Question: Is incense mentioned in the Bible? And what was its purpose?

Answer: Incense was one of the ingredients used in ancient times to make the sacred perfume called frankincense.

This ingredient (incense) comes from the resin produced by a tree known as Boswellia (see picture above). The Boswellia tree begins to produce resin between 8 to 10 years after being planted, and it thrives best in dry regions.

In the Bible, “incense” was mixed together with three other ingredients stacte, onycha, and galbanum to prepare the sacred perfume called incense. The high priest would burn it so that its smoke filled the Tabernacle before carrying out the work of atonement.

That kind of incense was strictly forbidden for any personal or private use. In other words, no one was allowed to make it using the same formula for their home, personal worship, or as perfume. Doing so was considered a serious offense.

> *Exodus 30:34–38*
>
> *Then the Lord said to Moses, “Take fragrant spices gum resin, onycha and galbanum and pure frankincense, all in equal amounts,*
>
> *and make a fragrant blend of incense, the work of a perfumer. It is to be salted and pure and sacred.*
>
> *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.*
>
> *Do not make any incense with this formula for yourselves; consider it holy to the Lord.*
>
> *Whoever makes incense like it to enjoy its fragrance must be cut off from their people.”*

To understand more deeply about incense and its spiritual meaning, see here >> WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO OFFER INCENSE?

But the question remains: Are Christians today allowed to burn

incense in worship or in our homes?

The answer is No. Christians have not been given any command to burn incense or to involve themselves with it. The incense was used under the Old Covenant in the Tabernacle, but after the New Covenant began, those practices became spiritual rather than physical. Therefore, no incense, frankincense, or any such spices are required in worship under the New Covenant.

Why are the rituals of burning incense no longer practiced?

For the same reason that animal sacrifices are no longer practiced. Today we do not use bulls or goats for the forgiveness of sins, because the blood of Jesus cleanses us in the spiritual realm.

In the same way, we cannot burn incense to draw the presence of God, since now we can do this through prayer and intercession.

> *Psalm 141:2*
>
> *May my prayer be set before you like incense;*

> *may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice.*

So, animal sacrifices (bulls, goats, lambs, doves) and the burning of incense have now become practices of pagan worship. Whoever engages in them invites the presence of spirits, not of God! Therefore, it is crucial to be careful.

May the Lord bless you.

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