

Exodus 30 – Oil and Incense

The tabernacle is nearly complete. Its completion is dependent upon two seemingly small things: incense and oil. Incense we have learned is symbolic of prayer. Our good prayers always produce a sweet aroma to the LORD. But there are the no-so-good prayers as well. James described these:

James 4:2-3 KJV Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. (3) Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume *it* upon your lusts.

James 4:2-3 NLT You want what you don't have, so you scheme and kill to get it. You are jealous of what others have, but you can't get it, so you fight and wage war to take it away from them. Yet you don't have what you want because you don't ask God for it. (3) And even when you ask, you don't get it because your motives are all wrong—you want only what will give you pleasure.

Acceptable prayers exalt our LORD and Savior. Acceptable prayers are selfless and even express a burden that we carry for others. Acceptable prayers never make light of our sins and never make them light before our God. Acceptable prayers are subject to the Holy Spirit who is the fire, so to speak, that sets our incense on fire. This fire isn't an all-consuming fire that burns hot and fast. No, this fire is a slow burn of prevailing prayer, hot enough to keep our prayers going but not too hot as to burn out quickly...that is, our prayers can be a continual offering to the LORD as we yield our heart and tongue to the Spirit of Christ within us. The priests kept the incense burning and the menorah lit day and night!

Some prayers, like sin, miss the mark and are wasted. God will not hear the prayers of a sinner unless it is confession. And like James said, the prayers one asks for himself are more than selfish and are manipulative attempts to persuade God to bless. He knows full well when a prayer would result in feeding one's lusts.

Today, we will see how the incense is made as well as the anointing oil. While detailed, the message is that God cares about the details and also the purposes of these material things.

First, the oil.

Exodus 30:22-38 NKJV Moreover the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: (23) "Also take for yourself **quality spices**—five hundred *shekels* of **liquid myrrh**, half as much sweet-smelling **cinnamon** (two hundred and fifty *shekels*), two hundred and fifty *shekels* of sweet-smelling **cane**, (24) five hundred *shekels* of **cassia**, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, and a hin of **olive oil**. (25) And you shall make from these a **holy anointing oil, an ointment compounded according to the art of the perfumer. It shall be a holy anointing oil.** (26) With it you shall anoint the tabernacle of meeting and the ark of the Testimony; (27) the table and all its utensils, the lampstand and its utensils, and the altar of incense; (28) the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, and the laver and its base. (29) **You shall consecrate them, that they may be most holy; whatever touches them must be holy.** (30) And you shall anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that *they* may minister to Me as priests. (31) "And you shall speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'This shall be a holy

anointing oil to Me throughout your generations. **(32) It shall not be poured on man's flesh; nor shall you make any other like it, according to its composition. It is holy, and it shall be holy to you. (33) Whoever compounds any like it, or whoever puts any of it on an outsider, shall be cut off from his people.' "**

(34) And the LORD said to Moses: "Take sweet spices, stacte and onycha and galbanum, and pure frankincense with *these* sweet spices; there shall be equal amounts of each. **(35)** You shall make of these an **incense, a compound according to the art of the perfumer, salted, pure, and holy.**

(36) And you shall beat *some* of it very fine, and put some of it before the Testimony in the tabernacle of meeting where I will meet with you. **It shall be most holy to you. (37)** But *as for* the incense which you shall make, **you shall not make any for yourselves**, according to its composition. It shall be **to you holy for the LORD. (38) Whoever makes any like it, to smell it, he shall be cut off from his people."**

Let's look at some of the obvious things and then dig deeper into the spiritual things concerning the oil. Last week we covered the symbolism of the incense which is the "prayers of the saints".

The ingredients:

Note that while the ingredients were specific, they recipe of making the oil and incense were "according to the art of the perfumer". You have all experienced this either by preparing food or eating food. A good recipe is detailed, with the built-in assumption is that if you follow it to the letter, the results will be delicious and satisfying. But that's not always the case. Sometimes it turns out different than you expected, sometimes better and sometimes worse. There's an art to cooking and that art is more than skill and can't be easily measured. Same goes for the oil and as we shall read, the incense as well.

The LORD didn't want inconsistency, so He became intimately involved with the perfumers and the builders. We read about this in chapter 31:1-11. Two men were "filled" with the Holy Spirit and He directed and enhanced their innate talents so that they would be artists as well. They would infuse the Holy Spirit into that which they made, whether furnishings, utensils, oil or incense. The dwelling place for God was to be holy as well as beautiful.

The uses for the oil

Its uses are listed: all things and persons who officiated in the Tabernacle were to be anointed with the oil. Sometimes it was sprinkled and sometimes poured. While there is much symbolism in the oil and the incense, you can imagine a practical side as well. The Tabernacle was a place of death as well as life. The smell of blood and flesh must have been overwhelming at times. As we learned, atonement was a full-time job! So, the oil and incense would cover the odors just as the blood covered the sins that were a scarlet stain upon each person.

We also read about the oil throughout the history of Israel but also in the days of Messiah:

Speaking of David, the Holy Spirit wrote:

1 Samuel 16:12 NKJV So he sent and brought him in. Now he *was* ruddy, with bright eyes, and good-looking. And the LORD said, "Arise, anoint him; for this *is* the one!"

Speaking to Elijah the Holy Spirit said:

(1 Kings 19:16 NKJV) Also you shall anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi *as* king over Israel. And Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel Meholah you shall anoint *as* prophet in your place.

Even in the NT we read:

Mark 6:13 NKJV And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed *them*.

John 12:3 NKJV Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.

:

John 12:7 NKJV But Jesus said, "**Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial.**"

This is why the gifts of the Magi were so remarkable and prophetic: Gold, incense and myrrh (the key ingredient in the oil). King, Priest and the Suffering Servant.

While the incense is symbolic of prayer, oil is symbol of the Holy Spirit.

(1 Samuel 16:13 NKJV) Then Samuel took the horn of oil and **anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward.** So Samuel arose and went to Ramah.

(Isaiah 61:1 NKJV) "The Spirit of the Lord GOD *is* upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to *those who are* bound;

This is what Jesus quoted in the synagogue and he concluded by saying:

(Luke 4:21 NKJV) And He began to say to them, "**Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.**"

And in Acts 10, Paul wrote:

Acts 10:36-38 NKJV The word which *God* sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ—He is Lord of all— (37) that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached: (38) **how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.**

And again:

2 Corinthians 1:21-22 NKJV (21) Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us *is* God, **(22)** who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

There are many different words in Hebrew and in Greek. This is important when reading the Scriptures. For example,

Psalms 23:5 NKJV You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over.

You may think that this anointing is like Aaron's. But this "anoint" means to "fully satisfy" so much so that his cup overflows with satisfaction.

The two words we might be familiar with are Mashiach (Hebrew) and Christo (Greek). They both mean "Anointed One". The Hebrew scriptures use Mashiach 38 times. While the NT uses Christo 530 times. It is not a last name for Jesus but a title as in Jesus the Christ. If you search for just Christ, it's still in the NT over 270 times. Certainly Jesus is the revealed "Anointed One", the Messiah. You might find it interesting that the English word "Messiah" is only found 2 times in the NT. Once in John 1:14 and once in John 4:25.

Surely any man could be an "anointed one". Saul was called anointed and David was too. Remember when David was hiding from Saul? He was in a cave and Saul came in to relieve himself. David cut a piece of his robe but immediately regretted it:

1 Samuel 24:5-6 NKJV Now it happened afterward that David's heart troubled him because he had cut Saul's *robe*. **(6)** And he said to his men, "**The LORD forbid that I should do this thing to my master, the LORD's anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, seeing he *is* the anointed of the LORD.**"

But the most notable place in the OT was in Daniel chapter 9 where Daniel understood that the Anointed One was the Messiah:

Daniel 9:24-26 NKJV "Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy. **(25)** "Know therefore and understand, *That* from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, *There shall be* seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times. **(26)** "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it *shall be* with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined.

The ancient Jewish sages recognized the Messiah in the Scriptures. They would often speak of King Messiah. But when He came, the Jewish leadership was all about politics and breaking the bonds of the Romans. They wanted a warrior King like David. But this Messiah, the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53 was unwelcomed, and His message was despised and rejected as was He Himself.

As we have seen, anointing oil was an incredible symbol of the Holy Spirit. In the OT, the anointing was achieved by pouring oil on things and people. In the OT we know that the Spirit was rarely given to dwell in a person but to empower the person for whatever calling the LORD had given the person.

But the NT revelation is the Holy Spirit who dwells in us. This is a **permanent** arrangement for those who confess the risen Christ as LORD and are born again of the Spirit. It is mysterious as the Gospel itself. ?Our God who is Spirit becoming flesh? ?And we must be reborn of the Spirit?

John 3:3-7 NKJV Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

:

(5) Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. (6) That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. (7) Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'

John 4:24 NKJV God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

John 6:63 NKJV It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.

And, given the many Names of the Spirit, one can truly see the mystery of He who is God the Holy Spirit!

(Matthew 3:16 NKJV) the Spirit of God
(Matthew 10:20 NKJV) the Spirit of your Father
(John 14:17 NKJV) the Spirit of truth,
(Acts 5:9 NKJV) the Spirit of the Lord
(Romans 1:4 NKJV) the Spirit of holiness,
(Romans 8:2 NKJV) the Spirit of life
(Romans 8:9 NKJV) the Spirit of Christ
(Romans 8:15 NKJV) the Spirit of adoption
(2 Corinthians 3:3 NKJV) the Spirit of the living God
(2 Corinthians 3:17 NKJV) the Lord is the Spirit
(Galatians 4:6 NKJV) the Spirit of His Son
(Ephesians 1:13 NKJV) the Holy Spirit of promise,
(Ephesians 4:30 NKJV) the Holy Spirit of God,
(Hebrews 10:29 NKJV) Spirit of grace
(1 Peter 4:14 NKJV) the Spirit of glory

The Spirit of God is Life. When He breathed into Adam, Adam became a living soul. That breath was the Spirit of God.

But Life without the Spirit is no life at all. It's just the flesh run amok, lusting after self-gratification by any means necessary.

But Life with the Spirit is glorious!

Paul wrote:

Galatians 5:19-21 NKJV Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, (20) idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, (21) envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told *you* in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Galatians 5:22-25 NKJV But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, (23) gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. (24) And those *who are* Christ's have **crucified the flesh** with its passions and desires. (25) If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.