



<sup>11</sup> And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, <sup>12</sup> 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 30:11-12)

The minds of the early people of God were quite primitive in their understanding of God; therefore, it was regarded as necessary to demonstrate His will and way in use of symbols and types. I wonder if the minds of modern men are not also in need of the symbols of Christ in order to better understand? Christ used material objects to reveal truth to His disciples – painted sepulchers full of dead men’s bones in describing the Pharisees (Matt 23:27); the chief cornerstone of the Temple in describing Himself (Matt 21:42); and the Bright and Morning Star (Rev 22:16). He also makes frequent reference to the cross and to the Temple of God (the heart of the believer). Paul also makes reference to symbols in revealing truth: “*Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour.*” (2 Tim 2:19-20)

In our reformed worship of God, inwardly, we also use outward forms and symbols to demonstrate that inward truth, i.e., the Lord’s Table, the Candles, the Cross, the Cup, and the Bread of Communion. Such symbols aid us in understanding the deeper spiritual truth represented. As we have studied in Exodus, those symbols, types and metaphors of faith are prominently revealed to us, and to those of the Wilderness.

### **The Altar of Incense**

<sup>1</sup> And thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon: of shittim wood shalt thou make it. <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> And thou shalt make the staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold. <sup>6</sup> And thou shalt put it before the vail that is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy seat that is over the testimony, where I will meet with thee. (Ex 30:1-6)

We should, from the first, recognize that the Altar of Incense represents our Lord in His intercessory roll for us just as the altar of Burnt Offerings represented Christ as the sacrifice (Cross) that opened the doors of Heaven to admit us (at the gate of the

Tabernacle). Shittim wood is similar to iron wood and is indestructible as is our Lord Jesus Christ. The Altar was to be a cubit on all sides which made the top FOUR-SQUARE – meaning that, though Christ is full of grace and mercy, He also is perfectly just. Gold is the metal of greatest value and it depicts sovereignty. This altar is considered part of the Holy of Holies though it stands just outside the Vail. Christ was both man AND God. He saved us in the body of a man. So He stands without the Vail but owns that which is beyond the Vail as well. “*And thou shalt put it before the vail that is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy seat that is over the testimony, where I will meet with thee.*” The Mercy Seat AND the Commandments of the Law were satisfied in Christ; however, note that the Mercy Seat is A BOVE the ark of the Testimony (Law). In Christ, Mercy trumps Law. We are able to meet with God only in Christ Jesus!

*7 And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it. 8 And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations. 9 Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt sacrifice, nor meat offering; neither shall ye pour drink offering thereon. 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. (Ex 30:7-10)*

The Romanizers in the Anglican Church (Oxford Movement) have long advocated a weekly (or more often) observance of Holy Communion. But the Holy Communion coincides with the Passover of Israel which was observed once per year. I see, therefore, no justification for a more frequent observance of the Lord’s Supper than once per month as the Canons of the AOC call for. The sin offering for atonements was also a yearly observance and was not permitted more often. To practice so solemn an observance more often will lead, inevitably, to a lower view of its spiritual dimensions. Each morning, Aaron would dress the lamps and, at the same time, burn sweet incense on the Altar. This sweet incense signals the sweet savor of God’s forgiveness in their prayers of repentance (DAILY!). The incense was of a type prescribed by God and none other was allowed. The incense would be burned at evening as well. Since the incense of the Altar symbolizes the prayers of the people rising to God, I believe this passage reminds us that we are to seek the face of God in prayer at first and last light (morning and evening). And, I can assure you, no damage follows a more frequent offering of prayer many times a day.

### **The Ransom of Souls**

*11 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 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. 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. 14 Every one that passeth among them that are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering unto the LORD. 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. 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. (Ex 30:11-16)*

**Half a shekel**—Each of the Israelites was ordered to give as a ransom for his soul (i.e., for his life) half a shekel, according to the shekel of the sanctuary. From this we may learn:

1. That the life of every man was considered as being forfeited to Divine justice.
2. That the redemption money given, which was doubtless used in the service of the sanctuary, was ultimately devoted to the use and profit of those who gave it.
3. That the standard by which the value of coin was ascertained, was kept in the sanctuary; for this appears to be the meaning of the words, after the shekel of the sanctuary.
4. The shekel is here said to be twenty gerahs. A gerah, according to Maimonides, weighed sixteen barleycorns, a shekel three hundred and twenty of pure silver. The shekel is generally considered to be equal in value to three shillings English; the redemption money, therefore, must be about one shilling and sixpence.
5. The rich were not to give more, the poor not to give less; to signify that all souls were equally precious in the sight of God, and that no difference of outward circumstances could affect the state of the soul; all had sinned, and all must be redeemed by the same price.
6. This atonement must be made that there might be no plague among them, intimating that a plague or curse from God must light on those souls for whom the atonement was not made.
7. This was to be a memorial unto the children of Israel, Exodus 30:16, to bring to their remembrance their past deliverance, and to keep in view their future redemption.
8. St. Peter seems to allude to this, and to intimate that this mode of atonement was ineffectual in itself, and only pointed out the great sacrifice which, in the fullness of time, should be made for the sin of the world. "Ye know," says he, "that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world," etc.; 1 Peter 1:18-20.
9. Therefore all these things seem to refer to Christ alone, and to the atonement made by his blood; and upon him who is not interested in this atonement, God's plagues must be expected to fall.

(Above points quoted from Adam Clarke's Commentary)

### **The Brazen Laver**

*17 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 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. 19 For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat: 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: 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. (Ex 30:17-21)*

From my early youth, my mother often repeated the old adage, "Cleanliness is next to Godliness." Of course, spiritual cleanliness is far more important than outward appearance; however, I believe God is honored by our clean and decent dress at worship. The Brazen Laver was located in the court of the congregation between the Altar of Burnt Offerings and the Holy Place. God was not to be served with unwashed hands and feet. Wheresoever we go, and whatsoever our hands find to do, should be consecrated to the Lord. Our sins were washed away by the Altar of Burnt Offerings (ultimately, the cross of Christ), and we are washed continually by the Water of the Word at the Brazen Laver. You will recall that this Laver stands in the place of the Prayer of Humble Access in the Book of Common Prayer. Unholy hands are not to

touch Holy Things. In the days of the Tabernacle, only the priest had access to the wash fountain; but today, we have an inexhaustible Fountain of Living Waters from in which all believers may bathe – *In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.* (Zech 13:1)

### **Holy Anointing Oil**

*22 Moreover the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 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, 24 And of cassia five hundred shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, and of oil olive an hin: 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. We have Christ represented in the two Altars, and the Father in the Holy of Holies. We now need a sweet and comforting influence of the Holy Ghost to bring to our understanding what these Holy things mean. Without an eyeopening of the Holy Ghost, a thousand volumes of written explanation would not suffice. The Holy Ghost is the Agent whereby God brings us into an awareness, first, of our sins, and then to a repentance and drawing near unto Him.*

*26 And thou shalt anoint the tabernacle of the congregation therewith, and the ark of the testimony, 27 And the table and all his vessels, and the candlestick and his vessels, and the altar of incense, 28 And the altar of burnt offering with all his vessels, and the laver and his foot. 29 And thou shalt sanctify them, that they may be most holy: whatsoever toucheth them shall be holy.*

The physical accoutrements of the Tabernacle would lack the precious anointing of Holiness without the pleasant touch of the Holy Ghost. All of our plans and purchases for our church must be informed by the leading and anointing of the Holy Ghost if the Church will be Holy. Isaac was anointed in a most exceptional manner – he was laid by Abraham upon an Altar unto the Lord with the intentions of sacrifice; but God spared Isaac. However, everything that touches the Altar is Holy unto the Lord – thusly was Isaac anointed as a precious vessel to the Lord.

*30 And thou shalt anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office. 31 And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, This shall be an holy anointing oil unto me throughout your generations. 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. 33 Whosoever compoundeth any like it, or whosoever putteth any of it upon a stranger, shall even be cut off from his people.*

This was a peculiar oil of anointing and the Lord desired that we maintain that peculiarity of holiness. Aaron and the priests were anointed with this oil, but none other. The ministers of God have a special anointing to preach the Word. Without that anointing, no man is authorized to preach. That Oil is the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is not to be trifled with or offended.

*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: 35 And thou shalt make it a perfume, a confection after the art of the apothecary, tempered together, pure and holy: 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. 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. 38 Whosoever shall make like unto that, to smell thereto, shall even be cut off from his people. (Ex 30:34-38)*

The Voice of the Lord is a distinct Voice from all others. The sweet perfume of frankincense and spices was to be unique so that the sweet savor of the Lord (His Word and Commands) would not be confused with those of the world. This was intended, as well, to preserve as sense of reverence of the people for God. The delicate and spiritually discernible Word of the Lord comes to us, often, as the distillation of the morning dews and damps. The Lord is particular in His coming to speak with us. He desires no competing voices of the world. His Voice is one of a kind, and often a small, still Voice that the ear of the soul must be attuned to in order to hear it. Have you heard it?

