

An Attempt To Listen To God
Significance Of The Spices
For The Tabernacle

By

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Notes On The Holy Anointing Oil

Notes on the spices and ointment:

- a) The calamus, cassia, cinnamon, and myrrh were combined with the olive oil for the anointing of the furnishings and Aaron on the day of his consecration. (Ex. 30:23-33)
- b) The spices themselves are all called “principal spices”. (Ex. 30:23)
 - i) It is only the cassia that is measured after the shekel of the sanctuary. (Ex. 30:24)
- c) The combination has several descriptive terms:
 - i) Holy ointment (Ex. 30:25)
 - ii) Holy anointing oil (Ex. 30:25)
 - iii) Composition (Ex. 30:32)
- d) The oil of the holy ointment (Ex. 30:25) sanctified the vessels of the Tabernacle and consecrated Aaron (Ex. 30:29-30), the result being that whoever touched them (the holy vessels) was holy (Ex. 30:29).
- e) Since they are blended with the olive oil they indicate the Holy Spirit in the life of our Lord and how they were manifested.

Calamus

Calamus was a spice with a sweet spicy intense fragrance. It is similar to the following roses: “Constance Spry, Distant Drums, and White Pet”.

Sweet

Calamus and cinnamon are both called “sweet” (Heb. “besem”) and is translated “sweet odours” (2 Chron. 16:14; Est. 2:12) and “sweet smell” (Isa. 3:24).

- a) In 2 Chronicles 14-16 there is the record of the life of King Asa. He was a man who began well but finished sadly. At the beginning of his reign he stood against all that was evil. This included taking away the high places, breaking the groves and images, and commanded Judah to seek the Lord (2 Chron. 14:2-3). Adding to this he removed his mother from being queen because she was an idolator (2 Chron. 15:16). In the time of conflict against Zerah, he did not rely on the flesh but on God (2 Chron. 13:11), and the Lord gave him a great victory (2 Chron. 14:13-15).
 - i) In these He is like our Lord in three aspects:
 1. He stood against the evil.
 2. In the time of conflict he prayed to God.
 3. And God gave the victory.
- b) In contrast to the Lord, he made a league with Ben-hadad, the King of Syria. This was a very serious sin and when Hanani the seer came and told him his wrong, he was wroth and began to oppress some of the people (2 Chron. 16:10). Our Lord could never be reproved for any wrong He had done, but instead He challenged humanity to show one iota of sin He had committed.
- c) In death he was laid on a bed of “sweet odours”. (2 Chron. 16:14)
 - i) With Asa, death had left its stench and sweet odours were needed, but the body of the Lord, whilst bound in sweet spices, did not need them to nullify the smell of death, for His body knew no corruption.
- d) Esther with the young women had need of purification before being brought before the king. Such was the purity of our Lord that He never needed to bring a sin or trespass offering, nor make any confession of sin before coming to God the great King. (Est. 2:3, 9, 12)
- e) Furthermore, His life never became a stench as Israel’s did, but was ever a sweet fragrance.

The Hebrew word (qaneh) has a number of translations and one of the most interesting is “reed”. By this word the unwavering steadfastness of Christ is seen in two ways:

- a) As a contrast to:
 - i) Israel, when under the judgment of God, was described as a “reed shaken in the water” (1 Kgs. 14:15). There was nothing wavering in the life of the Lord. His steps were deliberate, and with ram like determination He moved on toward the goal of glorifying God on the earth, finishing the works God gave Him to do. With steady persistent footsteps He moved on toward Calvary, His ascension, and the fulfillment of the purposes of God. He could not be deterred by possibility thinking, personal insult, or savage cruelty.
 - ii) The judgment of God on Egypt by either the Assyrians (Isa. 20:4), **or** Babylonians (Jer. 46:26), and due to the waters being turned, the “reeds and flags shall wither” (Isa. 19:6). There was never any withering of usefulness for God in the life of the Lord due to sin.
 - iii) God’s description of Egypt was that of a “broken reed” (Isa. 36:6). How rich this is when we consider our Lord. His will never had to be broken, but it was yielded to God (Lk. 22:42); His spirit could never be broken, but His body was. (1 Cor. 11:24). *(I am well aware that there are those who say that the word “broken” is not inspired. My understanding is that while “not a bone of Him was broken” (Ex. 12:46; Num. 9:12; Psa. 34:20), yet when all His bones were out of joint (Psa. 22:14), that was a broken body. Furthermore, the very breaking of the bread symbolizes the broken body or else the symbol fails.)*
- b) As a manifestation of that which the Lord is:
 - i) “There was a man . . .the appearance of brass . . .and in his hand, a measuring reed” (Ezek. 40:3)
 1. The calamus in this context indicates the Lord as the criteria by which God judges. In Revelation 5 He takes the book out of the hand of the Throne Sitter, and from chs. 6-19 He is the executor of judgment on all that is contrary to God.
- c) The word “qaneh” comes from the root “qaneh”, which is translated “purchased” (Gen. 25:10); “redeemed” (Neh. 5:8).
 - i) The One who could not be made to waver, wither, or be broken, has become the Redeemer of those who put their trust in Him.
 1. Peter wrote: “For ye were not redeemed . . . with silver or gold . . . but with the precious blood of Christ” (1 Pet. 1:18).
 2. Paul wrote: “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law” (Gal. 3:13).
 3. John wrote: “Thou art worthy . . . for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood” (Rev. 5:9).
 4. Isaiah wrote: “Fear not, I have redeemed thee, thou art mine” (Isa. 43:1).

Cassia

The word translated “cassia” (qiddah is used twice in the scriptures Ex. 30:24; Ezek. 27:19), the word translated “cassia” in Psa. 45:8 and is only used on this occasion. The root word for “qiddah” is “qadad”) and the first reference is: “And the man *bowed down his head*, and worshipped the Lord” (Gen. 24:26). It is repeated of this unnamed servant in verse 48. Again, the children of Israel when they heard the Lord had visited His people, they *“bowed their heads”* (Ex. 4:31). While it is used of one human to another, it indicates respect as with Bathsheba (1 Kgs. 1:16), but more often it has to do with the bowing and worshipping of the Lord (David and all the people 1 Chron. 29:20; Jehoshaphat: 2 Chron. 20:18; Hezekiah: 2 Chron. 29:30; Ezra: Neh. 8:6). With this in mind, it is evident cassia indicates a reverent attitude and worshipping God.

The question then becomes: “Under what circumstances did these individuals and people worship the Lord?”

The unnamed servant had been sent to seek a wife for the son of the father (Gen. 24:3, 40, 48). He had just seen how the Lord had moved providentially, this young woman from his masters family came at the precise time he

had prayed. He had shown the riches of the son and worships the Lord. In a very real way the Lord depended on the providential activity of God. One instance was when He told Peter to go and cast in a line and take up the first fish and therein find the money for the temple tax. While we are not told He worshipped, there can be no doubt He would have thanked God for not only the provision, but also for the strengthening it was to the faith of Peter and the other disciples.

For four hundred long years the children of Israel had suffered. Then one day a man comes in from the wilderness and tells the elders the words the Lord has spoken, and the miracles He had given Moses for his authentication. For the first time in many years there was a hope in the midst of the darkness, God was going to deliver His people and fulfill His ancient promise to Abraham (Gen. 15:13). With hearts lifted high they worshipped.

Cinnamon

Cinnamon is mentioned four times in the scriptures (Ex. 30:23; Prov. 7:17; Song of Sol. 4:14 and Rev. 18:13). The word means “to erect as upright rolls” and it was also a very sweet fragrance.

It is used in sharp contrasting ways:

- a) That which delight to the heart of God as a sweet fragrance of anointing oil (Ex. 30:23), and with man using that which is precious to God for his own enrichment (Rev. 18:13).
- b) It is included in the expression of delight which the bridegroom finds in his bride (Song of Sol. 4:14), and then it is connected with corrupted affection with the “strange woman” (Prov. 7:17).

As meaning “erect or upright rolls”, it is a lovely illustration of the Torah rolls as they lined the wall in the synagogue. This was God’s rule for life, containing His statutes, judgments, laws and decrees. When this is lifted up as a shadow of our Lord, we see an interesting unfolding:

- a) His life that was lived with the vertical dimension of ever being in fellowship with GOD, was constantly upright and unfolding the mind of God in perfection.
- b) Because His life was ever in fellowship with God, it was always vertical and so able to perfectly unfold the mind of God.
- c) His unfolding of the mind of God was because He was always upright and in fellowship with God.

When the religious authorities of His day looked at His life, they found fault in:

- a) What He said: “My father worketh hitherto, and I work”. Double emphasis (Jn. 5:17-18).
- b) When He did things: healed on the Sabbath day (Jn. 5:16).
- c) What He accepted the ointment and worship of the woman of the city (Lk. 7:39).
- d) What He did when censuring them, as when the woman was taken in adultery (Jn. 8:7-9).
- e) Questioning why He had not come, and indeed His ability to heal Lazarus (Jn. 11:21, 32).
- f) His lack of learning (Jn. 11:37).

They were not in fellowship with God, but were “of their father the devil” (Jn. 8:44), therefore, their teachings were not the mind of God. They were the servants of sin (Jn. 8:34). The glorious reason, they could not convict Him of sin (Jn. 8:46), and Pilate three times over declared: “I find no fault in this man” (Lk. 23:4; Jn. 18:38, 19:4, 6) was because every thought, word, or deed was in fellowship with God. He was perfectly upright in all that He did, ever unfolding the mind and will of God.

**May God grant us good understanding as He, by His Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.
John 16:13**

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