

The Tabernacle: The Altar of Incense

Use with the full teaching and a Bible. Read or watch first, complete the questions, then discuss and apply. For family study, an adult can select suitable portions and accept spoken answers.

Test the teaching's explanations against the cited passages. Keep the answer key and facilitator notes separate when distributing learner pages.

[Open the full teaching](#)

Teaching summary

The incense altar stood inside the tent before the veil. Made of acacia wood overlaid with gold, it was used for fragrant incense morning and twilight. It was distinct from the courtyard's altar of sacrifice, and its incense mixture was reserved for holy use.

Psalm 141 compares prayer with incense, and Revelation identifies golden bowls of incense with the saints' prayers. This lesson particularly examines prayers asking God to deliver his people and bring justice against oppression.

Prayers for justice must be read alongside Yeshua's command to love enemies and Paul's instruction to bless persecutors. The teaching calls us to desire repentance and salvation rather than delight in another person's suffering. We pray in submission to God's will.

The lesson explains divine judgment as a defense of God's people, using biblical examples of deliverance and judgment. This is a theological explanation of those accounts, not permission to decide that a present opponent deserves harm or to claim certainty about every event.

The central practical limit is explicit: vengeance belongs to God. We bring grievances and fears to him and seek his judgment rather than retaliate. Trusting him does not require silence about wrongdoing or prevent seeking appropriate help and protection.

Revelation's altar scene reinforces patient trust. The teaching reminds us that we may not see justice within our own lifetime, yet YHWH does not overlook evil. Prayer can therefore express both honest anguish and confidence in his righteous care.

Summary points

- The incense altar was inside the tent before the veil.
- Fragrant incense was burned morning and twilight.
- The holy incense recipe was not for personal perfume.
- Scripture compares incense with the prayers of God's people.
- The lesson focuses on prayer for deliverance and justice.
- We are called to love enemies and bless persecutors.
- Prayer submits to God's will and seeks repentance.
- God's judgment must not become a pretext for personal retaliation.
- Honest prayer brings grievances before the righteous judge.
- Patient trust can continue when justice is not yet visible.

Fill in the blank

Use the teaching and the cited Bible passages. Equivalent wording is welcome when it expresses the same meaning.

Basic

1. The incense altar was overlaid with pure _____.
2. It stood in front of the _____ separating the Ark's chamber.
3. Aaron burned incense in the morning and at _____.
4. The holy incense was not to be copied for use as _____.
5. Revelation identifies bowls of incense with the _____ of the saints.
6. Yeshua tells us to love our _____.

Challenging

1. The slain witnesses ask God how long before he will judge and _____ their blood.
2. Paul says to bless persecutors and not _____ them.
3. John gives confidence that God hears when we ask according to his _____.
4. Peter says God is patient, desiring that people reach _____.
5. Romans 12 tells us never to _____ ourselves.
6. The witnesses in Revelation are told to _____ a little longer.

Group discussion

Discuss respectfully and support answers from the passages. Use these lines for brief notes or a notebook for longer responses.

1. How was the incense altar distinct from the courtyard altar?

2. Why does this lesson focus on justice when discussing prayer as incense?

3. How can we pray for protection and justice while loving enemies?

4. What does leaving vengeance to God require, and what does it not require?

5. How does the Revelation scene address the pain of delayed justice?

6. How might this teaching change a prayer we bring this week?

Answer key

For the leader or parent. Answers follow the teaching and the passages. Accept equivalent wording that expresses the same meaning.

Basic

1. gold

Exodus 30:3

2. veil

Exodus 30:6

3. twilight (also: evening)

Exodus 30:7-8

4. perfume

Exodus 30:37-38

5. prayers

Revelation 5:8

6. enemies

Matthew 5:44

Challenging

1. avenge

Revelation 6:10

2. curse

Romans 12:14

3. will

1 John 5:14

4. repentance

2 Peter 3:9

5. avenge

Romans 12:19

6. rest

Revelation 6:11

Facilitator notes

These responses give direction for discussion. They are not a test of identical wording. Invite participants to explain the passages and consider a faithful practical response.

1. It stood inside before the veil and was gold-covered, with incense offered morning and twilight. The courtyard altar was associated with animal sacrifices. Exodus forbids using the incense altar for other specified offerings or unauthorized incense.

Exodus 30:1-10

2. Revelation joins incense with saints' prayers and portrays slain witnesses asking God to judge and avenge. Psalm 141 similarly joins incense-like prayer with a plea for protection. The lesson explores this particular dimension of prayer without reducing all prayer to it.

Revelation 5:8; 6:9-11; Psalm 141:1-2, 9-10

3. We can ask God to stop harm and vindicate the oppressed while desiring repentance and salvation for wrongdoers. The teaching rejects spite and delight in suffering. We submit the outcome to God rather than dictate another person's fate.

Matthew 5:44; Romans 12:14; 1 Timothy 2:1-4

4. It requires refusing personal retaliation and trusting his judgment. It does not mean concealing wrongdoing, excusing abuse, or refusing appropriate help. The teaching's point is that God is the judge and we are not authorized to enact his vengeance.

Proverbs 20:22; Romans 12:19; Leviticus 19:18

5. The witnesses' cry is acknowledged, yet they are told to wait. The lesson uses the scene to encourage confidence beyond what we can presently see, without promising that every wrong will be visibly resolved during our lifetime.

Revelation 6:9-11

6. We can honestly name the wrong, ask for protection and a just resolution, pray for repentance, and release plans for revenge. Prayer holds anguish, love, and trust together while we take appropriate steps toward safety and peace.

Matthew 5:44; 1 John 5:14; Romans 12:19

Facilitator reminders

Keep prayers for justice together with love for enemies and the explicit prohibition of personal revenge.

Put it into practice

Choose one response to the passages. What will we do, and when will we revisit it? Share only what you are comfortable sharing.