

# Exodus 30 Commentary

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## Summary Chart of The Book of Exodus

DELIVERANCE  
FROM OPPRESSION

PREPARATION FOR  
WORSHIP

<b>Redemption from Egypt</b> Ex 1:1-18:27						<b>Revelation from God</b> Ex 19:1-40:38			
<b>Getting Israel Out of Egypt</b>						<b>Getting Egypt Out of Israel!</b>			
<b>Narration</b>						<b>Legislation</b>			
Birth of Moses Ex 1-2	Call of Moses Ex 3-6	Conflict with Pharaoh Ex 7-10	Exodus from Egypt Ex 11-12	Red Sea Crossed Ex 13-15	Journey To Sinai Ex 16-18	Law Given Ex 19-24	Tent Plan Ex 25-31	Idol Worship Ex 32-34	Tent Built Ex 35-40
<b>Subjection</b>			<b>Redemption</b>			<b>Instruction</b>			
<b>Suffering and Liberation of People of God</b>			<b>Guidance of God</b>			<b>Worship of God</b>			
<b>Moses and Burdens of Israel</b>		<b>Pharaoh and Plagues Upon Egypt</b>		<b>Red Sea Deliverance</b>	<b>Wilderness Provision</b>	<b>Sinai Instructions</b>			
<b>Bondage and Oppression</b>			<b>Deliverance and Provision</b>			<b>Law Pattern and Construction</b>			
<b>Israel in Egypt</b> Ex 1:1-13:16			<b>Israel to Sinai</b> Ex 13:17-18:27			<b>Israel at Sinai</b> Ex 19:1-40:38			
<b>God's People Enduring Bondage</b>			<b>God's Grace Revealed in Redemption</b>			<b>God's Glory Manifested in Worship</b>			
<b>Egypt</b> <b>430 Years</b> (15% of Exodus)			<b>Wilderness</b> <b>2 Months</b> (30% of Exodus)			<b>Mt Sinai</b> <b>10 Months</b> (55% of Exodus)			
<b>From Groaning</b>									<b>To Glory!</b>

[Jensen's Survey of the Old Testament - online](#)

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[Click for Excellent Map of Route of the Exodus](#)

[Click another Exodus from Egypt](#)

[Click for Events during the Sojourn at Kadesh-Barnea](#)

<b>GENESIS</b>	<b>EXODUS</b>
human effort and failure	divine power and triumph
word of promise	work of fulfillment
a people chosen	a people called
God's electing mercy	God's electing manner
revelation of nationality	realization of nationality

**SUMMARY OF THE PENTATEUCH**  
(from Believer's Study Bible)

**Exodus 30:1 "Moreover, you shall make an altar as a place for burning incense; you shall make it of acacia wood.**

NET Exodus 30:1 "You are to make an altar for burning incense; you are to make it of acacia wood.

NLT Exodus 30:1 "Then make another altar of acacia wood for burning incense.

ESV Exodus 30:1 "You shall make an altar on which to burn incense; you shall make it of acacia wood.

NIV Exodus 30:1 "Make an altar of acacia wood for burning incense.

KJV Exodus 30:1 And thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon: of shittim wood shalt thou make it.

LXE Exodus 30:1 And thou shalt make the altar of incense of incorruptible wood.

ASV Exodus 30:1 And thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon: of acacia wood shalt thou make it.

CSB Exodus 30:1 "You are to make an altar for the burning of incense; make it of acacia wood.

NKJ Exodus 30:1 "You shall make an altar to burn incense on; you shall make it of acacia wood.

NRS Exodus 30:1 You shall make an altar on which to offer incense; you shall make it of acacia wood.

YLT Exodus 30:1 'And thou hast made an altar for making perfume; of shittim wood thou dost make it;

- **an altar:** Ex 30:7,8,10 37:25-28 40:5 Lev 4:7,18 1Ki 6:20 2Ch 26:16 Rev 8:3
- [Exodus 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**NET Note** - Why this section has been held until now is a mystery. One would have expected to find it with the instructions for the other furnishings. The widespread contemporary view that it was composed later does not answer the question, it merely moves the issue to the work of an editor rather than the author. N. M. Sarna notes concerning the items in chapter 30 that "all the materials for these final items were anticipated in the list of invited donations in 25:3–6" and that they were not needed for installing Aaron and his sons (Exodus [JPSTC], 193).

**NET Note Outline** - Verses 1–10 can be divided into three sections:

1. the instructions for building the incense altar (1–5),
2. its placement (6),
3. and its proper use (7–10).

#### Altar of Incense

**Moreover, you shall make an altar as a place for burning incense; you shall make it of acacia wood**- The altar had one purpose - to burn incense. No sacrifices are to be offered on this altar.

**Currid** - Incense altars have a long history in the ancient Near East, and in Palestine in particular. The earliest example in Palestine has been discovered at et-Tell, from the Early Bronze III period (c. 2650–2350 B.C.). And they have been found in specifically Israelite contexts, such as at Iron Age Arad.<sup>46</sup>

**NET Note** - The expression is מִזְבֵּחַ מִקְטָר קֶטֶרֶת (mizbeakh miqtar qétoret), either "an altar, namely an altar of incense," or "an altar, [for] burning incense." The second noun is "altar of incense," although some suggest it is an active noun meaning "burning." If the former, then it is in apposition to the word for "altar" (which is not in construct). The last noun is "incense" or "sweet smoke." It either qualifies the "altar of incense" or serves as the object of the active noun. B. Jacob says that in order to designate that this altar be used only for incense, the Torah prepared the second word for this passage alone. It specifies the kind of altar this is (Exodus, 828).

**Thompson** - The thing that seems somewhat odd about this part of Exodus is that all of the other furniture items have been made and one would think that this piece of furniture would have been designed and made along with the others before the ordaining of the priests. However, there can be no denying the fact that until you have everything in place, including the priests, the whole operation is lacking as being a beautiful, fragrant, sweet smelling offering to God. So what that would suggest is until you have all of the parts in place, the operation is not a sweet smelling fragrance to God. Until everything is in place in the way it should be, it is not sweet smelling to the Lord. Now we know from Scripture that this fragrant smoke that is coming from this burning of incense is that which symbolizes prayer (Ps. 141:2; Rev. 5:8; Rev 8:3-4). Any who carefully study the Bible may observe that. We may assume that as the incense was being offered, prayers were being offered to the Lord. It is very possible that when this incense was being offered, Moses and the priests and people in Israel realized this did symbolize prayer because David certainly understood this in Psalm 141:2. We know from Hebrews that the earthly tabernacle reflected God's heavenly sanctuary (Heb. 8:2-5; 9:24). We may assume that Moses had some perspective of the fact that this incense altar did have a purpose of symbolizing the prayers of the people that would be offered day and night.

**Criswell** - The incense altar was smaller in size (1-1/2 feet square, 3 feet high) and made from richer material than the altar of burnt offering. The former was to be located in the larger chamber of the tabernacle, the holy place, just in front of the veil (cf. Heb. 9:4,

note).

**George Bush** - Thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon. Heb. מזבח מקטר קטרת mizbēah miktar ketoreth, an incense-altar of incense; or, an altar, a perfumatory of perfume. Gr. θυσιασθηριον θυμιμαδος, an altar of incense. Chal. 'Thou shalt make an altar to offer upon it incense of sweet spices.' The original implies an altar on which odorous substances were to be burnt and resolved into a fragrant and grateful fume. In the subsequent account of its construction, Ex. 37:25, it is called simply an 'altar of incense' as rendered by the Greek here, and in Num. 4:11, 'the golden altar,' as the other covered with brass was called 'the brazen altar.' But as the Hebrew term for altar (מזבח mizbēah, from זבח zabah, to slay), legitimately carries with it the idea of slain sacrifices, and as no such service was performed upon this, it is for distinction sake termed מקטר miktar, from קטר katar, to fume, to fumigate, to make to smoke. The practice of burning incense upon altars as a religious rite is to be traced to a very remote antiquity; but we have nothing more ancient in the way of historic record relative to this custom than what the present chapter contains. It seems scarcely probable, however, that the custom originated on this occasion in the order here prescribed. Incense altars appear in the most ancient Egyptian paintings, and when it was required to be compounded 'after the art of the apothecary (perfumer),' it would seem to be implied that this was an art which was practised, and which the Israelites had learned, in Egypt. Plutarch moreover assures us, that the Egyptians offered incense to the sun—resin in the morning, myrrh at noon, and about sunset an aromatic compound which they called kypi. But the custom was in ancient times by no means confined to Egypt. It pervaded all the religions of antiquity, and like many other features of the Hebrew worship may have been derived from an antediluvian origin. Nor are we disposed to overlook the circumstance in this connexion of incense being burnt among the Orientals by way of honorary tribute to kings, princes, and persons of distinction. It is one of the usages peculiar to palaces, and the houses of the wealthy and great, and as God in the character of Theocratic Ruler of Israel saw fit to be honored in modes analogous to those which were common in reference to eastern sovereigns, so he would not have his palace, the Sanctuary, to be lacking in a usage of such striking significance. But we shall hope to evince in the sequel that this came far short of fulfilling all the symbolical purposes which were answered by this remarkable portion of the furniture of the Tabernacle. Of the remark of Maimonides that incense was burnt in the Tabernacle to counteract the offensive smell of the sacrifices, we can only say, that although this may have been to a very limited degree the effect of the ordinance, it fell altogether short of being its main object. As to its materials and form this Altar was made like the Ark of shittim-wood overlaid with plates of gold. When it is said to have been 'four-square,' the meaning is, not that it was, as a whole, of a cubical form, but that upon its upper and under surface it showed four equal sides. It was, however, twice as high as it was broad, being twenty-one inches broad, and three feet six inches high. From the four corner posts arose four horns or pinnacles, doubtless of similar form to those of the altar of sacrifice, which were covered with gold like the rest, and its top was surrounded with an ornamental ledge or border of solid gold, here called 'a crown,' like that which adorned the upper edges of the Ark of the Covenant and of the Table of Shew-bread. Beneath this were placed two golden rings, probably on the opposite corners, for the conveniency of carrying it on staves during the marches of Israel in the wilderness, and afterwards when removed to different places in Canaan.

**Exodus 30:2 "Its length shall be a cubit, and its width a cubit, it shall be square, and its height shall be two cubits; its horns shall be of one piece with it.**

NET Exodus 30:2 Its length is to be a foot and a half and its width a foot and a half; it will be square. Its height is to be three feet, with its horns of one piece with it.

NLT Exodus 30:2 Make it 18 inches square and 36 inches high, with horns at the corners carved from the same piece of wood as the altar itself.

ESV Exodus 30:2 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.

NIV Exodus 30:2 It is to be square, a cubit long and a cubit wide, and two cubits high--its horns of one piece with it.

KJV Exodus 30:2 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.

LXE Exodus 30:2 And thou shalt make it a cubit in length, and a cubit in breadth: it shall be square; and the height of it shall be of two cubits, its horns shall be of the same piece.

ASV Exodus 30:2 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 one piece with it.

CSB Exodus 30:2 It must be square, 18 inches long and 18 inches wide; it must be 36 inches high. Its horns must be of one piece.

NKJ Exodus 30:2 "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.

NRS Exodus 30:2 It shall be one cubit long, and one cubit wide; it shall be square, and shall be two cubits high; its horns shall be of one piece with it.

YLT Exodus 30:2 a cubit its length, and a cubit its breadth, (it is square), and two cubits its height; its horns are of the same.

**Its length shall be a cubit, and its width a cubit, it shall be square, and its height shall be two cubits-** "18 inches square and 36 inches high."

**its horns shall be of one piece with it-** This is the same description as the horns on the bronze altar in Ex 27:2 "its horns shall be of one piece with it."

**Exodus 30:3 "You shall overlay it with pure gold, its top and its sides all around, and its horns; and you shall make a gold molding all around for it.**

NET Exodus 30:3 You are to overlay it with pure gold— its top, its four walls, and its horns— and make a surrounding border of gold for it.

NLT Exodus 30:3 Overlay the top, sides, and horns of the altar with pure gold, and run a gold molding around the entire altar.

ESV Exodus 30:3 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.

NIV Exodus 30:3 Overlay the top and all the sides and the horns with pure gold, and make a gold molding around it.

KJV Exodus 30:3 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.

LXE Exodus 30:3 And thou shalt gild its grate with pure gold, and its sides round about, and its horns; and thou shalt make for it a wreathen border of gold round-about.

ASV Exodus 30:3 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.

CSB Exodus 30:3 Overlay its top, all around its sides, and its horns with pure gold; make a gold molding all around it.

NKJ Exodus 30:3 "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.

NRS Exodus 30:3 You shall overlay it with pure gold, its top, and its sides all around and its horns; and you shall make for it a molding of gold all around.

YLT Exodus 30:3 'And thou hast ove

- overlay it: Ex 25:11,24
- top: Heb. roof
- sides: Heb. walls
- [Exodus 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**You shall overlay it with pure gold, its top and its sides all around, and its horns-** Recall that items near the Ark were covered with the most precious metal gold. Some consider the altar of incense to be a smaller version, in gold, of the bronze altar in the court, complete with the horns on each corner.

**and you shall make a gold molding all around for it-** NET "Heb "and make for it border gold around." The verb is a consecutive perfect. See Exod 25:11, where the ark also has such a molding."

**Exodus 30:4 "You shall make two gold rings for it under its molding; you shall make them on its two side walls--on opposite sides--and they shall be holders for poles with which to carry it.**

NET Exodus 30:4 You are to make two gold rings for it under its border, on its two flanks; you are to make them on its two sides. The rings will be places for poles to carry it with.

NLT Exodus 30:4 Make two gold rings, and attach them on opposite sides of the altar below the gold molding to hold the carrying poles.

ESV Exodus 30:4 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.

NIV Exodus 30:4 Make two gold rings for the altar below the molding--two on opposite sides--to hold the poles used to carry it.

KJV Exodus 30:4 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.

LXE Exodus 30:4 And thou shalt make under its wreathen border two rings of pure gold; thou shalt make it to the two corners on the two sides, and they shall be bearings for the staves, so as to bear it with them.

ASV Exodus 30:4 And two golden rings shalt thou make for it under the crown thereof; upon the two ribs thereof, upon the two sides of it shalt thou make them; and they shall be for places for staves wherewith to bear it.

CSB Exodus 30:4 Make two gold rings for it under the molding on two of its sides; put these on opposite sides of it to be holders for the poles to carry it with.

NKJ Exodus 30:4 "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.

NRS Exodus 30:4 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 hold the poles with which to carry it.

YLT Exodus 30:4 and two rings of gold thou dost make to it under its crown; on its two ribs thou dost make them, on its two sides, and they have become places for staves, to bear it with them.

- **rings:** Ex 25:12,14,27 26:29 27:4,7
- [Exodus 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**You shall make two gold rings for it under its molding** - The altar of incense was also carried by the system of rings and poles, just like the Ark of the Covenant, the table of showbread, and the brazen altar but the latter was bronze not gold. "Since it was a small altar, it needed only two rings, one on either side, in order to be carried. The second clause clarifies that the rings should be on the sides, the right and the left, as you approach the altar." (NET)

**you shall make them on its two side walls--on opposite sides--and they shall be holders for poles with which to carry it** - "On two of the sides of the altar, at opposite ends, there will be a gold ring through which a pole may be inserted. The altar, like the ark, is not to be touched by human hands." (Currid)

**Exodus 30:5 "You shall make the poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold.**

NET Exodus 30:5 You are to make the poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold.

NLT Exodus 30:5 Make the poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold.

ESV Exodus 30:5 You shall make the poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold.

NIV Exodus 30:5 Make the poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold.

KJV Exodus 30:5 And thou shalt make the staves of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold.

LXE Exodus 30:5 And thou shalt make the staves of incorruptible wood, and shalt gild them with gold.

ASV Exodus 30:5 And thou shalt make the staves of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold.

CSB Exodus 30:5 Make the poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold.

NKJ Exodus 30:5 "You shall make the poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold.

NRS Exodus 30:5 You shall make the poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold.

YLT Exodus 30:5 'And thou hast made the staves of shittim wood, and hast overlaid them with gold;

- Ex 25:13,27
- [Exodus 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**You shall make the poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold-** Poles were overlain with gold just as were the poles used to transport the Ark (Ex 25:13). These poles are not stated as remaining in place like the poles of the Ark. (Ex 25:15).

**Exodus 30:6 "You shall put this altar in front of the veil that is near the ark of the testimony, in front of the mercy seat that is over the ark of the testimony, where I will meet with you.**

NET Exodus 30:6 "You are to put it in front of the curtain that is before the ark of the testimony (before the atonement lid that is over the testimony), where I will meet you.

NLT Exodus 30:6 Place the incense altar just outside the inner curtain that shields the Ark of the Covenant, in front of the Ark's cover-- the place of atonement-- that covers the tablets inscribed with the terms of the covenant. I will meet with you there.

ESV Exodus 30:6 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.

NIV Exodus 30:6 Put the altar in front of the curtain that is before the ark of the Testimony--before the atonement cover that is over the Testimony--where I will meet with you.

KJV Exodus 30:6 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.

LXE Exodus 30:6 And thou shalt set it before the veil that is over the ark of the testimonies, wherein I will make myself known to thee from thence.

ASV Exodus 30:6 And thou shalt put it before the veil that is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy-seat that is over the testimony, where I will meet with thee.

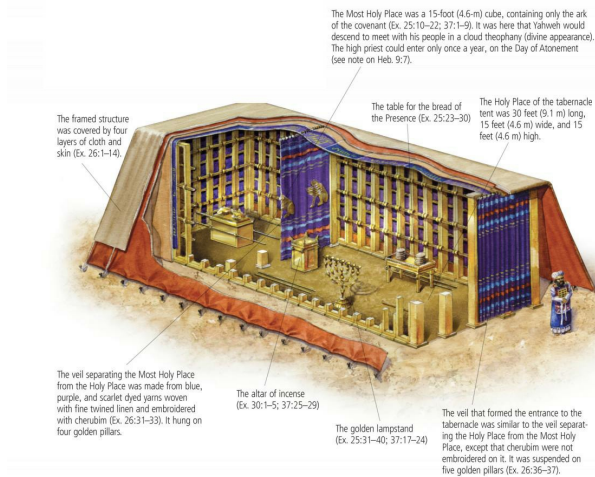
CSB Exodus 30:6 "You are to place the altar in front of the veil by the ark of the testimony-- in front of the mercy seat that is over the testimony-- where I will meet with you.

NKJ Exodus 30:6 "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.

NRS Exodus 30:6 You shall place it in front of the curtain that is above the ark of the covenant, in front of the mercy seat that is over the covenant, where I will meet with you.

YLT Exodus 30:6 and thou hast put it before the vail, which is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy-seat which is over the testimony, whither I am met with thee.

- **veil:** Ex 26:31-35 40:3,5,26 Mt 27:51 Heb 9:3,4
- **before the mercy seat that is over the testimony:** Ex 25:21,22 Lev 16:13 1Ch 28:11 Heb 4:16 9:5
- **I will:** Ex 30:36 29:42,43 Nu 17:4
- [Exodus 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



**The Tabernacle with Altar of Incense Before the Veil**  
 Click Picture to Enlarge  
 (Source: [ESV.org](http://ESV.org))

## A PLACE TO GOD WOULD MEET WITH MOSES

**You shall put this altar in front of the veil that is near the ark of the testimony, in front of the mercy seat that is over the ark of the testimony, where I will meet with you.** - (See the depiction above) This is on the West side of the Holy place, next to the Veil separating the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. The placement of this altar is given in details that are very precise, more so than the locations of the Table of Show Bread and the Lampstand.

The Hebrew verb **meet** (yaad) means to meet at an appointment, to engage and is rendered in the Septuagint with [ginosko](http://ginosko) which means to know by experience. This is incredible! It means that when we pray, God meets with us and we come to know Him! O my! How this convicts me because of my weak prayer life!!! And as if God is trying to get our attention, Yahweh says "I will meet with you" four times (all 4 translated with [ginosko](http://ginosko)) - Ex 25:22; Ex 29:42; Ex 30:6; Ex 30:36; (and once I will meet with the sons - Ex 29:43)

**Meet** ([03259](http://03259))(**yaad**) means to appoint, to summon, to engage, to agree, to assemble. "It also means allotted or appointed time, such as the amount of time David appointed to Amasa to assemble the men of Judah (2 Sam. 20:5). This word can also take the meaning of appointing or designating someone to be married (Ex. 21:8, 9). Another meaning is to meet someone at an appointed time. Amos asked the question, How can two walk together unless they appoint a time at which to meet (Amos 3:3)?" (Baker)

**Gilbrant** - Yā'adh means "to meet," "to assemble together" or "to make an appointment." The primary nuance of the verb is "to assemble" for the purpose of a legally binding activity. This nuance is found in Middle Hebrew. The nuance of "appoint" is attested in Arabic, Syriac and the Dead Sea Scrolls. The meaning "to promise" is not attested in Hebrew, although it is found in Old South Arabian, Arabic and Biblical Aramaic. A Semitic promise was not a mere vocal act, but a legally binding oral contract. In all the occurrences of this verb, the issue of meeting has to do with legal circumstances. In the Qal, the root can refer to the betrothal of a woman (Exo. 21:8f). It can also refer to the appointment of a specific place (Jer. 47:7) or a specific time (2 Sam. 20:5). It may further refer to a punishment (Mic. 6:9). The Niphal form of yā'adh, when followed by le (HED #3937; Exo. 25:22; 29:42f; 30:6, 36) or 'el (HED #420), means "to meet together at an appointed time and place," or more generally, "to come together." These passages, along with Num. 10:3; 1 Ki. 8:5 (and its parallel 2 Chr. 5:6), use the Niphal of yā'adh in connection with the assembly coming together and meeting before the Lord. These were appointed times when the Lord met with the congregation of Israel. God met the people at an appointed time at the "mercy seat" (Exo. 25:22) and the dedication of Solomon's Temple (1 Ki. 8:5; 2 Chr. 5:6). The Niphal form of yā'adh with the preposition 'al (HED #6142) can refer to the people coming together against the Lord (Num. 14:35; 16:11; 27:3). The Niphal form by itself means "to meet at an appointed place, by appointment," "to come together at an appointed time or place." Joshua 11:5 and Neh. 6:2, 10 use yā'adh in the Niphal to speak of officials coming together, including kings joining their forces (Josh. 11:5), and leaders of people coming together to talk (Neh. 6:2, 10). It can also carry with it the idea of "agreement" (Amos 3:3). The Hiphil form of yā'adh means "to appoint someone to meet (especially a time for a trial or judgment)" (Jer. 49:19) and "to summon" (Jer. 50:44; Job 9:19). The Hophal form of this verb means "to be fixed," "to be directed." The Hophal participle is used in Jer. 24:1 and Ezek. 21:21. ([Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary](http://Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary))



**Yaad** - 29x in 29v - agreed to meet(1), appointed(3), assemble(1), assembled(3), assigned(1), designated(1), designates(1), gather(1), gathered(3), made an appointment(2), meet(7), meet together(1), set(1), summon(3). Exod. 21:8; Exod. 21:9; Ex 25:22; Ex 29:42; Exod. 29:43; Ex 30:6; Ex 30:36; Num. 10:3; Num. 10:4; Num. 14:35; Num. 16:11; Num. 17:4; Num. 27:3; Jos. 11:5; 2 Sam. 20:5; 1 Ki. 8:5; 2 Chr. 5:6; Neh. 6:2; Neh. 6:10; Job 2:11; Job 9:19; Ps. 48:4; Jer. 24:1; Jer. 47:7; Jer. 49:19; Jer. 50:44; Ezek. 21:16; Amos 3:3; Mic. 6:9

**MacArthur on in front of the veil** - This places the altar outside of the Holy of Holies in the Holy Place. Heb 9:3, [4](#) speaks of the altar in the Holy of Holies in the sense of its proximity to the ark and in relation to its cleansing on the Day of Atonement. The priests could not go beyond it on any other day. (MSB)

**Douglas Stuart on in front of the veil** - This would fit the symbolism of the incense as representing prayer before God since the fragrant smoke could be expected to reach into the holy of holies, there to offer its sweet aroma to God, whose presence is represented by the ark in its entirety and more narrowly, by the "atonement cover that is over the Testimony." (NAC-Ex)

**Thompson** points out that "outside the Tabernacle were sacrifices that were being offered. There would have been several different unpleasant odors on the outside. This altar of incense would prevent any unpleasant odor from being in the place of God's presence. It would fumigate this part of the Tabernacle with sweet odors."

**G C Morgan** - "The table of showbread represented communion with God, the lampstand spoke of testimony to the world, and now the golden altar speaks of the offering of adoration."

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**Question:** [What was the significance of the altar of incense?](#)

**Answer:** The altar of incense is first mentioned in Exodus chapter 30 as one of the items inside the Holy Place of the tabernacle. The top of the altar was square—one cubit per side—and the whole altar was two cubits high. A cubit was about twenty inches, or just under two feet. The altar of incense was made of acacia wood and overlaid with gold. It had four "horns," one at each corner, similar to the altar of sacrifice in the courtyard (Exodus 27:2). Rings of gold were built into the altar so that it could be carried with acacia wood poles that were slipped through the rings. The altar of incense was placed before the veil that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. On the other side of the veil was the Ark of the Testimony, where the presence of God was (Exodus 25:22).

Aaron was instructed to burn incense on the altar each morning and at twilight, every day, as a regular offering to the Lord (Exodus 30:7–8). God gave the recipe for making the incense and stipulated that no other incense ever be burned on the altar (verses 34–38). The fire used to burn the incense was always taken from the altar of burnt offering outside the sanctuary (Leviticus 16:12). Never was the altar of incense to be used for a burnt offering, a grain offering, or a drink offering (Exodus 30:9). Once a year, on the Day of Atonement, the high priest was to put blood on the horns of the altar of incense to cleanse it. The altar of incense was called "most holy to the Lord" (verse 10).

Of course, God's primary desire for His people is that they be holy. Simply going through the rituals required by the Law—including the burning of incense on the altar of incense—was not enough to make the Israelites right with God. The Lord wanted their hearts and lives to be right, not just their formalities. During Isaiah's time, the people were disobedient to God, yet they still maintained the temple rites, and that's why God said through the prophet, "Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me" (Isaiah 1:13). More important than burning the proper incense at the proper time with the proper fire with the proper implements was having a proper heart before God.

In Scripture, incense is often associated with prayer. David prayed, "May my prayer be set before you like incense" (Psalm 141:2). In his vision of heaven, John saw that the elders around the throne "were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of God's people" (Revelation 5:8; cf. 8:3). As Zechariah the priest was offering incense in the temple in Luke 1:10, "all the assembled worshipers were praying outside."

The **altar of incense**, then, can be seen as a symbol of the prayers of God's people. Our prayers ascend to God as the smoke of the incense ascended in the sanctuary. As the incense was burned with fire from the altar of burnt offering, our prayers must be kindled with heaven's grace. The fact that the incense was always burning means that we should always pray (Luke 18:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:17). The altar of incense was holy to the Lord and was atoned for with the blood of the sacrifice; it is the blood of Christ applied to our hearts that makes our prayers acceptable. Our prayers are holy because of Jesus' sacrifice, and therefore they are pleasing to God.

The **altar of incense** can also be seen as a picture of the intercession of Christ. Just as the altar of sacrifice in the courtyard was a type of Christ's death on our behalf, the altar of incense in the Holy Place was a type of Christ's mediation on our behalf—Christ's work on earth and in heaven. The altar of incense was situated before the mercy-seat of the Ark—a picture of our Advocate's

standing in the presence of the Father (Hebrews 7:25; 9:24). The incense was to be burning continually on the altar of incense, which shows the perpetual nature of Christ's mediation. Christ's intercession on our behalf is a sweet-smelling savor to God.

It is beautiful to know that God considers the prayers of believers to be like a sweet smell of incense. Because of Christ, we can now enter God's holy presence by faith, with full assurance (Mark 15:38; Hebrews 4:16). We offer our prayers upon the altar, trusting in Jesus, our eternal, perfect, and faithful High Priest (Hebrews 10:19–23). (Source: [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org))

### Exodus 30:7 "Aaron shall burn fragrant incense on it; he shall burn it every morning when he trims the lamps."

NET Exodus 30:7 Aaron is to burn sweet incense on it morning by morning; when he attends to the lamps he is to burn incense.

NLT Exodus 30:7 "Every morning when Aaron maintains the lamps, he must burn fragrant incense on the altar.

ESV Exodus 30:7 And Aaron shall burn fragrant incense on it. Every morning when he dresses the lamps he shall burn it,

NIV Exodus 30:7 "Aaron must burn fragrant incense on the altar every morning when he tends the lamps.

KJV Exodus 30:7 And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it.

LXE Exodus 30:7 And Aaron shall burn upon it fine compound incense every morning; whensoever he trims the lamps he shall burn incense upon it.

ASV Exodus 30:7 And Aaron shall burn thereon incense of sweet spices: every morning, when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn it.

CSB Exodus 30:7 Aaron must burn fragrant incense on it; he must burn it every morning when he tends the lamps.

NKJ Exodus 30:7 "Aaron shall burn on it sweet incense every morning; when he tends the lamps, he shall burn incense on it.

NRS Exodus 30:7 Aaron shall offer fragrant incense on it; every morning when he dresses the lamps he shall offer it,

YLT Exodus 30:7 'And Aaron hath made perfume on it, perfume of spices, morning by morning; in his making the lamps right he doth perfume it,

- **fragrant incense** Ex 30:34-38
- **he trims:** Ex 27:20,21 1Sa 2:28 3:3 1Ch 23:13 Lu 1:9 Ac 6:4
- [Exodus 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### PROPER PRACTICE WITH INCENSE ALTAR

**Aaron shall burn fragrant incense on it; he shall burn it every morning when he trims**(lit "makes them good") **the lamps** - NET = "Aaron is to burn sweet incense on it morning by morning; when he attends to the lamps he is to burn incense." Trims ("makes them good") he replaces oil and wicks and cleans the lamps, making them in effect as "good as new." The timing of burning the fragrant incense coincided with the morning and evening sacrifices described in Ex 29:38–42.

Exodus 27:20; 21 "You shall charge the sons of Israel, that they bring you clear oil of beaten olives for the light, **to make a lamp burn continually.**" 21 "In the tent of meeting, outside the veil which is before the testimony, Aaron and his sons shall keep it in order from evening to morning before the LORD; it shall be a perpetual statute throughout their generations for the sons of Israel.

**Thompson** - When he trimmed the lamps and took care of the wicks in the morning, he was to burn incense. It is clear that God wants His people talking with Him every morning.

Kaiser - The effective use of anything depends on following correct procedures. The incense that was to be burned every morning and evening symbolized the prayers of the saints and communion with God (vv.7–8; cf. Ps 141:2; Luke 1:10; Rev 5:8; 8:3–4). What was not to be used on the altar of incense is explicitly pointed out (v.9). Failure to follow this would result in the desecration of the

altar. Also, it was necessary that once a year the altar be cleansed with blood from the atoning offering (v.10).

**NET Note** on when **he trims** - The Hebrew is בְּהִיטִיבוֹ (béhetivo), a Hiphil infinitive construct serving in a temporal clause. The Hebrew verb means “to make good” and so in this context “to fix” or “to dress.” This refers to cleansing and trimming the lamps.

**NET Note** on **burn incense** - The point of the little golden altar of incense is normally for intercessory prayer, and then at the Day of Atonement for blood applied atonement. The instructions for making it show that God wanted his people to make a place for prayer. The instructions for its use show that God expects that the requests of his people will be pleasing to him.

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**Arnold Fruchtenbaum** - The responsibilities of the priesthood were fivefold.

1. First, they were to burn the Incense on the Altar of Incense (Ex. 30:7–8).
2. Secondly, they were responsible for burning the offerings and sacrifices (Ex. 29:38–42; Lev. 6:13). While the Incense was burned on the Altar of Incense within the Holy Place, the sacrifices were slaughtered and burned on the Altar of Sacrifice outside the Tabernacle in the courtyard.
3. The third responsibility of the priesthood was to inspect the animals before the sacrifice to make sure these animals were without spot and without blemish (Lev. 27:11–12).
4. The fourth responsibility of the priesthood was to keep the lamp burning so that the seven branched Lampstand would be continually burning (Lev. 24:1–4).
5. The fifth responsibility was to teach Israel (Deut. 17:8–13; 19:15–20; 21:5). It should be remembered that, at this time of history, it was impossible for everyone to possess their own copy of the Scriptures. This was not to be until the printing press was invented. So the Tribe of Levi was given the responsibility to maintain the Scriptures by making new copies after the old copies became worn, and they were to teach the other tribes of Israel the Law of Moses, which were the Scriptures of that day.

**Exodus 30:8 "When Aaron trims the lamps at twilight, he shall burn incense. There shall be perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations."**

NET Exodus 30:8 When Aaron sets up the lamps around sundown he is to burn incense on it; it is to be a regular incense offering before the LORD throughout your generations.

NLT Exodus 30:8 And each evening when he lights the lamps, he must again burn incense in the LORD's presence. This must be done from generation to generation.

ESV Exodus 30:8 and when Aaron sets up the lamps at twilight, he shall burn it, a regular incense offering before the LORD throughout your generations.

NIV Exodus 30:8 He must burn incense again when he lights the lamps at twilight so incense will burn regularly before the LORD for the generations to come.

KJV Exodus 30:8 And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations.

LXE Exodus 30:8 And when Aaron lights the lamps in the evening, he shall burn incense upon it; a constant incense-offering always before the Lord for their generations.

ASV Exodus 30:8 And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn it, a perpetual incense before Jehovah throughout your generations.

CSB Exodus 30:8 When Aaron sets up the lamps at twilight, he must burn incense. There is to be an incense offering before the LORD throughout your generations.

NKJ Exodus 30:8 "And when Aaron lights the lamps at twilight, he shall burn incense on it, a perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations.

NRS Exodus 30:8 and when Aaron sets up the lamps in the evening, he shall offer it, a regular incense offering before the LORD throughout your generations.

YLT Exodus 30:8 and in Aaron's causing the lamps to go up between the evenings, he doth perfume it; a continual perfume before Jehovah to your generations.

- **at twilight.** Ex 12:6 \*marg:
- **perpetual:** Ro 8:34 1Th 5:17 Heb 7:25 9:24
- [Exodus 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PERPETUAL INCENSE

**When Aaron trims the lamps at twilight, he shall burn incense-** Trims here is literally "causing the lamps to go up." "It is clear that God wants His people talking with Him every evening. When Aaron went back in the evening to check and care for the lamps, he was to burn incense. So this was a twice daily regimen. The timing of these morning and evening matters coincided with the morning and evening sacrifices that were being offered. So there were things going on outside the Tabernacle/Tent and things going on inside the Tabernacle/Tent. The sacrifices outside the tent took care of the sin problem and the incense inside the tent illustrated communication one may have with God once the sin problem has been resolved." (Thompson)

**There shall be perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations** - The soothing aroma of the incense was continually before Yahweh. This speaks of continual prayer. While believers are called to pray without ceasing, it is Jesus Who in fact is praying without ceasing for us!

**Thompson** - Israel did a relatively good job of maintaining this custom for many years. In fact, one of the main episodes in the program of God occurred while this very ritual was being followed. Zacharias was functioning as the high priest of Israel and was actually in the temple burning incense, while the people outside were praying and it was at that very moment that an angel of the Lord appeared to him and actually stood to the right of the incense altar. That angel revealed to Zacharias that his wife would give birth to John, who would be the forerunner of Jesus (Luke 1:8-17)

### Passages that associate prayer with incense:

Psalm 141:2 May my **prayer** be counted as **incense** before You; The lifting up of my hands as the evening offering.

Revelation 5:8 When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of **incense**, which are the **prayers** of the saints.

Revelation 8:3-4 Another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much **incense** was given to him, so that he might add it to the **prayers** of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the **incense**, with the **prayers** of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand.

Who is praying continually? Jesus and His disciples

Romans 8:34 who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also **intercedes** ([present tense](#) = continually) for us.

Hebrews 7:25 Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to **make intercession** ([present tense](#) = continually) for them. (See also Hebrews 9:24)

(Possibly Related to Intercession ) Hebrews 9:24 For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;

1 Thessalonians 5:17 **pray** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) without ceasing;

**Exodus 30:9 "You shall not offer any strange incense on this altar, or burnt offering or meal offering; and you shall not pour out a drink offering on it.**

NET Exodus 30:9 You must not offer strange incense on it, nor burnt offering, nor meal offering, and you must not pour out a drink offering on it.

NLT Exodus 30:9 Do not offer any unholy incense on this altar, or any burnt offerings, grain offerings, or liquid offerings.

ESV Exodus 30:9 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.

NIV Exodus 30:9 Do not offer on this altar any other incense or any burnt offering or grain offering, and do not pour a drink offering on it.

KJV Exodus 30:9 Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt sacrifice, nor meat offering; neither shall ye pour drink offering thereon.

LXE Exodus 30:9 And thou shalt not offer strange incense upon it, nor and offering made by fire, nor a sacrifice; and thou shalt not pour a drink-offering upon it.

ASV Exodus 30:9 Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt-offering, nor meal-offering; and ye shall pour no drink-offering thereon.

CSB Exodus 30:9 You must not offer unauthorized incense on it, or a burnt or grain offering; you are not to pour a drink offering on it.

NKJ Exodus 30:9 "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.

NRS Exodus 30:9 You shall not offer unholy incense on it, or a burnt offering, or a grain offering; and you shall not pour a drink offering on it.

YLT Exodus 30:9 'Ye do not cause strange perfume to go up upon it, and burnt-offering, and present, and libation ye do not pour out on it;

- Lev 10:1
- [Exodus 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## NO STRANGE INCENSE

**You shall not offer any strange incense on this altar, or burnt offering or meal offering; and you shall not pour out a drink offering on it** - "You must not offer unauthorized incense" (CSB). No offerings other than incense. Strange is used of the "strange fire" offered up by Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu which resulted in their deaths. (see Lev 10:1-7+) Note that the statement prohibiting these other offerings probably relates to the fact that on the bronze altar, food mixed with incense could be offered (Lev 2:1-2, 15-16; Lev 6:15).

**David Thompson** applies this - We cannot offer up prayer to God on our terms, it must be on His terms. Three specific terms we know are: #1 - We must offer up prayer in the name of Jesus Christ. John 14:13 #2 - We must not hide iniquity in our hearts. Psalm 66:18 #3 - We must abide in fellowship with Christ based on God's Word. John 15:7 So a person could offer up as many prayers as they want and be offering strange incense which is not acceptable to God. It must be in conformity with the prerequisites of God.

**Criswell** - There was one proper type of incense, and one correct way for it to be offered. Man cannot come to God in his own way (cf. Prov. 12:15, note). He must come in God's way or not at all.

**Meal (grain) offering** (offering) (04503)(**minchah**) means a gift (given to another without compensation = Ge 32:13, 2Ki 8:8), tribute ( payment by one ruler or nation to another in acknowledgment of submission or as the price of protection = Jdg 3:14, 2Sa 8:2; Hos 10:6) or offering (as a gift offered to God). The most common sense by far in the OT is as an offering (usually "grain offering" in the NAS but it could refer to animal offerings Ge 4:3-5 or "sacrifices" in general Isa 19:21).

**Henry Morris** on **Strange Incense** - The exact composition of the incense is specified in Exodus 30:34-35. Since the incense represents the prayers of believers, this instruction indicates that effective prayer must be in accord with God's specifications (see note on James 4:3).

**Bush** has an excellent comment - **Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon**. That is, incense of a different composition from that prescribed, v. 34. Gr. θυμιαμα τερον, another incense. Chal. 'Incense of strange spices.' The incense was to be that alone which God had appointed; and special care was to be taken to make no confusion between the offerings belonging to the respective altars, of which the one kind was for atonement, the other for acceptance only. So when drawing nigh to God in prayer, we are not to bring the fervor of mere animal spirits, which may easily be mistaken for true devotion; but a broken and a contrite heart, which alone sends forth an odor that is well-pleasing to God. Nor are we to imagine that by our prayers, or by any thing else that we can bring to God, we can atone for sin, or contribute in the least degree towards the efficacy of Christ's atonement. **These must be kept quite**

distinct; and whilst our prayers are offered on the Altar of Incense, our pleas must be taken solely from the Altar of Burnt-offering.

**Exodus 30:10 "Aaron shall make atonement on its horns once a year; he shall make atonement on it with the blood of the sin offering of atonement once a year throughout your generations. It is most holy to the LORD."**

NET Exodus 30:10 Aaron is to make atonement on its horns once in the year with some of the blood of the sin offering for atonement; once in the year he is to make atonement on it throughout your generations. It is most holy to the LORD."

NLT Exodus 30:10 "Once a year Aaron must purify the altar by smearing its horns with blood from the offering made to purify the people from their sin. This will be a regular, annual event from generation to generation, for this is the LORD's most holy altar."

ESV Exodus 30:10 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."

NIV Exodus 30:10 Once a year Aaron shall make atonement on its horns. This annual atonement must be made with the blood of the atoning sin offering for the generations to come. It is most holy to the LORD."

KJV Exodus 30:10 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.

LXE Exodus 30:10 And once in the year Aaron shall make atonement on its horns, he shall purge it with the blood of purification for their generations: it is most holy to the Lord.

ASV Exodus 30:10 And Aaron shall make atonement upon the horns of it once in the year; with the blood of the sin-offering of atonement once in the year shall he make atonement for it throughout your generations: it is most holy unto Jehovah.

CSB Exodus 30:10 "Once a year Aaron is to perform the purification rite on the horns of the altar. Throughout your generations he is to perform the purification rite for it once a year, with the blood of the sin offering for atonement. The altar is especially holy to the LORD."

NKJ Exodus 30:10 "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."

NRS Exodus 30:10 Once a year Aaron shall perform the rite of atonement on its horns. Throughout your generations he shall perform the atonement for it once a year with the blood of the atoning sin offering. It is most holy to the LORD.

YLT Exodus 30:10 and Aaron hath made atonement on its horns, once in a year, by the blood of the sin-offering of atonements; once in a year doth he make atonement for it, to your generations; it is most holy to Jehovah.'

- **Aaron:** Ex 29:36,37 Lev 16:18,29,30 23:27 Heb 1:3 9:7,22,23,25
- **sin offering:** Lev 16:5,6
- [Exodus 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## ANNUAL DAY OF ATONEMENT

### Related Passage:

Leviticus 16:34+ Now you shall have this as a permanent statute, to make atonement for the sons of Israel for all their sins once every year." And just as the LORD had commanded Moses, so he did.

Recall that a sin-removal ceremony was required for the sanctification of the bronze altar on a daily basis (Ex 29:36-37), whereas cleansing of the altar of incense was to be done annually at the time of the Day of Atonement.

**Aaron shall make atonement ([kaphar/kaphar](#)) on its horns once a year; he shall make atonement([kaphar/kaphar](#)) on it with the blood of the sin offering of atonement ([kippur/kippurim](#)) once a year throughout your generations** - Did you notice the "**key word**" ? **Atonement** occurs three times in one verse! Note the phrase **atonement once a year** is a reference to the **Day of Atonement** (Yom Kippur) which was to be carried out once per year. God is simply saying that once each year the altar of incense was to be daubed with blood so that it could be atoned for (presumably the idea is that sinful men had been ministering in the Holy Place and this was the annual "clean up day" so to speak."

**Thompson** - A special sin removing and sin cleansing ceremony was required on this **altar** once a year (see Lev 16:16). One time per year Aaron was to place blood on the horns of this altar as atonement for sin. This is a holy place and even a high priest like Aaron was still a sinner. Now only the priests could get into this place at this altar and pray at this place. But all priests were still fleshly sinners. It does not matter how high the position, we are still all fleshly sinners. The Apostle Paul near the end of his life called himself the "chief of sinners" (1 Ti 1:15). The Greek grammar of Paul's statement "I am the foremost of sinners" is written in such a way that Paul emphatically saw this about himself continually all of the time. Paul did not strut around viewing himself as some sinless saint. He recognized his need of cleansing just like these priests needed to recognize it.

**Guzik** points out that " Prayer is not the place sacrificial atonement is made (**ED: BLOOD IS APPLIED IN THIS PASSAGE BUT THE SACRIFICE TO OBTAIN THE BLOOD WAS AT THE BRONZE ALTAR**); it is the place sacrificial atonement is enjoyed. We don't save ourselves through prayer; we pray because of Jesus' saving work on the cross."

**Bush** - Aaron shall make atonement upon the horns of it once in a year. This was to be upon what was called the great day of Atonement, of which a full account is given Lev. 16. The ordinance was peculiarly striking, as it intimated that all the services performed at it were imperfect, that the Altar itself had contracted a degree of impurity from the sinfulness of those who ministered there, and that even the very odors of the daily incense needed to be sweetened by a fresh infusion of the savor of the blood of sprinkling.

**It is most holy to the LORD** - This signifies the altar is not to be used for any other purpose (cf Ex 29:37+ "whatever touches the altar shall be holy. ")

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**Question: [What is the Day of Atonement \(Yom Kippur\)?](#)**

**Answer: The Day of Atonement** (Leviticus 23:27-28+), also known as Yom Kippur, was the most solemn holy day of all the Israelite feasts and festivals, occurring once a year on the tenth day of Tishri, the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar. On that day, the high priest was to perform elaborate rituals to atone for the sins of the people. Described in Leviticus 16:1-34+, the atonement ritual began with Aaron, or subsequent high priests of Israel, coming into the holy of holies. The solemnity of the day was underscored by God telling Moses to warn Aaron not to come into the Most Holy Place whenever he felt like it; he could only come on this special day once a year, lest he die (Lev 16:2). This was not a ceremony to be taken lightly, and the people were to understand that atonement for sin was to be done God's way.

Before entering the tabernacle, Aaron was to bathe and put on special garments (Lev 16:4), then sacrifice a bull for a sin offering for himself and his family (Lev 16:6, 11). The blood of the bull was to be sprinkled on the ark of the covenant. Then Aaron was to bring two goats, one to be sacrificed "because of the uncleanness and rebellion of the Israelites, whatever their sins have been" (Lev 16:16), and its blood was sprinkled on the ark of the covenant. The other goat was used as a scapegoat. Aaron placed his hands on its head, confessed over it the rebellion and wickedness of the Israelites, and sent the goat out with an appointed man who released it into the wilderness (Lev 16:21). The goat carried on itself all the sins of the people, which were forgiven for another year (Lev 16:30).

The symbolic significance of the ritual, particularly to Christians, is seen first in the washing and cleansing of the high priest, the man who released the goat, and the man who took the sacrificed animals outside the camp to burn the carcasses (Lev 16:4, 24, 26, 28). Israelite washing ceremonies were required often throughout the Old Testament and symbolized the need for mankind to be cleansed of sin. But it wasn't until Jesus came to make the "once for all" sacrifice that the need for cleansing ceremonies ceased (Hebrews 7:27). The blood of bulls and goats could only atone for sins if the ritual was continually done year after year, while Christ's sacrifice was sufficient for all the sins of all who would ever believe in Him. When His sacrifice was made, He declared, "It is finished" (John 19:30). He then sat down at the right hand of God, and no further sacrifice was ever needed (Hebrews 10:1-12).

The sufficiency and completeness of the sacrifice of Christ is also seen in the two goats. The blood of the first goat was sprinkled on the ark, ritually appeasing the wrath of God for another year. The second goat removed the sins of the people into the wilderness where they were forgotten and no longer clung to the people. Sin is both propitiated and expiated God's way—only by the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Propitiation is the act of appeasing the wrath of God, while expiation is the act of atoning for sin and removing it from the sinner. Both together are achieved eternally by Christ. When He sacrificed Himself on the cross, He appeased God's

wrath against sin, taking that wrath upon Himself: "Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!" (Romans 5:9). The removal of sin by the second goat was a living parable of the promise that God would remove our transgressions from us as far as the east is from the west (Psalm 103:12) and that He would remember them no more (Hebrews 8:12; 10:17). Jews today still celebrate the annual Day of Atonement, which falls on different days each year in September-October, traditionally observing this holy day with a 25-hour period of fasting and intensive prayer. Jews also often spend most of the day in synagogue services. (Source: [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org))

#### Related Resource:

- [What is the meaning of Azazel / the scapegoat?](#)
- [How did the Israelites deny themselves in Leviticus 23:27? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Did the high priest have a rope tied to him when he entered the Holy of Holies? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- Baker Evangelical Dictionary [Day of Atonement](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Day of Atonement](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Day of Atonement](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Day of Atonement](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Day of Atonement](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Atonement day of](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Day of Atonement](#)

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#### J J Knapp - It is Most Holy Ex. 30:10

The golden altar of incense with its horns bend down, stood in front of the veil in the tabernacle as the altar of prayer. Like the precious incense that was spread upon it by the hand of the priest, arose from it in aromatic vapours, so a continual supplication arises from the midst of the New-Testament Congregation before God's countenance. More tender and holier exercise than the service of this golden altar of incense, whether it be in the inner closet, or in public, cannot be found in the widest scope of the life of faith. Therefore it applies to prayer what the text of today says about the altar,—it is most holy unto the Lord.

This holy character of prayer should fill us with reverence for each praying person. Whether it be a minister who speaks in the name of the congregation from the pulpit to the Lord; whether it be a father who presents in simple words his household before the Almighty; whether it be a child that stammers in broken sounds to the Eternal One,—it makes no difference, when we see it, we place our finger upon our lips and wait respectfully.

The dedication of prayer prevents us to judge in an unspiritual manner the petition that comes from someone's lips. Although man's judgement does not apply to this holy ground, the Lord's judgement does fall upon this hidden life of the soul for our own conscience. Before that divine court we are humbled deeply, when the frightful conviction takes hold of our heart that too often sin cleaves to our own prayer.

The most holy things defiled!  
The golden altar polluted!  
Undedicated and stained lips!

When we mutter holy words with our lips but there is no lifting up of the heart; when that deep reverence slips away from our soul while praying and we fall into the spirit of commonness that sounds different from the spirit of respectful familiarity; when our thoughts drift away while we stand before God's countenance, or when our soul is taken up by things that are not divine,—then we are not refreshed and quickened by our praying, but we are conscious of the fact that we have defiled the most holy things of God. However, praise be unto the Lord, there is also a covering for that sin. Once a year amongst Israel the golden altar was cleansed with the blood of redemption. In a similar way the heavenly High Priest also sprinkles the altar of our prayer with His blood that spreads its covering power over our guilty petitions and makes them to be a pleasing savour to the Lord.

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#### Exodus 30:11 The LORD also spoke to Moses, saying,

- [Exodus 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**The LORD also spoke to Moses, saying** - Hebrew "and Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying." This full means for introducing a quotation from the Lord is used again in Ex 30:17, 22; 31:1; and Ex 40:1. It appears first in Ex 6:10+." (NET Note) This is the first break in the conversation of Yahweh with Moses since it began in Ex 25:1+ after Moses had "entered the midst of the cloud as he



went up to the mountain; and Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights." (Ex 24:17+). Yahweh spoke again (either **LORD spoke** or **LORD said**) in Ex 30:17, 22, 34, Ex 31:1, 12)

[David Thompson](#) divides Exodus 30:11-38 into 4 sections explaining "There are **four worship mandates** that are given in this chapter. It is obvious that if you attempt to worship God without meeting these mandates, there were serious promised consequences.

- **WORSHIP MANDATE #1** – Those over 20 need to make a sacrificial ransom contribution to the Lord's work or they will be hit with plagues. Ex 30:11-16
- **WORSHIP MANDATE #2** – Those priests who minister need to first wash their hands and feet or they will die. Ex 30:17-21
- **WORSHIP MANDATE #3** – Those who worship God must use proper anointing oil or they will be cut off from God's people. Ex 30:22-33
- **WORSHIP MANDATE #4** – Those who worship God must use specific spices and incense or they will be cut off from God's people. Ex 30:34-38

**NET Note** - This brief section has been interpreted a number of ways by biblical scholars (for a good survey and discussion, see B. Jacob, Exodus, 829–35). In this context the danger of erecting and caring for a sanctuary may have been in view. A census would be taken to count the losses and to cover the danger of coming into such proximity with the holy place; payment was made to ransom the lives of the people numbered so that they would not die. The money collected would then be used for the care of the sanctuary. The principle was fairly straightforward: Those numbered among the redeemed of the LORD were to support the work of the LORD to maintain their fellowship with the covenant. The passage is fairly easy to outline:

- I. Every covenant member must give a ransom for his life to avoid death (11–12);
- II. The ransom is the same for all, whether rich or poor (13–15);
- III. The ransom money supports the sanctuary as a memorial for the ransomed (16).

**Exodus 30:12 "When you take a census of the sons of Israel to number them, then each one of them shall give a ransom for himself to the LORD, when you number them, so that there will be no plague among them when you number them."**

Hamilton "When you carry out a head count of Israel's sons for their registration, each one shall give a ransom for his life to the LORD when he registers them, that there be no plague among them when he registers them.

NET Exodus 30:12 "When you take a census of the Israelites according to their number, then each man is to pay a ransom for his life to the LORD when you number them, so that there will be no plague among them when you number them.

NLT Exodus 30:12 "Whenever you take a census of the people of Israel, each man who is counted must pay a ransom for himself to the LORD. Then no plague will strike the people as you count them.

ESV Exodus 30:12 "When you take the census of the people of Israel, then each shall give a ransom for his life to the LORD when you number them, that there be no plague among them when you number them.

NIV Exodus 30:12 "When you take a census of the Israelites to count them, each one must pay the LORD a ransom for his life at the time he is counted. Then no plague will come on them when you number them.

KJV Exodus 30:12 When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the LORD, when thou numberest them; that there be no plague among them, when thou numberest them.

LXE Exodus 30:12 If thou take account of the children of Israel in the surveying of them, and they shall give every one a ransom for his soul to the Lord, then there shall not be among them a destruction in the visiting of them.

ASV Exodus 30:12 When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel, according to those that are numbered of them, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto Jehovah, when thou numberest them; that there be no plague among them, when thou numberest them.

CSB Exodus 30:12 "When you take a census of the Israelites to register them, each of the men must pay a ransom for himself to the LORD as they are registered. Then no plague will come on them as they are registered.

NKJ Exodus 30:12 "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.

NRS Exodus 30:12 When you take a census of the Israelites to register them, at registration all of them shall give a ransom for their lives to the LORD, so that no plague may come upon them for being registered.

YLT Exodus 30:12 'When thou takest up the sum of the sons of Israel for their numbers, then they have given each an atonement for his soul to Jehovah in their being numbered, and there is no plague among them in their being numbered.

- **When you take a census:** Ex 38:25,26 Nu 1:2-5 26:2-4 2Sa 24:1
- **ransom:** Nu 31:50 2Ch 24:6 Job 33:24 36:18 Ps 49:7 Mt 20:28 Mk 10:45 1Ti 2:6 1Pe 1:18,19
- **no plague:** 2Sa 24:2-15 1Ch 21:12,14 27:24
- [Exodus 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## RANSOM TAX ATONEMENT MONEY

**Constable** points out that "The directions regarding the tabernacle opened with instructions concerning contributions for its construction (Ex 25:1–9). They close with this directive that every Israelite 20 years or older was to pay a flat fee of half a shekel during Israel's census for the tabernacle's maintenance (Nu 1:2; Nu 26:2). Everyone was to pay the same amount because the cost of everyone's atonement was the same in the Lord's sight."

**When you take a census of the sons of Israel to number them - When you take a census** is literally "when you [singular but Moses probably did not do the counting] lift up the head of the sons of Israel" and is an idiom meaning to take a head count. In Exodus 38:26 we find out that "those who were numbered, from twenty years old and upward, for 603,550 men." The reason for the **census** is not stated but some thoughts are noted below.

**Walter Kaiser** explains that "Previously Exodus 13:13 stated that the firstborn son belonged to God and had to be redeemed by a sacrifice. Likewise all firstborn belonged to God, and he accepted the tribe of Levi in lieu of all the firstborn (Ex 4:22; Num 3:12). Ex 30:12 extends the principle. The word for "ransom" or "atonement" (kōper) signifies "to deliver or redeem by a substitute." In this case the substitute was money by taking a census. Usually a **census** was equivalent to mustering troops; that is why it was so dangerous in David's case (2 Sam 24). It is clear, however, that those who were numbered under the proper circumstances would be under divine protection. (EBC-Ex)

**Douglas Stuart** has a lucid explanation for the need for ransom payment when taking a census - This instruction requires the Israelites to enter into a census only with great caution and under potentially great penalty. Why? What was wrong with taking a census? Isn't it useful to know the population figures? The answer is that in the ancient world, as far as we know, a census was taken for one of only two purposes: to prepare for war or to impose some sort of taxation. In ancient Israel there was technically only one purpose: to prepare for war. Because the Israelites had no right to go to war except for the taking and holding of the promised land by holy war as called explicitly by Yahweh through a prophet and because they had no right to impose taxes beyond the contribution system revealed in the law by God himself, the taking of a census would constitute in most cases an act of direct covenant disobedience. (NAC-Ex)

**UBS Handbook** note - The sanctuary tax, sometimes called the "poll tax," or the "half-shekel tax," provided the silver needed for making the bases for the tabernacle. (See Ex 38:25–28.) In the context of the book of Exodus, it is presented as a one-time obligation of the people. But this account became the basis for an annual taxation for the maintenance of the tabernacle and the worship. Later it became the basis for the Temple tax (Matt 17:24). A **census** was considered to be a dangerous undertaking, partly because it was often done in preparation for war or for taxation. The account of David's census (read 2 Samuel 24:1-25) suggests that it could easily arouse God's anger against the people. So here a provision is made to avert the outbreak of a plague. This was done through payment of half a shekel by everyone who was counted. This served as a "ransom" to "atone" for each person's sins and to appease God's anger.

**Bruckner** has an interesting comment - The Lord instituted a tabernacle census tax for two purposes. First, it was to be yet another reminder that God, as Creator, was the source of their individual lives. Their lives, purchased out of slavery, belonged to God. They were to recognize this reality each time a census was taken. At the time of a census, the community would be tempted to take pride in the power of its fighting force (as in Num. 1:2–3; 2 Sam. 24:1–2; 1 Chr. 21:1–5; see also 2 Chr. 2:17–18). At this time God required each man to pay the LORD a ransom for his life. The Hebrew word for "ransom" is from the same root as "covering" or "atonement" (kippur). The men twenty years old or more would stand in a line and would cross the courtyard, placing a half shekel

(about 5 grams/.2 oz. silver) in the collection box. Each would be counted as he paid the atonement money that “covered” his life. It was not a measure of personal worth, but a token acknowledgement of the Lord’s action in giving him life. The second purpose of the tabernacle “atonement money” was to cover expenses of the service (or “work on”) of the Tent of Meeting, which explains its place in this tabernacle text. ([Exodus - UBCS](#))

**Constable** adds that "Israel's leaders collected this money whenever they took a census. In time it became a yearly “temple tax” (Matt. 17:24) A half shekel weighed .2 ounces, and it was silver. “**Money**” in verse 16 is literally “**silver**.” In our Lord’s day it amounted to two days wages (Matt. 17:24). Evidently the taking of a census incurred some guilt (Ex 30:12). Perhaps it reflected lack of complete trust in God to multiply the nation as He had promised (cf. 2 Sam. 24).”

**Keil and Delitzsch** offers this explanation for the ransom payment - “It was no ordinary tribute, therefore, which Israel was to pay to Jehovah as its King, but an act demanded by the holiness of the theocratic covenant. As an [expiation](#) for souls, it pointed to the unholiness of Israel’s nature, and reminded the people continually, that by nature it was alienated from God, and could only remain in covenant with the Lord and live in His kingdom on the ground of His grace, which covered its sin.”

**NET Note on to number them** - The form is לִפְדֹּתָם (lifqudehem, “according to those that are numbered of/by them”) from the verb פָּדָה (paqad, “to visit”). But the idea of this word seems more to be that of changing or determining the destiny, and so “appoint” and “number” become clear categories of meaning for the word. Here it simply refers to the census, but when this word is used for a census it often involves mustering an army for a military purpose. Here there is no indication of a war, but it may be laying down the principle that when they should do this, here is the price. B. Jacob (Exodus, 835) uses Num 31 as a good illustration, showing that the warrior was essentially a murderer, if he killed anyone in battle. For this reason his blood was forfeit; if he survived he must pay a כֹּפֶר (kofer) because every human life possesses value and must be atoned for. The payment during the census represented a “presumptive ransom” so that they could not be faulted for what they might do in war.

**Number (06485)**([pequddah/pāqadh/paqad](#)) conveys the root idea of something that is attended to or set in order -- fighting men under an officer (2 Chr. 17:14), priests in an order (1 Chr. 23:11; 24:19); arrangement of Tabernacle (Nu 4:16[2x]).

**Then each one of them shall give a ransom for himself to the LORD, when you number them - Ransom is koper** which speaks of a price paid in order to obtain release. It was used in Ex 21:30+ "If a **ransom (koper)** is demanded of him, then he shall give for the redemption of his life whatever is demanded of him." In that context the person was guilty of manslaughter because he was negligent in controlling his ox he knew was dangerous and the penalty was death (Ex 21:29+). However he could pay the ransom price and save (redeem) his life. In both Ex 21:30+ and the present passage, **koper** is translated in the Septuagint with the noun [lutron/lytron](#) which was used to describe the price paid for release from slavery or captivity ransom. This same word **lutron** is used only twice in the NT, both times in a description of Jesus Christ, Who declared ““even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a **ransom (lutron)** for many.” (Mk 10:45, cf M 20:28). The ransom here in Exodus 30:12 is by the man himself, only for himself and only his physical life, whereas the ransom in the NT is by Jesus, for many and for spiritual (eternal) life!

The Hebrew word **koper** is used in Psalm 49:7 which says "Certainly a man cannot rescue his brother; he cannot pay God an adequate **ransom** price (Ps 49:7NET) The NET Note explains that "The psalmist pictures God as having a claim on the soul of the individual. When God comes to claim the life that ultimately belongs to him, he demands a ransom price that is beyond the capability of anyone to pay. The psalmist’s point is that God has ultimate authority over life and death; all the money in the world cannot buy anyone a single day of life beyond what God has decreed."

**Douglas Stuart** - What was “a ransom for [one’s] life” (v. 12)? It was a payment through which one symbolically bought his [or in special cases another’s] life back from God. It was not a penalty for being willing to go to war or a bribe paid to God in order to escape death in war. Rather, it recognized two important facts: (1) God owns the lives of his people, and (2) although he would have the right to require his people to lose their lives in battle, he generously gave them back their lives so they could enjoy the abundant life he had for them within his covenant protection. These two principles are seen in the ransom/redemption laws found already in Exodus 479 as well as being related to the concept of atonement (see below). In 13:13, for example, we read: “Redeem with a lamb every firstborn donkey, but if you do not redeem it, break its neck. Redeem every firstborn among your sons.” What was the point of this sort of law? It was that something that rightfully belongs to God (e.g., firstborn animal, firstborn son) may be given back to its owner (e.g., one’s life) rather than taken by God as long as his rightful claim to it is recognized by the payment of the appropriate ransom/redemption/atonement fee in substitution for the thing itself. ([Exodus - New American Commentary](#))

**So that there will be no plague among them when you number them**- Always be alert for **so that** which identifies purpose, in this case the purpose being pay or suffer **plague**! Why would they potentially suffer a **plague**? As explained above in some way (I do not completely understand) when Israel took a census they incurred some guilt and needed a ransom payment to atone for that

guilt.

**Victor Hamilton** has an interesting note on the ransom to prevent a plague - The reason for using kpr with the temple tax may be because of the negative overtones often associated with census taking in Israel. Note the similarity between David's census taking in 2 Sam. 24 and Exod. 30:11–16. In response to David's act, God sends a plague (deber) among Israel (2 Sam. 24:15). According to Exod. 30:12, the purpose of the "ransom" is so that "there be no plague [negep] among them." There is, however, one major difference between the two, as Porter (1965: 374n1) has observed. In Exod. 30 the danger resides in each particular person who allows him- or herself to be counted, and there is no attribution of guilt to Moses the census taker, as there is to David the census taker. Another parallel is in Num. 31, the account of Israel's war against Midian. Numbers 31:48–54, especially vv. 48–50, records that after the victory and after taking a census of their own troops (nāsā' rō's, Num. 31:49a, as in Exod. 30:12), they discover that not a single soldier is missing (pāqad, Num. 31:49b, as in Exod. 30:12). In response, the officers contribute to the sanctuary all the gold ornaments they have stripped off the slain Midianites, most likely to avoid any negative fallout for taking a count of their warriors. Their purpose for doing this, Num. 31:50 says, is lēkappēr 'al-napšōtēnū, the exact same phrase as in Exod. 30:15–16, except for the change of the pronominal suffix, ransoming "our lives" versus "your lives." Finally, the gift of gold is a "reminder/remembrance" (zikkārōn) to the Lord as is the atonement money (Exod. 30:16 and Num. 31:54b). ([Exodus: Exegetical Commentary](#))

**David Thompson** - If you don't think giving offerings is important to God, take a look at this text. God warns that those who do not give this particular ransom offering would be hit with a series of plagues. Now these offerings were to come from God's people. These were not offerings collected from the Canaanites. These were offerings that were to come from God's people and God specifies five key facts about this particular offering: Every son of Israel (EVERY MALE) was responsible to give this ransom offering for himself. This has been called a **ransom tax or atonement money**. A theme that shows up over and over again is that in any relationship that one has with God, it is always on the basis of redemption that is paid by a ransom price. Why would God continually demand this? Because He wants His people to always remember that we are in a relationship with Him because of a redemptive ransom price that has been paid. (ED: AND COMPARING Ex 38:25-28 WE READ "Of the 1,775 shekels, he made hooks for the pillars and overlaid their tops and made bands for them." THEN READ Ex 27:17 All the pillars around the court shall be furnished with **silver bands with their hooks of silver** and their sockets of bronze." HERE'S THE POINT -- THESE SILVER BANDS AND HOOKS WERE ON EVERY SIDE OF THE TABERNACLE COURT AND THEREFORE CLEARLY VISIBLE. THIS SERVED AS CONTINUAL REMINDER TO ISRAEL THAT THEY THEY HAD BEEN RANSOMED WITH A PRICE).

1 Peter 1:18-19+ knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, 19 but **with precious blood**, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.

**Criswell** - This **ransom** money would be paid by an individual only once in his life and would go to the support of the temple. Perhaps its purpose was to avoid the pride that would otherwise result from numbering the people (cf. 2 Sa 24). Since those numbered were eligible for military service, it may also have made atonement for lives taken in battle (cf. Ex 21:30; Nu 35:31, 32).

**Ransom** (03724)([koper](#)) is a masculine noun which refers to the ransom payment, but in several OT contexts assumes the sense of a bribe. A ransom is the price required to redeem a person. The idea of **koper** is that of delivering or redeeming by a substitute, and in Ex 30:12 the substitute is money (silver). If they paid the amount, their lives would be safe. The **Lxx** translates **koper** with the Greek noun [lutron/lytron](#) (used by Jesus Himself in Mark 10:45 and Mt 20:28) which refers to the ransom price or the payment which is necessary to free a slave from bondage (or a prisoner from captivity) giving them liberty.

**Koper** - translated in **NAS** - bribe(1), bribes(1), ransom(11).**Koper** - 17v (KJV) - Ge 6:14; Ex 21:30; 30:12; Num 35:31-32; 1Sam 6:18; 12:3; Job 33:24; 36:18; Ps 49:7; Pr 6:35; 13:8; 21:18; Song 1:14; 4:13; Isa 43:3; Amos 5:12

Note that in this context the **ransom** is for each of the sons of Israel over 20 years of age, so that no plague might come on them (Ex 30:12) that the ransom is half a shekel, a contribution to the LORD (Ex 30:13-14), to make atonement (Ex 30:16 - verb [kapar](#)) with the "atonement money." (Ex 30:16 - noun - [kippur/kippurim](#)).

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### **James Smith - Handfuls of Purpose - THE ATONEMENT MONEY. Exodus 30:11-16.**

It is interesting to note that this money, given by the people as an "atonement for their souls," went to form the foundation of the Tabernacle, so that the Tabernacle, as the House of God, literally stood upon the price of souls— Redemption. The Church of God to-day has no other standing. This "half shekel" is a figure of the precious Blood of Christ, by which we have been ransomed for God (1 Peter 1:18, 19). Observe that—

**I. All alike needed a Ransom. "Every man" (v. 12).**

In relation to God all are alike, there is no difference, for all have sinned. Birth, wealth, position, education, reformation will not avail to commend one more than another. God's Word has settled this. Every man must bring a ransom (Heb. 9:22).

## **II. The Ransom Price was Divinely Fixed. "Half a shekel" (v. 13), saith the Lord, neither more nor less.**

God does not leave it to man to say how much he will give for his soul. Such could only minister to his vanity. Man is so ignorant of himself and of the terrible nature of sin that it is not in him to mention what the ransom should be. "Deliver from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom" (Job 33:24). Where? In His own bosom, in the Person of His Son (John 3:16). "My Beloved Son." This is the price fixed by Jehovah before the world was created.

## **III. The Ransom was Divinely Judged. "After the shekel of the sanctuary" (v. 13).**

Each half shekel brought as atonement money must be after the perfect standard of holiness. The atonement money must be up to the weight of the sanctuary shekel, up to the righteous demands of a holy law. The Lord Jesus Christ, as our Ransom, was tested and judged by the perfect law of righteousness. He was up to the sanctuary standard (Matt. 17:5).

## **IV. The Ransom was alike for All. "The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less" (v. 15).**

God has but one price for souls, "The precious Blood of Christ." Neither more nor less. Not the blood and your prayers, gifts or good works, nothing must be added to the Blood of His Cross, nothing can be taken from it. "He gave Himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. 2:6). Those who preach a bloodless Gospel are blocking the way of sinners to God. It matters not what culture or criticism may say, His Word stands unalterable. "Neither more nor less."

## **V. The Ransom had to be Personally Presented. Every man shall give (v. 14).**

Salvation is a personal and individual matter. No one can "redeem his brother" (Psa. 49:7). The testimony of Moses had to be believed, the price taken, and definitely brought to God for a very special and definite purpose. So the Word of the Gospel must be believed, Christ personally and consciously accepted (John 1:12), and offered to God as the only but God-pleasing ransom. Neither is there salvation in any other Name. Jesus paid it all. "It is finished."

## **VI. The Ransom was the only Ground of Acceptance.**

It did not matter what a man might bring; if he did not bring the appointed "half shekel" he could not be accepted, he could not be a ransomed soul. A man was not accepted because he was rich or poor, learned or illiterate, good or bad, but because he presented the atonement money. This was the only condition, and all who brought it became partakers of the redemption, irrespective of caste or character. Here the rich and poor meet together, the Lord alone is the Saviour of all. "He that believeth not is condemned already" (John 3:18).

## **VII. The Ransomed were Expected to Serve.**

"They were to go forth to war" (Num. 1:45). We are delivered that we might "serve Him all the days of our life" (Luke 1:74, 75). Saved to serve (Acts 27:23). "Freely ye have received, freely give" (Matt. 10:8). Having been ransomed at such a price, let us therefore glorify God in our bodies and spirits, which are His. The ransomed of the Lord who go out to fight shall return with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads. The battle is the Lord's, thy God shall fight for thee. "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so" (Psa. 107:2).

**Exodus 30:13 "This is what everyone who is numbered shall give: half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary (the shekel is twenty gerahs), half a shekel as a contribution to the LORD.**

NET Exodus 30:13 Everyone who crosses over to those who are numbered is to pay this: a half shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary (a shekel weighs twenty gerahs). The half shekel is to be an offering to the LORD.

NLT Exodus 30:13 Each person who is counted must give a small piece of silver as a sacred offering to the LORD. (This payment is half a shekel, based on the sanctuary shekel, which equals twenty gerahs.)

ESV Exodus 30:13 Each one who is numbered in the census shall give this: half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary (the shekel is twenty gerahs), half a shekel as an offering to the LORD.

NIV Exodus 30:13 Each one who crosses over to those already counted is to give a half shekel, according to the sanctuary shekel, which weighs twenty gerahs. This half shekel is an offering to the LORD.

KJV Exodus 30:13 This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary: (a shekel is twenty gerahs:) an half shekel shall be the offering of the LORD.

LXE Exodus 30:13 And this is what they shall give, as many as pass the survey, half a didrachm which is according to the didrachm of the sanctuary: twenty oboli go to the didrachm, but the half of the didrachm is the offering to the Lord.

ASV Exodus 30:13 This they shall give, every one that passeth over unto them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary; (the shekel is twenty gerahs;) half a shekel for an offering to Jehovah.

CSB Exodus 30:13 Everyone who is registered must pay half a shekel according to the sanctuary shekel to the shekel). This half shekel is a contribution to the LORD.

NKJ Exodus 30:13 "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.

NRS Exodus 30:13 This is what each one who is registered shall give: half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary (the shekel is twenty gerahs), half a shekel as an offering to the LORD.

YLT Exodus 30:13 'This they do give, every one passing over unto those numbered, half a shekel, by the shekel of the sanctuary (the shekel is twenty gerahs); half a shekel is the heave-offering to Jehovah;

- **a shekel** : Lev 27:25 Nu 3:47 Eze 45:12
- **half shekel**: Ex 38:26 Mt 27:24
- [Exodus 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**This is what everyone who is numbered shall give** - "Each man was to pass in front of the counting officer and join those already counted on the other side." (NET)

**Hamilton** - It is one thing to pay for the erection of a new building. It is another thing to have funds for its upkeep and maintenance over the long haul. In the case of the tabernacle, it is the people's voluntary offerings that pay for the construction of the tabernacle and its appurtenances (Exod. 25:1–7; 36:3–7). This temple tax of one-half shekel provides contingency funds for its upkeep. The offerings for construction are freewill. This temple tax is mandatory, but only for one time....These two kinds of offerings (freewill and mandatory) appear in the account of Joash (or Jehoash), king of Jerusalem, and his project to repair the temple (2 Kings 12). The king funds the project by appropriating several sources of revenue, three in fact. Two of those three are (1) "the money collected in the census" (as reflected in Exod. 30:11–16) and (2) "the money brought voluntarily to the temple" (2 Kings 12:4 [5]). ([Exodus: Exegetical Commentary](#))

**Half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary (the shekel is twenty gerahs), half a shekel as a contribution to the LORD** - NLT = "Each person who is counted must give a small piece of silver as a sacred offering to the LORD." The **shekel** is a weight (see [note](#)), not a coin.

**Rod Mattoon** - The foundation of the Tabernacle was made of silver sockets. It is interesting to note that 3000 shekels were used to form one socket. This was the ransom money for 6000 men. Two sockets were used for each board. This represented 12,000 men. One talent of silver was used for each of the 100 sockets. A talent was around 95 to 100 pounds. The total weight of the silver sockets came to around five tons. The value of the silver in the Tabernacle, at the May, 2007, price of around \$13 per ounce would be \$2,080,000.

**David Thompson** - Every numbered person shall give ½ shekel as a contribution to the LORD for the Sanctuary. 30:13 Half a shekel was not a lot of money. In fact, half a shekel was about 1/5th of the amount of an ounce of silver. An ounce of silver today is worth about \$17 so 1/5th is a little more than \$3. Pg. 337 So it wasn't much. If we put it in regard to a dollar, it was worth about 20 cents. But the point is every person must realize that even though they may not be worth much, the only way they get into a right relationship with God is by a redemptive ransom price that must be paid. Now when we take this to the New Testament, what we learn is that **Jesus Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law that we might receive full sonship status in the sight of God** (Gal. 3:13; Gal 4:5).

Galatians 3:13+ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written,

“CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE”–

Galatians 4:5+ so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

1 Peter 1:18-19+ knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.

**NET Note** - The half shekel weight of silver would be about one-fifth of an ounce (6 grams). (Regarding the **shekel of the sanctuary**) It appears that some standard is in view for the amount of a shekel weight. The sanctuary shekel is sometimes considered to be twice the value of the ordinary shekel. The “gerah,” also of uncertain meaning, was mentioned as a reference point for the ancient reader to understand the value of the required payment. It may also be that the expression meant “a sacred shekel” and looked at the purpose more—a shekel for sanctuary dues. This would mean that the standard of the shekel weight was set because it was the traditional amount of sacred dues (S. R. Driver, Exodus, 333). “Though there is no certainty, the shekel is said to weigh about 11, 5 grams ... Whether an official standard is meant [by ‘sanctuary shekel’] or whether the sanctuary shekel had a different weight than the ‘ordinary’ shekel is not known” (C. Houtman, Exodus, 3:181).

**Exodus 30:14 "Everyone who is numbered, from twenty years old and over, shall give the contribution to the LORD.**

Hamilton - Everyone passing through the registration, from twenty years old and up, shall give the Lord's donation

NET Exodus 30:14 Everyone who crosses over to those numbered, from twenty years old and up, is to pay an offering to the LORD.

NLT Exodus 30:14 All who have reached their twentieth birthday must give this sacred offering to the LORD.

ESV Exodus 30:14 Everyone who is numbered in the census, from twenty years old and upward, shall give the LORD's offering.

NIV Exodus 30:14 All who cross over, those twenty years old or more, are to give an offering to the LORD.

KJV Exodus 30:14 Every one that passeth among them that are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering unto the LORD.

LXE Exodus 30:14 Every one that passes the survey from twenty years old and upwards shall give the offering to the Lord.

ASV Exodus 30:14 Every one that passeth over unto them that are numbered, from twenty years old and upward, shall give the offering of Jehovah.

CSB Exodus 30:14 Each man who is registered, 20 years old or more, must give this contribution to the LORD.

NKJ Exodus 30:14 "Everyone included among those who are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering to the LORD.

NRS Exodus 30:14 Each one who is registered, from twenty years old and upward, shall give the LORD's offering.

YLT Exodus 30:14 every one passing over unto those numbered, from a son of twenty years and upwards, doth give the heave-offering of Jehovah;

- **from twenty:** Nu 1:3,18,20 14:29 26:2 32:11
- [Exodus 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## A MANDATORY OFFERING

**Everyone who is numbered, from twenty years old and over, shall give the contribution to the LORD-** "Each man was to pass in front of the counting officer and join those already counted on the other side." (NET) **Twenty years old and over** refers to military age.

**Stuart** comments "Israel's all-volunteer holy war army was made up of men aged twenty years and older (there was no automatic upper age limit)."

**David Thompson** - Everyone who is 20 years of age and older must give this contribution. There are two kinds of offerings when it comes to God: **free will offerings** and **mandatory offerings**. The ransom offering is a mandatory offering. Now the Roman church has played on this point by saying you can pay your way out of your sin debt. In fact, they came up with a system that said the more you pay, the more sins may be forgiven. But the next fact completely negates this idea.

**Exodus 30:15 "The rich shall not pay more and the poor shall not pay less than the half shekel, when you give the contribution to the LORD to make atonement for yourselves.**

Hamilton - The rich man shall not pay more, and the poor man shall not give less than a half shekel, when giving the LORD'S donation to atone for yourselves/to serve as ransom for your lives.

NET Exodus 30:15 The rich are not to increase it, and the poor are not to pay less than the half shekel when giving the offering of the LORD, to make atonement for your lives.

NLT Exodus 30:15 When this offering is given to the LORD to purify your lives, making you right with him, the rich must not give more than the specified amount, and the poor must not give less.

ESV Exodus 30:15 The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less, than the half shekel, when you give the LORD's offering to make atonement for your lives.

NIV Exodus 30:15 The rich are not to give more than a half shekel and the poor are not to give less when you make the offering to the LORD to atone for your lives.

KJV Exodus 30:15 The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the LORD, to make an atonement for your souls.

LXE Exodus 30:15 The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than the half didrachm in giving the offering to the Lord, to make atonement for your souls.

ASV Exodus 30:15 The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less, than the half shekel, when they give the offering of Jehovah, to make atonement for your souls.

CSB Exodus 30:15 The wealthy may not give more and the poor may not give less than half a shekel when giving the contribution to the LORD to atone for your lives.

NKJ Exodus 30:15 "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.

NRS Exodus 30:15 The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less, than the half shekel, when you bring this offering to the LORD to make atonement for your lives.

YLT Exodus 30:15 the rich doth not multiply, and the poor doth not diminish from the half-shekel, to give the heave-offering of Jehovah, to make atonement for your souls.

- **rich**: Job 34:19 Pr 22:2 Eph 6:9 Col 3:25
- **give less** . Ex 30:12 Lev 17:11 Nu 31:50 2Sa 21:3
- [Exodus 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **SAME RANSOM PRICE FOR ALL**

**The rich shall not pay more and the poor shall not pay less than the half shekel, when you give the contribution to the LORD to make atonement ([kaphar/kaphar](#)) for yourselves** - What is the purpose of giving? To make atonement.

**Henry Morris** - This special offering, "after the shekel of the sanctuary" (Exodus 30:13), which was offered in order "to make an atonement for your souls," typifies the principle that all must come under God's covenant in exactly the same way.

**David Thompson** - Each person is to pay the same exact amount. There is no partiality with God. All are equal and all need redemption. It does not matter if one is rich or poor, successful or not successful; all need to be redeemed by the ransom price.



**Exodus 30:16 "You shall take the atonement money from the sons of Israel and shall give it for the service of the tent of meeting, that it may be a memorial for the sons of Israel before the LORD, to make atonement for yourselves."**

Hamilton - And you shall take the atonement money from Israel's sons, and assign it for the (construction) work on the tent of meeting, and it shall be for Israel's sons a remembrance before the LORD, to atone for yourselves/to serve as ransom for your lives."

NET Exodus 30:16 You are to receive the atonement money from the Israelites and give it for the service of the tent of meeting. It will be a memorial for the Israelites before the LORD, to make atonement for your lives."

NLT Exodus 30:16 Receive this ransom money from the Israelites, and use it for the care of the Tabernacle. It will bring the Israelites to the LORD's attention, and it will purify your lives."

ESV Exodus 30:16 You shall take the atonement money from the people of Israel and shall give it for the service of the tent of meeting, that it may bring the people of Israel to remembrance before the LORD, so as to make atonement for your lives."

NIV Exodus 30:16 Receive the atonement money from the Israelites and use it for the service of the Tent of Meeting. It will be a memorial for the Israelites before the LORD, making atonement for your lives."

KJV Exodus 30:16 And thou shalt take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and shalt appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of the congregation; that it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before the LORD, to make an atonement for your souls.

LXE Exodus 30:16 And thou shalt take the money of the offering from the children of Israel, and shalt give it for the service of the tabernacle of testimony; and it shall be to the children of Israel a memorial before the Lord, to make atonement for your souls.

ASV Exodus 30:16 And thou shalt take the atonement money from the children of Israel, and shalt appoint it for the service of the tent of meeting; that it may be a memorial for the children of Israel before Jehovah, to make atonement for your souls.

CSB Exodus 30:16 Take the atonement money from the Israelites and use it for the service of the tent of meeting. It will serve as a reminder for the Israelites before the LORD to atone for your lives."

NKJ Exodus 30:16 "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."

NRS Exodus 30:16 You shall take the atonement money from the Israelites and shall designate it for the service of the tent of meeting; before the LORD it will be a reminder to the Israelites of the ransom given for your lives.

YLT Exodus 30:16 'And thou hast taken the atonement-money from the sons of Israel, and hast given it for the service of the tent of meeting; and it hath been to the sons of Israel for a memorial before Jehovah, to make atonement for your souls.'

- **shall give it for the service:** Ex 38:25-31 Ne 10:32,33
- **a memorial:** Ex 12:14 Nu 16:40 Lu 22:19
- [Exodus 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE ATONEMENT MONEY

**You shall take the atonement money from the sons of Israel and shall give it for the service of the tent of meeting- Money** is [silver](#). The **money** is to take care of the tabernacle. "The book of Exodus is already connecting ransom with atonement." (Hamilton) For **tent of meeting** see Ex 27:21+.

**Atonement** (03725)([kippur/kippurim](#)) is a masculine plural noun which refers to an act of reconciliation and is used to describe the Day of Atonement. Swanson adds that kippurim refers to "an act. of ceremonially accounting for wrong done in a covenantal relationship, which causes forgiveness, pardon, and right relationship, which may have a possible implication of appeasement or anger (Ex 29:36; 30:10, 16; Nu

5:8; 29:11)" and then adds that "the plural (kippurim) is a marker of a superlative." Baker adds "Kippurim is used five times to indicate the act or process of reconciliation: a young bull was sacrificed each day for seven days during the ordination ceremony of Aaron and his sons to make atonement (Ex. 29:36). **Once a year, the blood of a sin offering was used to make atonement on the horns of the altar of incense located in front of the Holy of Holies** (Ex. 30:10). **Ransom money of a half-shekel was used to effect atonement or reconciliation for male Israelites who were at least twenty years old** (Ex. 30:16). The money was then used to service the Tent of Meeting. When a person had wronged the Lord or another person, a ram was presented to the priest, along with proper restitution (Num. 5:8); a sin offering for atonement was presented yearly on the Day of Atonement (Num. 29:11). Three times the noun is used to indicate the Day of Atonement itself (Lev. 23:27, 28; 25:9)."

**that it may be a memorial for the sons of Israel before the LORD-** The purpose was "to keep Jehovah in continual remembrance of the ransom which had been paid for their lives" (S R Driver)

**Stuart** comments that "The money given thus functioned as "a **memorial** for the Israelites before the LORD," a visible token or indicator of the fact that Yahweh knew that the volunteers belonged to him and thus were holy."

**Memorial** (reminder, remembrance) (02146) **zikkaron** from **zakar** = to remember) means a memorial, a remembrance (with an implication of honor, worship, and celebration), a record, a reminder. That by which the memory of a person or thing is preserved. Something that keeps remembrance vivid. A **memorial** is a monument, statue, holiday, or ritual that serves as a remembrance or reminder of a person or an event. Seven of 22 uses are in Exodus - Exod. 12:14; Exod. 13:9; Exod. 17:14; Exod. 28:12; Exod. 28:29; Exod. 30:16; Exod. 39:7

This suggests it was something that they could see. In Exodus 27:10, 11, 12, 14 we see there were hooks of the pillars and bands that were silver. So on all 4 sides of the court of the Tabernacle one could see these silver bands and hooks.

**David Thompson** - This is atonement money that is to be used for the service at the tent of meeting. Victor Hamilton, who has written a good commentary on the book of Exodus, says, "It is one thing to pay for the erection of a new building. It is another thing to have funds for its upkeep and maintenance over the long haul" (Exodus, p. 510). Contributions came in for the building of the Tabernacle, but contributions were also needed for the maintenance of the facility. This particular offering was to be used for the upkeep and general expenses related to proper worship. Even though this offering would remind all of the ransom necessary for a relationship with God, it also had a very specific purpose.

**George Bush** - That it may be a **memorial** unto the children of Israel before the Lord. That is, a memorial at once of them and for them; a memorial testifying to their obedience, and reminding them of what they owed to their heavenly Benefactor. We read of different memorials in the sacred Scriptures. The censers in which Koran and his company offered incense were taken out of the fire in which the offerers perished, and made into plates to be a covering of the altar; 'to be a **memorial** that none but the seed of Aaron come near to offer incense before the Lord.' The jewels and bracelets of which the Israelites spoiled the slaughtered Midianites were presented to the Lord 'as a **memorial** unto the children of Israel,' that not one of their army fell, though the whole Midianitish kingdom was utterly destroyed. **So the half shekels at the numbering of the people would serve as a remembrancer of all the interesting facts connected with the occasion of their past deliverance, of the fulfilment of the divine promises, and of their future preservation and blessedness under the favor of heaven.**

**THOUGHT** - AND I WOULD ADD TO BUSH'S COMMENT THAT THESE "MEMORIALS" WOULD BE VISIBLE TO EVERY PERSON FOR THE NEXT 40 YEARS IN THE WILDERNESS! WHY? BECAUSE SOME OF THE SILVER WAS USED TO MAKE HOOKS TO HANG THE CURTAINS AROUND THE COURTYARD (Exodus 27:17+) AND EVERY TIME THEY SAW THIS SILVER GLITTERING IN THE DESERT SUN, THEY WOULD (OR THEORETICALLY COULD/SHOULD) RECALL THAT THIS **SILVER** WAS THE **RANSOM PAYMENT** THAT MADE **ATONEMENT** FOR THEIR LIFE. THIS WOULD BE A SHADOW OF THE NECESSITY OF EVERY PERSON'S NEED FOR A RANSOM PAYMENT TO MAKE ATONEMENT FOR THEIR LIFE ETERNALLY! Peter alludes to "silver" in 1 Peter 1:18-19<sup>+</sup> writing "knowing that you were not **redeemed** (RANSOM PAYMENT) with perishable things like **silver** or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, 19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ (WHICH WROUGHT ABOUT ATONEMENT OR PROPITIATION - Ro 3:25, 1 Jn 2:2!)." )

**Memorial** (reminder, remembrance) (02146) **zikkaron**

**To make atonement for yourselves** - So they would not incur a plague.

**Make atonement** (forgive, appease (03722) **kapar/kaphar**) means to make atonement, to make

reconciliation (to reconcile), to purge, to make propitiation (to propitiate), to pacify, to cancel. There are two main ideas regarding the meaning of **kapar** - (1) Kapar means to cover over sin (2) A number of resources however favor the idea that kapar means to wipe away.

**Richards** notes that "It is often said that the idea expressed (in kapar) is one found in a possibly related Arabic root that means "to cover or conceal." **Atonement** would then denote a *covering* that *conceals* a person's sin and makes it possible for him to approach God. Although this relationship is possible, the language link is not at all certain. What is certain is the role that atonement played in the religion of Israel—a role given to atonement by God to carry a vital message about our faith."

As might be surmised the verb **kapar** is found most often in the Pentateuch, especially in Leviticus. In Leviticus, **kapar** is especially prominent in Leviticus 16, occurring 16 times in the great chapter that describes the annual Day of Atonement.

**Vine** writes that "Most uses of **kapar** involve the theological meaning of "**covering over**," often with the blood of a sacrifice, in order to atone for some sin. It is not clear whether this means that the "**covering over**" hides the sin from God's sight or implies that the sin is **wiped away** in this process."

**Kapar/kaphar** in Exodus - Ex. 29:33; Ex. 29:36; Ex. 29:37; Ex. 30:10; Ex. 30:15; Ex. 30:16; Exod. 32:30;

### Exodus 30:17 The LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

- [Exodus 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**The LORD spoke to Moses, saying** - Yahweh spoke either **LORD spoke** or **LORD said** in Ex 30:11, 17, 22, 34, Ex 31:1, 12

**David Thompson** - Those priests who minister need to first wash their hands and feet or they will die. Ex 30:17-21 It is very evident from this next mandate that in order for proper worship to take place, the priests must be clean and not dirty. God mandated that they be washed and cleansed.

### Exodus 30:18 "You shall also make a laver of bronze, with its base of bronze, for washing; and you shall put it between the tent of meeting and the altar, and you shall put water in it.

- **a laver:** Ex 31:9 38:8 Lev 8:11 1Ki 7:23,38 2Ch 4:2,6,14,15 Zec 13:1 Tit 3:5 \*Gr: 1Jn 1:7
- **put it:** Ex 40:7,30-32
- [Exodus 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Laver of Bronze Before  
Entrance to the Holy Place

## WASHING HANDS IS GOOD PRACTICE

**You shall also make a laver of bronze, with its base of bronze, for washing; and you shall put it between the tent of meeting and the altar, and you shall put water in it.** - The laver was made by melting bronze mirrors contributed by the Israelite women (Ex 38:8+). "Moreover, he made the **laver of bronze** with its base of bronze, from the mirrors of the serving women who served at the doorway of the tent of meeting." Highly polished glass gave a reflection of one's face (cf 1 Cor 13:12). The basin itself is not described otherwise except for its composition (bronze), its general shape (a basin), and the fact that it must be placed upon a stand, also to be made of bronze. The main point of this section is the priest was to ritually wash every time they entered the Tent and this was a perpetual ordinance.

**THOUGHT** - We are believer-priests and it would seem to apply to us that every time we enter the "Tent" even into the Holy of Holies, so to speak, we should first make sure our "hands and feet" (I would add our heart and mind) are "washed," cleansed of all impurities (sins). How? By confessing our sins as prescribed by Scripture...

1 John 1:9+ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Proverbs 28:13+ He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, But he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion.

With the bronze laver God was teaching His people the importance of purity in His presence. "Accordingly, the hands that touched the sacrifices or the feet that walked into the tabernacle had to be washed to remove dirt and to make the priest of Yahweh symbolically pure before him so as to be able to serve worthily in his house. The importance of this rule for all priests is underscored both by repetition and by the addition of the death penalty for violation. Any priest bringing a sacrifice to the altar or entering the holy place for any reason, however, would have had to wash each time—not just at the beginning of a day's service but throughout the day, each separate time he ministered at the altar or within the Tent." (Stuart)

It has always been the "pure in heart" who can enter into the presence of God's perfect holiness

Psalm 73:1 A Psalm of Asaph. Surely God is good to Israel, To those who are pure in heart!

Matthew 5:8+ "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

1 Timothy 1:5 But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

2 Timothy 2:22+ Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

**David Thompson** - A bronze wash basin was to be made for washing. When Solomon constructed the Temple, he was so focused on the cleanliness of worship that he made 10 of these bronze basins (1 Ki 7:38). A bronze basin filled with water was to be put between the tent of meeting and the altar. In other words, **after the altar but before the entrance into the tent** there was to be this bronze altar filled with water. Now we may observe from this that being washed clean is different than being cleansed by the blood. At the altar the blood was shed and beyond that altar was this act of cleansing. It is one thing to be saved; it is another thing to come to worship God as a saved person and be clean

**Criswell** - The "laver of bronze" was located in the court of the tabernacle and was to be supplied with water at all times. In the temple constructed centuries later by Solomon, the "laver" was replaced by the "Sea of cast bronze" (1 Ki 7:23).

**THOUGHT**- The washing typifies daily cleansing of confession for all believer-priests who seek to be used in the service of the LORD. John writes "**If** (CONDITIONAL CLAUSE) we confess (present tense = continually, implies that we continually have sins that need to be confessed!) our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1Jn 1:9+). The condition is confession. The promise is cleansing. Why do we (I) so often fail to exercise this great privilege?

**Bush - Thou shalt make a laver of brass, &c.** Heb. כִּיּוֹר kiyor, rendered 'caldron.' 1 Sam 2:14, but usually spoken of a large basin or other vessel for washing. In respect to none of the sacred articles is the information of the text more brief than in respect to this, as nothing is said of its form or dimensions. It is reasonable, however, to infer, that as Solomon modelled the furniture of the Temple after that of the Tabernacle, only on a vastly larger scale, and as his Laver was an immense vat or reservoir, called 'a sea,' and of a circular form, so the form of the Tabernacle-laver was also circular. De

**Exodus 30:19 "Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet from it;**

- Ex 40:31,32 Ps 26:6 Isa 52:11 Joh 13:8-10 1Co 6:9-11 Tit 3:5 Heb 9:10 10:22 Rev 1:5,6
- [Exodus 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **A PRIEST MUST BE CLEAN**

**Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet from it**- This is fulfilled in Ex 40:31,32. There are no specific instructions about how the washing was to be done (were they to put their hands and feet in the water, were they to ladle the water onto their hands and feet, etc). How were they to dry? The text does not say.

Recall that the in the consecration ceremony, the entire body of the priest was washed (Exodus 29:4+), but now (and hereafter in their service to Jehovah) they are to wash only their hands and their feet (note they did not wear sandals into the presence of Jehovah as alluded to in the burning bush episode - Ex 3:5). Surely the words of Jesus in John 13 are an allusion to this OT ritual...

Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God and

was going back to God, 4 \*got up from supper, and \*laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself. 5 Then He \*poured water into the basin, and began **to wash the disciples' feet** and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded. 6 So He \*came to Simon Peter. He said to Him, "Lord, do You wash my feet?" 7 Jesus answered and said to him, "What I do you do not realize now, but you will understand hereafter." 8 Peter \*said to Him, "Never shall You wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "**If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.**" 9 Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, then wash not only my feet, but also my hands and my head." 10 Jesus \*said to him, "**He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet**, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you." (John 13:3-10 )

**David Thompson** - The priests needed to wash their hands and feet before they entered into the tent or else they would die. Ex 30:19-21 God will not accept any attempt to worship Him if a priest is dirty. **A priest needs to be clean.** The value of this wash basin is that it says God wants His ministers pure and not dirty. If anyone tries to minister for God who is not washed from the dirt and filth of this world, God will not accept it and the person is in jeopardy of being judged by God. In fact, one who tries to minister for God without being clean is in danger of the death penalty. Many years ago in another church, I witnessed in a service a woman who came up to sing special music. She started singing and then had to start over. In the middle of the song she stopped and had lost her place. She was struggling to hit the right notes in harmony with the piano. It was a disaster. When she got done, she was so emotionally upset she was weeping. Her ministry in the church was dead. We would later learn that this woman was involved in sin. She had tried to stand up in a church of God, not having dealt with the sin and God would not let her minister effectively because she was not clean. The application to us is obvious. If we want a vibrant relationship with God, we must be clean. **What this means is that there needs to have been a confession that is made to God to be clean.** (1Jn 1:9<sup>±</sup>)

**Exodus 30:20 when they enter the tent of meeting, they shall wash with water, so that they will not die; or when they approach the altar to minister, by offering up in smoke a fire sacrifice to the LORD.**

- **die:** Ex 12:15 Lev 10:1-3 16:1,2 1Sa 6:19 1Ch 13:10 Ps 89:7 Ac 5:5,10 Heb 12:28,29
- [Exodus 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **WASHING HANDS PREVENTS DEATH**

**When they enter the tent of meeting, they shall wash with water, so that they will not die-** How interesting that as I write these notes we are in the midst of the Coronavirus global pandemic and one of the repeated rules is wash your hands to prevent infection, an infection by which you may die! Notice that it begins with "when" implying that this is not an option, but is "when they enter," and every time they enter the Tent.

**Or when they approach the altar to minister, by offering up in smoke a fire sacrifice to the LORD-** NET = "Also, when they approach the altar to minister by burning incense as an offering made by fire to the LORD." So this refers to approaching the altar of incense. Washing hands enables a priest to offer sweet incense on the altar!

**THOUGHT** - This again emphasizes for us in the NT the necessity to approach "offering incense" (prayers) only after we have "washed," and been cleansed from defiling sins. The psalmist adds "If I regard wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear." (Ps 66:18) So while believer-priests today won't die, if we don't "wash" (confess), in effect our prayers will "die" and not come into the Holy of holies and the hearing of the LORD God.

**Comment** on Ps 66:18 specifically the word "**regard**" - "**Regard**" means here "to look with favor upon", even to "plan". One picture is that of a heart which is making "provision" for sin (Ro 13:14b<sup>±</sup>). Another aspect is that of compromising with sin rather than having a holy aversion to it. The sanctified believer must have the same attitude toward sin which God has. A clear conscience, devoid of a desire for sin, is necessary for effectual prayer (see esp 1Jn 3:20,21<sup>±</sup>). Avoid nullifying your prayers by planning, harboring, or entertaining sin or wickedness in your heart. There are a number of reasons why our prayers may seem to go unanswered and the presence of unconfessed and unforsaken sin is often the cause. This possibility must always be considered with all honesty before seeking another reason.

**Spurgeon's comment** on Psalm 66:18 - If, having seen it to be there, I continue to gaze upon it without aversion; if I cherish it, have a side glance of love toward it, excuse it, and palliate it. The Lord will not hear me. How can he? Can I desire him to connive at my sin, and accept me while I wilfully cling to any evil way? Nothing hinders prayer like iniquity harboured in the breast; as with Cain, so with us, sin lieth at

the door, and blocks the passage. If thou listen to the devil, God will not listen to thee. If you refuse to hear God's commands, he will surely refuse to hear thy prayers. An imperfect petition God will hear for Christ's sake, but not one which is wilfully miswritten by a traitor's hand. For God to accept our devotions, while we are delighting in sin, would be to make himself the God of hypocrites, which is a fitter name for Satan than for the Holy One of Israel.

**John Bunyan:** "Prayer will make a man cease from sin, or sin will entice a man to cease from prayer."

**Matthew Henry:** "If I have favorable thoughts of it, if I love it, indulge it, and allow myself in it, if I treat it as a friend and bid it welcome, make provision for it and am loathe to part with it, if I roll it under my tongue as a sweet morsel, though it be but a heart sin that is thus countenanced and made much of, if I delight in it after the inward man, God will not hear my prayer, will not accept it, nor be pleased with it, nor can I expect an answer of peace to it."

**Adam Clarke:** "If I have seen iniquity in my heart," if I have known it was there, and encouraged it; if I pretended to be what I was not; if I loved iniquity, while I professed to pray and be sorry for my sin; the Lord."

Cross references on the LORD will not hear - Job 27:9 Isa 1:15 Isa 59:2 Pr 15:8,29 Pr 21:13, Pr 28:9 Jn 9:31 Ps 4:3 Jer 11:11 Mic 3:4 Zec 7:13 Jas 4:3 1Pe 3:12 1Jn 3:21

**Exodus 30:21 "So they shall wash their hands and their feet, so that they will not die; and it shall be a perpetual statute for them, for Aaron and his descendants throughout their generations."**

- **a statute:** Ex 28:43
- [Exodus 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **WASHING IS A PERPETUAL STATUTE**

**So they shall wash their hands and their feet, so that they will not die-** Just in case we missed how serious failure to wash is, God repeats it! Beloved, we dare not seek to go boldly into His presence (which is our privilege now in Christ) before we have "cleansed" ourselves with confession!

**and it shall be a perpetual statute for them, for Aaron and his descendants throughout their generations-** By way of application to reiterate what has been discussed earlier in this section, this "statute" prescribing washing is still important to New Covenant believer-priests!

**Exodus 30:22 Moreover, the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,**

- [Exodus 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Moreover, the LORD spoke to Moses, saying** - Yahweh spoke either **LORD spoke** or **LORD said** in Ex 30:11, 17, 22, 34, Ex 31:1, 12

**David Thompson** - Those who worship God must use proper anointing oil or they will be cut off from God's people. Ex 30:22-33 Now it was critical that in order to worship God there needed to be an amazing perfumed oil for anointing purposes. God wanted things in His place of worship to smell nice. As one writer observed, the amount of ingredients here would add up to a sizeable and expensive quantity.

**Exodus 30:23 "Take also for yourself the finest of spices: of flowing myrrh five hundred shekels, and of fragrant cinnamon half as much, two hundred and fifty, and of fragrant cane two hundred and fifty,**

- **Take also for yourself:** Ex 37:29 Ps 45:8 Pr 7:17 Song 1:3,13 4:14 Jer 6:20 Eze 27:19,22
- [Exodus 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## SPICES FOR THE ANOINTING OIL

**ake also for yourself the finest of spices: of flowing myrrh five hundred shekels, and of fragrant cinnamon half as much, two hundred and fifty, and of fragrant cane two hundred and fifty** - This is quite a lot of material. "The quantity of fifteen hundred shekels of fragrance (five hundred of myrrh, two hundred and fifty of cinnamon, two hundred and fifty of cane, and five hundred of cassia) was about thirty-eight pounds in modern measurement." (Stuart)

**Criswell** - God described the exact ingredients, including the weight of each spice and the quantity of olive oil, to be used in making the "holy anointing oil" (v. 25). Directions are given for its use (vv. 26-30), and warning is issued against its misuse (vv. 31-33).

**David Thompson** - **Fact #1** This perfumed oil was to be made of the finest spices. These were the very best and highest valued of spices that were to be used. **Fact #2** - This perfumed oil was to be made of flowing myrrh worth 500 shekels. Free-flowing myrrh has been identified as an aromatic gum that seeps out from cracks in the bark that typically grows in Arabia and India. Now a shekel was a weight that was used for measuring the value of something. It is unclear as to the specific weight. Some have suggested that one shekel was equivalent to the weight of 10 pennies. So 500 shekels would be quite a total weight value and would probably purchase a substantial amount of myrrh. **Fact #3** - This perfumed oil was to be made of fragrant cinnamon worth 250 shekels. 30:23c Cinnamon appears only three times in the Hebrew Bible (Ex. 30:23; Song 4:14; Pr 7:17). **Fact #4** - This perfumed oil was to be made of fragrant cane worth 250 shekels.

**Stuart** has an interesting comment - Anointing related to cleanness and purity as symbols of holiness. God demanded that his priests, the servants of his house, be clean and pure. But lice were endemic in biblical times, and to be "lousy" was hardly to be clean and pure. The solution was regular use of oil, which kills lice. Only the high priest was ritually anointed ("oiled") as a condition of being installed in office (chap. 29), but all priests were required to use a perfumed sacred oil, described in this passage, not only on their own heads but also on the tabernacle furnishings. Oiling the furnishings did not imply that they were capable of supporting lice in the same way that a living body can, but oiling would help protect the furnishings from any lice accidentally transmitted by an imperfectly oiled priest or by priests' clothing as it received lice from contact with lice-bearing worshipers bringing their offerings to the tabernacle. As v. 29 states, "Whatever touches them [must be] holy." Lice are not holy. (Ibid)

**Bush** - **Take thou unto the principal spices,**&c. Heb. בשמים ראש besamim rosh, head spices; intimating that the several spices which formed the ingredients of the anointing oil were to be of the very best kinds then known and valued. These we may consider in their order.

**Pure myrrh.** Heb. מר דרור mar deror, myrrh of freedom; i. e. myrrh which flowed freely and spontaneously, instead of being drawn by incision, and was therefore of the purest kind.

**Sweet cinnamon.** Hebrew קנמן בשם kinnemon besem, aromatic cinnamon, a well-known article of spicery deriving its name directly from the Hebrew. The word is ordinarily used to denote the second or inner bark of the cinnamon-tree which grows in great abundance in the island of Ceylon. But as the bark of the root has a stronger flavor than that of the trunk, Scheuzer conjectures that that which was employed in the composition of the holy anointing oil was of the former kind.

**Sweet calamus.** Heb. בשם קנה kenēh bosem, spiced cane. This term denotes an aromatic reed growing in moist places in Egypt, in Judea near lake Gennesareth, and in several parts of Syria. It grows to about two feet in height; bearing from the root a knotted stalk, quite round, containing in its cavity a soft, white pith. The whole is of an agreeable aromatic smell; and the plant is said to scent the air with fragrance, even while growing. When cut down, dried, and powdered, it makes an ingredient in the richest perfumes.

**Exodus 30:24 and of cassia five hundred, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, and of olive oil a hin.**

- **cassia:** Ps 45:8
- **the shekel:** Nu 3:47 Eze 45:12
- **hin:** Ex 29:40 Lev 19:36 Nu 15:5
- [Exodus 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**and of cassia five hundred, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, and of olive oil a hin**- A hin is about a gallon of olive oil.

**David Thompson** - This perfumed oil was to be made of cassia worth 500 shekels. Douglas Stuart says that the 1500 total shekels would turn out to be about 38 pounds in modern dry measurement. This was to be mixed together to form this fragrance and it was not to be a paste, but an oil that one could pour. This perfumed oil was to be made of olive oil measured a hin . A hin is a liquid measurement which, according to Merrill Unger, is equivalent to 6 pints. Douglas Stuart says it was about a gallon

**Bush - Cassia.** Heb. כִּדָּהּ kiddah; but as the Shemitic d and z are closely related in sound, the word is otherwise written kitzia, from which comes the Gr. κάσσια, and thence the English, cassia. We find in the Scriptures no mention of this article except here and Ezek. 27:19, where it is joined with calamus and enumerated among the precious things which were brought from the mart of Tyre.

#### Related Resource:

- [What was the significance of anointing spices in the Bible?](#)

**Exodus 30:25 "You shall make of these a holy anointing oil, a perfume mixture, the work of a perfumer; it shall be a holy anointing oil.**

- **perfumer**, 1Ch 9:30
- **holy**: Ex 37:29 Nu 35:25 Ps 89:20 133:2 Heb 1:9
- [Exodus 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## HOLY ANOINTING OIL

**You shall make of these a holy anointing oil, a perfume mixture, the work of a perfumer; it shall be a holy anointing oil**

**David Thompson** - Three times in these verses this oil is identified as Holy anointing oil (Ex 30:25, 25, 31). In Ex 30:32, it is stressed that this is very "holy." Now there is absolutely no doubt that this anointing oil is an illustrative picture of the value of the person and work of the Holy Spirit (1 Sam. 16:13). We believe that this is illustrative of the value of the Holy Spirit that is incalculable to the worth in the life of the believer....This perfumed oil is to be made into **holy** anointing oil. This oil was to be the work of someone specifically skilled in this field.

**Bush - 25–28. Thou shalt make it an oil of holy ointment.** The quantity of oil was sufficient to retain the compound in a liquid state, which was probably much improved by straining off the dreggy parts and leaving the residuum defecated and pure. With this holy oil was the Tabernacle, with its priesthood and its furniture, to be anointed, as the last and crowning act of consecration. By this sacred unction the whole was sanctified and set apart to the uses for which it was designed. And as every thing to which it was applied became thereby most holy, so a peculiar sanctity attached to the anointing oil itself, which imparted this, and it was on peril of death that any of the same composition was made for any other purpose. But the tradition of the Jews, founded upon the phraseology of v. 31, 'Throughout your generations;' that the very oil now prepared by Moses was preserved till near the captivity, and that none was to be made like it, not even for the same purpose, is undoubtedly erroneous. It is perfectly reasonable to suppose that under the inspection of the High Priest it was made as often as it was wanted; nor do we see any objection to the idea that not only the priests but also the kings of Judah were anointed with it, although as that form of government was not especially contemplated at this time, nothing is said on this subject.

**Exodus 30:26 "With it you shall anoint the tent of meeting and the ark of the testimony,**

- Ex 40:9-15 Lev 8:10-12 Nu 7:1,10 Isa 61:1 Ac 10:38 2Co 1:21,22 1Jn 2:20,27
- [Exodus 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**With it you shall anoint the tent of meeting and the ark of the testimony-** This would surely be in the form of symbolic sprinkling for the amount of incense oil to anoint the entire tent would have been huge. The Ark of the Testimony is a picture of Jesus (especially the Mercy Seat) Who Himself was anointed

Isaiah 61:1+ The **Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me**, Because the **LORD has anointed Me** To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives And freedom to prisoners;

Acts 10:38+ "You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how **God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit** and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

**THOUGHT** - What is the tent to a believer? Paul describes our body as a tent (2 Cor 5:4). And what was the "tent" anointed with? The Spirit of Christ (1 Jn 2:20, 27+, cf 2 Cor 5:5). Our body is also a Temple that has



been "anointed" with "the oil of the Spirit" - "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? 20 For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body." (1 Cor 6:19-20+).

#### Exodus 30:27 and the table and all its utensils, and the lampstand and its utensils, and the altar of incense,

- [Exodus 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### and the table and all its utensils, and the lampstand and its utensils, and the altar of incense

[David Thompson](#) - This perfumed oil is to be used to anoint the table, the lampstand and altar of incense plus all the utensils.

#### Exodus 30:28 and the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils, and the laver and its stand.

- [Exodus 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### and the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils, and the laver and its stand

[David Thompson](#) - This perfumed oil is to be used to anoint the burnt offering altar and the wash basin plus all the utensils. All of these things were to be classified as holy .

#### Exodus 30:29 "You shall also consecrate them, that they may be most holy; whatever touches them shall be holy.

- **whatever:** Ex 29:37 Lev 6:18 Mt 23:17,19
- [Exodus 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**You shall also consecrate them, that they may be most holy; whatever touches them shall be holy-** So the altar of incense and the utensils were to be most holy, repeating the instructions for the bronze altar in Ex 29:37+. "For seven days you shall make atonement for the altar and consecrate it; then the altar shall **be most holy, and whatever touches** the altar **shall be holy.**" (See note on that passage).

**Stuart** comments - Holiness cannot be transmitted by touching (Hag 2:11–12, summarizing the Levitical law), but corruption can indeed be transmitted by touching (Hag 2:13, again summarizing the Levitical law). Thus all who served in the courtyard or tent had to be careful themselves to be holy, properly consecrated, so that they could then avoid contamination of anything at God's house." (Ibid)

[David Thompson](#) - Everything associated with this place needed to be holy. Everything needed to look good and smell good.

**Bush - 29. Whatsoever toucheth them shall be most holy.** The two leading attributes of the anointing oil were its preciousness and its sanctity. The spices of which it was composed were peculiarly rare and odoriferous, and the oil with which they were blended was most pure. This was doubtless intended to shadow forth the excellency of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, whose distinguishing emblem under the old economy was oil. And what is to be compared with the preciousness of those divine influences which emanate from this source? Upon whomsoever they are poured forth, they impart light to the understanding, pliancy to the will, purity to the affections, tenderness to the conscience, and holiness to the entire man. There is nothing beside them to be so earnestly coveted or so advantageously possessed. They are the true riches of the soul, and the sealing title to an eternal inheritance. Wherever enjoyed they constitute the subject of them, 'a new creature,' and so far sanctify every offering which he presents, that 'God smells a sweet savor from it,' and is well pleased. And not only so. It is a diffusive blessedness which is thus conferred. As every vessel that was anointed with the holy ointment, imparted a sanctity to every thing with which it came in contact, so every true Christian communicates to others, as far as his influence extends, the same divine principles which he has imbibed. As was said in mystic language of the Savior, so may it be said of all his anointed ones, 'Their garments smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia,' and wherever they go they diffuse around them 'the savor of the knowledge of Christ.' Let us seek then this 'unction from the Holy One,' the 'crown of the anointing oil,' which sanctifies and separates all those upon whom it comes. Let us guard against any thing that would reflect dishonor upon the Holy Spirit. Let us bear in mind the striking admonition conveyed in the figurative style of Solomon; 'Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savor; so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for

wisdom and honour.' There is a sanctity about the Christian character which should be kept inviolate, and he that dishonors his calling puts fire to the oil of his consecration to his own consuming.

**Exodus 30:30 "You shall anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may minister as priests to Me.**

- **anoint:** Ex 29:7-37 40:15 Lev 8:12,30 Nu 3:3
- **consecrate:** Ex 28:3 29:9,35
- [Exodus 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**You shall anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may minister as priests to Me**- The priests were to bring a pleasing aroma into the presence of the LORD. This reminds us of our Great High Priest Christ Jesus in Ephesians 5:2+ **"walk** ([present imperative with a negative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) in love, just as (TERM OF COMPARISON) Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us (FOR US = SUBSTITUTION), **an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma."**

**David Thompson** - All of the priests must be anointed and consecrated so they may minister as priests unto God. Every believer who comes into the presence of God needs to realize the value of purity in regard to the Holy Spirit.

**Exodus 30:31 "You shall speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'This shall be a holy anointing oil to Me throughout your generations.**

- **holy:** Ex 37:29 Lev 8:12 21:10 Ps 89:20
- [Exodus 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**You shall speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'This shall be a holy anointing oil to Me throughout your generations**- NLT = "from generation to generation." "No one could decide to change the anointing oil formula or to stop using it in consecration/ordination ceremonies." (Stuart)

**David Thompson** - All of the sons of Israel need to know that this is sacred anointing oil and it is not to be made or used for common purposes. Sacred things are not to be made into common things. Worship things should be viewed as sacred worship things. No sanctuary should ever be turned into a night club. No pulpit should ever be replaced by a drum set.

**Exodus 30:32 'It shall not be poured on anyone's body, nor shall you make any like it in the same proportions; it is holy, and it shall be holy to you.**

- man's: Lev 21:10 Mt 7:6
- it is: Ex 30:25,37,38
- [Exodus 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**It shall not be poured on anyone's body, nor shall you make any like it in the same proportions; it is holy, and it shall be holy to you.**

**Exodus 30:33 'Whoever shall mix any like it or whoever puts any of it on a layman shall be cut off from his people.'"**

- **shall mix:** Ex 30:38 Lu 12:1,2 Heb 10:26-29
- **a layman :** Ex 29:33
- **cut off:** Ex 12:15,19 Ge 17:14 Lev 7:20,21 17:4,9 19:8 23:29 Nu 9:13
- [Exodus 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Whoever shall mix any like it or whoever puts any of it on a layman shall be cut off from his people**- Cut off is [karath](#) and translated in the Septuagint with exolethreuo which means to utterly destroy (to be eliminated by destruction) and is used in Acts 3:23+.

[David Thompson](#) - Any wrong use of this anointing oil will cut off a person from God's people. It is very serious business to do anything wrong in a sacred place of worship or to sacred things involved in worship.

**Exodus 30:34 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Take for yourself spices, stacte and onycha and galbanum, spices with pure frankincense; there shall be an equal part of each.**

NET Exodus 30:34 The LORD said to Moses: "Take spices, gum resin, onycha, galbanum, and pure frankincense of equal amounts

NLT Exodus 30:34 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Gather fragrant spices-- resin droplets, mollusk shell, and galbanum-- and mix these fragrant spices with pure frankincense, weighed out in equal amounts.

ESV Exodus 30:34 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),

NIV Exodus 30:34 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Take fragrant spices--gum resin, onycha and galbanum-- and pure frankincense, all in equal amounts,

KJV Exodus 30:34 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:

LXE Exodus 30:34 And the Lord said to Moses, Take for thyself sweet herbs, stacte, onycha, sweet galbanum, and transparent frankincense; there shall be and equal weight of each.

ASV Exodus 30:34 And Jehovah said unto Moses, Take unto thee sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum; sweet spices with pure frankincense: of each shall there be a like weight;

CSB Exodus 30:34 The LORD said to Moses: "Take fragrant spices: stacte, onycha, and galbanum; the spices and pure frankincense are to be in equal measures.

NKJ Exodus 30:34 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.

NRS Exodus 30:34 The LORD said to Moses: Take sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum, sweet spices with pure frankincense (an equal part of each),

YLT Exodus 30:34 And Jehovah saith unto Moses, 'Take to thee spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum, spices and pure frankincense; they are part for part;

NAB Exodus 30:34 The LORD told Moses, "Take these aromatic substances: storax and onycha and galbanum, these and pure frankincense in equal parts;

- **take:** Ex 30:23 25:6 37:29
- **frankincense:** Lev 2:1,15 5:11 24:7 1Ch 9:29,30 Ne 13:5 Song 3:6 Mt 2:11
- [Exodus 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Then the LORD said to Moses** - Yahweh spoke either **LORD spoke** or **LORD said** in Ex 30:11, 17, 22, 34, Ex 31:1, 12

**"Take for yourself spices, stacte and onycha and galbanum, spices with pure frankincense; there shall be an equal part of each** - "The spices themselves cannot be confidently identified except for frankincense, which is mentioned here first and will be mentioned frequently hereafter in the Old Testament, most often in connection with its role as an ingredient in the cereal offerings." (Stuart)

[David Thompson](#) - Ex 30:34-38 - Those who worship God must use specific spices and incense or they will be cut off from God's people. Not only was there to be this anointing oil, but these were special spices for the twice daily incense burning. There is one more worship mandate that God spells out in this section and that is the mandate of making a special type of incense for worship. The incense was to be made of different spices. The incense was to be made of stacte. - gum that comes from the storax tree. This is a very sweet spice. The incense was to be made of onycha. - a powder scraped from a shell that was found near the Dead Sea, which when burned gave off perfume. The incense was to be made of galbanum. - this was a brownish resin that came from a thick-stalked plant, which was a Mediterranean Sea coastal plant. - The incense was to be made from pure frankincense. - fragrant gum that comes from Boswellia trees that are found in the Mediterranean world. Dr. C. I. Scofield said all of this speaks of

the beauty and perfections of Jesus Christ. His entire life was a rich, sweet-smelling aroma before God (cf Eph 5:2+ walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.).

**Bush - Take unto thee sweet spices, &c.** This order has respect to the composition of the Incense which was to be burnt upon the golden Altar. This also was prepared of sweet spices, though not of so rare or precious a quality as those of which the anointing oil was compounded. But concerning both preparations the same law is given that nothing like them should be made for common use. This would tend to beget among the Israelites a reverence for whatever was of divine institution, and a sedulous care to guard against its profanation or abuse, and as to us, who are privileged to look deeper into the spiritual drift of the Mosaic economy, it may well admonish us to beware of any 'counterfeit presentment,' or any unhallowed prostitution, of those ordinances, gifts, or graces which emanate from the Spirit of God and in which his honor is especially concerned.

**Stacte.** Heb. נטף netaph from נטף nataph, to drop. Gr. στακτη, from σταζω, to distil. This was a fine kind of gum which was produced from the myrrh tree, but differing from that substance mentioned v. 23, by retaining a waxy or resinous form, instead of flowing out as a liquid. It is supposed to have been the same with what was afterwards called 'opobalsam' or 'the balm of Jericho.'

**Onycha.** Heb. שחלת shehēleth, a word which occurs only in this place, and of which the true sense is consequently very difficult to be determined. In Syriac שחלת shehelta, is a tear, a distillation, and the Hebrew word would seem therefore to mean something that exuded, some vegetable gum of odorous qualities. The Gr. indeed has ονυχα, onycha, from ονυξ, nail, and several learned critics have supposed it to be the external covering (nail) of the shell-fish purpura or murex, which possessed aromatic properties and was thence called unguis odoriferans, odoriferous onyx. This, according to Rumphius, was the basis of the principal perfumes employed in India, just as aloes is the basis of all their pills. But as India was too distant for drugs to be brought from thence to Judea or Arabia, where the Israelites now were, and as the context and the etymology seem to require some vegetable substance, the opinion is far preferable that makes it the gum of some aromatic plant; and as the Arabic version has 'Ladana,' it is not improbable that gum-ladanum, the produce of the 'Cistus ladaniferus,' was the drug in question. This is a secretion from the leaves, which is swept off by the beard of the browsing goats, from whence it was collected. The shrub is a native of the Levant, the isles of the Mediterranean, and Arabia.

**Galbanum.** Heb. חלבנה helbenah, which Michaelis supposes to be a compound of חלב heleb, milk or gum and לבן leben, white, denoting the white milk or gum of some plant, as it is common with us to call the white juice which exudes from certain plants the 'milk,' and the phraseology is retained in medical nomenclature 'gum lac, &c. The 'galbanum' is supposed to have been the gum-resin or thickened sap of the 'Bubon Gummiferum,' an umbelliferous plant of Turkey, which yields this gum in softish, pliant, and pale cream-colored masses, whenever a wound is made in any part of it. It is of a strong piercing smell, and of a bitterish taste.

**Frankincense.** Heb. לבנה tebonah, a term of which the root also is לבן labēn and conveying the idea of whiteness. The English word 'frankincense' is supposed to have the prefixed epithet 'frank,' free, from the liberal and ready distribution of its odors. This drug, otherwise called 'olibanum,' is a dry resinous substance of a yellowish white color, a strong fragrant smell, and bitter acrid taste. It is produced from the 'Boswellia serrata,' a native of India, and a fine tree belonging to the family of the turpentine-bearing trees. The 'pure frankincense' is that which is first obtained from the tree, and for that reason considered the best. When laid upon burning coals, or a hot iron, it sends forth a vapor of most delicious fragrance.

**Exodus 30:35 "With it you shall make incense, a perfume, the work of a perfumer, salted, pure, and holy.**

- **perfume:** Pr 27:9 Song 1:3 3:6 Joh 12:3
- **the:** Ex 30:25
- **salted,** Lev 2:13
- [Exodus 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**With it you shall make incense, a perfume, the work of a perfumer, salted, pure, and holy**

**David Thompson** - The incense was to be made into a perfume by a perfumer The incense was to be salted, pure and holy. Why was salt to be added? Because salt would preserve it. This gave permanence to the perfume. The fact that this is pure and holy would indicate that this relationship with God is a permanent relationship and it is always based on what is pure and holy

**Bush - Tempered together.** Heb. ממלח memullah, salted, from מלח melah, salt. The Chal. and Gr., however, have set the example of rendering by mixed or tempered, as if their idea was that the different ingredients were to be mixed together just as salt is mixed with any substance on which it is sprinkled. Ainsworth contends for the liberal rendering, inasmuch as the law, Lev. 2:13, expressly says, 'With all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt.' In support of this he quotes Maimonides, who affirms that 'there was not any thing offered on the Altar without salt, except the wine of the drink-offerings, and the blood, and the wood;' and of the incense he says still more expressly, that 'they added to it the fourth part of a kab of salt.' In accordance with which, it is supposed, our Savior says, Mark 9:49, 'Every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.' We feel incompetent to decide the question, but confess a leaning towards the view of

Ainsworth, who further remarks very appropriately, that 'if our speech is to be always with grace, seasoned with salt, as the apostle teaches, Col. 4:6, how much more should our incense, our prayers unto God, be therewith seasoned?'

**Exodus 30:36 "You shall beat some of it very fine, and put part of it before the testimony in the tent of meeting where I will meet with you; it shall be most holy to you.**

NET Exodus 30:36 You are to beat some of it very fine and put some of it before the ark of the testimony in the tent of meeting where I will meet with you; it is to be most holy to you.

NLT Exodus 30:36 Grind some of the mixture into a very fine powder and put it in front of the Ark of the Covenant,<sup>1</sup> where I will meet with you in the Tabernacle. You must treat this incense as most holy.

ESV Exodus 30:36 You shall beat some of it very small, and put part of it before the testimony in the tent of meeting awhere I shall meet with you. blt shall be most holy for you.

NIV Exodus 30:36 Grind some of it to powder and place it in front of the Testimony in the Tent of Meeting, where I will meet with you. It shall be most holy to you.

KJV Exodus 30:36 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.

LXE Exodus 30:36 And of these thou shalt beat some small, and thou shalt put it before the testimonies in the tabernacle of testimony, whence I will make myself known to thee: it shall be to you a most holy incense.

ASV Exodus 30:36 and thou shalt beat some of it very small, and put of it before the testimony in the tent of meeting, where I will meet with thee: it shall be unto you most holy.

CSB Exodus 30:36 Grind some of it into a fine powder and put some in front of the testimony in the tent of meeting, where I will meet with you. It must be especially holy<sup>1</sup> to you.

NKJ Exodus 30:36 "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.

NRS Exodus 30:36 and you shall beat some of it into powder, and put part of it before the covenant<sup>1</sup> in the tent of meeting where I shall meet with you; it shall be for you most holy.

YLT Exodus 30:36 and thou hast beaten some of it small, and hast put of it before the testimony, in the tent of meeting, whither I am met with thee; most holy it is to you.

- **the testimony:** Ex 16:34
- **where I will:** Ex 30:6 25:22 29:42,43 Lev 16:2
- [Exodus 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **PERFUME BEFORE THE ARK OF THE TESTIMONY**

**You shall beat some of it very fine, and put part of it before the testimony in the tent of meeting where I will meet with you; it shall be most holy to you** - "Logically, this meant making everything "fitting to belong to God" and therefore to be placed in his presence. Anointing accomplished this purpose by symbolizing the killing of that which produced impurity (vermin), leaving behind a purified person or object. In effect the Israelites understood that the anointing of the tabernacle and its furniture, and Aaron and his sons and their clothing (29:21), showed that they were setting aside these things for God, consigning them to his realm and special possession." (Stuart)

[David Thompson](#) - The incense was to be beaten into a very fine state. The incense was to be put in part before the testimony in the tent of meeting. The incense was important to God meeting with His people. The incense was to be considered most holy .

**Exodus 30:37 "The incense which you shall make, you shall not make in the same proportions for yourselves; it shall be holy to you for the LORD.**

- **shall make:** Ex 30:32,33

- **it shall:** Ex 29:37 Lev 2:3
- [Exodus 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**The incense which you shall make, you shall not make in the same proportions for yourselves; it shall be holy to you for the LORD** - The warning is clear: The anointing oil and the incense were for the worship of the people, not for personal use.

[David Thompson](#) - The incense was never to be made for anything but worship .

**Exodus 30:38 "Whoever shall make any like it, to use as perfume, shall be cut off from his people."**

- **cut off:** Ex 30:33
- [Exodus 30 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## SERIOUS CONSEQUENCE FOR PROFANE USE

**Whoever shall make any like it, to use as perfume, shall be cut off from his people-** This oil was holy and was not to be used for profane use. **Cut off** is [karath](#) and is translated in the Septuagint with the verb [apollumi](#) which means means to destroy or kill (as Herod sought to do to Jesus in Mt 2:13).

[David Thompson](#) - Any person who made this incense for non- sacred uses would be cut off from His people. It is very clear to see that you didn't just worship God on your terms. There needs to be careful thought and preparation that goes into worship.

[David Thompson](#) - SOME NEW TESTAMENT APPLICATIONS:

1. The ransom redemptive offering is a mandatory offering needed by all for worship.
2. God does keep track of who gives generous offerings to Him and who doesn't. 2 Cor. 9:6-7
3. God's people need to be clean when they come to worship God. 1 John 1:9
4. God's people need to be properly anointed in order to worship God. 2 Cor. 1:21
5. God's people need to offer up proper incense offerings

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**Question:** [What does the Bible say about anointing oil?](#)

**Answer:** Anointing oil, mentioned 20 times in Scripture, was used in the Old Testament for pouring on the head of the high priest and his descendants and sprinkling the tabernacle and its furnishings to mark them as holy and set apart to the Lord (Exodus 25:6; Leviticus 8:30; Numbers 4:16). Three times it is called the "holy, anointing oil," and the Jews were strictly forbidden from reproducing it for personal use (Exodus 30:32-33). The recipe for anointing oil is found in Exodus 30:23-24; it contained myrrh, cinnamon and other natural ingredients. There is no indication that the oil or the ingredients had any supernatural power. Rather, the strictness of the guidelines for creating the oil was a test of the obedience of the Israelites and a demonstration of the absolute holiness of God.

Only five New Testament passages refer to the practice of anointing with oil, and none of them offer an explanation for its use. We can draw our conclusions from context. In Matthew 6:17 Jesus mentions the everyday practice of anointing oneself with oil. In Mark 6:13 the disciples anoint the sick and heal them. In Mark 14:3-9 Mary anoints Jesus' feet as an act of worship. In James 5:14 the church elders anoint the sick with oil for healing. In Hebrews 1:8-9 God says to Christ as He returns triumphantly to heaven, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever," and God anoints Jesus "with the oil of gladness."

Should Christians use anointing oil today? There is nothing in Scripture that commands or even suggests that we should use similar oil today, but neither is there anything to forbid it. Oil is often used as a symbol for the Holy Spirit in the Bible as in the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins (Matthew 25:1-13). Christians have the Spirit who leads us into all truth and "anoints" us continually with His grace and comfort. "But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth" (1 John 2:20). (Source: [GotQuestions.org](#))

**Related Resource:**

- [What is the anointing? What does it mean to be anointed?](#)

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