



**Clanking Chains: “Conflagration”: A Salute to Brett Turner & All Who Serve in the Islamic War;  
The Sacred Incense: Frankincense & Salt**

***“CONFLAGRATION”***

**A Salute to Those Who Serve  
in the Islamic War**

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**Subs and ships sail forth from their harbors  
To assigned destination.  
Awaiting them the foe;  
Backing them their nation.**

**Armies, strong and mighty, stand in ranks  
Upon appointed ground.  
Where Abraham once lived  
They await tocsins sound.**

**Airmen are poised afloat carriers  
Primed to ascend the sky,  
Awaiting the signal  
That let’s them launch and fly.**

**Terror engulfs those who made terror;  
Fire thunders from on high.  
Vengeance’s reckoning,  
Justice’s wrath is nigh.**

**Retribution, the promised booty,  
Awaits the conqu’ring throng.  
Weapons spew fiery froth;  
Death cries wail requ’em’s song.**

**Those who sponsored murder and hatred  
Have found eternal hell.  
The battle is the Lord’s—  
Against Him none prevail.**

**Those who boldly answered freedom’s call  
Are welcomed home gladly.  
They all did their duty  
To hearth, God, and country.**

(4) Pure **frankincense**: Hebrew, **לְבֹנָה** *lebonah*; Greek, **λίβανος**, *libanos*, meaning literally “white.”

*Lebonah* comes from a word group that helps us identify the typology of its use in the sacred incense:



Harris, R. Laird (ed.). *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1080), 1:467-68:

The Semitic root לבן *Ivn*: white. It refers to the white of snow, manna, and the gray of the moon.

לבן *laben*: to be white. Its major theological motif relates whiteness to moral purity. The cleansing which God brings to the sinner makes the sinner white as snow.

לבנה *lebanah*: the moon. Used in poetic figures both for beauty and for glory.

לבנון *Lebanon*: the Lebanon mountain range. They received their name probably from the white limestone rock of which they are largely composed.

The frankincense used in the incense burned on the Altar of Incense was a gum resin secreted as a milky-white substance by various species of trees of the genus *Boswellia*. The highest quality frankincense, whiter and more transparent and thus more expensive, was that obtained from the species of *Boswellia* called *carterii*. These trees grow on the limestone rocks of south Arabia. Some grow to a considerable height and send down their roots to extraordinary depths. This species accounts for the use of the adjective זָקִי *zak* which means “pure.”

The characteristics of frankincense in its various states are described by:

Tenney, Merrill C. (ed.). *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), 2:606:

The gum is collected during the summer; it is customary to peel the bark back first, and then to make a deep cut with a sharp knife.

The Hebrew name *lebona* means “white.” This is presumably because when the gum first exudes from the bark it is of an amber color; later when removed from the tree, the resin produces a white dust on its surface. The gum, when warmed and burned, produces a sweet, pleasant odor.

Orr, James (ed.). *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956), 2:1144-45:

The gum is obtained by incising the bark, and is collected in yellowish, semitransparent tears, readily pulverized; it has a nauseous taste.

Myers, Allen C. (ed.). *The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1987), 392:

The gum, which exudes as transparent beads from incisions or “resin canals” cut into the bark, slowly congeals and is later pressed into cylindrically shaped yellow pieces which are then ground into powder. When heated and burned it produces a pleasant, penetrating odor similar to that of balsam.

Smith, William. *Smith's Bible Dictionary*. Rev. ed. (Philadelphia: A. J. Holman Co.), 109:

It has a balsamic smell, and burns with a white flame and fragrant odor. Its burning was symbolical of the holiness of Jehovah and of prayer.



Ridout, Samuel. *Lectures on the Tabernacle*. (New York: Loizeaux Brothers, 1914), 370-71:

The word in the original is from a root meaning “to be white.” The name has been supposed to be given to the frankincense because of the whiteness of the pure gum; this would also suit the white flame with which it burns. It grows upon almost bare marble rocks, drawing its sustenance from these. The gum is obtained from incisions, and is very valuable. Besides being in demand for incense, it is useful as a medicine, and an antidote to poison.

Here, then, we have a fullness of suggestion as to our Lord who, “as a root out of dry ground [Isaiah 53:2],” grew in the arid wilderness of this world, where naturally there was nothing to sustain. That it should extract nourishment and fragrance from marble, suggests the two-fold thought that He flourished in that pure and perfect will of God which put Him in a barren world, but where He gathered in every way that which was fragrant to God. The incision through which the gum flowed reminds us that His piercing drew forth the sweet perfume of entire submission to God—priceless indeed to God as a sweet savor, and the perfect antidote to Satan’s poison with which he drugged man, a healing medicine for the deepest ills of the soul.

From these summaries we are able to develop a series of types and suggestions that describe our Lord’s sacrifice, glorification, and office:

- (1) The process of extracting the resin provides the first suggestions of the agony of the cross. To “peel the bark back” reminds us of the scourging of our Lord ordered by Pontius Pilate (Matthew 27:26). The thorns of the ἄκανθα, *akantha*, or briar-bramble that grew around Jerusalem, was platted into a mocking crown and incised into the scalp of our Lord (Matthew 27:29). He was beaten over the head with a reed by the Roman soldiers (Matthew 27:30). Finally, the nails of Roman crucifixion were driven into His hands and feet on Golgotha (Matthew 27:35). However, these physical abuses did not cause Him once to cry out. The only time He is said to have cried out was when our sins were imputed to Him and judged by divine justice:

Thieme, R. B., Jr. *King of Kings and Lord of Lords*. 3d ed. (Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 1974), 29:

It was contact with our sins that caused Him to scream, when all the physical torture in the world did not bring one cry from His lips. This cry was the apogee of the crucifixion, for when Jesus Christ screamed out the words, “Ἐλωϊ, Ἐλωϊ, λαμὰ σαβαχθάνι,” “*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani*”—“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” [Mark 15:34] He suffered spiritual death—separation from God.

The physical and spiritual sufferings ended on the cross when our Lord dismissed His soul to the Holy Spirit (Luke 23:43) and His human spirit to the Father (Luke 23:46). His physical death was verified by the plunging of the soldier’s sword into his chest cavity:

**John 19:34 - One of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water.**

At death, blood separates into clots and serum. Both oozed from our Lord’s chest proving His physical death. Serum is defined by:



*The New Oxford American Dictionary, s.v. "serum":*

An **amber-colored**, protein-rich liquid that separates out when blood coagulates.

- (2) When the gum of the *Boswellia carterii* oozes from the bark it first appears amber-colored and has a "nauseous taste." These are suggestive of the agony our Lord suffered in dying physically and spiritually for our sins. The gum speaks of the latter or expiation.
- (3) But after it is removed from the tree the resin produces a white dust on its surface. This is suggestive of the Lord's physical death and burial or retroactive positional truth.
- (4) When the resin is burned it produces a bright flame which, when a part of the sacred incense, is a type for the glorified Christ, and indicates current positional truth.
- (5) Its part in making the "sweet savor" indicates that the intercessory prayer of the glorified Christ is acceptable to the Father.
- (6) In addition, the whiteness of the flame is also suggestive of the righteousness of Christ which is a characteristic of His divine essence and the purity of His human impeccability.

To these four ingredients was added:

- (5) **Salt:** Hebrew, מֶלַח *malach*; Greek, ἅλας, *halas*, a compound used for its preservative qualities.

Not only did its presence serve as a preservative for the ingredients but it also referred to the contract that God has with His people: if they recognize the cross their prayers will be processed at the Golden Altar:

*Myers, The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary, 904:*

**SALT.** In the Old Testament a "covenant of salt" is a perpetual covenant (Numbers 18:19); thus, "the salt of the covenant with your God" was added to all sacrifices and to the incense of the tabernacle.

This final tempering provided the final mixture that produced the sacred incense to be used exclusively at the Golden Altar.