

Prayers as Incense oraciones como incienso

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Rev 5:7-8 ESV And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne. (8) And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

Mal 1:11 RVG Porque desde donde el sol nace hasta donde se pone, *será* grande mi nombre entre los gentiles; y en todo lugar se ofrecerá incienso a mi nombre, y ofrenda limpia; porque mi nombre *será* grande entre las naciones, dice Jehová de los ejércitos.

For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name will be great among the nations, and in every place incense will be offered to my name, and a pure offering. For my name will be great among the nations, says the LORD of hosts. (Mal 1:11)

Explain...Tell

"You shall make an altar on which to burn incense; you shall make it of acacia wood. A cubit shall be its length, and a cubit its breadth. It shall be square, and two cubits shall be its height. Its horns shall be of one piece with it. You shall overlay it with pure gold, its top and around its sides and its horns. And you shall make a molding of gold around it. And you shall make two golden rings for it. Under its molding on two opposite sides of it you shall make them, and they shall be holders for poles with which to carry it. You shall make the poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold. And you shall put it in front of the veil that is above the ark of the testimony, in front of the mercy seat that is above the testimony, where I will meet with you. And Aaron shall burn fragrant incense on it. Every morning when he dresses the lamps he shall burn it, and when Aaron sets up the lamps at twilight, he shall burn it, a regular incense offering before the LORD throughout your generations. You shall not offer unauthorized incense on it, or a burnt offering, or a grain offering, and you shall not pour a drink offering on it. Aaron shall make atonement on its horns once a year. With the blood of the sin offering of atonement he shall make atonement for it once in the year throughout your generations. It is most holy to the LORD."

(Exo 30:1-10)

Exo 30:30-34 RVG Ungirás también a Aarón y a sus hijos, y los consagrarás para que sean mis sacerdotes. (31) Y hablarás a los hijos de Israel, diciendo: Éste será mi aceite de la santa unción por vuestras generaciones. (32) Sobre carne de hombre no será untado, ni haréis otro semejante, conforme a su composición: santo es; por santo habéis de tenerlo vosotros. (33) Cualquiera que preparare ungüento semejante, y que pusiere de él sobre un extraño, será cortado de su pueblo. (34) Dijo además Jehová a Moisés: Tómate especias aromáticas, estacte y uña aromática y gálbano aromático e incienso puro; de todo en igual peso.

The LORD said to Moses, "Take sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum, sweet spices with pure frankincense (of each shall there be an equal part), and make an incense blended as by the perfumer, seasoned with salt, pure and holy. You shall beat some of it very small, and put part of it before the testimony in the tent of meeting where I shall meet with you. It shall be most holy for you. And the incense that you shall make according to its composition, you shall not make for yourselves. It shall be for you holy to the LORD. Whoever makes any like it to use as perfume shall be cut off from his people." (Exo 30:34-38)

Light incense

Num 15:10 ESV And you shall offer for the drink offering half a hin of wine, as a food offering, a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

Num 15:10 RVG y de vino para la libación ofrecerás la mitad de un hin, en ofrenda encendida de olor grato a Jehová.

The Golden Altar of Incense



The golden altar of incense, which is not to be confused with the brazen altar, sat in front of the curtain that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. This altar was smaller than the brazen altar. It was a square with each side measuring 1.5 feet and was 3 feet high. It was made of acacia wood and overlaid with pure gold. Four horns protruded from the four corners of the altar.

God commanded the priests to burn incense on the golden altar every morning and evening, the same time that the daily burnt offerings were made. The incense was to be left burning continually throughout the day and night as a pleasing aroma to the Lord. It was made of an equal part of four precious spices (stacte, onycha, galbanum and frankincense) and was considered holy. God commanded the Israelites not to use the same formula outside the tabernacle to make perfume for their own consumption; otherwise, they were to be cut off from their people (Exodus 30:34-38).

The incense was a symbol of the prayers and intercession of the people going up to God as a sweet fragrance. God wanted His dwelling to be a place where people could approach Him and pray to Him.

“...for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.” (Isaiah 56:7)

The picture of prayers wafting up to heaven like incense is captured in David's psalm and also in John's vision in Revelations:

"May my prayer be set before you like incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice."
(Psalm 141:2)

Rev 8:3-4 RVG Y otro ángel vino y se puso en pie delante del altar, teniendo un incensario de oro; y le fue dado mucho incienso para que lo ofreciese con las oraciones de todos los santos sobre el altar de oro que estaba delante del trono. (4) Y el humo del incienso subió de la mano del ángel delante de Dios con las oraciones de los santos.

"Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar before the throne. The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God from the angel's hand." (Revelations 8:3-4)

The golden altar, furthermore, is a representation of Christ, who is our intercessor before God the Father. During His days on earth, Jesus prayed for the believers. He was like the high priest of the tabernacle, who bore the names of each of the Israelite tribes on his breastplate before God. Just before He was betrayed and sentenced to death, Jesus interceded for His disciples and all believers, asking God to guard them from evil and sanctify them by His Word, and that they may see God's glory and be a witness to the world (John 17:1-26).

Today, Jesus still is our high priest at the Father's side, interceding for God's people:

"Christ Jesus, who died — more than that, who was raised to life — is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us." (Romans 8:34)

Since we have been forgiven of our sins through the blood of Christ, we also come boldly in prayer in Jesus' name. When we pray in Jesus' name, we are praying based on the work He has done and not on our own merit. It is in His powerful name that we are saved and baptized, and in His name we live, speak and act.

"And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it." (John 14:13-14)

The horns of the golden altar were sprinkled with blood from the animal sacrifice to cleanse and purify it from the sins of the Israelites (Leviticus 4:7, 16:18). Just as the horns on the brazen altar represent the power of Christ's blood to forgive sins, the horns on golden altar signify the power of His blood in prayer as we confess our sins and ask for His forgiveness.

And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective." (James 5:15-16)

Now even the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly place of holiness. For a tent was prepared, the first section, in which were the lampstand and the table and the bread of the Presence. It is called the Holy Place. Behind the second curtain was a second section called the Most Holy Place, having the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a

golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron's staff that budded, and the tablets of the covenant. Above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail. (Heb. 9:1-5)

They shall teach Jacob your rules and Israel your law; they shall put incense before you and whole burnt offerings on your altar. (Deu. 33:10)

Jesus is our High Priest

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Heb. 4:14-16)

As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (1 Pet. 2:4-5)

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. (Eph. 5:1-2)

From my book: *Praying God's Way by Decreeing His Will*

"As I have learned more about praying and how prayers ascend to God in Heaven I was directed to this passage. The four living creatures are holding golden bowls full of incense fragrant spices and gums for burning which are the prayers of God's people the saints. (Rev. 5:8 AMP) This is not new. God decreed: "And you shall offer a burnt offering for a sweet and pleasing odor to the Lord." (Num. 29:2)

As the Israelites performed the required sacrifices and offerings, the burning smell from the animals ascended to Heaven and was received as "sweet and pleasing order." We learn in Hebrews that our prayers are offered through the authority and power of Christ's sacrifice. When we pray in Christ's name our prayers, become a pleasing "odor to the Lord."

The book of Revelations illustrates an angel standing over Heaven's altar holding a golden censer and is given incense, fragrant spices, and gums which exhale perfume when burned. An angel mingles it with the prayers from the people of God upon the golden altar before God's throne. (Rev. 8:3; Ps. 141:2) The activation of our prayers become smoke of incense arising as a perfume in the presence of God. (Rev. 8:4)



The Psalmist uses the same descriptive language when describing prayers for others. "Let my prayer be set forth as incense before You, the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice." (Psa. 141:2; 1 Tim. 2:8; Rev. 8:3, 4) Paul also implies: "But thanks be to God... (who) through us spreads and makes evident the fragrance of the knowledge of God everywhere. For we are the sweet fragrance of Christ which exhales unto God..." (2 Cor. 2:14-15 AMP) Paul teaches more than just prayers of incense but that our life in Christ will be a living and fresh aroma before God. (2 Cor. 2:16) Wow, not only our prayers but, also our Christ-like actions are ascending to the throne of God as offerings of incense.



My prayer and hope for you is that you will become like Elisha, who was a student of Elijah. He would not let Elijah depart without receiving a blessing from God. Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for you before I am taken from you." And Elisha said, "Please let there be a double portion of your spirit on me." And he said, "You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it shall be so for you, but if you do not see me, it shall not be so." (2 Kin. 2:9-12 ESV)

Prayers from the saints become as bowls of incense before the Lamb of God.

Prayers the smoke of incense from the saints join with the activation of fire from the altar and is cast down upon the earth as thunder, rumblings, lightening, and earthquakes.

Rev 8:1-5 ESV When the Lamb opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. (2) Then I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. (3) And 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, (4) and the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God from the hand of the angel. (5) Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth, and there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake.

Rev 8:1-5 RVG Y cuando abrió el séptimo sello, fue hecho silencio en el cielo como por media hora. (2) Y vi los siete ángeles que estaban en pie delante de Dios; y les fueron dadas siete trompetas. (3) Y otro ángel vino y se puso en pie delante del altar, teniendo un incensario de oro; y le fue dado mucho incienso para que lo ofreciese con las oraciones de todos los santos sobre el altar de oro que estaba delante del trono. (4) Y el humo del incienso subió de la mano del ángel delante de Dios con las oraciones de los santos. (5) Y el ángel tomó el incensario, y lo llenó del fuego del altar, y lo arrojó a la tierra; y hubo voces, y truenos, y relámpagos, y terremotos.

Summary

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Fragrance - Aroma

Offerings become pleasing aromas to the Lord.

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Polycarp's martyrdom illustrates this living death. (Church historian Eusebius records the event.) Polycarp speaking: "Wherefore I praise thee also for everything; I bless thee, I glorify thee, through the eternal high priest, Jesus Christ, thy beloved Son, through whom, with him, in the Holy Spirit, be glory unto thee, both now and for the ages to come, Amen."

Eusebius recounts: "When he had offered up his Amen and had finished his prayer, the firemen lighted the fire and as a great flame blazed out, we, to whom it was given to see, saw a wonder, and we were preserved that we might relate what happened to the others. For the fire presented the appearance of a vault, like the sail of a vessel filled by the wind, and made a wall about the body of the martyr and it was in the midst not like flesh burning, but like gold and silver refined in a furnace. For we perceived such a fragrant odor, as of the fumes of frankincense or of some other precious spices. So at length the lawless men, when they saw that the body could not be consumed by the fire, commanded an executioner to approach and pierce him with the sword. And when he had done this there came forth a quantity of blood so that it extinguished the fire; and the whole crowd marveled that there should be such a difference between the unbelievers and the elect, of whom this man also was one, the most wonderful teacher in our times, apostolic and prophetic, who was bishop of the catholic Church in Smyrna. For every word which came from his mouth was accomplished and will be accomplished...Him we worship as the Son of God, but the martyrs we love as disciples and imitators of the Lord."¹

Polycarp's death became a living, sweet fragrant aroma of sacrifice.

¹ Eusebius, *The Church History*, 151.

2Co 2:14-17 RVG Mas a Dios gracias, el cual hace que siempre triunfemos en Cristo, y manifiesta la fragancia de su conocimiento por nosotros en todo lugar. (15) Porque para Dios somos de Cristo grata fragancia en los que son salvos, y en los que se pierden; (16) a éstos ciertamente olor de muerte para muerte; y a aquéllos fragancia de vida para vida. Y para estas cosas, ¿quién es suficiente? (17) Porque no somos como muchos que adulteran la palabra de Dios; antes con sinceridad, como de parte de Dios, delante de Dios hablamos en Cristo.

2Co 2:14-17 ESV But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere. (15) For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, (16) to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things? (17) For we are not, like so many, peddlers of God's word, but as men of sincerity, as commissioned by God, in the sight of God we speak in Christ.