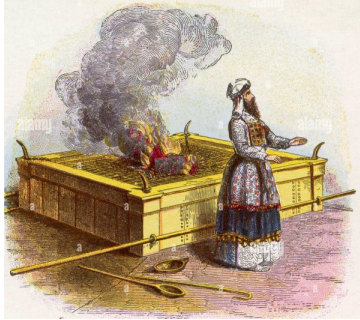


The Altar

We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.
Hebrews 13:10

Altars aren't used much anymore. When I was growing up we had what Mom called, Family Altar. By that she meant we all gathered in our living room for a sacred time of Scripture reading and prayer every day.



In the church where I was raised the altar was a kneeling step and rail in front of the platform. As a child I always thought it was a barricade to keep people from getting to the preacher. The church altar was often used at the end of the service as a place of repentance and surrender. It was a place to get right with God. It was a place to surrender yourself totally to the Lord.

The altar in both Old and New Testaments meant a place where people went to meet God or offer sacrifices to God, but much more than that it was a place of cleansing. Noah was the first to be mentioned as building an altar to the Lord where he offered sacrifices of thanksgiving after the flood. In the Old Testament sense the altar was a place of memorial where something great happened in your relationship with God, so you build an altar as a memory of that important event.

In Isaiah 6, when Isaiah said he saw the Lord high and lifted up and his train filling the temple. Feeling his sinful unworthiness before God, an angel took a coal from off the altar in heaven, and placed it on his tongue and declared him clean. The altar is where we go to get purified, cleansed, and forgiven. Jesus is our altar. He is our altar. He is where we go to get cleansed and forgiven. The sacrifice is not our to give, he already gave the ultimate sacrifice once for all when he laid down his body of the altar of sacrifice for us.

We have an altar,
...a place for calling on God,
...a place of surrender,
...a place of forgiveness and cleansing,
...a place where we make things right with God.

It's at the feet of Jesus. You want cleansing? Come to Jesus. You need to surrender something back to God? Come to Jesus. You need to pray something through? Come to Jesus. He is our altar, and the altar always says, "Come, this is the meeting place of God. This is where you do business with God."

I John 1:9-10

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. He is the one to whom we go to find cleansing.

**If God provides an altar in heaven,
isn't it logical that we would need one on earth too?**

Old Testament Altar <04196>

There are 338 references to “altar” in the Old Testament. We will list only those in Genesis. Please do your own search of the whole Old Testament.

- Genesis 8:20 And Noah built an altar unto the LORD; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.
- Genesis 12:7 And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there buildt he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him. 8 And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, *having* Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he builr an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD.
- Genesis 13:4 Unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the LORD.
- Genesis 22:9 And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood.
- Genesis 26:25 And he builded an altar there, and called upon the name of the LORD, and pitched his tent there: and there Isaac's servants digged a well.
- Genesis 33:20 And he erected there an altar, and called it Elelohe-Israel.
- Genesis 35:7 And he built there an altar, and called the place Elbethel: because there God appeared unto him, when he fled from the face of his brother.

New Testament Altar <2379>

- Matthew 5:23 Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; :24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.
- Matthew 23:18 And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty. 19 Ye fools and blind: for whether *is* greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? 20 Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon.
- 1 Corinthians 9:13 Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live *of the things* of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar?
- 1 Corinthians 10:18 Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?
- Hebrews 13:10 We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.
- Revelation 8:3 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer *it* with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

Hymn: Is Your All of the Altar?

Song: That's What This Altar is For, by Ray Boltz
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=axZnaf9osWw>

Questions for Discussion

1. Do you have any memorial altars where you did business with God?
2. Have you, or anyone you've known, obeyed Matthew 5:23 “leave your gift at the altar” and be restored first?
3. Is there anything in your life that needs to be placed on the altar?