

Your Altar is Your Legacy

- Thank ALL who served at S.I.
- Open with the Lord's Prayer

Throughout history altars have been erected by the Lord's people to signify obedience, for worship, to pay tribute, and to recognize a powerful encounter with God. They also mark and consecrate a word or promise from the Lord and leave a legacy.

The altars of your life will be the legacy you leave for the generations that follow you.

Abraham's Altars: Praise, Prayer, Peace & Provision

1. The Altar of Praise: (Genesis 12:1-7)

“Now the LORD had said to Abram: ‘Get out of your country, From your family and from your father’s house, To a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’ So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. Then Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother’s son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came to the land of Canaan. Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, as far as the terebinth tree of Moreh. And the Canaanites were then in the land. Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, ‘To your descendants I will give this land.’ And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him.”

2. The Altar of Prayer: (Genesis 12:8)

“And he moved from there to the mountain east of Bethel, and he pitched his tent with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; there he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD.”

3. The Altar of Peace (Genesis 13:18)

“Then Abram moved his tent, and went and dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and built an altar there to the LORD.”

4. The Altar of Provision (Genesis 22:14)

“Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood.

And Abraham called the name of the place, The-LORD-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, ‘In the Mount of the LORD it shall be provided.’

I want to spend a little more time on this altar of provision, even though they all have their importance and relevance to God’s story and promise for us.

There’s great significance in the legacy that is found on the site where Abraham led Isaac on Mount Moriah, a thirty-seven acre plot of land and perhaps the most hotly contested piece of real estate on the globe. It is a profoundly sacred area to Christians, Jews, and Muslims.

- It is here in Genesis 22 that we discover “God’s Mountain”, and it is introduced in this beautiful foreshadowing between a father and only son of the complete ‘provision’ of God’s love and sacrifice at the Cross of Calvary with Jesus Christ.
 - I am sure it is not missed on you that it was Abraham who actually was on the altar that day, not his son Isaac.
- Fast forward about a thousand years later and we find King David, negotiating a purchase for this exact piece of ground, the threshing floor Araunah the Jebusite. He proceeded to build an altar to the Lord, so that “a plague may be held back from the people” – (2 Samuel 24:18, 21).
- King Solomon would later build on this altar and land a glorious temple unto the Lord after the death of his father, David. It would last four hundred years until it’s destruction in 587-586 BC by the armies of Nebuchadnezzar.
- The Jewish people would rebuild another temple to the Lord approximately seventy years after their release from captivity Babylon. This temple would also be positioned on the same site.
- Around the first century, King Herod made a significant addition to the structure, and it became known as Herod’s Temple (the same temple that Jesus would cleanse in John 2:15)
- After it’s destruction in 70 A.D., by the Roman Emperor Titus, all that remained was a retaining wall known as the *Western Wall* or *Wailing Wall*. It is a destination for pilgrims and a Jewish prayer site for many centuries.
- Mount Moriah and the site originally occupied by Abraham’s altar of Isaac, now houses the Dome of the Rock on the Temple Mount and the Al-Aqsa Mosque. It will be the future site of God’s third temple where biblical prophecy will unfold and be fulfilled at the end of the age.

Abraham consecrated the ground around Jerusalem and Israel for God's people with the altars he built and dedicated to God. This was land marked by his obedience to God as the permanent home of His beloved, His people. It will be the location when He brings heaven to earth at the end all things!

Abraham's altars became homing beacons (light houses) to guide Israel back to God time and again, from the bondage in Egypt, out of the wilderness and captivity from Babylon to Persia and beyond.

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The Cross of Calvary: God's altar and your Heart:

ALL of humanity suffers from a proud spirit, disobedient will, boastful tongue, arrogant lustful mind, and a wicked heart.

- The cure for all these issues is a narrow path of salvation, the width of the Cross and a fully repentant heart.

“Turn to God with all your heart. Learn to dismiss external things, to devote yourself to those that are within, and you will see the Kingdom of God come to you.” - *Thomas a' Kempis*

- Temples and tabernacles were adorned and carved with images from the Garden, when man walked with God in the cool of the day.
- They were meant to be outposts of Eden, designed to house the presence of God.
- After the Cross and God's complete work and final sacrifice, to bleed salvation for His beloved creation, we are God's temple.
- John 15: Jesus' prayer, His desire to have union with us.
- Our hearts are designed to experience and contain the presence of God. Little outposts of Eden, we are to steward our hearts, the well spring of our lives.
- We are living out the *living sacrifice* daily unto the Lord to host His presence and be a beacon of light to the world around us.

- Our heart is our altar to God, our living sacrifice and it is designed to be an Eden temple of the Lord.
- How is your heart today? Do you need a transplant (from a heart of stone to one flesh, with fresh soil, renewed and vibrant)?
- Is the Garden of your heart a place where Jesus would want to visit with you and bring refreshing streams of living water?
- By the way of The Cross, when we place ourselves on God's altar, we come to genuinely realize that what initially looks like the altar of *sacrifice* becomes the altar of provision in our lives by the gracious overwhelming love of the Father and His Son, Christ Jesus.
- Jesus made the complete and perfect sacrifice so that we may experience the ultimate provision of abundant life.
- Revelation 3:20 "Behold, I stand at the door and knock..."
- When you come to the altar of Calvary, your legacy becomes intertwined and connected to the Kingdom of God and His eternal legacy for His beloved.
- In doing so, you leave a beacon, a lighted path for your family to follow (Jesus's footsteps to the cross) and find their way to the Father's heart and throne room.

Closing: Prayer & Communion

- Jesus know my anxious heart, weigh me in Your kingdom scales, light my path and lead me in Your perfect way.
- Christ will come to you, if you prepare a fit dwelling place for Him in your heart, He will come to you.
- His communion is sweet and full of consolation, His peace great, and His intimacy wonderful indeed.