

THE TABERNACLE OF MOSES

"The Brazen Altar"

Proclamation-

Ps 32:1-6

- 1 Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.
- 2 Blessed is the man whose sin the LORD does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit.
- 3 When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.
- 4 For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Selah
- 5 Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD"-- and you forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah
- 6 Therefore let everyone who is godly pray to you while you may be found; (NIV)

The Brazen Altar, or The Altar of Burnt Offering-

Exod 27:1-8 (NIV)

- 1 "Build an altar of acacia wood, three cubits high; it is to be square, five cubits long and five cubits wide.
- 2 Make a horn at each of the four corners, so that the horns and the altar are of one piece, and overlay the altar with bronze.
- 3 Make all its utensils of bronze-- its pots to remove the ashes, and its shovels, sprinkling bowls, meat forks and firepans.
- 4 Make a grating for it, a bronze network, and make a bronze ring at each of the four corners of the network.
- 5 Put it under the ledge of the altar so that it is halfway up the altar.
- 6 Make poles of acacia wood for the altar and overlay them with bronze.
- 7 The poles are to be inserted into the rings so they will be on two sides of the altar when it is carried.
- 8 Make the altar hollow, out of boards. It is to be made just as you were shown on the mountain.

Exod 40:6-8

- 6 "Place the altar of burnt offering in front of the entrance to the tabernacle, the Tent of Meeting;
- 7 place the basin between the Tent of Meeting and the altar and put water in it.
- 8 Set up the courtyard around it and put the curtain at the entrance to the courtyard. (NIV)

We have been journeying through the Tabernacle from God's perspective; from the holy of holies outward. We have said that it was the Ark of the Covenant (the presence of God) which gave the entire structure significance and purpose. This is true from God's perspective, God to man, the way of Grace. The Lord has come out to meet us from his throne room (the holy of holies) all the way out in the court before the door at the altar of burnt offering. If the ark of the covenant gives the structure its significance, the altar of burnt offering makes that significance possible. From man's perspective (man to God, the way of faith) and God's prescription, no approach to the Lord's throne can be made without going to the altar of burnt offering first. It is from this altar that the blood which sanctified all the furniture and structure around it came and where the fire of God fell to provide all the fire and light used thereafter (Lev. 9:24).

It stood in the courtyard, the place of brass (judgment). It is here that the sins of the people were judged and atoned for. It was an instrument of blood, fire, and billows of smoke. As fearful and awesome as it appeared and as serious as the services were which surrounded it, it was stamped with the grace of God. As Romans 5:20b declares, "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: (KJV)"

The number five (representing grace in Scripture) is stamped all over the altar and its ministry. It was to be foursquare (like New Jerusalem), measuring 5 cubits wide, 5 cubits deep, and 3 cubits high. Five priests (Aaron and his four sons) were originally anointed to minister at it. Five types of implements (or vessels) were dedicated for its service: the pans, the shovels, the basins, the fleshhooks, and the firepans. Five types of Levitical offerings made up the majority of its sacrifices: the burnt offering, the fellowship offering, the grain offering, the sin offering, and the guilt offering. Both offerer and priest each had five distinct responsibilities with regard to the sacrifice. The offerer had the responsibilities of laying on of hands, slaying, skinning, cutting up, and washing the inwards of the sacrifice. The priest had the responsibilities catching up the blood, sprinkling the blood, tending the altar fire, laying on of the wood, and the bringing up of the pieces. In its function as the place where atoning sacrifices were made and the number five being all over it, the Lord is telling us that in His judgments, He offers grace; a grace sufficient for every weakness of mankind (2 Cor. 12:9).

Though as Christians we may be very aware of how Jesus Christ fulfilled every type of sacrifice in the Old Testament and that the cross was the antitype for which the brazen altar (and every true altar in Scripture) was the type, we may be unaware how many common concepts of New Testament priesthood come to us from the altar service. "Presenting our bodies", "laying on of hands", "lifting up holy hands", "rightly dividing", and "fanning the flame" are all concepts that come to us by way of the Tabernacle economy.

How does one begin to expound the significance of this great and terrible sign on the earth that the Lord provided to the Old Testament saints in reality and to us in writing? With great humbleness, we shall attempt to look at its blood-covered brass surface and see what it speaks to us with regard to the work that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished for us and what we as New Testament priest ought to be doing.

Quotation from *The Temple: Its Ministry and Services*, A. Edersheim, p. 74-75

"The sacrifices of the Old Testament were symbolical and typical. An outward observance without any real inward meaning is only a ceremony. But a rite which has a present spiritual meaning is a symbol; and if, besides, it also points to a future reality, conveying at the same time, by anticipation, the blessing that is yet to appear, it is a type. Thus the Old Testament sacrifices were not only symbols, nor yet merely predictions by fact (as prophecy is a prediction by word), but they already conveyed to the believing Israelite the blessing that was to flow from the future reality to which they pointed."

The Five Offerings-

Of all the different sacrifices (bloody, not bloody; holy and less holy; daily and festival) there are five Levitical classifications, or the five Levitical offerings described in Leviticus chapters 1-

7. *They are the burnt offering, the grain offering, the fellowship offering, the sin offering, and the guilt offering. Each of these pointed to Jesus and some also are types of what we are to do under the new covenant.*

The Sin Offering-

Lev 4:1-5:13; Lev 6:24-30; Lev 8:14-17; Lev 16:3-22

- ❑ A sacrifice for unintentional or unknown sin. (Lev. 4:2,13,22,27; 5:2)
- ❑ Sin was transferred onto the animal by the laying on of hands. (Lev. 4:4,15,24,29).
Here we see some of the doctrine of "laying on of hands" of Heb. 6:2
- ❑ Fat, kidneys, and liver were burned on the altar. (Lev. 4:8-10,19,26)
- ❑ If it was for the priest or the whole community, the remainder burned outside the camp on the ash heap. (Lev. 4:11-12)
- ❑ The blood made it all the way to the altar of incense, the veil, and the mercy seat.
- ❑ If it was for a leader or a common person, the remainder belonged to the priest that offered it. (Lev. 6:26)
- ❑ The blood was only put on the brazen altar.

Jesus, the Sin Offering-

Heb 7:24-8:5; Heb 9:22-28

Heb 9:22-28

- 22 In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.
- 23 It was necessary, then, for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.
- 24 For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence.
- 25 Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own.
- 26 Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.
- 27 Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment,
- 28 so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. (NIV)

The Guilt Offering-

Lev 5:14-6:7; Lev 7:1-6; Lev 14:24

- ❑ A sacrifice for unintentional sins. (Lev. 5:15,17)
- ❑ A sacrifice for sins requiring restitution (at a 20% mark up). (Lev. 5:16; 6:5)
- ❑ A sacrifice for intentional sins against neighbors requiring restitution at the same rate as above. (Lev. 6:2-5)
- ❑ In the case of the leper, his trespass offering was waved before the Lord by being lifted up, then brought down, then moved left then right. You former Catholics may recognize this motion. And in it, do we see another example of "lifting holy hands"?

(Lev. 14:24; 1 Tim 2:8)

- The fat, kidneys, liver, and fat tail were burned on the altar. (Lev. 7:3-5)
- The remainder could be eaten by the priests.
- Not called "an aroma pleasing to the Lord."

Jesus, the Guilt Offering-

Heb 9:7-14; Heb 10:1-10

Heb 9:7-14

- 7 But only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance.
- 8 The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still standing.
- 9 This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper.
- 10 They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings-- external regulations applying until the time of the new order.
- 11 When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation.
- 12 He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption.
- 13 The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean.
- 14 How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! (NIV)

Heb 10:1-10

- 1 The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming-- not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship.
- 2 If it could, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins.
- 3 But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins,
- 4 because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.
- 5 Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said: "Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me;
- 6 with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased.
- 7 Then I said, 'Here I am-- it is written about me in the scroll-- I have come to do your will, O God.'"
- 8 First he said, "Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them" (although the law required them to be made).
- 9 Then he said, "Here I am, I have come to do your will." He sets aside the first to establish the second.
- 10 And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ

once for all. (NIV)

*These two sacrifices, the sin and guilt offering, are sacrifices **for** communion with God. They make the way for worship offerings to take place. Though all the offerings are typical of Jesus, these two are the most closely associated with him. The next three are offerings made **in** communion with God. It is because he was all and gave his all that we can give anything to God at all.*

The Fellowship Offering- (Peace offering)

Lev 3:1-17; Lev 7:11-34

1. Sin was transferred onto the animal by the laying on of hands. (Lev. 3:2,8,13)
2. All the fat, kidneys, and liver were burned. (Lev. 3:3-5,9-11,14-16)
3. The eating of blood and/or fat is prohibited. (Lev. 3:17)
4. It could be a thank offering (Lev. 7:12) in which case, several rules applied:
 - a) It was done with a grain offering. (Lev. 7:13-14)
 - b) It had to be eaten on the day offered. (Lev. 7:15)
 - c) The remainder had to be burned. (Implied)
5. It could be a vow or a freewill offering (Lev. 7:16) in which case, several rules applied:
 - a) It had to be eaten on the day it was offered. (Lev. 7:16)
 - b) The remainder could be eaten on the second day. (Lev. 7:16)
 - c) Anything left by the third day had to be burned (Lev. 7:17).
 - d) If any of it was eaten on the third day, the sacrifice didn't count (Lev. 7:18; See Phil. 4:15-18).
6. The breast of the offering became a wave offering and belonged to Aaron and his sons.
7. It was an aroma pleasing to the Lord.

NT Fellowship Offerings-

2 Cor 9:7-15; Phil 4:13-20; Heb 13:16; 1 Cor 10:18-21

2 Cor 9:7-15

- 7 Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.
- 8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.
- 9 As it is written: "He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures forever."
- 10 Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.
- 11 You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.
- 12 This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.
- 13 Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else.

14 And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you.

15 Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift! (NIV)

Phil 4:18-20

18 I have received full payment and even more; I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.

19 And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

20 To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen. (NIV)

Heb 13:16 (NIV)

And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

1 Cor 10:16-18 (NIV)

16 Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?

17 Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.

18 Consider the people of Israel: Do not those who eat the sacrifices participate in the altar?

The sacrifices of giving (food, clothing, sustenance) make fellowship in the body of Christ possible.

The Grain Offering-

Lev 2:1-16; Lev 6:14-23

- ❑ Offering of fine flour, oil, and incense or baked goods. (Lev. 2:1,4)
- ❑ A portion was burned as a memorial. (Lev. 2:2,9,16; 6:15)
- ❑ The remainder belonged to Aaron and his sons. (Lev. 2:3,10)
- ❑ It could not be made with yeast or honey. (Lev. 2:11; 6:17)
- ❑ It always had to be seasoned with salt. (Lev. 2:13)
- ❑ If a priest was offering it for himself, the whole was burned. (Lev. 6:23)
- ❑ It included the drink offering. (See Ex. 29:38-41; Phil. 2:17; Joel 1:13)
- ❑ It was an aroma pleasing to the Lord.

Joel 2:4, 19, 24-25, 28-32

4 Who knows? He may turn and have pity and leave behind a blessing-- grain offerings and drink offerings for the LORD your God.

19 The LORD will reply to them: I am sending you grain, new wine and oil, enough to satisfy you fully; never again will I make you an object of scorn to the nations.

24 The threshing floors will be filled with grain; the vats will overflow with new wine and oil.

25 I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten-- the great locust and the young locust, the other locusts and the locust swarm-- my great army that I sent among you.

28 'And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions.

29 Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.

30 I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, *blood and fire and billows of smoke*.
31 The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.
32 And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the LORD has said, among the survivors whom the LORD calls. (NIV)

Verse 30 speaks of wonders in the heavens and on the earth. The word for wonders (mopet) is also translated as "sign" or "symbol", as in a token of a future event (I Kings 13:3; Zech. 3:8). The immediate sign or wonder is blood and fire and billows of smoke, which refers to the brazen altar. The grain and drink offering pointed to the outpouring of the holy spirit. The pouring out is the wine provided by God (vs.14) and the prophecies, dreams, and visions are the grain (bread) provided by him as a blessing (vs.14).

NT Grain Offerings-

Phil 2:14-18; Heb 13:15

Heb 13:15

Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise-- the fruit of lips that confess his name. (NIV)

Phil 2:17-18

17 But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you.

18 So you too should be glad and rejoice with me. (NIV)

The Burnt Offering-

Lev 1:1-17; Lev 6:8-13; Lev 8:18-21; Lev 16:24

- ❑ Sin was transferred on the animal by the laying on of hands. (Lev. 1:4; 8:18)
- ❑ Person offering it had to slaughter it. (Lev. 1:5,11)
- ❑ All of it was burned. (Lev. 1:9,13)
- ❑ It was an aroma pleasing to the Lord. (See: John 12:3-7; Eph. 5:2; 2 Cor. 2:14-17)

Jesus, the Burnt Sacrifice-

Eph 5:2

and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. (NIV)

Our Burnt Sacrifices-

Rom 12:1-2; 1 Cor 13:3

Rom 12:1-2

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.

2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. (KJV)

*To "present your bodies a living sacrifice" speaks of the practice of facing the sacrificial animal toward the tabernacle before slaying (Lev. 4:4). We are to face the Lord and offer up our **bodies** as a sacrifice to him.*

Jesus Christ was sacrifice, the offerer, and officiating priest. He fulfilled all the responsibilities with regard to the sacrifices on both sides of the ledger.

Responsibilities of the sacrificer:

- 1) laying on of hands - "He has become sin for us" (2 Cor. 5:21)
- 2) slaying - "Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8).
- 3) skinning - No longer know him after the flesh (2 Cor. 5:16).
The veil was rent, which was his flesh (Heb. 10:20).
Healed by his stripes (he was skinned)(1 Pet. 2:24).
New wine in new skins (Matt. 9:17)
- 4) cutting up - Rightly dividing the word of truth (2 Tim 2:15)
(Lev. 1:6).
- 5) washing the inwards - washing and regeneration via Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5).
washing water by the Word (Eph. 5:26).

Responsibilities of the priests:

- 1) catching up the blood - Entered with his own blood (Heb. 9:12).
- 2) sprinkling the blood - Sprinkled his own blood (Heb. 9:13-14)
- 3) lighting the altar fire (Lev. 9:24)- Baptism of fire (Acts 2:1-4, 32-33; Matt. 3:11).
- 4) laying it on the wood - Carried his cross (John 19:17). We must take up our cross and follow him (Mt. 16:24).
- 5) bringing up the pieces - "A body thou hast prepared for me," (Heb. 10:5).
Sanctified by the offering of his body (Heb. 10:10).

Quotation from *The Tabernacle of Moses* by Kevin Connor, p. 91-

"There was nothing beautiful about the slaughter of animals. There was nothing photogenic about the body and blood of the slain victims. It was probably a smelly, ugly, repulsive sight. In fact, it was not meant to be pretty. It was a place of judgment. It was a scene of fire, smoke, and the shedding of blood."

The account of Asa-

2 Chr 15:1-7

1 The Spirit of God came upon Azariah son of Oded.

2 He went out to meet Asa and said to him, "Listen to me, Asa and all Judah and Benjamin. The LORD is with you when you are with him. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will forsake you.

3 For a long time Israel was without the true God, without a priest to teach and without the law.

4 But in their distress they turned to the LORD, the God of Israel, and sought him, and he was

found by them.

5 In those days it was not safe to travel about, for all the inhabitants of the lands were in great turmoil.

6 One nation was being crushed by another and one city by another, because God was troubling them with every kind of distress.

7 But as for you, be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded." (NIV)

The Lord speaks to Asa by a prophet and Asa responds. His response and Judah's response with him tell us much about the altar (this one in the Temple) and what it (the cross) means to us.

2 Chr 15:8

When Asa heard these words and the prophecy of Azariah son of Oded the prophet, he took courage. He removed the detestable idols from the whole land of Judah and Benjamin and from the towns he had captured in the hills of Ephraim. He repaired the altar of the LORD that was in front of the portico of the LORD's temple. (NIV)

It is a place of CLEANSING (removed idols) and CONVERSION (repaired altar).

2 Chr 15:9-10

9 Then he assembled all Judah and Benjamin and the people from Ephraim, Manasseh and Simeon who had settled among them, for large numbers had come over to him from Israel when they saw that the LORD his God was with him.

10 They assembled at Jerusalem in the third month of the fifteenth year of Asa's reign. (NIV)

It is a place of CONGREGATION.

2 Chr 15:11

At that time they sacrificed to the LORD seven hundred head of cattle and seven thousand sheep and goats from the plunder they had brought back. (NIV)

It is a place of CONSECRATION (the sacrifices) and COMMEMORATION (the plunder).

2 Chr 15:12-15

12 They entered into a covenant to seek the LORD, the God of their fathers, with all their heart and soul.

13 All who would not seek the LORD, the God of Israel, were to be put to death, whether small or great, man or woman.

14 They took an oath to the LORD with loud acclamation, with shouting and with trumpets and horns.

15 All Judah rejoiced about the oath because they had sworn it wholeheartedly. They sought God eagerly, and he was found by them. So the LORD gave them rest on every side. (NIV)

Finally, it was (and is) a place of COVENANT and CONSECRATION.

Isa 52:13-15

13 See, my servant will act wisely; he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted.

14 Just as there were many who were appalled at him-- his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness--
15 so will he sprinkle many nations, and kings will shut their mouths because of him. For what they were not told, they will see, and what they have not heard, they will understand. (NIV)