

FOUNDATION STONES – ALTAR SERVICE

The word ALTAR is actually an ancient word, signifying a RAISED PLACE where a SACRIFICE was made, and that sacrifice signified CONSECRATION to God.

- Noah built an altar immediately upon leaving the ark
- Abraham built an altar when he first set foot in the promised land, when he separated from Lot, and when he prepared to offer Isaac
- Isaac built an altar when God renewed His covenant with him
- Jacob built an altar when he was reunited with his brother Esau, and when God changed his name to Israel
- Moses built an altar after the battle with Amalek (where Joshua and Caleb held up his hands), and called it “Jehovah Nissi” – and he also built an altar for all of Israel after they pledged to keep God’s Law

Early individual altars were made of earth or stone, but they couldn’t be made out of hewn stone. **The principle here is that GOD decides how an altar is to be constructed, not MAN.**

Exodus 20:25 And if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it.

When God wanted a permanent altar for His people, He once again gave Moses the EXACT details of how it was to be built.

GOD SAID THAT THE BRASEN ALTAR MUST HAVE FOUR HORNS.

Exodus 27:1-2 And thou shalt make an altar of shittim wood, five cubits long, and five cubits broad; the altar shall be foursquare: and the height thereof shall be three cubits. And thou shalt make the horns of it upon the four corners thereof: his horns shall be of the same: and thou shalt overlay it with brass.

The altar’s dimensions were 7.5 feet by 7.5 feet by 4.5 feet high.

Horns are the chief source of attack and defense for animals that have them – they are figurative of POWER. **Power comes from the altar!**

Psalms 18:1-3 I will love thee, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the HORN of my salvation, and my high tower. I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.

Luke 1:67-69 And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, And hath raised up an HORN of salvation for us in the house of his servant David;

THE HORNS WERE THE PLACE THAT THE BLOOD WAS APPLIED.

Leviticus 4:34 And the priest shall take of the blood of the sin offering with his finger, and put it upon the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and shall pour out all the blood thereof at the bottom of the altar:

THE SACRIFICE WAS BOUND TO THE HORNS OF THE ALTAR.

Psalms 118:27 God is the LORD, which hath shewed us light: bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar.

THE FIRE ON THE ALTAR WAS NEVER ALLOWED TO GO OUT.

Leviticus 6:13 The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out.

A MAN WHO KILLED SOMEONE ACCIDENTALLY COULD FLEE TO THE SANCTUARY AND HOLD ON TO THE HORNS OF THE ALTAR.

Exodus 21:13-14 And if a man lie not in wait, but God deliver him into his hand; then I will appoint thee a place whither he shall flee. But if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour, to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die.

THE ONLY TIME THIS LAW WAS USED IS FOUND IN FIRST KINGS:

David is old and feeble, almost at the point of death; Adonijah (his son) and Joab (his nephew) each plot to set themselves up as the next king.

ADONIJAH:

- David’s son, heir to the throne after deaths of Ammon and Absalom
- set aside in favor of Solomon, but claims the throne anyway
- Bathsheba and the prophet Nathan defeated his plot
- Solomon was crowned king and Adonijah fled to the altar

JOAB:

- nephew of David (son of his sister Zeruah), captain of David’s army
- killed Abner with a dagger in revenge for death of his brother Asahel
- secured the death of Uriah the Hittite for King David
- killed Absalom in a brutal way, against King David’s orders
- killed Amasa with a dagger because David chose him as captain first
- supported Adonijah, but fled to the altar when their plot failed

Notice the difference! Adonijah is spared, but Joab is killed right in the Tabernacle. Why? Because Joab's crimes of murder were premeditated. There is a LEGAL difference between them, but also a SPIRITUAL one!

1 Kings 1:50-53 And Adonijah feared because of Solomon, and arose, and went, and caught hold on the horns of the altar. And it was told Solomon, saying, Behold, Adonijah feareth king Solomon: for, lo, he hath caught hold on the horns of the altar, saying, Let king Solomon swear unto me to day that he will not slay his servant with the sword. And Solomon said, If he will shew himself a worthy man, there shall not an hair of him fall to the earth: but if wickedness shall be found in him, he shall die. So king Solomon sent, and they brought him down from the altar. And he came and bowed himself to king Solomon: and Solomon said unto him, Go to thine house.

1 Kings 2:28-31 Then tidings came to Joab: for Joab had turned after Adonijah, though he turned not after Absalom. And Joab fled unto the tabernacle of the LORD, and caught hold on the horns of the altar. And it was told king Solomon that Joab was fled unto the tabernacle of the LORD; and, behold, he is by the altar. Then Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, saying, Go, fall upon him. And Benaiah came to the tabernacle of the LORD, and said unto him, Thus saith the king, Come forth. And he said, Nay; but I will die here. And Benaiah brought the king word again, saying, Thus said Joab, and thus he answered me. And the king said unto him, Do as he hath said, and fall upon him, and bury him; that thou mayest take away the innocent blood, which Joab shed, from me, and from the house of my father.

- **Joab is found merely BY the altar, and he DIES there!**
- **Adonijah is found ON the altar, and he is SAVED there!**

Many church members are like "religious tourists" today – they see the sights but don't live there! It is possible to die within sight of the altar!

To be ON the altar would mean enduring the blood, the remains of the sacrifices, and the continual heat from the coals ... but it was worth it!

MY FLESH REBELS AGAINST THE ALTAR!

Adonijah had the spirit which said, "My hope is built on nothing less ..."

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Bishop William Parent's dedication prayer for Emily Rae in 1888 ...

"Today, we place this child upon the altar, and we promise that we will never take her off."