

the
crimson
thread

OF REDEMPTION

Seeing the Cross in the Old Testament



Hardy Street Baptist Church

The Holy Place
Showbread/ Lampstand/ The Altar of Incense
March 7, 2019

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The Holy Place
Showbread/Lampstand/Incense
Exodus 25:23-40 and Exodus 30:1-10 and 34-38.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. The Holy place speaks of worship.

B. **There are three articles of furniture in the Holy Place:**

1. The table of showbread
2. The golden lampstand
3. The altar of incense

II. WHAT IS THE PASSAGE SAYING?

A. The Showbread

1. The table with the bread was a small table made of acacia wood and overlaid with pure gold. It measured (3 ft) by (1.5 ft) and was about (27 in) high. It stood on the right side of the Holy Place across from the lampstand. On it were loaves of bread, one for each tribe of Israel.

B. The Lampstand

1. The golden lampstand stood on the left side of the Holy Place. Hammered out of a single piece of pure gold, it had a central shaft from which three branches extended from each side, forming a total of seven branches. Lamps filled with olive oil formed the top of each branch. Each branch resembled that of an almond tree, with buds, blossoms and flowers.
2. The specific dimensions of the lampstand are not given in Scripture. A depiction of it, however, can be seen today on the Arch of Titus in the city of Rome. This arch was built to commemorate the Roman General Titus's conquest of Jerusalem in AD 70 and the plunder of the Temple and its artifacts.
3. We also know that the size of the lampstand would have been limited by the total weight of the gold (about 75 lb) used in constructing it and its accessories (Exodus 25:39).
4. The lit lamps would have cast a soft glow throughout the entire room. Since the room was walled with planks surfaced with thin sheets of pure gold, the effect would have been stunning.

C. The Altar of Incense

1. The golden altar of incense sat in front of the curtain that separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place (the Holy of Holies). This altar was considerably smaller than the bronze altar. It was square with each side measuring (1.5 ft) and was (3 ft) high. It was made of wood and overlaid with pure gold. Four horns protruded from the four corners of the altar.

2. God commanded the priests to burn specially formulated incense on the golden altar every morning and evening—the same time that sacrifices were being offered in the courtyard on the bronze altar.
3. Not only was the burning incense intended to take away the ill smell of the flesh that was burnt on the brazen altar, but to show the acceptableness of his people’s services.

III. WHAT IS THE PASSAGE TEACHING US?

A. The Showbread

1. *Why bread? Was God hungry?*

2. *Why was this bread called the “bread of the Presence” in Exodus 25 verse 30*

a) _____

3. **Represented the 12 Tribes of Israel:**

a) **1 Corinthians 10:17** says: *“For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.”*

4. **God is the one that preserves us.**

B. The Lampstand

1. **To Shine Light into the Darkness**
2. **To Point us back to the Garden of Eden.**

a) Notice the connection between the lamp stand and the Garden of Eden. Not only is the entrance of the Tabernacle in the east just like the entrance to the Garden of Eden (1 Kings 6:23-29; Exodus 25:18-22; 26:31. But also, In the center of the Garden of Eden is the Tree of Life.

Similarly, in the center of the Tabernacle and later on in the Temple is the Lampstand. Which is a stylized tree of life. (Kingdom Through Covenant)

3. **In Summary**, come to the light the find life. Jesus is the light of the World.

C. The Altar of Incense

1. **Incense is the symbol of prayer and praise, as several scriptures assure:**

“Being confident of this very thing, that he which has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” (Philippians 1:6)

I KNEW THAT I COULD NOT KEEP MYSELF, BUT IF CHRIST PROMISED TO KEEP ME, THEN I SHOULD BE SAFE FOR EVER. — SPURGEON

- a) *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. (Revelation 5:8)*
 - b) *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, and the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God from the hand of the angel. (Revelation 8:3&4)*
 - c) *David cried: Let my prayer be set forth before you as incense. (Psalm 141:2)*
2. After the close of the Old Testament. God was silent for 400 years.
When did God break the silence? God broke the silence at the time of incense.
- a) *Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. (Luke 1:8-10)*
3. On designated occasions such as the day of atonement, the blood of animals sacrificed on the bronze altar was to be applied to the horns on the altar of incense.
- a) What lessons can we learn from this association of blood with the altar of incense?**
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HOW DOES THE PASSAGE POINT US TO CHRIST?

D. Showbread

a) ***Was the table made of Gold or of wood?***

b) ***Was Jesus human or God?***

2. Why is this image important to us as believers?

a) *Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." (Matthew 26:26)*

E. Lampstand

1. The lamp stand was the perfect symbol of Christ as the Son of God: **John 1:9** says, *"The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world."*
2. In **John 8:12**, Jesus says, *"I am the light of the world."*

F. The Altar of Incense

1. The altar of incense is first of all a figure of Christ as our great Intercessor.
 - a) *We have such a high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heavens. (Hebrews 8:1)*
 - b) *Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. (Hebrews 7:25)*
2. A contrast of the two altars at this point will throw light upon how the altar of incense points us to Christ. The altar of gold is where God dealt with a saint; the altar of brass is where he dealt with a sinner. The altar of gold speaks of heaven, the altar of brass speaks of earth. The altar of gold has to do with holiness; the altar of brass has to do with sin. The altar of gold, as a figure, represented what Christ does for us in heaven; the altar of brass, as a figure, represented what Christ did on earth.

IV. WHAT CHANGES MONDAY?

A. Showbread

1. Those who do come to Him will find full satisfaction, for Jesus said to them, *“I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.” (John 6:35)*
2. ***Are you satisfied in Christ? Have you tasted and seen that the Lord is good?***

B. Lampstand

1. We today as believers have been sent into the world as lights: **Matthew 5:14** says, *“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.”* We are merely reflectors, to reflect His light. Only as we walk in Him can we be lights in the world. A reflector must be where the light is, in order to reflect it.
2. **Isaiah 2:5** says, *“O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the LORD.”*
3. The measure to which we reflect Christ ought to be what Hardy Street is noted for — not our programming, not our facilities, not our music, nor our preaching.
4. ***Are you reflecting the Light of Christ into the darkness of this world? Do you stand out or do you blend into this world?***

C. The Altar of Incense

- a) *Pray without ceasing* as **1 Thessalonians 5:17** commands us.
- b) We get a warning about a strange fire. God cares about how you worship him. The strange incense in Exodus 30:9 speaks of any attempt to worship God which is contrary to His Word.

- c) Duplication is equally as bad, for it speaks of trying to please man while trying to serve God.
- d) A dead ritual and a lifeless church service are an abomination to God and produce spiritual deadening to man.
- e) *What kind of Incense are you producing with your life? Is it a sweet aroma before the Lord or is it a strange fire?***

D.CONCLUSION

1. We are reminded - though the ultimate 'Most Holy Place' was not in the tabernacle or the temple but was nothing other than the very presence of God, before whom Christ, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself unblemished, that his blood might cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death so that we may serve the living God. The closing two chapters of the Bible take this line of thought one step farther. The new Jerusalem is built like a cube (Revelation 21:16), and the only biblical 'cube' is the Most Holy Place, whose dimensions were prescribed by God. In other words, this is another way of saying that there is no temple in the new Jerusalem (21:22): the whole place is the Most Holy Place, constantly placing its blessed citizens in the presence of the unshielded glory of God - or, otherwise put, there is no temple in the city 'because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple' (21: 22).