

KNOWING JESUS THROUGH THE STUDY OF THE TABERNACLE

Part 3 – The Brazen Altar (Outer court)

The brazen, or bronze altar was a key element of the tabernacle in the wilderness, a place where the ancient Israelites sacrificed animals to atone for their sins. Altars had long been used by the patriarchs, including Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The altars were made of earth or stacked stones. After God rescued the Jews from slavery, he commanded Moses to build the tabernacle, a portable place where God would live among his people.

The various animal sacrifices of the Old Testament were offered on this altar. Although those sacrifices could never take away sin (Hebrews 10:11-12), they pictured the future Great Sacrifice who would take away sin forever. As John the Baptist said about the Lord Jesus, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).

Here is how God told Moses to make this altar:

Exodus 27:1-8 ; 38: 1-7

Exodus 27:1-8 "You shall make the altar of acacia wood, five cubits long and five cubits broad. The altar shall be square, and its height shall be three cubits. 2 And you shall make horns for it on its four corners; its horns shall be of one piece with it, and you shall overlay it with bronze. 3 You shall make pots for it to receive its ashes, and shovels and basins and forks and fire pans. You shall make all its utensils of bronze. 4 You shall also make for it a grating, a network of bronze, and on the net you shall make four bronze rings at its four corners. 5 And you shall set it under the ledge of the altar so that the net extends halfway down the altar. 6 And you shall make poles for the altar, poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with bronze. 7 And the poles shall be put through the rings, so that the poles are on the two sides of the altar when it is carried. 8 You shall make it hollow, with boards. As it has been shown you on the mountain, so shall it be made.

Here's the execution of God's plan:

Exo 38:1-7 He (Bezalel) made the altar of burnt offering of acacia wood. Five cubits was its length, and five cubits its breadth. It was square, and three cubits was its height. 2 He made horns for it on its four corners. Its horns were of one piece with it, and he overlaid it with bronze. 3 And he made all the utensils of the altar, the pots, the shovels, the basins, the forks, and the fire pans. He made all its utensils of bronze. 4 And he made for the altar a grating, a network of bronze, under its ledge, extending halfway down. 5 He cast four rings on the four corners of the bronze grating as holders for the poles. 6 He made the poles of

acacia wood and overlaid them with bronze. 7 And he put the poles through the rings on the sides of the altar to carry it with them. He made it hollow, with boards.

Dimensions: 7.5 ft long, 7.5 ft wide, 4.5 ft high (5 cubits x 5 cubits x 3 cubits high)

The Brazen altar was the first and the largest instrument found in the Tabernacle as a person entered the gate. It was located inside the courtyard.

The Brazen altar was square in shape (foursquare). Its length and breadth were exactly the same as the height of the white linen fence around the court 5 cubits (7 1/2 feet). Its height was 3 cubits (4 1/2 feet) and it was made of acacia wood overlaid with bronze with horns at each corner. All the utensils of the altar- the pots, the shovels, the basins, the forks, and the fire pans were made out of bronze.



Specifications & parts of the altar:

- Size (mentioned above)
- Horns for it on its four corners; its horns shall be of one piece with it, and you shall overlay it with bronze.
- ***Utensils*** - pots for it to receive its ashes, and shovels and basins and forks and fire pans. You shall make all its utensils of bronze.

The word **basins** were used to hold the blood of the animals sacrificed at the altar of burnt offerings.

Shovels : used to remove burning coals from the outer altar, where the fire was constantly burning. The priest used the shovel to bring these coals into the sanctuary to the Golden Altar, where the incense was offered.

Pots for it to receive its ashes. They were used for carrying the ashes from the altar to a prescribed place outside the camp.

The fire pans or censers which carries coals of fire from the altar of burnt-offerings. When incense was burned before God in the Holy Place the fire was removed from the Brazen Censer and placed in those made of gold.

The word "**fleshhooks**" were three-pronged instruments which were hooked at the ends. They were used by the priests to keep the sacrifice in place on the altar. As the fire did its work, the sacrifice fell apart and tended to move away from the fire. The fleshhooks were used to catch hold of the carcass and bring it back to the center of the altar and the heat of the fire.

- **Grating** - You shall also make for it a grating, a network of bronze, and on the net you shall make four bronze rings at its four corners. And you shall set it under the ledge of the altar so that the net extends halfway down the altar.
The sides are connected by a grate that is placed on the top. It holds the sides together and the grate keeps the sacrificial animals from coming into direct contact with the fire below. They place the coal on top of the grate and then the specified parts of the animals according to each sacrifice. The ashes would fall through the grating.
- **Poles/ staves**: And you shall make poles for the altar, poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with bronze. And the poles shall be put through the rings, so that they are on the two sides of the altar when it is carried.
(Staves to lift up easily for transport)
- You shall make it hollow, with boards.

Instructions given regarding Brazen altar:

- Made all out of bronze
- Placement: Place the altar of burnt offering in front of the Tabernacle entrance. Exodus 40: 6

- The altar was elevated: Normally altars are pictured to be placed on the ground but this could not be correct for God said: "And Aaron lifted up his hand toward the people, and blessed them, and came down from offering of the sin offering, and the burnt offering, and peace offerings" (Lev. 9:22). However, it was to be a sloping ascend for: "Neither shall thou go up by steps unto mine altar" (Ex. 20:26).
- Instructions for Dedication/ ordination of Aaron & his sons. It was implemented in Leviticus 8 & 9; Ordination ceremony that lasted 7 days.
- Instructions for Consecration of the brazen altar in Exodus 29:35-37
It was implemented; Consecration of the altar including all tabernacle furnishings. They were anointed and set apart with the anointing oil in Exodus 40 :10; Leviticus 8:11
The Brazen altar was consecrated after the sprinkling of anointing oil and purified it by anointing its four horns with the blood of a bullock offered as a sin-offering, "and poured the blood at the bottom of the altar and sanctified it, to make reconciliation upon it" (Lev 8:14–15).
- Fire was to be lit from heaven directly on the Brazen altar. No other source of fire was acceptable to God. When the sons of Aaron attempted to put a foreign fire, they were slain by God (Numbers 3:4). Uzziah turned leprous when he sinned against the Lord by entering the sanctuary of the Lord's temple and personally burning incense on the altar of incense (2 Chronicles 26: 16-21) . Korah and his 250 men swallowed up alive by earth, when they put incense and lit their own fire on incense burners (Numbers 16).

On the eighth day, after offering the required sacrifices just as the Lord commanded, we see in ***Lev 9:24 and the glory of the Lord appeared to all the people. 24 And fire came out from before the Lord and consumed the burnt offering and the pieces of fat on the altar, and when all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces.***

The Jews affirm that this fire burned continuously through their sojourning years in the wilderness. It was again sent down during the dedication of the new temple by Solomon (2 Chronicles 7:1)

- Regular sacrifice to be made on the altar (Each day offer two lambs that are a year old – one in the morning, one in the evening) To be made from generation to generation. There I will meet with the people of Israel there. I will consecrate the tabernacle and the altar, Aaron & His sons. I will dwell among the people of Israel, and I will be their God. (Exo 29:42-46).

- The fire on the altar must be kept burning all the time, it must never go out. Lev 6:9,12
The coals from the brazen altar were carried to the altar of incense. It also provided fire for the burning of incense (Lev.16:12).
- Must always wash their hands and feet. ***Exodus 30:20 They must wash with water whenever they go into the Tabernacle to appear before the Lord and when they approach the altar to burn up their special gifts to the Lord—or they will die! 21 They must always wash their hands and feet, or they will die.***
- Everything the altar touched was sanctified (Ex 29:37)
- Transportation: The Kohathites were the Levites who were responsible for moving and setting up the altar. When it was time for the Israelites to move, they removed the ashes from the altar, and spread a purple cloth over it, placed all of the instruments and vessels used in the sacrifices on it, covered it with a blanket of badger skin, and put the carrying poles in place (Numbers 4:13–14).

What were the Sacrifices: (Leviticus 1-7)

The tabernacle offerings were a grisly reminder that sin has terrible consequences, and the only remedy for it is the shedding of blood.

Sacrifices (Hebrew Korban means offering)- to draw close to, personal connection, intimacy, heartfelt relationship, desire to become close to .

1. Burnt Offering : Leviticus 1; 6:8-13
2. Grain Offering / Meal offering Leviticus 2; 6:14-23
3. Peace offering Leviticus 3; 7:11-36
4. Sin offering Leviticus 4:1- 5:13 ; 6:24 -30; 12:6-8
5. Guilt / trespass offering Leviticus 5: 14 – 6:7; 7:1-6; 14:12-18

All these sacrifices were a representation of Jesus and fulfilled in Jesus .

General rules for these sacrifices:

1. Bring cattle out of your herd/ flocks not someone else's. Lev 1:2, 2 Samuel 24:24
But the king replied to Araunah, "No, I insist on buying it, for I will not present burnt offerings to the Lord my God that have cost me nothing." So David paid him fifty pieces of silver for the threshing floor and the oxen. David built an altar there to the

Lord and sacrificed burnt offerings and peace offerings. And the Lord answered his prayer for the land, and the plague on Israel was stopped.

There is a price attached to your sacrifice, cost you something , pain behind your sacrifice.

2. Attitude of the person offering is important: **Genesis 4** -sacrifice offered by Abel Cain . God was pleased in Abel and in his sacrifice. Abel bought a more acceptable offering than Cain. Evidence that he was a righteous man. Heb 11:4 ; **1 Sam 15:22** ***What is more pleasing to the Lord: your burnt offerings and sacrifices or your obedience to his voice? Listen! Obedience is better than sacrifice, and submission is better than offering the fat of rams.***

Leviticus 19:5 ***When you sacrifice a peace offering to the Lord, offer it properly so you will be accepted by God.***

Lev 22:4-10 ***cannot approach sacrifices with uncleanness.***

Malachi 1:7-10 ***You have shown contempt (showing no respect) by offering defiled sacrifices on my altar.***

That is why it is important to examine our hearts well before we partake of the Lord's table which represents the greatest sacrifice ever made in history. If earthly sacrifices had so many rules, how much more reverence we need to have when we partake of the Lord's table.

3. **Offerings required the highest quality offering to be sacrificed:** In the case of the whole burnt offering, the animal, whether bull, goat, sheep, or bird (turtledove or pigeon), had to be young, male (except for birds), and without blemish. The grain to be offered had to be "fine."
4. Unblemished / without defect: ***Malachi 1:7-10*** ***When you give blind animals as sacrifices, isn't that wrong? And isn't it wrong to offer animals that are crippled and diseased? Try giving gifts like that to your governor and see how pleased he is!" says the Lord of Heaven's Armies. How I wish one of you would shut the Temple doors so that these worthless sacrifices could not be offered! I am not pleased with you," says the Lord of Heaven's Armies, "and I will not accept your offerings.***
5. Salt should be used for the sacrifices – ***Season all your grain offerings with salt to remind you of God's eternal covenant. Never forget to add salt to your grain offerings.***
Lev 2:13

Eze 43:24 You are to present them to the Lord, and the priests are to sprinkle salt on them and offer them as a burnt offering to the Lord.

Mark 9:49 For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.

No yeast(leaven) or honey

Oil, frankincense, salt – key ingredients that were allowed

Mark 9:50 Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves and have peace one with another.

Salt was THE SYMBOL OF THE COVENANT, purification, preservation .

6. Priests sacrifices for himself before going to the altar. Leviticus 16
Hebrews 7:26-28 He is the kind of high priest we need because he is holy and blameless, unstained by sin. He has been set apart from sinners and has been given the highest place of honor in heaven. 27 Unlike those other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices every day. They did this for their own sins first and then for the sins of the people. But Jesus did this once for all when he offered himself as the sacrifice for the people's sins. 28 The law appointed high priests who were limited by human weakness. But after the law was given, God appointed his Son with an oath, and his Son has been made the perfect High Priest forever.

Significance of The Brazen altar: The entire sacrifice upon the brazen altar — the whole event from begin-ning to end — is a picture of Christ.

Many altars in Bible – altars built by Noah, Jacob, Isaac, Elijah, Moses, Abraham, Joshua. The word “altar” in Hebrew is ‘Mizbeah’ means **place sacrifice / slaughter place/ high/ lifted up.**

1. Reminder of man's sinfulness and his need for a blood sacrifice:

- a. The first thing that one saw upon coming through the gate was the brazen altar, which served as a reminder of man's sinfulness and his need for a blood sacrifice in order to be in fellowship with God. Through the sin of Adam & Eve, man lost fellowship with the Holy God. And God found the only way to restore fellowship was through a shedding of blood through a sacrifice.

The position of the altar was meant to teach all who entered the taber-nacle that man's first need is to have his sins and impurities purged away. Until that is done one cannot

presume to worship God or enter into His presence. Leviticus makes very clear that the sinner himself had to come with the sin-offering. No servant, no friend, no parent, no child could go in the sinner's place. No matter who you were; king, prophet, priest, or the common person; the sinner had to come. The transaction that was to take place on the altar was between the sinner and the holy God.

- b. Need for sacrifice/ shedding of blood : The altar was a place of substitutionary sacrifice. It was a place of death that speaks of justification. The altar demonstrates that the only way a person can meet with God is on the basis of substitutionary atonement. On the basis of BLOOD. No one, not even the High Priest, could approach the Lord except on the basis of innocent shed blood.

All the sacrifices of the people of Israel were brought to the bronze altar. The Bible tells us that without the shedding of blood there can be no remission of sin. In Leviticus 4, different sin offerings were commanded to be offered depending on who the offender was — the priest, the congregation, a leader, or the common person.

***“...without the shedding of blood there is no remission (forgiveness of sins)”
Hebrews 9:22***

“For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.” Leviticus 17:11

Each was to bring an animal without blemish for sacrifice — a bull, a goat, or a lamb. Whether the sin was intentional or unintentional, the offender had to bring the sin offering to the bronze altar. The one bringing the sacrifice (bull / goat/ lamb) with no defects) would have to press his hand hard upon the sacrifice as it was being slaughtered. (Lev 4: 4, 15, 24,29). The priest would take the blood of the sacrifice and put it with his finger on the horns of the altar.

Isaiah 53:6: "The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

Hebrews 7:26 For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens.

1 Peter 1:19 But with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

2 Cor 5:21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

1 Peter 2:21-24 For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

1 John 3:5 You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin.

Ephesians 5: 2 And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

The sin of the sinner being transferred to the animal upon the altar. Even as the sin of the guilty one was transferred to the innocent lamb, the blamelessness of that spotless lamb was transferred to the repentant sinner.

Leviticus 16:21:24 –(Day of Atonement) And Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the iniquities of the people of Israel, and all their transgressions, all their sins. And he shall put them on the head of the goat and send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who is in readiness. 22 The goat shall bear all their iniquities on itself to a remote area, and he shall let the goat go free in the wilderness.

We read in the New Testament: "And they took Jesus and led Him away. And He, bearing His cross, went forward into the place called the place of the skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha" (John 19:16, 17). The author of Hebrews writes "Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered and died outside the city gate" (Hebrews 13:12).

2. Finished work of Christ – Once for all.

The animals sacrificed upon the altar were completely destroyed. There was nothing left of them. That is why the sacrifice had to be done again and again. They were not enough.

Hebrews 10: 1-10 The sacrifices under the Old system were repeated again and again, year after year, but they were never able to provide perfect cleansing for those who came to worship. 2 If they could have provided perfect cleansing, the sacrifices would

have stopped, for the worshipers would have been purified once for all time, and their feelings of guilt would have disappeared.

3 But instead, those sacrifices actually reminded them of their sins year after year. 4 For it is not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

First, Christ said, "You did not want animal sacrifices or sin offerings or burnt offerings or other offerings for sin, nor were you pleased with them" 9 Then he said, "Look, I have come to do your will." He cancels the first covenant in order to put the second into effect. 10 For God's will was for us to be made holy by the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all time.

We do not have to go to the bronze altar time and time again. We need but come to Christ. He is the sacrifice that the Holy God received and accepted as the complete sin offer-ing for our sin.

3. Reminder that we have access to the throne room of God through the blood of Jesus. There is power in the blood of Jesus.

Hebrews 10:19,20 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;

Through the blood of Jesus we are justified, forgiven, spared from wrath of God, debt is paid once for all, cleansed, healed, victory, protection, freedom from bondage of slavery and every curse broken. We can boldly come close to God. It makes us spiritually alive *(John 6:35 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.)*

4. Suffering on the cross:

Brazen altar made of Acacia wood . These woods were available in plenty in those regions, known for durability.

One researcher has noted, "This wood is resistant to decay because the tree deposits in the heartwood many waste substances which are preservatives and render the wood unpalatable to insects making the wood dense and difficult to be penetrated by water and other decay agents." The tabernacle was used for the next four hundred years, eventually finding a resting place within the temple in Jerusalem constructed during the reign of Solomon.

Made of wood but coated with bronze (can handle high heat). The wood that is sandwiched inside won't burn but can feel the extreme heat. Jesus took all our pain on Him, He was burning in the fire of wrath of God. Took the judgement on Him. Whatever we experience today, our freedom – is because of His redemption.

Isaiah 53:12 because he poured out his soul to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.

Isaiah 53:5 But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

1 Peter 3:18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit.

5. Brazen altar needs to have fire burning continuously. (No strange fire)

After hearing this instruction and the very next of chapter (Lev 10) where the fire was lit from heaven, Nadab & Abihu disobeyed the Lord by lighting strange fire. They were burned up and they died before the Lord.

- ✓ Moses Tabernacle – brazen altar- fire lit from heaven. ***Leviticus 9: 24 And fire came out from before the Lord and consumed the burnt offering and the pieces of fat on the altar, and when all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces.***
- ✓ Solomon's temple – ***2 Chr 7:1 When Solomon finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD filled the temple.***
- ✓ Upper room – fire from above ***When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. Acts 2:1-4***

6. Brazen Altar reminds us of complete surrender:

Daily sanctification that is taking place inside of us . Daily renewing & transforming of our mind. Daily surrender that needs to happen.

Rom 12:1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

all our time, our SELF, all our talents, all our physical powers, all our ambitions, all our affections, our will - all must be laid on the altar to be consumed entirely for Him.

Willingness to deny ourselves, take our cross and follow Him.

Galatians 5:24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Ephesians 4:22 that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit,

John 12:24 "Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds."

In burnt offering – sacrifice needs to be consumed completely. It is a special gift. A pleasing aroma to the Lord.

Binding sacrifice to the horns of the altar:

Horns can represent 4 camps of Israel, 4 directions, Symbol of safety until a fair trial takes place. It also represents strength (horn of my salvation). The horns of an animal, first and foremost, are a sign of strength. They are fundamentally weapons, used for fighting off predators, defending offspring. So horns represent strength, power, and victory in battle. ***You have exalted my horn like that of the wild ox; I have been anointed with fresh oil.(Ps 92:10) "My heart exults in the Lord; my horn is exalted in the Lord"(1 Sam 2:1)***

Psalm 118:27 The Lord is God, and He has given us light; Bind the festival sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar.

The animal to be sacrificed at times were bound to the horns of the altar. Why? There would a tendency the animal might run away, drift away from being sacrificed .

Tendency to shrink back, turn back and go. animal was bound by cords to the horns of the altar so it won't escape the knife, and burst away from the hands of the priest.

When you are tied, you have no option but to stay. Situations can make us to drift away from yielding completely to Him.

Jesus yielded up Himself as a spotless sacrifice, that, by the offering of Himself once upon the cross, He might forever put away our sins. Not by compulsion but willingly surrendered to do the Father's will. Now this sacrifice is said in the text to be "bound unto the horns of the altar."

Romans 12:1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

Can we ask the Holy Spirit to bind ourselves to the horns of the altar with the cords to get back on the altar? When we are bound, we are left with no other choice but to yield ourselves completely to him. Putting our life on the brazen altar.