

Lord and Saviour, his atonement made us acceptable in God's sight and provided us with the privilege of prayer. It is through his resurrected life and the giving of His Spirit that we now have power in prayer.

Praying Perpetually

📖 Exodus 30:7,8. **Q.** According to v8, for how long was this ceremony of burning incense to continue?

Q. According to Heb 7:25, for how long will Jesus pray for us?

📖 Luke 18:1. **Q.** What was Jesus teaching through this parable?

📖 1 Thes 5:17. **Q.** How often are we to pray?_____.

God, through the altar of incense was illustrating that prayer should *always* be made to Him. Because Christ lives forever in heaven making intercession for us, we can come to the Father in prayer at any time.

📖 1 Tim 5:8. **Q.** Where should we pray?_____.

📖 Php 4:6. **Q.** What should we pray for? _____.

The life of a Christian should be one characterized by prayer. When we pray to God *without ceasing* we are expressing to Him that we are utterly dependent on Him. When we fail to pray we are taking our lives back into our own hands and expressing pride and independence from Him. Stress, depression and worry can be cured by a life of continual prayer and a confidence in our sovereign God.

📖 1 Pet 5:6. **Q.** What are we told to do in this verse?

📖 1 Pet 5:7 **Q.** How is this *humility* shown in our attitude?

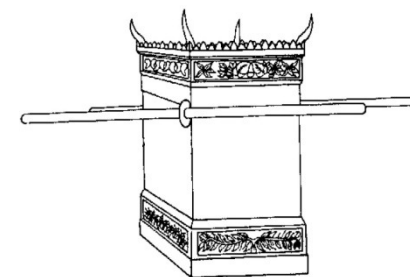
📖 Rom 8:28. **Q.** What can we be confident of in times of trouble?

A Christians prayer life should be a continual conversation with God throughout the entire day. We may start and end our days with special, dedicated times of prayer, but these are simply the book ends of an entire day spent in communion with God. This is the only way that we can be true to the verses which compel us to *pray without ceasing*

The altar of incense was close to the presence of God, it burned continually, was made acceptable by the blood of a lamb, and was ignited by fire from the altar of burnt offering. Likewise, we are never closer to God than when we pray, we are made acceptable by the blood of Jesus Christ, and we are empowered by his sacrifice on the cross!

The Altar of Incense

In this study we continue our look at the three pieces of furniture contained in the *sanctuary*. Upon walking into the holy place, the priest would see the *table of shewbread* to his right and the *golden candlestick* to his left, and immediately in front of him he would find the piece of furniture featured in this study – the *golden altar of incense*.



📖 Exodus 30:1-10. Alternate reading this passage and answer some key questions regarding the altar of incense.

Q. v1. What two materials was the altar made from? _____

Q. v6. Where was the altar of incense located? _____

Q. v7. How is the incense described here? _____

Q. v7,8. When was the incense to be burned? _____

Q. v8. The incense was to be a p_____ incense before God.

Q. v9. What was *not* to be offered on the altar? _____

Q. v10. What was Aaron to do to the altar once every year?

Each morning and each evening Aaron was to enter the holy place and to put oil in the lamps as well as to burn incense upon the incense altar. Like the burning of the lamps, and like the placing of the bread, it was to be repeated *perpetually*.

So far we have learned that the bread on the table of shewbread represented the body of Jesus Christ. The eating of the bread was a picture of the fellowship that Christians have with one another on the basis of Christ's broken body and his presence within us. The golden candlestick represented Jesus Christ as the light of the world, he is the pure, perfect, and eternal light which shines in the holy place. It also represented us as Christians who become the light of the world upon receiving the *spirit of Christ* at salvation. Each of these pieces of furniture had a definite and immediate purpose, but each also had a prophetic quality, serving as a shadow of things to come.

For the remainder of this study we will examine the altar of incense and attempt to determine what it foreshadowed and how it applies to us today. For our first clue, let's consider what *incense* may have symbolized.

📖 Psalm 141:2. **Q.** What did the Psalmist compare incense to in this verse?

📖 2 Chronicles 30:27. **Q.** How might the prayers in this verse be compared to incense?

📖 Rev 5:8. **Q.** How are the *prayers of the saints* described here?

📖 Rev 8:3,4. **Q.** In this scene in Heaven, what is set *before the throne* of God?

Q. What was offered with the incense upon this altar?

Q. What happened to the prayers of the saints?

From these passages alone we can see plainly what God intended by the altar of incense. The burning of incense upon this altar was a clear picture of prayer. As we will see, it was a picture both of the prayers of the saints, and of the prayers of Jesus Christ himself.

Prayer – Entering the Presence of God

📖 Look up Ex 30:8, 1 Kings 9:25, Lev 4:7. **Q.** How do these verses describe the location of the altar of incense? _____.

It is significant that the altar of incense was placed directly in front of the veil. The altar of incense was the piece of furniture that was closest to the place where God's presence would come.

📖 Heb 10:12. **Q.** Where is Jesus right now?

📖 Heb 7:25. **Q.** What does Jesus "ever live" to do for us?

Jesus Christ is eternally present with the Father. One of the roles he fulfills as our *high priest* and as our *advocate* (1 John 2:1) is that of *interceding* or praying for us.

📖 1 John 2:1. **Q.** According to this verse, what is the advantage of having an *advocate* with the father?

📖 Luke 22:31,32. **Q.** With his prayer for Peter as an example, what might Jesus pray for us?

In John 17 we read an amazing passage, it is Jesus Christ praying to God the Father for us. Fill in the blanks below, indicating what it is that Christ prayed for.

📖 v11. _____.

📖 v15. _____.

📖 v17. _____.

📖 v20,21. _____.

📖 v24. _____.

Jesus prayed both for his disciples and for us (John 17:20) while he was on earth. According to Heb 7:25, his ministry of intercession continues even today in Heaven. Like the altar of incense that was always present before the mercy seat, Jesus is sitting on the right hand of the Father in heaven offering prayers to God for us.

Not only does the altar of incense picture the prayer life of the Lord Jesus Christ, but it also pictures our prayer lives.

Praying in the Power of Christ

📖 John 16:23-24. **Q.** How should we ask for things in prayer?

📖 Heb 4:16. **Q.** Because Jesus is our high priest in heaven, what can we do?

📖 Eph 2:18. **Q.** What do we now have *through Christ*?

Because Jesus is in Heaven as our high Priest interceding for us, we also have access to God in prayer. We can come directly into God's presence through prayer when we pray in the name of Jesus Christ.

📖 Lev 16:12-13 **Q.** Where did the coal come from which burned the incense?

📖 Exo 30:10 **Q.** What did Aaron anoint the incense altar with?

As we learned in our first lesson, the altar of burnt offering was a picture of Christ's death on the cross for us. Here we find both the blood of the offering and the coals from the fire of the brazen altar applied to the altar of incense. The anointing of the incense altar with blood from the brazen altar made it acceptable to God, the coal from the brazen altar is what actually enabled the incense to rise into God's presence. When we accepted Jesus Christ as our