

1) What is Perfume

Perfume It is used to make things smell pleasant and to ward off insects and pests. The Bible frequently references perfumes, especially in connection with sacred rituals, offerings, and acts of reverence.

In the Bible, perfume is sometimes used to symbolize devotion, sacrifice, and honor. A well-known instance is when a woman poured an expensive perfume on Jesus' head. This act of worship and reverence became a significant moment in Jesus' ministry.

Mathew 26:6-13 (NIV):

[6]"While Jesus was in Bethany, in the home of Simon the Leper,

[7]a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, which she poured on his head as he was reclining at the table.

[8]When the disciples saw this, they were indignant. 'Why this waste?' they asked.

[9]This perfume could have been sold at a high price and the money given to the poor.' Aware of this,

[10]Jesus said to them, 'Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a beautiful thing to me.

[11]The poor you will always have with you, but you will not always have me.

[12]When she poured this perfume on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial.

[13]Truly I tell you, wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.'"

The expensive perfume was a symbol of her deep love and devotion. In Jewish culture, perfumes were also used in burial rites, signifying respect for the deceased. In this context, the woman was unknowingly preparing Jesus for His death, emphasizing that her act of love was prophetic.

Another mention of perfume is when Mary Magdalene and other

women prepared spices and perfumes to anoint Jesus' body after His crucifixion, showing their reverence for Him even after His death.

Luke 23:56 (NIV): "Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment."

The act of preparing the perfumes for His body reflects the tradition of honoring the dead, which in this case, also pointed to Jesus' fulfillment of the ultimate sacrifice for humanity. The perfume in these instances symbolizes not just physical fragrance, but spiritual reverence and devotion.

2) What Are Incense

Incense, refers to aromatic substances that are typically burned to produce fragrance. Incense was commonly used in ancient religious practices as part of offerings and rituals to honor God. In the Old Testament, God commanded the Israelites to burn incense as part of their worship in the Tabernacle and later the

Temple.

Exodus 30:34-38 (NIV) describes the preparation of incense for the Tabernacle:

"[34]Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Take fragrant spices, gum resin, onycha and galbanum, and pure frankincense, all in equal amounts, and [

35] make a fragrant blend of incense, the work of a perfumer. It is to be salted and pure and sacred.

[36]Grind some of it to powder and place it in front of the Ark of the Covenant law in the tent of meeting, where I will meet with you. It shall be most holy to you.

[37]Do not make any incense with this formula for yourselves; consider it holy to the Lord.[

38] Whoever makes incense like it to enjoy its fragrance must be cut off from their people.'"

This incense, which includes frankincense was seen as sacred, a

way of offering prayers to God. The burning of incense symbolized the prayers of God's people ascending to Him.

Revelation 8:3-4 (NIV) also refers to incense in a spiritual context:

“Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all God's people, on the golden altar in front of the throne. The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of God's people, went up before God from the angel's hand.”

This verse demonstrates how incense in heaven is used as a metaphor for the prayers of the saints, indicating that incense is not just a physical offering but also represents the spiritual devotion and prayers of believers.

Incense like perfume, is associated with the worship of God. It is symbolic of our prayers and sacrifices being offered to God in love and reverence. Just as the burning of incense was integral to the Old Testament worship, it continues to symbolize our ongoing relationship with God, with our prayers rising to Him like the sweet fragrance of incense.

Both marhamu and manukato have deep theological significance. In the Bible, they are symbols of devotion, sacrifice, and honor. Whether it's the woman pouring perfume on Jesus' head, or the incense that rises with the prayers of believers, these fragrant substances remind us of the importance of worship and reverence in our relationship with God.

Maranatha!

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