

## 22. Worshiping the One True God

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If we are not worshipping the true and living God, then we will worship a god of our own composition, or some false god. The problem with a false god is that it can't hear us. It can't see us. It is not aware of us. It is not real. It's a god of our own imagination. Satan would love for us to have it in our lives.

But the true God, the living God, sees us. He knows about us completely. He cares about us deeply. He hears us intensely. And He is interested in us immensely.

Somehow we tend to think that worshipping our God stops at the time when we stop singing our praise and worship songs. No, thousand times NO. It continues in our lives, in our prayers, in our giving to the Lord and in our thoughts.

It is not about singing, clapping hands nor playing musical instruments. To really worship the Lord, we must, I repeat we must, ignore our own pride and self-image, but submerge into His presence. Without that, we really can not experience the true worship of God.

Chapter 30 and 31 are the great worship chapters. Let's learn how the rest of the Tabernacle articles are connected with worshipping the one true God.

### A. THE ALTAR OF INCENSE

*Exodus 30:1-10 "You shall make an altar to burn incense on; you shall make it of acacia wood. 2 A cubit shall be its length and a cubit its width--it shall be square--and two cubits shall be its height. Its horns shall be of one piece with it. 3 And you shall overlay its top, its sides all around, and its horns with pure gold; and you shall make for it a molding of gold all around. 4 Two gold rings you shall make for it, under the molding on both its sides. You shall place them on its two sides, and they will be holders for the poles with which to bear it. 5 You shall make the poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold. 6 And you shall put it before the veil that is before the ark of the Testimony, before the mercy seat that is over the Testimony, where I will meet with you. 7 Aaron shall burn on it sweet incense every morning; when he tends the lamps, he shall burn incense on it. 8 And when Aaron lights the lamps at twilight, he shall burn incense on it, a perpetual incense before the Lord throughout your generations. 9 You shall not offer strange incense on it, or a burnt offering, or a grain offering; nor shall you pour a drink offering on it. 10 And Aaron shall make atonement upon its horns once a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonement; once a year he shall make atonement upon it throughout your generations. It is most holy to the Lord."*

The altar of incense was made of acacia wood overlaid with gold. It was 18 square inches and 3 feet high. It was taller than the Table of Showbread and the Lampstand in the Holy Place. As we already have learned, the wood represents humanity and gold represents deity in the Bible. So again the Altar of Incense represents our Lord Jesus Christ.

The burning of the incense pictures the offering up of our prayers. The fire that consumes the incense reminds us of the Holy Spirit, because without His aid we cannot truly pray.

*Romans 8:26-27 Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. 27 Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.*

True prayer must be based on the work of Christ on the cross and on our complete dedication to God. A true fervency in prayer isn't a religious emotion we work up ourselves. Rather, it's a blessing that God sends down as we yield ourselves to Him.

*James 5:16 The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.*

Many people have a tendency to think that praying to God is some sort of bargaining process like buying a car from a car dealer. We can not negotiate with God for what we want through our prayers, nor we can change His mind to what we want. It is a place where we come to adore Him as our God and saying, "Your will be done."

## **B. THE RANSOM MONEY**

*Exodus 30:11-16 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: 12 "When you take the census of the children of Israel for their number, then every man shall give a ransom for himself to the Lord, when you number them, that there may be no plague among them when you number them. 13 This is what everyone among those who are numbered shall give: half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary (a shekel is twenty gerahs). The half-shekel shall be an offering to the Lord. 14 Everyone included among those who are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering to the Lord. 15 The rich shall not give more and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when you give an offering to the Lord, to make atonement for yourselves. 16 And you shall take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and shall appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of meeting, that it may be a memorial for the children of Israel before the Lord, to make atonement for yourselves."*

A census put Israel at risk of plague because a numbering the nation's population signified ownership. This spoke against God's ownership of Israel, because in their thinking, a man only had the right to count or number what belonged to him.

Israel didn't belong to Israel. Israel belonged to God. It was up to Him to command a counting. This was David's problem in 2 Samuel 24:1-25, when David took a census without the ransom money and God plagued Israel. Seventy thousand lives were lost in plague. It is so much better for us to obey God than going against Him.

The amount of this ransom money for individual was a half shekel. The rich were not to give more, the poor not to give less. That means 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 that was paid by Jesus on the cross.

## **C. THE BRONZE LAVER**

*Exodus 30:17-21 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: 18 "You shall also make a laver of bronze, with its base also of bronze, for washing. You shall put it between the tabernacle of meeting and the altar. And you shall put water in it, 19 for Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet in water from it. 20 When they go into the tabernacle of meeting, or when they come*

*near the altar to minister, to burn an offering made by fire to the Lord, they shall wash with water, lest they die. 21 So they shall wash their hands and their feet, lest they die. And it shall be a statute forever to them--to him and his descendants throughout their generations."*

According to Exodus 38, the Israelite women gave up their polished bronze mirror to make this bronze laver. It is a wonderful thing for people to give up the thing they consider precious and important for the sake of God.

In the tabernacle courtyard, the laver stood between the bronze altar and the tent, and the priests and Levites had to stop there regularly to wash their hands and feet. If they entered the tent or served at the bronze altar without first washing, they were in danger of death.

The Lord didn't specify either the size or shape of the laver, nor the instructions of how to carry to a new location.

With no floor in the tabernacle, the priests' feet would get dirty. In addition, the handling of the sacrifices would defile their hands. It is possible to be defiled even while serving the Lord. The laver illustrates the cleansing power of God's Word.

One of the big problems in our modern day churches is that there is too much body odor, that is spiritual body odor. People get into worshiping God without confessing their sins to the Lord. Confessing individual sins as lip service is not good enough to God. If we are serious enough to confess our sins to the Lord, we should be serious enough to turn away from our sins and start to walk in the path of God.

God does not accept worship until it comes from a cleansed heart nor will He accept service except from a cleansed heart.

#### **D. THE HOLY ANOINTING OIL**

*Exodus 30:25-33 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."*

This holy anointing oil represents the Holy Spirit, not to be duplicated or desecrated by common use. It could only be poured on the priests. The common people could not use this special ointment.

I asked you to underline v 32. This shows that the work of the Holy Spirit is never to be imitated with our own effort. There is to be no place for encouraging a fleshly imitation of the gifts or operations of the Holy Spirit.

A good example is speaking in tongue. Some people say, "If you just make some noises with your mouth, you will be able to start to speak in tongue." Far from the truth. Many times, people start to pretend that they speak in tongue because of this kind of pressure. When the Holy Spirit wants that person to speak in tongue, He will give it to that person, not by our decision.

## **E. THE INCENSE**

*Exodus 30:35-38 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."*

Now the incense was a secret formula, long since lost, and it was not to be duplicated nor replaced like the holy anointing oil.

We may have been in the worship services where we were impressed by outstanding musical talents of individual musician or the way they performed. But other than that impressive performance, we have to ask ourselves if we actually had a close encounter with our God.

I am not talking about emotional hype that goes away with 'Woo' and 'Ah' to the musicians. I am talking about the enrapturing time of personal worship because of simple and distinctive presence of the Holy Spirit. This can happen anywhere with or without fancy worship leaders. It is a matter of individual worshippers' heart.

A number of words in the Bible are translated "worship." One means "to bow down and pay homage." Another word literally means, "to kiss toward." It is a word that conveys the idea of reverence. So putting these two words together, we get an idea of what worship is and what it should be. We worship God because He is worthy. And in doing so, we bow down and pay homage to Him. That speaks of reverence toward and respect for God. But we also kiss toward Him, which speaks of tenderness and intimacy. God wants us to reverence Him, to honor Him, and to be obedient to Him. But at the same time, He wants tender intimacy in our worship.

## **F. BEING FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT**

*Exodus 31:1-5 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: 2 "See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. 3 And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, 4 to design artistic works, to work in gold, in silver, in bronze, 5 in cutting jewels for setting, in carving wood, and to work in all manner of workmanship."*

God does not call someone who is capable to do the job. But He calls someone who is willing to be used by Him and gives capabilities by filling that person with the Holy Spirit.

What is the main purpose of being filled with the Holy Spirit? Is it to boast what we have from God to others? Is it to impress others what a wonderful man or woman of God? No, it is to do God's work and to bring glory to the Father in heaven.

## **G. THE SABBATH LAW**

*Exodus 31:12-18 And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 13 "Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: 'Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the Lord who sanctifies you. 14 You shall keep the Sabbath, therefore, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people. 15 Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. 16 Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. 17 It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.'" 18 And when He had made an end of speaking with him on Mount Sinai, He gave Moses two tablets of the Testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God.*

The Sabbath was not given to the Gentile nations but only to Israel as a sign of their special relationship to the Lord.

Though in the New Covenant we are not bound by the Sabbath, the principle is still important. When workers for God are burnt-out, they have almost always allowed their work for God to be bigger in their minds than His work for them.

*Romans 14:5 One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.*

We often say that something can not be changed because "it's written in stone." The Ten Commandments were written in stone. No matter what the United States Supreme Court hands out as their decisions, God's truth remains.

## **H. APPLICATIONS**

- 1) We should worship God because He is always worthy of our praise.
- 2) God does not accept worship until it comes from a cleansed heart nor will He accept service except from a cleansed heart.
- 3) To really worship the Lord, we must ignore our own pride and self-image, but submerge into His presence.
- 4) God wants us to reverence Him, to honor Him, and to be obedient to Him. But at the same time, He wants tender intimacy in our worship.