

Title: **CHRIST OUR ALTAR**

Text: Exodus 27:1-8

Subject: *Christ Typified by the Altar of Brass*

Date: Tuesday Evening — February 24, 2008

Tape : Exodus #93

Readings: *Larry Criss and David Burge*

Introduction:

As the chosen sinner came to worship God in the days of Moses, he would approach the Tabernacle in the Wilderness. It was not much to look at from the outside. It was a tent, covered with badgers' skins, surrounded by an enclosed court. There was only one way of access into the Tabernacle, one gate, or door, really just a curtain. But that was the only way the worshipper could come to God. He must come through that one entrance.

As he pulled back the curtain and passed through the door, the first thing he saw was a huge bronze altar — 7 1/2 feet wide, 7 1/2 feet long, and 4 1/2 feet high. It had four large horns, one on each corner. This great brazen altar was the first thing to meet the eye, as the sinner came to worship God. Let's read about it (Exodus 27:1-8; 29:36-37).

(Exodus 27:1-8) “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. (2) 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. (3) And thou shalt make his pans to receive his ashes, and his shovels, and his basins, and his fleshhooks, and his firepans: all the vessels thereof thou shalt make *of* brass. (4) And thou shalt make for it a grate of network *of* brass; and upon the net shalt thou make four brazen rings in the four corners thereof. (5) And thou shalt put it under the compass of the altar beneath, that the net may be even to the midst of the altar. (6) And thou shalt make staves for the altar, staves *of* shittim wood, and overlay them with brass. (7) And the staves shall be put into the rings, and the staves shall be upon the two sides of the altar, to bear it. (8) Hollow with boards shalt thou make it: as it was showed thee in the mount, so shall they make *it*.”

(Exodus 29:36-37) “And thou shalt offer every day a bullock *for* a sin offering for atonement: and thou shalt cleanse the altar, when

CHRIST OUR ALTAR

thou hast made an atonement for it, and thou shalt anoint it, to sanctify it. (37) Seven days thou shalt make an atonement for the altar, and sanctify it; and it shall be an altar most holy: whatsoever toucheth the altar shall be holy.”

The brazen altar was the place where the blood was shed and the victim consumed in the fire. It was the place that gave meaning to everything else connected with the Tabernacle. Without this brazen altar nothing was accomplished. This brazen altar typified **CHRIST OUR ALTAR** (Hebrews 13:10).

As the brazen altar was the very first thing the ancient worshipper saw, as he approached the thrice holy God upon his throne, so Christ crucified is the first thing the sinner sees as he comes to God. The very first thing the Spirit of God teaches the heaven-born soul is accomplished redemption by the sacrifice and blood-atonement of the lord Jesus Christ.

The brazen altar first arrested the eyes of any who drew near to God. Every eye must first behold the altar. Every step must first approach this hallowed structure. There is no coming to God any other way. So it is that all heaven-taught souls are made to acknowledge Christ Jesus as the Altar of the Church. — *“We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle”* (Hebrews 13:10).

Christ (his obedience, his blood, his sacrifice, his atonement) is first and foremost in the knowledge and worship of God. — Let him be first and foremost the affection of our hearts. Let him be first and foremost in all our doctrine, in all our preaching, in all our hymns of worship, in all our prayers, in all our praise!

That which is represented in the brazen altar is the sacrifice of Christ by which sinners are brought to God. This is the heart of the gospel; and this is the heart of all gospel preaching. The Lamb of God, our Lord Jesus Christ died in our place, as our Sacrifice. As the bloody offerings were brought to the altar, each was consumed by the fire on the altar. But Christ is the Sacrifice that consumed the fire of God’s holy wrath and justice. — All the beauty of religion is vain without the blood of this altar.

ALTAR OF SACRIFICE

CHRIST OUR ALTAR

This brazen altar, called the altar of burnt offering in Exodus 40:29. It was place of sacrifice. It stood in the court between the gate of the court and the Tabernacle itself. The burnt offering, remember, was a sweet savor offering to the Lord (Leviticus 1:9).

(Leviticus 1:1-9) “And the LORD called unto Moses, and spake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying, (2) Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man of you bring an offering unto the LORD, ye shall bring your offering of the cattle, *even* of the herd, and of the flock. (3) If his offering *be* a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD. (4) And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him. (5) And he shall kill the bullock before the LORD: and the priests, Aaron’s sons, shall bring the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar that *is by* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. (6) And he shall flay the burnt offering, and cut it into his pieces. (7) And the sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire upon the altar, and lay the wood in order upon the fire: (8) And the priests, Aaron’s sons, shall lay the parts, the head, and the fat, in order upon the wood that *is* on the fire which *is* upon the altar: (9) But his inwards and his legs shall he wash in water: and the priest shall burn all on the altar, *to be* a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD.”

Our Lord Jesus died upon the cursed tree as our sin-offering; and his death is declared to be a “*sweet savor offering*” to God (Ephesians 5:2).

The brazen altar was made by the hands of men; but it was made according to the pattern and purpose of God. So, by the hands of men our Lord was led outside Jerusalem and nailed to the cursed tree; but he died there according to the eternal decree and unalterable purpose of the triune God (Acts 2:23).

(Acts 2:22-24) “Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: (23) Him, being delivered by the determinate

CHRIST OUR ALTAR

counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: (24) Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.”

Christ submitted to men that he might offer himself a burnt offering and sacrifice to God and a sin-offering for chosen sinners (Hebrews 9:26-28).

(Hebrews 9:26-28) “For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. (27) And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: (28) So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.”

(Hebrews 9:12) “Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*.”

That is redemption! The Lord Jesus Christ put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

The brazen altar was not a type, or emblem, or picture of the cross! The cross is not our altar! We glory in the gospel doctrine of the cross, Christ crucified, but not in the physical cross, or shape of the cross. The cross is not our altar. **Christ is our Altar.** The brazen alter typified our crucified Savior, but not the cross on which he died!

The altar was the place of sacrifice. Every animal sacrificed to God was laid out on this huge altar. How large it looked, with a little turtle-dove laying on it. Yet, how small it must have looked with a year old calf laying on it. But on what Altar can the Christ of God place himself? What altar can sustain the weight of this sacrifice? The promised God-man came to die. — What arms might be able to bear him up?

All things below are worse than worthless for such glorious use. If structure could be raised, in which each stone were brighter than a million suns, it would be black beside him. Creation has nothing that can hold him! When Jehovah’s fellow came to die, none could possibly sustain him but himself!

CHRIST OUR ALTAR

We cannot imagine the burdens pressed him down. The least transgression of God's righteous law is load beyond all thought. Its weight sinks the sinner deeper and deeper through unending ages in the unfathomable gulfs of hell!

But our Lord Jesus Christ bore all the weight of the countless sins of countless multitudes, when he was made sin for us. What could support him when the avenging fire of infinite justice fell, and he cried, "*My God, my God, Why hast thou forsaken me?*" No angel could uphold the weight of such a sacrifice. The help of multiplied worlds would crumble into dust. Earth could supply no prop or pillar to sustain him. Where is the altar to hold this sacrifice? — Christ himself is the Altar! Christ alone could uphold himself, with all the load and weight of our sin and our guilt, with all the load and weight of God's furious anger! Christ's only Altar is himself (Isaiah 63:3-5).

(Isaiah 63:3-5) "I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people *there was* none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. (4) For the day of vengeance *is* in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. (5) And I looked, and *there was* none to help; and I wondered that *there was* none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me."

Pause now, my ransomed soul! Behold God's Altar and God's Offering.

- Christ stood, the sacrificing, fire-applying Priest.
- Christ came, the fire burned Lamb.
- Christ bore all, the fire-sustaining Altar.
- Christ died, the fire-consuming Sacrifice!

Yes, blessed be his name, our Lord Jesus Christ is the sacrifice that consumed the fire on the altar. This sacrifice satisfied forever the wrath and fury and justice of the holy Lord God! All was sufficient, for all was divine. There was enough in all, for God was in all. The wrath broke forth. The fury was outpoured. Vengeance demanded her due. The law exacted its curse. But this one great burnt-offering was fully adequate and satisfactory!

- Every divine attribute was magnified.
- Every sin of the whole family of God was expiated.

CHRIST OUR ALTAR

- Christ bore the whole, because he is the Altar of God's making, who is himself God!
- He is the Priest who made the sacrifice, the Sacrifice offered, and the Altar that sustained the Sacrifice

There is no sweeter thought on earth, there is no louder song in heaven, than praise to the Priest who offered, to the Lamb who suffered, to the Altar who sustained.

THE COMPONENTS OF THE ALTAR

Look at the specified components of this great brazen altar, and behold the magnificence of Christ our Altar.

- The shittim wood speaks of our Lord's humanity.
- The brass represents his deity.

The frame was made of choice wood combined overlaid with and encased in brass. The wood alone could not suffice. The flames would have consumed it. An altar of unmingled brass would be too heavy to carry through the wilderness. The union of wood and brass made an altar fit for its destined purpose (John 1:14).

The altar was square, solid and strong, able to bear every weight put upon it. It stands the massive symbol of solidity. It cannot be overthrown. Faith sees this and rejoices! Christ our Altar is stronghold. He is our Rock and our Salvation.

The altar had four horns. The horn represented power. Christ our Altar and our Sacrifice is omnipotent, prevailing, and effectual. Adonijah and Job fled to the altar and took hold of its horns, hoping to escape the fury of King Solomon; but they were slain holding the horns of that physical altar. Now hear me. — If you flee to a physical altar, take refuge in a physical altar, and take hold of the horns of any physical altar, you will not escape the fury of God's wrath. But, any sinner who take hold of the horn's of this Altar shall live forever! — Behold, the efficacy of Christ's Sacrifice.

- For Satisfaction!
- For Forgiveness!
- For Justification!
- For Victory! — The Unicorn (rhinoceros) pushes with power that none can resist! — *“Canst thou bind the unicorn?”*

CHRIST OUR ALTAR

These four horns, one on each corner, represented the fact that Christ's one great sacrifice for sin reaches to the four corners of the earth.

- See the live coals caught on the grate! — (Isaiah 6)
- Take the Fleshhook and grab the Sacrifice, you priests of God!

EVERY SACRIFICE

Every sacrifice was offered to God upon this one altar. No Israelite could get ceremonial absolution for his sins, or a blessing from the priest, except he come to this altar with a sacrifice. He claimed the victim laid on the altar as his substitute, laying his hands upon its head, and was accepted. He was pronounced ceremonially clean. Everything and everyone brought to the altar was sanctified and accepted by the altar.

The Altar's main design was to receive burnt-offerings. At early morn, throughout the day, at evening's close, the flames were bright, the spire of smoke ascended. So it is today!

(Exodus 29:36-37) “And thou shalt offer every day a bullock *for* a sin offering for atonement: and thou shalt cleanse the altar, when thou hast made an atonement for it, and thou shalt anoint it, to sanctify it. (37) Seven days thou shalt make an atonement for the altar, and sanctify it; and it shall be an altar most holy: whatsoever toucheth the altar shall be holy.”

What wondrous, blessed words are those! — “*Whatsoever toucheth the altar shall be holy!*”

- Me!
- My prayers!
- My praise!
- My service!
- My gifts!
- My insignificant cup of cold water!

(Hebrews 13:10-15) “We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. (11) For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. (12) Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. (13) Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp,

CHRIST OUR ALTAR

bearing his reproach. (14) For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. (15) By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of *our* lips giving thanks to his name.”

(1 Peter 2:4-5) “To whom coming, *as unto* a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, *and* precious, (5) Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”

ONE ALTAR

There is but one Altar by which sinners can come to God; and that is the Altar of God’s own making, the Lord Jesus Christ (Exodus 20:24-26).

(Exodus 20:24-26) “An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen: in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee. (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. (26) Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon.”

Yet, in every age **Satan erects many counterfeit altars.** He decks them with gaudy disguises. He slopes them with a flowery path into his bewitching snare. He smooths with skillful hand the slippery descent.

- He sits forth the altar of **man’s imagined worth.** He causes a man to dream that dung dug from his own bowls and shaped by his own foul hands, and beautified by the tools of his own heart’s sewer is an altar by which he can come to God!
- He raises the altar of man’s mighty **will.**
- He erects the gradually **ascending altar of man’s holiness.**
- He always puts man upon **an altar that exposes** his nakedness!
- Christ is the only Altar of God’s making; and coming to God by this Altar **our nakedness is always completely covered!**

Christ must be all, or nothing! He must do all the work, have all the merit, and possess all the glory. **Every other altar stands on ruin’s ground and**

CHRIST OUR ALTAR

will carry you to hell. We must come to Christ the Altar, if we would come to God; but this is an Altar to which no man will come until the Sacrifice on the Altar has been brought to him (Isaiah 6:1-7). Isaiah experienced this! He saw the awful distance between his soul and God, and he cried, “*Woe is me.*” His neighbor’s sins troubled him more than his own in chapter five. He pronounced six woes upon others; but when he saw the holiness of the Holy One, his seventh woe was for himself. He passed judgement on himself and took his place in the dust. Then he saw the altar and its provision.

(Isaiah 6:1-7) “In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. (2) Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. (3) And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, *is* the LORD of hosts: the whole earth *is* full of his glory. (4) And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. (5) Then said I, *Woe is me!* for I am undone; because I *am* a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. (6) Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, *which* he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: (7) And he laid *it* upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.”

Oh, may God bring you to himself by Christ our Altar, our Sacrifice, our Priest, our All in All!

Amen.