

Laying it *All* on the Alter

Definition: Alter - A place to do sacrifices, a structure on which sacrifices are offered to a deity; In Old Testament, sacrifices were made for a variety of human spiritual needs, plus it was a place where one would spend time worshipping and giving thanks to God.

Scripture Reading:

Noah built an **altar** to the LORD, ... / And the Lord appeared to him the same night and said, I am the God of your father Abraham; do not fear, for I am with you. I will bless you and multiply your descendants for my servant Abraham's sake. So he built an **altar** there and called on the name of the Lord, and he pitched his tent there and there Isaac servants dug a well. / And Moses built an **altar** and called its name, "The LORD Is My Banner". / So, Gideon built an **altar** there to the Lord, and called it "The LORD Is Peace" ... / And David built there an **altar** to the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So, the Lord heeded the prayers for the land, and the plague was withdrawn from Israel. / Then Jeshua the son of Jozadak and his brethren and the priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and his brethren, arose and built the **altar** of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings on it, as it was written in the Law of Moses the man of God. / Then one of the seraphim flew to me (Isaiah), having in his hand a live coal which had been taken with the tongs from the **altar**. / Therefore, if you bring your gift to the **altar**, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the **altar**, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

Gen 8:20, 26:24-25; Ex 17:15; Judg 6:24; 2 Sam 24:25; Ezra 3:2; Isa 6:6; Matt 5:23-24

Discipleship Directive:

Altars were built in various places; after the Exodus, there was an altar in the Tabernacle and later, one in the Holy of Holy of the Temple. Priests would carry out the ministry of doing sacrifices on the altar for themselves and for the people of God. The altar is a holy place where one can meet privately with God, and even today it is good for the disciple to have a prayer closet, a place set aside where one can pour out their hearts before God. We can see from Scriptures how often the people of God, after they encountered God, took time to build an altar to worship God and to give Him thanks for what He had done. We know from Scriptures that Jesus shed blood, was also sprinkled upon the altar as a one-time offering for the remissions of our sins. We too need to come to the altar of God remembering that when Christ died, the veil in the temple was torn from the top to the bottom, showing that we now have access because of the blood of Christ, to the very presence, an altar of God. Christ commends us, to bring our offerings to the foot of the cross and to leave them there in His hands. We need to remember that the altar is a place for the disciple to pray and to open our hearts not only for himself but also for the people that one may have offended. The altar is a place where we need to "let go and let God" do His divine work in our hearts. A place where He can mold us into a vessel that can be used for His glory. Question? Are we willing to go into the Holy of Holies each day and lay our all, on the altar of Jesus Christ?

Dedication Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus,

I come to You today desiring to lay my life on Your altar as a gift and sacrifice for what You have done for me on the cross of Calvary. I thank you for shedding Your blood as a sacrificial Lamb, making it possible for me to be able to enter the Holy of Holies and to have a personal, everlasting relationship with You. I thank You that the Old Testament gives us examples of how people came to You to make sacrifices, to pray and to give thanksgiving for what You had done for them individually and as a people. Lord I know that You desire that all people would come before Your cross and humble themselves before You and draw near to You. For You have promised that as we draw near to You, you would draw near to us. I pray that each day Your Holy Spirit would prompt my heart to come to Your altar and to lay down there all the challenges and struggles that I face, knowing that as I do, I may experience You as "The Lord of Peace".

Your Servant.
