

## Doctrine of Frankincense

1. Frankincense (Heb. *lebownah*, leb-o-naw') refers to a vegetable white resin, brittle, glittering, and of a bitter taste.
  - *Exodus 30:34 And the Lord said unto Moses, Take unto thee sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum; these sweet spices with pure frankincense: of each shall there be a like weight: 35 And thou shalt make it a perfume, a confection after the art of the apothecary, tempered together, pure and holy: 36 And thou shalt beat some of it very small, and put of it before the testimony in the tabernacle of the congregation, where I will meet with thee: it shall be unto you most holy.*
2. Frankincense is obtained by making incisions in the bark of the Boswellia tree.
3. The Hebrews imported their frankincense from India and southwest Arabia.
  - *Isaiah 60:6 The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall shew forth the praises of the Lord.*
  - *Jeremiah 6:20 To what purpose cometh there to me incense from Sheba, and the sweet cane from a far country? Your burnt offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices sweet unto me.*
4. The special recipe for frankincense is given in Exodus 30.
  - *Exodus 30:34 And the Lord said unto Moses, Take unto thee sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum; these sweet spices with pure frankincense: of each shall there be a like weight: 35 And thou shalt make it a perfume, a confection after the art of the apothecary, tempered together, pure and holy:*
5. Some of the special frankincense was to be placed before the Ark of Testimony, which is the Ark of the Covenant in the Tabernacle in the Holy of Holies.
  - *Exodus 30: 36 And thou shalt beat some of it very small, and put of it before the testimony in the tabernacle of the congregation, where I will meet with thee: it shall be unto you most holy.*
6. Upon penalty of death, the special recipe for frankincense was not to be used for personal pleasure.
  - *Exodus 30:37 And as for the perfume which thou shalt make, ye shall not make to yourselves according to the composition thereof: it shall be unto thee holy for the Lord. 38 Whosoever shall make like unto that, to smell thereto, shall even be cut off from his people.*

7. Because it burns for a long time with a steady flame and gives forth an odor, frankincense was allowed to be used in various sacrifices as an accelerant and for fumigation.
  - Frankincense was allowed to be used in the Meat (Grain) Offering. *Leviticus 2:1 And when any will offer a meat offering unto the Lord, his offering shall be of fine flour; and he shall pour oil upon it, and put frankincense thereon: 2 And he shall bring it to Aaron's sons the priests: and he shall take thereout his handful of the flour thereof, and of the oil thereof, with all the frankincense thereof; and the priest shall burn the memorial of it upon the altar, to be an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord:*
  - Frankincense was allowed to be used in association with the Shewbread. *Leviticus 24:7 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. With some sacrifices frankincense was not allowed.
  - Frankincense was not allowed to be used in the Sin (Trespass) Offering. *Leviticus 5:11 But if he be not able to bring two turtledoves, or two young pigeons, then he that sinned shall bring for his offering the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour for a sin offering; he shall put no oil upon it, neither shall he put any frankincense thereon: for it is a sin offering.*
  - Frankincense was not allowed in the grain offering for jealousy. *Numbers 5:15 Then shall the man bring his wife unto the priest, and he shall bring her offering for her, the tenth part of an ephah of barley meal; he shall pour no oil upon it, nor put frankincense thereon; for it is an offering of jealousy, an offering of memorial, bringing iniquity to remembrance.*
9. The Levites were appointed to oversee the frankincense and make sure it was properly used.
  - *1 Chronicles 9:26 For these Levites, the four chief porters, were in their set office, and were over the chambers and treasuries of the house of God. 27 And they lodged round about the house of God, because the charge was upon them, and the opening thereof every morning pertained to them. 28 And certain of them had the charge of the ministering vessels, that they should bring them in and out by tale. 29 Some of them also were appointed to oversee the vessels, and all the instruments of the sanctuary, and the fine flour, and the wine, and the oil, and the frankincense, and the spices.*
10. Along with other items frankincense was well protected in a great chamber in the Second Temple.
  - *Nehemiah 13:5 And he had prepared for him a great chamber, where aforetime they laid the meat offerings, the frankincense, and the vessels, and the tithes of the corn, the new wine, and the oil, which was commanded to be given to the Levites, and the singers, and the porters; and the offerings of the priests.*

- *Nehemiah 13:9 Then I commanded, and they cleansed the chambers: and thither brought I again the vessels of the house of God, with the meat offering and the frankincense.*
11. In the Song of Solomon, frankincense was used metaphorically to speak of the loveliness of the Shepherd Lover, a type of Christ.
- *Song of Solomon 3:6 Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant?*
12. The prophet Isaiah condemned sacrifices offered without a proper motive of love for God.
- *Isaiah 43:23 Thou hast not brought me the small cattle of thy burnt offerings; neither hast thou honoured me with thy sacrifices. I have not caused thee to serve with an offering, nor wearied thee with incense.*
13. The use of frankincense in association with idolatrous worship was condemned.
- *Isaiah 66:3 He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations.*
  - *Jeremiah 6:20 To what purpose cometh there to me incense from Sheba, and the sweet cane from a far country? Your burnt offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices sweet unto me.*
14. The child Jesus was honored by the Wise Men from the East with a gift of frankincense.
- *Matthew 2:11 And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.*
15. During the seize of Jerusalem in AD 70, the merchants of the earth wept and mourned for they had no one to buy their frankincense anymore.
- *Revelation 18:11 And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more: 12 The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, 13 And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.*