* + - * **CLOUD OF INCENSE**

**Text: Leviticus 16:13**

* “And he shall put the incense on the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of incense may cover the mercy seat that is on the Testimony, lest he die.

**INTRO:**

* Do you know what’s the cloud of incense for?
* What it has to do with the presence of God?
* Mat 17:5 While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!”
* Exodus 20:21 So the people stood afar off, but Moses drew near the thick darkness where God was.

**AIM:**

* FOR US TO CREATE CLOUDS OF INCENSE (Praise and Worship)
* TO FILTER THE GLORY OF GOD
* FOR US TO MINISTER THE PRESENCE OF GOD

**I. GOD’S GOAL**

* God created us to be His family
* He placed us in the garden of Eden
* God does not want us to be far away from Him
* God knows we are malfunctioning apart from Him
* It was for this purpose that Christ died for us
* To restore us back into His presence
* Before the fall, God’s presence was with us through the Holy Spirit
* After the fall, the Holy could no longer live in us
* In other words, one of Jesus’ mission was to prepare us to receive the Holy Spirit
* To restore His presence into us
* Luke 24:49 “Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.”

**II. ALTARS FOR GOD**

* Gen 4:3 And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD.
* Tools specific to Gen 4:4
* Gen 4:4 Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat.
* And the LORD respected Abel and his offering,
* They were trying to get back into touch with God
* Altars were built to prepare a place for the presence of God to come and offered sacrifices either to invite God to come or to commemorate a time and a place where he Had come.
* Gen 8:20 Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.
* Gen 8:21 And the LORD smelled a soothing aroma. Then the LORD said in His heart, “I will never again curse the ground for man’s sake, although the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done.

**III. FRIENDS WITH GOD**

* **ABRAHAM**
* Gen 12:7 Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, “To your descendants I will give this land.” And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him.
* Gen 22:9 Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood.
* Gen 22:17 “blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies.
* Gen 22:18 “In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.”
* **DAVID**
* He had sinned by counting the fighting men of Israel
* 2 Sam 24:18 And Gad came that day to David and said to him, “Go up, erect an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.”
* 2Ch 3:1 Now Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the LORD had appeared to his father David, at the place that David had prepared on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.
* He chose the third option to fall into the hands of God because he knows God is good and His mercy endures forever.
* 2 Sam 24:24 Then the king said to Araunah, “No, but I will surely buy it from you for a price; nor will I offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God with that which costs me nothing.” So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.
* He chose the third option to fall into the hands of God because he knows God is good and His mercy endures forever.
* He already practice praise privately
* 2 Sam 24:24 Then the king said to Araunah, “No, but I will surely buy it from you for a price; nor will I offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God with that which costs me nothing.” So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.
* Worship must cost us something or it’s not of worth
* **MOSES**
* Exodus 33:12 Then Moses said to the LORD, “See, You say to me, ‘Bring up this people.’ But You have not let me know whom You will send with me. Yet You have said, ‘I know you by name, and you have also found grace in My sight.’
* Exodus 33:13 “Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight. And consider that this nation is Your people.”
* Exodus 33:14 And He said, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”
* Exodus 33:15 Then he said to Him, “If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here.
* It wasn’t enough for him to encounter God from the pillar of cloud whenever he entered the tabernacle
* God knew Moses’ request was a problem
* Moses saw God’s glory

**IV. GOD’S TEMPLE**

* In the Tabernacle or temple, the worship of God became more regulated
* Exodus 25:1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying:
* Exodus 25:2 “Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring Me an offering. From everyone who gives it willingly with his heart you shall take My offering.
* Exodus 25:3 “And this is the offering which you shall take from them: gold, silver, and bronze;
* Exodus 25:8 “And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.
* He desired to live with His children/people
* Building a place for God is always about having the presence of God in the midst of His people
* Without God’s presence all would come to nothing
* God’s presence is the only essential ingredient in worship
* Our praise and the other elements of our meeting must lead us into the presence of God
* If they don’t there is no reason to do them
* The purpose of praise is to enter the presence of God
* Anything that does not contribute to this is unnecessary clutter
* God’s presence in our worship is he only worthwhile end of our meetings.
* This was God’s purpose of instructing Moses to build the tabernacle
* He wanted to get close with His people
* His bottom line continues to His passion for getting His presence back into man’s experience.
* God does not want you to live in heaven someday but right now through His presence
* The issue is not where you are located , but who is located where you are.
* Rev 21:1 Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.
* Rev 21:2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.
* Rev 21:3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.
* Rev 21:22 But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.
* Rev 21:23 The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light.

**Challenge:**

* As you praise and worship the Lord, are you diligent enough to encounter His presence?
* Are you worshipping Him in His prescribed manner?
* Is your worship of worth?
* Did it cost you a lot?

**CONCLUSION:**

* Psalm 22:3 But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.