christ added to the saints' prayers....That in their worship to God the twenty-four angelic elders are holding the golden bowls full of incense shows that they, as priests, are ministering to God by bringing the saints' prayers to Him. (Rev. 5:8, footnote 1)

Incense signifies Christ with all His merit to be added to the prayers of the saints that the saints' prayers offered upon the golden altar might be acceptable to God. (Rev. 8:3, footnote 4)

The incense we burn at [the incense] altar is Christ Himself....A deep matter such as the burning of the incense can only be understood by experience. When you reach the point where you have this experience, you will see that your experience is exactly portrayed by the type of the incense in Exodus 30. You go to God in prayer, and your prayer is your going to God. Furthermore, this going to God is Christ. This is your prayer, a sweet-smelling fragrance to God. The prayer that ascends to Him as a sweet-smelling fragrance is God's administration and carries out God's plan. God has no other way to carry out His economy.

If we persist in seeking the Lord, eventually our experience will bring us into the realization of the fact that our prayer is simply Christ Himself. Our prayer is Christ, and it is also our going to God in Christ, with Christ, and even as Christ. This kind of prayer not only satisfies God with a sweet-smelling fragrance, but simultaneously carries out God's administration. (Life-study of Exodus, p. 1782)

The smoke of the incense indicates that the incense is burned and ascends to God with the prayers of the saints. This implies that the prayers of the saints become effective and are acceptable to God. In other words, smoke indicates that the saints' prayers are effective because Christ has been added to them as incense. The smoke of the incense goes up with the prayers of the saints to the throne of God, and the prayers are answered....It is incense, not the saints' prayers, that causes the smoke to rise. In our prayers we need to have Christ as the incense with the smoke that rises. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, p. 4277)

Further Reading: The Conclusion of the New Testament, msg. 420

« WEEK 36 — DAY 5 »

Morning Nourishment

Lev. 16:12-13 And he shall take a censer full of coals of fire from the altar before Jehovah, with his hands full of finely ground fragrant incense, and bring it inside the veil. And he shall put the incense upon the fire before Jehovah, that the cloud of the incense may cover the expiation cover that is over the Testimony, so that he does not die.

To burn the incense actually means to pray Christ. The incense typifies the resurrected and ascended Christ, the unique One who is received by God and acceptable to Him. Thus, He becomes a sweet savor to God. This savor, as the incense, should be in our prayer. Since the incense signifies Christ, to burn the incense means to pray Christ. God's desire is that when we pray, we pray Christ. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, p. 4277)

Today's Reading

Exodus 30:27 and 28 say that both the altar of incense and the altar of burnt offering were anointed with the holy anointing oil...Exodus 30:26-28 says, "And with it you shall anoint the Tent of Meeting and the Ark of the Testimony, and the table and all its utensils, and the lampstand and its utensils, and the altar of incense, and the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, and the laver and its base." Notice that the sequence in these verses is the tabernacle, the Ark, the table, the lampstand, the altar of incense, and the altar of burnt offering. Thus, the anointing connects the two altars.

The anointing signifies God's move. According to God's move, therefore, the incense altar and the altar of burnt offering are connected. The anointing is the connecting element.

The altars were also connected by the blood of the sin offering offered for propitiation, or atonement, on the Day of Atonement. The Day of Atonement, or as we would prefer to translate it, the Day of Expiation, occurred once a year. On that day the most important sin offering was offered. After the blood of this offering was shed, it was brought from the altar into the Holy Place and applied to the four corners of the incense altar. A portion of the blood was also brought into the Holy of Holies, and the remainder was poured out around the altar in the outer court.

Furthermore, the two altars were connected by the fire that burned on the altar in the outer court. If we read the Old Testament carefully, we shall see that no strange fire was allowed to be on the incense altar for the burning of the incense. Rather, the only fire that could be used to burn the incense was the fire from the altar of burnt offering, the fire which had come down from the heavens...The heavenly fire, the fire that came from God, that was used to burn the offerings on the altar of burnt offering was also used to burn the incense on the incense altar. By this we see that the fire that burned the offerings was also an element that linked these two altars.

From both the burning on the offering altar and from the burning on the incense altar a sweet savor ascended to God for His satisfaction. There was a difference, however, between these two kinds of burnings. The burning on the offering altar was a burning of judgment, but the burning on the incense altar was a burning of acceptance.

These two kinds of burning and ascending reflect each other. In particular, the first kind of sweet savor, that from the altar of burnt offering, is reflected in the second, that from the incense altar. The sweet savor ascending to God from the altar of burnt offering is reflected in the savor that ascended to Him from the incense altar. Here in these two kinds of sweet savor we have the sweetness of Christ in His death at the offering altar and the sweetness of Christ in His resurrection and ascension at the incense altar. The fragrance of Christ in His resurrection and ascension is for our acceptance. By these three elements—the anointing, the blood, and the fire—the two altars are connected. (Life-study of Exodus, pp. 1620-1621)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1969, vol. 1, "How to Meet," ch. 19; CWWL, 1966, vol. 1, "The Priesthood," ch. 15

« WEEK 36 — DAY 6 »

Morning Nourishment

Exo. 30:7 And Aaron shall burn on it fragrant incense; every morning when he dresses the lamps he shall burn it.

40:26-27 Then he put the golden altar in the Tent of Meeting before the veil, and he burned fragrant incense on it, as Jehovah had commanded Moses.

According to Exodus 20:24-26, the altar and sacrifices for the worship of God indicate that in order to worship God fallen man must be redeemed, terminated, and replaced. God requires man to worship Him through an altar and with a sacrifice. Furthermore, the one who worships God must lay his hand on the head of the sacrifice and thereby identify himself with it. The sacrifice is then slain and placed on the altar. All this indicates that fallen man needs to be redeemed, terminated, and replaced by Christ with His cross. We are redeemed and terminated by the altar, but we are replaced by Christ. (Life-study of Exodus, p. 830)

Today's Reading

Before we can appreciate these matters, we need to realize that we are sinners and that our case is hopeless. If we were not sinners, there would have been no need for God to redeem us. If we were not hopeless, God would not require that we be terminated and replaced. The fact that we need redemption, termination, and replacement indicates that we are sinful and hopeless.

The altar and the sacrifices imply redemption, termination, and replacement....Whenever I read of the altar and the sacrifices, I see Christ, my replacement, with His cross. Now I can say, "Praise the Lord that even though I am sinful, I have been redeemed, and even though I am hopeless, I can be terminated and replaced. Lord, I thank You that the process of being replaced by You is still going on, and one day it will be completed. The time is coming when I shall be fully replaced by You." (Life-study of Exodus, pp. 830-831)

Regarding the incarnated Triune God, there are two main consummations....The first consummation is the first altar—the bronze altar for the offering of all the sacrifices (Christ in His crucifixion) to solve all the problems of man before God.

The second altar is the golden altar of incense (Christ in His ascension) for God's acceptance of the redeemed sinners (Psa. 84:3). When we experience Christ in His ascension, we have a place of rest, and we sense that we are at home. At the first altar we have a nest, and at the second altar we have a resting place in the house of God. (Life-study of the Psalms, pp. 384-385)

In type, to offer strange incense is to pray something that is not Christ or is not related to Christ (cf. footnote 1 on Exo. 30:7), and to use strange fire (Lev. 10:1) is to pray with motives that have not been dealt with by the cross (cf. footnote 3 on Exo. 30:35). (Exo. 30:9, footnote 1)

Burning the incense typifies praying (Psa. 141:2; Luke 1:10-11; Rev. 8:3-4). The incense typifies the resurrected and ascended Christ (see footnote 1 on Exo. 30:35 and footnote 4 on Rev. 8:3). Hence, to burn the incense is to pray Christ, to pray in Christ and with Christ as the incense. This kind of prayer is intercessory prayer, not prayer for ourselves but prayer for the carrying out of the divine administration, for the dispensing of God's supplying grace, and for the churches and the saints. Such prayer is a fragrant incense to God—it fulfills His purpose, satisfies His desire, and delights His heart. (Exo. 30:7, footnote 1)

According to typology, there is no indication that the incense altar is a place to pray. This is our interpretation. The incense altar is a place to burn incense, and burning the incense typifies praying. How should we pray at the incense altar? Now that we are in God and He is in us, and now that we are at the incense altar, we must burn the incense. But what is this incense? The incense is Christ. Christ is the tabernacle, Christ is the offerings, and Christ is also the incense. Thus, to burn the incense means to pray Christ....We should not offer as incense anything except Christ. (Life-study of Exodus, p. 1613)

Further Reading: The Conclusion of the New Testament, msg. 419; Life-study of Exodus, msg. 152

« WEEK 36 — HYMN »

Hymns, #813

1 I come before Thy throne of grace
With hungry heart on Thee to feed,
Thy grace and mercy to receive
To help me in this hour of need.

2 Here I behold Thy radiant face,
Its light upon my heart doth shine
With healing rays consuming all
The weaknesses and faults of mine.

3 'Tis here Thy light illuminates
My true condition unto me;
'Tis here Thy blood's effectiveness
To cleanse from sin I gladly see.

4 Thy Spirit too anoints me here
And makes Thy very substance mine;
Thy very self I thus enjoy
And know Thy very heart's design.

5 Thy Word I read before Thee here
E'en as the priests the lamp did light;
Thy Spirit is as oil to me
To light Thy Word and give me sight.

6 E'en as the priests the incense burned,
In prayer to Thee I persevere;
As incense Thou the Spirit art
Mixed with the prayer I offer here.

7 Thy Word is light, Thy Word is food;
Which doth enlighten and supply;
I long to read and feed much more,
For light and food to satisfy.

8 Thou art the living water too
Which full revival doth bestow;
I wish to pray and drink e'en more
That through me living rivers flow.

9 Thou art the incense unto God,
In Thee acceptance is complete;
I want to pray yet more and more,
To offer up this fragrance sweet.

10 By reading I'm enlightened, filled,
By prayer my thirst is quenched indeed;
Thus Thou to me may be supplied,
And Thou through me may meet the need.

11 I long to have such fellowship,
To read and pray and blend with Thee;
I long that Thou wouldst saturate
Till Thou may overflow from me.

