

STUDY GUIDE

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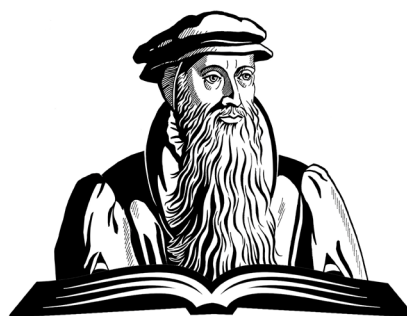
The Tabernacle of Moses

Video Lecture Series

by Rev. A. T. Vergunst

Lecture 12 ~

THE ALTAR OF INCENSE



The John Knox Institute
of Higher Education

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Entrusting our Reformed Inheritance to the Church Worldwide

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Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the Authorized King James Version.

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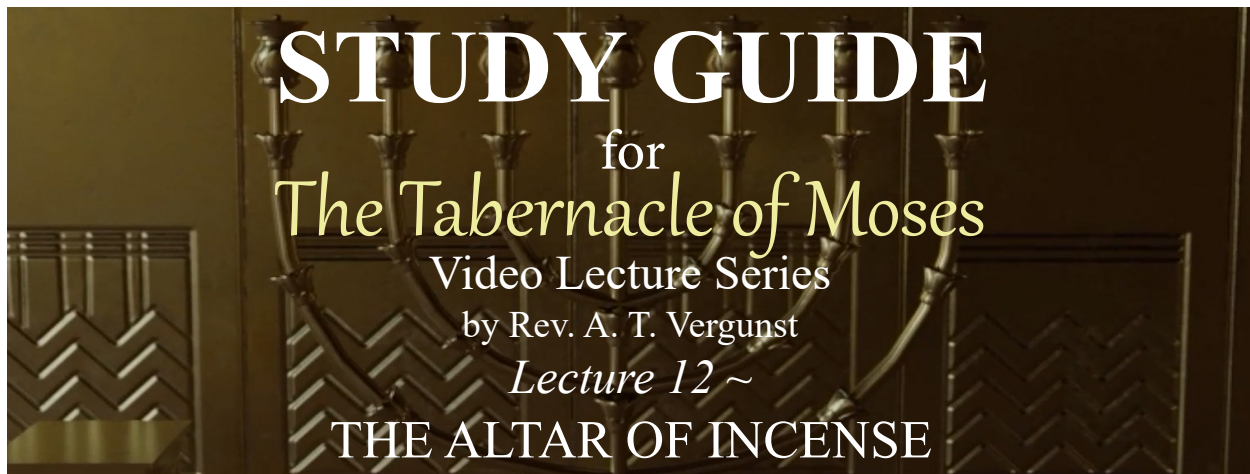


The Tabernacle of Moses

Video Lecture Series

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2. The Temple Theme
3. Setting and Organization
4. The Courtyard Fence
5. The Courtyard Gate
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10. The Lampstand
11. The Table of Shewbread
12. The Altar of Incense
13. The Ark of the Covenant



Scripture Text

“And thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon : of shittim wood shalt thou make it. 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. 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. 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. And thou shalt make the staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold. 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. And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it. And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations. Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt sacrifice, nor meat offering; neither shall ye pour drink offering thereon. 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.” —Exodus 30, verses 1 to 10

“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: and thou shalt make it a perfume, a confection after the art of the apothecary, tempered together, pure and holy: 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. 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. Whosoever shall make like unto that, to smell thereto, shall even be cut off from his people.”—Exodus 30, verses 34 to 38

Key Points

1. Reminder, the purpose of the Tabernacle—God would meet with his people.
2. The Altar of Incense.
 - a. It is the smallest piece of furniture in the Tabernacle.

- b. It is covered with pure gold.
 - c. It has a golden crown.
 - d. It has four horns, one at each corner.
 - e. It has gold-covered staves for carrying it.
 - f. Twice a day, the priest took hot coals from the Brazen Altar and put them on the Altar of Incense. Then he sprinkled the special incense on it and prayed to God.
 - g. Then the priest would go to the Tabernacle Gate and proclaim a blessing on the people.
3. Gospel teachings in the Altar of Incense.
- a. The wood covered with gold, the crown around the edge, and the horns on the corners all pictured various aspects of the glory of Jesus Christ.
4. The Altar of Incense was placed just before the inner veil—“most holy unto the LORD.”
- a. Behind that veil was God’s throne room with the Ark of the Covenant.
5. The connection between the Altar of Incense and the Brazen Altar.
- a. The Brazen Altar sets out Christ in his humiliation, his suffering, and his death. It had no crown, and it stood outside the Tabernacle building. Pictured how Jesus was made sin for us and laid down his life for his people.
 - b. The Altar of Incense was inside, decorated with a crown, and never seen by the people. It points to Jesus in his exaltation, in the glory of God’s presence after he ascended.
6. The Altar and the Incense portrayed the intercessory work of the praying High Priest, the risen and ascended Lord Jesus Christ.
7. The perfect composition of the four equal ingredients of the Incense pictures the perfect work of the Savior. We should take care never to add to it or subtract from it.

Review Questions

1. Describe the shape and size of the Alter of Incense.

2. What was the special task of the priest regarding the Altar of Incense?

3. What did God forbid regarding the use of incense for the Tabernacle? What happened to Aaron's two sons, Nadab and Abihu?

4. Why did God tell Moses to place the Altar of Incense just before the inner veil?

5. Explain the connections between the Brazen Altar in the Courtyard and the Golden Altar inside the Tabernacle building. What are the spiritual connections?

6. What act is symbolized by the Altar of Incense? How does the Bible prove this?

7. Why is it that whenever the priest entered the Tabernacle to do other tasks, he first had to offer incense on the Altar of Incense?

8. What encouragement do we find in Hebrews chapter 7?

9. How did the timing of the morning and evening sacrifice coincide with the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ? How are we to understand Hebrews 9, verses 3 and 4?

10. What spiritual illustration of Jesus Christ do we see in the four ingredients of the incense?

Personal Applications

1. Why did God so strictly stipulate the use of the fire, the incense, and the Altar? What does this tell you about how we should approach and worship God?

2. Sometimes, people come to God or worship God according to their feelings or what they think is right. This lecture teaches us an important lesson about only coming God by the way he has provided, and that way is only through the Lord Jesus Christ. What have you learned about prayer and worship from this lecture?
