

# Lesson 11 | February 12, 2023

## The Holy Place

**Study Text:** Exodus 25:23–40; 30:1–10; Leviticus 24:1–9; John 1:4–9; 6:44–51; 8:12; Revelation 5:6–10; 8:3–4

**Central Truth:** The objects of the Holy Place provide a picture of Christ’s ministry.

### Key Verse: John 8:12

Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life (KJV).

Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, “I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won’t have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life” (NLT).

### Learning Objectives

- Students will be able to identify and describe the furnishings of the Holy Place.
- Students will reflect the light of Jesus to others.
- Students will gain a more effective prayer life.

## Introducing the Study

**Say:** “Never judge a book by its cover.” This familiar adage is usually applied to our first impressions of people. However, it could also be applied to the tabernacle. From the exterior, the tabernacle probably appeared to be a drab, tent-like structure. But, within its walls was a richly ornamented, beautiful house of worship. And beyond the appearance of the items in the tabernacle lay even more: **symbols of the coming Messiah.**

### Opening Activity—Holy Objects

**Ask.** *What objects or furnishings are used in our worship today that carry a special significance or holiness?* (Answers may include such things as the pulpit, baptistry, the altar, or communion ware.)

**Say:** Nothing in God’s plan is random. When He gave instructions for the tabernacle, each item had significance far beyond its immediate use within it. This week’s study focuses on the three pieces of furniture that occupied the Holy Place—the lampstand, the table of showbread (KJV; Bread of the Presence, NLT), and the altar of incense. All three of the objects point to a time that the Israelites did not understand. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Today’s study takes us deeper into the tabernacle as we consider the Holy Place. Only the priests were allowed to enter the Holy Place; there they performed many of their duties. While they entered the Holy of Holies (KJV; Most Holy Place, NLT) only once a

year, they entered the Holy Place every day. However, we have the blessing of seeing God's hand at work as He fulfilled His promise of redemption.

[Exo 25:23-40 KJV] 23 Thou shalt also make a table [of] shittim wood: two cubits [shall be] the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. 24 And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, and make thereto a crown of gold round about. 25 And thou shalt make unto it a border of an hand breadth round about, and thou shalt make a golden crown to the border thereof round about. 26 And thou shalt make for it four rings of gold, and put the rings in the four corners that [are] on the four feet thereof. 27 Over against the border shall the rings be for places of the staves to bear the table. 28 And thou shalt make the staves [of] shittim wood, and overlay them with gold, that the table may be borne with them. 29 And thou shalt make the dishes thereof, and spoons thereof, and covers thereof, and bowls thereof, to cover withal: [of] pure gold shalt thou make them. 30 And thou shalt set upon the table shewbread before me alway. 31 And thou shalt make a candlestick [of] pure gold: [of] beaten work shall the candlestick be made: his shaft, and his branches, his bowls, his knops, and his flowers, shall be of the same. 32 And six branches shall come out of the sides of it; three branches of the candlestick out of the one side, and three branches of the candlestick out of the other side: 33 Three bowls made like unto almonds, [with] a knop and a flower in one branch; and three bowls made like almonds in the other branch, [with] a knop and a flower: so in the six branches that come out of the candlestick. 34 And in the candlestick [shall be] four bowls made like unto almonds, [with] their knops and their flowers. 35 And [there shall be] a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, according to the six branches that proceed out of the candlestick. 36 Their knops and their branches shall be of the same: all it [shall be] one beaten work [of] pure gold. 37 And thou shalt make the seven lamps thereof: and they shall light the lamps thereof, that they may give light over against it. 38 And the tongs thereof, and the snuffdishes thereof, [shall be of] pure gold. 39 [Of] a talent of pure gold shall he make it, with all these vessels. 40 And look that thou make [them] after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount.

[Exo 30:1-10 KJV] 1 And thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon: [of] shittim wood shalt thou make it. 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. 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. 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. 5 And thou shalt make the staves [of] shittim wood, and overlay them with gold. 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. 7 And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it. 8 And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations. 9 Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt

sacrifice, nor meat offering; neither shall ye pour drink offering thereon. 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.

[Lev 24:1-9 KJV] 1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Command the children of Israel, that they bring unto thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamps to burn continually. 3 Without the vail of the testimony, in the tabernacle of the congregation, shall Aaron order it from the evening unto the morning before the LORD continually: [it shall be] a statute for ever in your generations. 4 He shall order the lamps upon the pure candlestick before the LORD continually. 5 And thou shalt take fine flour, and bake twelve cakes thereof: two tenth deals shall be in one cake. 6 And thou shalt set them in two rows, six on a row, upon the pure table before the LORD. 7 And thou shalt put pure frankincense upon [each] row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, [even] an offering made by fire unto the LORD. 8 Every sabbath he shall set it in order before the LORD continually, [being taken] from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant. 9 And it shall be Aaron's and his sons'; and they shall eat it in the holy place: for it [is] most holy unto him of the offerings of the LORD made by fire by a perpetual statute.

[Jhn 1:4-9 KJV] 4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. 6 There was a man sent from God, whose name [was] John. 7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all [men] through him might believe. 8 He was not that Light, but [was sent] to bear witness of that Light. 9 [That] was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

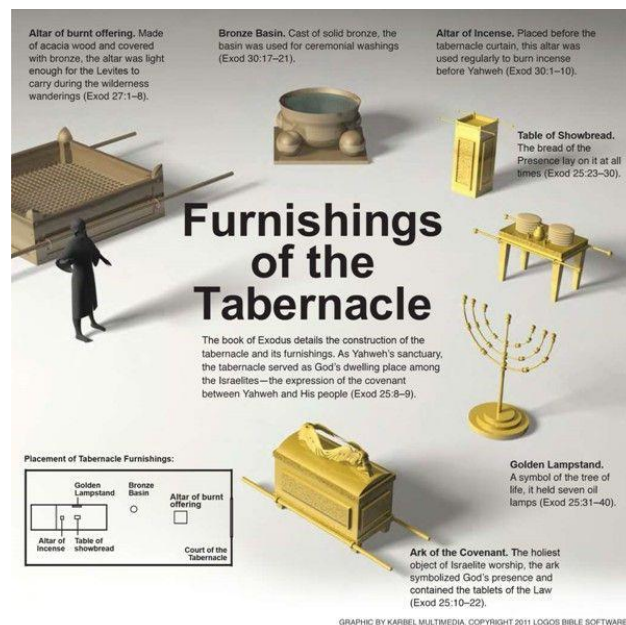
[Jhn 6:44-51 KJV] 44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. 45 It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. 46 Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father. 47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. 48 I am that bread of life. 49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. 50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. 51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

[Jhn 8:12 KJV] 12 Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

[Rev 5:6-10 KJV] 6 And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. 7 And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. 8 And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four [and] twenty elders fell down

before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. 9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; 10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

[Rev 8:3-4 KJV] 3 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer [it] with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. 4 And the smoke of the incense, [which came] with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.



## Part 1—Light of the World

### Light for the Holy Place

Exodus 25:31-40; Leviticus 24:1-4

[Exo 25:31-40 KJV] 31 And thou shalt make a candlestick [of] pure gold: [of] beaten work shall the candlestick be made: his shaft, and his branches, his bowls, his knops, and his flowers, shall be of the same. 32 And six branches shall come out of the sides of it; three branches of the candlestick out of the one side, and three branches of the candlestick out of the other side: 33 Three bowls made like unto almonds, [with] a knop and a flower in one branch; and three bowls made like almonds in the other branch, [with] a knop and a flower: so in the six branches that come out of the candlestick. 34 And in the

candlestick [shall be] four bowls made like unto almonds, [with] their knops and their flowers. 35 And [there shall be] a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, and a knop under two branches of the same, according to the six branches that proceed out of the candlestick. 36 Their knops and their branches shall be of the same: all it [shall be] one beaten work [of] pure gold. 37 And thou shalt make the seven lamps thereof: and they shall light the lamps thereof, that they may give light over against it. 38 And the tongs thereof, and the snuffdishes thereof, [shall be of] pure gold. 39 [Of] a talent of pure gold shall he make it, with all these vessels. 40 And look that thou make [them] after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount.

**[Lev 24:1-4 KJV] 1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Command the children of Israel, that they bring unto thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamps to burn continually. 3 Without the vail of the testimony, in the tabernacle of the congregation, shall Aaron order it from the evening unto the morning before the LORD continually: [it shall be] a statute for ever in your generations. 4 He shall order the lamps upon the pure candlestick before the LORD continually.**

**Say:** If you've ever stumbled around in a room with no windows during a power outage, you know how important it is to have a source of light. In addition to its spiritual symbolism, the lampstand in the Holy Place served the practical purpose of providing light for the priests as they did their work. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

The Holy Place measured 15 feet by 30 feet and stood in the western half of the courtyard. Behind the Holy Place was the Most Holy Place, which was 15 feet square and was separated from the Holy Place by a special linen curtain with intricate embroidery. Our next lesson will discuss the Most Holy Place more thoroughly.

**Only three pieces of furniture were found within the Holy Place. On the south side was the lampstand (NLT; candlestick, KJV). Exodus 25:31–40 records God's instructions concerning forming this lampstand and its accessories, all of which were made of pure gold. According to some estimates these items weighed between 120 and 132 pounds.**

The lampstand had seven branches, three on each side and one in the middle (verses 31–32). Each branch had a lamp cup “shaped like almond blossoms, complete with buds and petals” (verse 33, NLT). This bowl was the reservoir for the oil for the lamp.

**The fuel for the lampstand was “pure oil of pressed olives” (Leviticus 24:2, NLT). This was a higher quality oil than the normally boiled olive oil.**

While God commissioned the people to supply the olive oil, the priests had the responsibility of keeping the light burning. They were to enter the Holy Place to tend the wicks and ensure there was oil in the lampstand (verses 3–4).

The lampstand was the only source of light in the Holy Place, an internal structure without windows which would have no natural light. While the lampstand served the practical purpose of providing illumination for the priest as he did his duties in this sacred place, light is seen throughout the Scripture as a metaphor for the guidance and direction God gives His people. **The ultimate light for God’s people is seen in Jesus, the Light of the World (John 8:12).**

### ***Discuss***

? What was the purpose of the lampstand, both physically and spiritually?

? Why do you think God required pure gold and the highest quality of olive oil for use in the tabernacle?

## **Light for Humanity**

John 1:4–9; 8:12

**[Jhn 1:4-9 KJV] 4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. 6 There was a man sent from God, whose name [was] John. 7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all [men] through him might believe. 8 He was not that Light, but [was sent] to bear witness of that Light. 9 [That] was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.**

**[Jhn 8:12 KJV] 12 Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.**

**Say:** The word “light” appears hundreds of times in Scripture, either in reference to literal light or figuratively in reference to spiritual light. It is not surprising that God included the lampstand in the tabernacle to point toward the Lord Jesus Christ. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

**The lampstand provided light for the darkness of the Holy Place. By the light of the lampstand, the priests could see to minister to the Lord. In a similar way, Jesus provides light for us in a dark and sinful world.**

**Jesus provides light by being life to fallen humanity (John 1:4). Humanity is bound in darkness and spiritual death because of sin, but Jesus brings the revelation of God and eternal life to those in darkness. When we accept Christ as Savior, the darkness of sin is removed and replaced by the light of the gospel (Colossians 1:12–13; 2 Corinthians 4:3–4). The light of Christ has invaded the darkness of the world. The world, though, rejects Christ and His truth. But the world “can never extinguish” the light (John 1:5). It continues to shine.**

God wants all people to come to Christ. He sent John the Baptist to bear witness to the Light (verses 6–8). John did not call attention to himself, but pointed people to Christ, that they might be saved. In our day we can bear witness to Christ and the light He has given us. Instead of glorying in ourselves, we need to point others to Christ, the true Light. Though many people, and even Satan himself, claim to be the “light,” they are false. There is only one Light, Jesus Christ (verse 9).

**In John 8:12, Jesus was in Jerusalem at the end of the Feast of Tabernacles. Light was one of the themes of this feast. This occasion provided Jesus the opportunity to proclaim himself as “the light of the world.” Since He is the Light, those who follow Him “shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (KJV).**

**This world, gripped in spiritual darkness, needs to hear the good news that Jesus can break the power of sin. As believers, we must follow the example of John the Baptist, pointing others to Jesus so they can be freed from the darkness of sin. Jesus commanded us to do so. Jesus himself commanded, “You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden” (Matthew 5:14, NLT).**

### ***Discuss***

? What does light represent in Scripture?

? What is our role in shining the light of Jesus to our world?

### **Resource Packet Item 1: Turn On the Light**

Distribute the work sheet and give the students a few minutes to work on it in small groups, then ask them to share their responses.

## **Part 2—Bread of Life**

### **Table of the Bread of the Presence**

Exodus 25:23–30; Leviticus 24:5–9

**[Exo 25:23-30 KJV] 23 Thou shalt also make a table [of] shittim wood: two cubits [shall be] the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof. 24 And thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, and make thereto a crown of gold round**

about. 25 And thou shalt make unto it a border of an hand breadth round about, and thou shalt make a golden crown to the border thereof round about. 26 And thou shalt make for it four rings of gold, and put the rings in the four corners that [are] on the four feet thereof. 27 Over against the border shall the rings be for places of the staves to bear the table. 28 And thou shalt make the staves [of] shittim wood, and overlay them with gold, that the table may be borne with them. 29 And thou shalt make the dishes thereof, and spoons thereof, and covers thereof, and bowls thereof, to cover withal: [of] pure gold shalt thou make them. 30 And thou shalt set upon the table shewbread before me alway.

[Lev 24:5-9 KJV] 5 And thou shalt take fine flour, and bake twelve cakes thereof: two tenth deals shall be in one cake. 6 And thou shalt set them in two rows, six on a row, upon the pure table before the LORD. 7 And thou shalt put pure frankincense upon [each] row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, [even] an offering made by fire unto the LORD. 8 Every sabbath he shall set it in order before the LORD continually, [being taken] from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant. 9 And it shall be Aaron's and his sons'; and they shall eat it in the holy place: for it [is] most holy unto him of the offerings of the LORD made by fire by a perpetual statute.

**Say:** The second piece of furniture we are discussing is the table of showbread (KJV) or Bread of the Presence (NLT). Again, the bread served a dual purpose of providing sustenance for the priests and representing God's provision for His people. Beyond that, it symbolized the coming of Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

On the north side of the Holy Place was a table of acacia wood overlaid with gold (Exodus 25:23–24). Acacia was a durable, insect-resistant wood that grew in the Sinai Peninsula region. This wood provided the perfect material for the tabernacle furnishings.

**A gold molding was placed around the rim of the tabletop to prevent anything from falling off (verse 25). Gold rings were attached to the sides of the table for the two poles used to carry the table when the Israelites journeyed (verse 26). Gold utensils rounded out the table's implements (verse 29).**

This table held the "showbread" (verse 30, KJV) or "the Bread of the Presence" (NLT). **The showbread consisted of twelve flat loaves of bread, one for each tribe of Israel. Each Sabbath, twelve fresh loaves were placed in two rows on the table**



**(Leviticus 24:5–6). Incense was also placed on this table along with the bread (verses 7–8).**

**The bread was a symbol of God’s presence and provision. His presence through His glory rested on the tabernacle. The people could be assured of God’s guidance in their lives. God also provided manna each day. His provision for the needs of the people is represented in the showbread.**

**On the Sabbath, when the priests removed the old bread and replaced it with fresh loaves, Aaron and his sons took the bread and ate it (verse 9). It was a weekly reminder of the covenant of God with the people of Israel. The bread, then, served as a memorial to the Lord, and food for the priests.**

The word for “memorial” (verse 7, KJV) can also be translated “offering” (NLT) or “reminder.” **As with the other features of the tabernacle, God was reminding His people of His provision. The bread was the literal provision of food for the priests, but it spoke of the spiritual provision He would one day offer all His children.**

### ***Discuss***

? What did bread symbolize to the people of Israel?

? What was done with the bread at the end of the week? How might that relate to the support of church leaders today? (See 1 Timothy 5:17 and Galatians 6:6.)

## **Christ, Our Bread of Life**

John 6:44–51

**[Jhn 6:44-51 KJV] 44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. 45 It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. 46 Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father. 47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. 48 I am that bread of life. 49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. 50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. 51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.**

**Say:** To understand the setting for this teaching of Jesus, we should remember that, on the previous day, Jesus had fed the five thousand (John 6:1–15). After crossing the Sea

of Galilee during the night, including the miracle of Jesus walking on the water, Jesus and His disciples were again surrounded by the crowd. While the people were primarily interested in the physical bread He had provided, He used the opportunity to teach them about the spiritual bread they should be seeking. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Jesus' listeners would have been very familiar with God's provision of manna (bread) in the wilderness for their ancestors. They would also have been familiar with the bread that was placed on the table in the Holy Place. **But now, God gave them "bread from heaven" (John 6:50, NLT). This Bread supplies more than physical nourishment. Unlike the manna, the sustenance Jesus offered lasts beyond the present physical need and reaches into eternity. Unlike the Bread of the Presence, which was eaten only by the priests, the Bread of Life is free to all who will accept Him.**

The people did not understand the nature of this spiritual bread. They were interested in physical bread. But Jesus explained that He is "the Bread of Life" (verse 48, see also verse 35). Jesus is the source of life. Only from Him can we really obtain life. **Not only is He the source, He is also the sustainer of life (Acts 17:28). Only through Jesus can we face every obstacle of life. And only Jesus can satisfy our spiritual hunger.**

**Physical hunger is not what brings man to God. The hunger that brings man to God is not humanly inspired. Instead it is the work of God in people's hearts (John 6:44–45). Those who are truly taught of God accept Christ and His teachings. As the "Bread of Life," Jesus meets the real need of the spiritually hungry by introducing people to the God for whom their souls crave. Jesus alone can reveal God to us (verse 46).**

The result of partaking of the Bread of Life is everlasting life (verses 47–51). Those who eat physical food will die (physically), just as the Israelites ate the physical manna and died in the desert. But **those who partake of the eternal bread of life will never die (spiritually).**

The greatest need of humanity—eternal life—is found only in Jesus Christ. **Jesus did not come for a select few. He gave the offering of His own flesh so that all might have eternal life (verse 51).**

### ***Discuss***

? Why is Jesus called the Bread of Life?

? As a believer, how can you feast on the Bread of Life to sustain your spiritual life?

## **Part 3—The Prayers and God's People**

### **The Altar of Incense**

Exodus 30:1–10

[Exo 30:1-10 KJV] 1 And thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon: [of] shittim wood shalt thou make it. 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. 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. 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. 5 And thou shalt make the staves [of] shittim wood, and overlay them with gold. 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. 7 And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it. **8 And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations. 9 Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt sacrifice, nor meat offering; neither shall ye pour drink offering thereon. 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.**

**Say:** While the altar of burnt offering stood in the courtyard of the tabernacle, the altar of incense was located in the Holy Place. The priests approached this altar twice daily to burn the incense that God required. Foreshadowing the prayers of God's people, the incense would provide a sweet smell to this place of worship. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

**The altar of incense was the central piece of furniture in the Holy Place. It stood in front of the veil, the entrance to the Most Holy Place. Like the table of showbread, it was made of acacia wood overlaid with gold. Though small in horizontal dimension (1 foot square), it was 3 feet tall, taller than the other items in the tabernacle (Exodus 30:2). Like the altar of burnt offering, it had horns; and, like the table of showbread, a gold rim around its top. It also had rings through which poles for carrying it were inserted (verses 3–5).**

**Twice daily, morning and evening, Aaron, the high priest, burned “sweet incense” on it. This was to be done “from generation to generation” (verse 7, KJV). God specifically wanted older generations to teach younger generations to obey His commands. Even today, if we do not teach future generations the**

## **principles of God's Word, the Church is only one generation from extinction.**

God strictly prohibited burning any incense on this altar other than what He prescribed (verse 9). He gave specific instructions for making this special incense. It was a combination of three fragrant spices and frankincense, blended in equal amounts. **Because this incense was special, God declared it "holy," or sacred and consecrated. He strictly forbade its personal use (see verses 34–38). In Leviticus 10, we read the account of two of Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, who disobeyed God's direction regarding burning incense.**

**God also prohibited burnt offerings, drink offerings, or grain offerings on the altar of incense. It was to be used only for burning incense. The only exception was on the Day of Atonement, when Aaron sprinkled the horns with blood from the sin offering, thus cleansing the altar (verse 10).**

### **Resource Packet Item 2: An Aroma Pleasing to God**

Distribute the work sheet and divide your class into small groups, assigning one Scripture passage to each group. Give them a few minutes to report their responses to the class.

#### ***Discuss***

? What practices or elements of worship does God expect His people to pass on to the next generation today? How do we do that?

? Why do you think God prohibited the incense prepared for the altar from being used for any other purpose?

## **The Fragrance of Prayer**

Revelation 5:8; 8:3–4

**[Rev 5:8 KJV] 8 And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four [and] twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.**

**[Rev 8:3-4 KJV] 3 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer [it] with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. 4 And the smoke of the incense, [which came] with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.**

**Say:** God loves to hear from His people. In fact, **the prayers of God's people are described as a pleasing aroma to Him.** David pictured his prayers as incense rising with his sacrifice of praise to God (see Psalm 141:1–2).

[Psa 141:1-2 NLT] 1 A psalm of David. O LORD, I am calling to you. Please hurry! Listen when I cry to you for help! 2 Accept my prayer as incense offered to you, and my upraised hands as an evening offering.

Our communion with God is like the pleasing aroma of the incense as it rose from the altar. John's vision in the Book of Revelation also depicts the prayers of God's people as a sweet incense before God. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

In John's vision he saw the four beasts and the twenty-four elders with "gold bowls filled with incense, which are the prayers of God's people" (Revelation 5:8, NLT). God treasures our prayers to Him as a sweet fragrance.

**In Revelation 8:3–4, John saw another angel with a gold incense burner. The "great amount of incense" (NLT) the angel was given indicates the large amount of "prayers of God's people" (NLT) that were rising to God as incense from a gold altar.** The scene vividly parallels the Old Testament ritual—coals carried in a censer (a vessel for burning incense) from the bronze altar to the altar of incense, incense placed upon the burning coals, and fragrant smoke rising from the altar.

In the Old Testament, the people of Israel often complained to God about their circumstances. Sometimes our prayers seem more like complaining than like a sweet fragrance, but **as we surrender to God, our prayers will rise as a sweet fragrance to Him. He invites us to enter a time of intimacy with Him each day—a time when we enter the Holy Place of His presence through prayer.**

### ***Discuss***

? What does the incense represent?

? How can we make our prayers more fragrant to God?

### **Resource Packet Item 3: Jesus in the Holy Place**

Distribute the work sheet and give the students a few minutes to look up each Scripture (individually or in pairs or groups). They can check their answers using the key at the bottom of the page.

## **What Is God Saying to Us?**

**Say:** God wants our hearts to be like the Holy Place of the tabernacle. Jesus is the Light for our world and the Bread for our spiritual sustenance and growth. Our prayers are sweet incense rising to God. The message we have is one the world we live in desperately needs.

## Living It Out

### Ministry in Action

- Be sure to feed your soul by feasting on the Bread of life.
- Find a way to shine the light of Jesus to an unbeliever this week.
- Let your prayers be a sweet aroma to God.

## Daily Bible Readings

Monday:

Faithful Service.  
2 Chronicles 13:10–12

**[2Ch 13:10-12 KJV] 10 But as for us, the LORD [is] our God, and we have not forsaken him; and the priests, which minister unto the LORD, [are] the sons of Aaron, and the Levites [wait] upon [their] business: 11 And they burn unto the LORD every morning and every evening burnt sacrifices and sweet incense: the shewbread also [set they in order] upon the pure table; and the candlestick of gold with the lamps thereof, to burn every evening: for we keep the charge of the LORD our God; but ye have forsaken him. 12 And, behold, God himself [is] with us for [our] captain, and his priests with sounding trumpets to cry alarm against you. O children of Israel, fight ye not against the LORD God of your fathers; for ye shall not prosper.**

Tuesday:

“By My Spirit.”  
Zechariah 4:1–9

**[Zec 4:1-9 KJV] 1 And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep, 2 And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all [of] gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which [are] upon the top thereof: 3 And two olive trees by it, one upon the right [side] of the bowl, and the other upon the left [side] thereof. 4 So I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, What [are] these, my lord? 5 Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, Knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my lord. 6 Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This [is] the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts. 7 Who [art] thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel [thou shalt become] a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone [thereof with] shoutings, [crying], Grace, grace unto it. 8 Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, 9 The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you.**

Wednesday:

Pure Offerings.  
Malachi 1:6–11

**[Mal 1:6-11 KJV] 6 A son honoureth [his] father, and a servant his master: if then I [be] a father, where [is] mine honour? and if I [be] a master, where [is] my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name? 7 Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the LORD [is] contemptible. 8 And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, [is it] not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, [is it] not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the LORD of hosts. 9 And now, I pray you, beseech God that he will be gracious unto us: this hath been by your means: will he regard your persons? saith the LORD of hosts. 10 Who [is there] even among you that would shut the doors [for nought]? neither do ye kindle [fire] on mine altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the LORD of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand. 11 For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name [shall be] great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense [shall be] offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name [shall be] great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts.**

**Thursday:**

The Word Dwelled Among Us.  
John 1:11–14

**[Jhn 1:11-14 KJV] 11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not. 12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, [even] to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. 14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.**

**Friday:**

Bread of Unity.  
1 Corinthians 10:14–17

**[1Co 10:14-17 KJV] 14 Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. 15 I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say. 16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? 17 For we [being] many are one bread, [and] one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.**

**Saturday:**

The Light of Christ.  
Revelation 1:12–20

**[Rev 1:12-20 NLT] 12 When I turned to see who was speaking to me, I saw seven gold lampstands. 13 And standing in the middle of the lampstands was**

someone like the Son of Man. He was wearing a long robe with a gold sash across his chest. 14 His head and his hair were white like wool, as white as snow. And his eyes were like flames of fire. 15 His feet were like polished bronze refined in a furnace, and his voice thundered like mighty ocean waves. 16 He held seven stars in his right hand, and a sharp two-edged sword came from his mouth. And his face was like the sun in all its brilliance. 17 When I saw him, I fell at his feet as if I were dead. But he laid his right hand on me and said, "Don't be afraid! I am the First and the Last. 18 I am the living one. I died, but look--I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and the grave. 19 "Write down what you have seen--both the things that are now happening and the things that will happen. 20 This is the meaning of the mystery of the seven stars you saw in my right hand and the seven gold lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.