

SOUTH GROVE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH. LONDON

Lord's Day Morning

20<sup>th</sup> November 2022

Preacher Rev Philip Knowles Ps/Hymns 22:1-2, 6-8 – Tune Amazing grace, 100 Rowan Tree, 294 134, Read Exodus 27:1-8, ch 38 Text Exodus 27:1-8

Series – The Tabernacle series (4) Title The Brazen Altar

The altar that we have read of today, had two different names. In **Ex 30:28** it was called the “**altar of burnt offering**,” and then in **Ex 38:30** the “**brazen altar**”.

God was declaring through the Brazen Altar, an object lesson to teach about a future day, on the Altar at Mount Calvary.

In fulfilment of this, type, object lesson, When man nailed Christ upon a Cross, it was because God had already purposed the cross was the manner of death He should die.

**John 12:21** Jesus Christ was lifted up to die in order to draw all men unto Himself, to show what manner of death He would die.

The Brazen altar was the largest of all the furniture in the Tabernacle. **Notice verse 1** “**five cubits long, and five cubits broad; the altar shall be foursquare: and the height thereof shall be three cubits.**”

Remember a cubit is 1 and ½ feet. So the Brazen altar was 7 ½ feet long and wide. Then 4 ½ feet high.

It was a square shape box, with coals at the bottom, then a net or grill **made of brass** in the middle allowing the flames and smoke to ascend, but also, **to put the sacrifice on.**

Then on all four corners of the altar were four horns. These horns as **Ps 118:27** “**bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar.**” The horns were a sign of strength and power.

**When the sacrificial offering was presented to God, it was lifted up upon the altar.**

Peter uses such language when he speaks about the lifting up of Christ upon the Altar of Mount Calvary, in **1 Peter 2:21** “*who His own self bare our sins on His own body on the Tree...*”

The word **bare** is made up of two words meaning to **carry, to offer, bring or bear up, it is to move from a lower position to a higher position.**

**At the time of sacrifice the offering was lifted up upon the altar.”**

In the OT, God’s covenant of grace to save sinners, was taught by object lessons.

The Brazen Altar brought the minds of the people to consider Christ’s death upon the Cross,

that there is power in blood to deliver sinners from the burden of sin, and all who depend upon the power of blood have all their sins past, present and future forgiven.

Hallelujah what a Saviour.

### **I FIRST, THE PLACE OF THE BRAZEN ALTAR.**

God said in **Ex 40:6** “*and thou shalt set the altar of the burnt offering before the door of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation.*”

When the Israelite entered through the only gate, the first structure viewed was the Brazen altar.

Having learned that Christ is the only entrance into God’s presence, they now learned that entrance was secured by the blood of Christ.

The word **altar**, actually means **to slay or slaughter**. It was the place where the sacrificial blood was shed.

In **Lev. 17:11**, declares that "**the life of the flesh is in the blood.**" Life is in the blood. As the blood pours from the sacrifice, it gives its life.

Upon Calvary Christ poured out His life to please God and save sinners.

The altar was central in the inner court. The tabernacle only had one Brazen Altar.

Only One place where the offering for sin could be made.

The first lesson having come into the court of the tabernacle was that sin is put away or covered by sacrificial blood shed upon the Altar in order for sinful man to be brought back into the fellowship with God.

It was the place of justification, from a legal standing of condemnation to a legal standing of justification sins completely put away from Gods sight by the covering of Christ's blood.

The mind was directed to Calvary, where Jesus Christ the lamb of God, as **1 John 3:5** says "...**was manifested to take away our sins.**" At that place **Isa 53:12** says "...**He hath poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.**"

The gospels testify their fulfilment. **Luke 23:33** "**And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the malefactors, one the right and the other on the left.**" **V34** "**Then said Jesus Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do...**"

**Throughout the years of the tabernacle the cross work of Christ was set before the people.**

**Remember the tabernacle was temporary until they built the Temple over 400 yeas later.**

***Until that time the Tabernacle was taken down and put when Israel journey.***

The Brazen altar had two staves or poles carried by the priest wherever they went. They stayed close to the Brazen Altar.

Therefore, the message of the gospel as revealed in the person and work of Christ must be carried by His people into all world as Christ commanded in **Mark 16:15**,

therefore, take the name of Jesus with you, and, stay near the cross daily, as John said **John 1:29** “***behold the lamb of the God which taketh away the sin of the world.***”

## ***II SECOND, THE PURPOSE OF THE BRAZEN ALTAR***

***1 Its purpose was to display strength.***

God in His wisdom designed the altar to endure the fire.

In **verse 1** it was made **shi-ttim wood**, we have already noted this wood was called acacia wood which was durable, lasting, incorruptible wood.

It was then in **verse 2** overlaid with brass.”

Brass was hard metal.

One commentator said “...***scientists discovered what God had already known. That hard wood covered with brass and sealed, makes a fire-proof combination.***”

The altar was made with strong wood and a strong metal. Otherwise it would be a failure, the wood would burn and metal melt.

The reason being, **Lev 6:13** confirms, the fire upon the altar would continually be burning day and night.

**Therefore, the Brazen altar must endure the lasting flames,** as the sacrifice was offered, symbolising the success and victory of the work of Christ.

The incorruptible wood and brass spoke of the sinless humanity of Christ and the judgement Christ bore for sinners. He was the only one qualified to be the Saviour of sinners.

Paul said in **Heb 12:2** Christ “**endured the cross...**” Christ never turned back, He was bound to the cross by love.

The execution of the righteous judgment of God against unrighteousness and iniquity fell upon the head of Christ

The book of Leviticus details the instruction for the offerings.

All 5 Levitical offerings **the burnt offering, the meat, peace, sin and trespass offering** were presented at the Brazen Altar.

Also, there was 5 animals to choose from, **the Lamb, bullock, goat, turtledove and bird**. The reason being some were poor, and they could not afford the costly animal.

Remember, in **Luke 2:24** Mary in her poverty, could choose between **a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons**.

From whatever animal of the 5 was offered the principle for the rich and poor was the same, the offeror was to bring the best, the strongest offering.

**Lev 1:2-5** gives details, Notice the words “**Male Without blemish**.”

The words **without blemish** means **without defect, blameless, perfection**,

The word refers to unblemished animals for sacrifice, think of the Passover Lamb in **Ex 12:5** “**your lamb shall be without blemish (defect) a male**.”

The offering was to have no blemish **outwardly but also inwardly**.

You will notice the only way to see inward parts was as **v6** states **flay the offering**, using the **fleshhooks**, **take the skin off, to**

**examine and wash**, to present to the LORD it was perfect, that it meet the condition.

It's very interesting that phrase **without blemish** is used in the Greek in **1 peter 1:18-19** the precious blood of Christ, as of **a Lamb without blemish and without Spot.**

God required that the offering presented to Him would be perfect. For the Lord would not accept a sacrifice that was lame, or broken, bruised, or deficient in any of its parts, or in any way blemished.

He required an offering "without blemish."

The priest would examine the animal to make sure there was no fault. **In v 7-9** The Priests prepared everything needed for sacrifice.

But notice they examined all four parts- the head, the fat, inwards parts, and the legs, the whole animal, **to symbolise the whole person in his thought life, obedience, affections and his walk.**

The sacrifice to be offered must be perfect in every part.

These all find their fulfilment in Christ, stated by **Hebrews 9:14** "**He offered Himself without spot to God.**"

The one to be an offering for sin upon the altar must be able to bear the punishment.

(On the cross, **John 19:28** "**After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished that the Scripture might be fulfilled said 'I thirst'.**" His "thirst" was the effect of the agony of His soul in the fierce heat of God's wrath. During the three hours of darkness, God's face had been turned away from Him, He forsaken, stricken and smitten of God, as He endured the fierceness of God's wrath and Hatred against sin. He cried out "**I thirst.**")

This is why Christ was qualified be our Saviour and our salvation is secure.

Because the sinless Saviour died my sinful soul is counted free for God the just is satisfied to look on Christ and pardon me.

God only accepted a perfect sacrifice for sin. God said this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.

Believer, Make much of the sinless Saviour in prayer, praise and proclaiming Christ.

The worshipper was taught by faith that Christ was the only one without sin, able to bear the Judgment of God for their sin.

**2 it's purpose was substitutional.**

The Israelite was taught, the sacrifice was offered in their place.

It lived, suffered and died for them. It was wounded and bruised, afflicted in their place. It was viewed and treated guilty taking responsibility for their sins.

**Leviticus 1:4**, The priest would touch the head of the substitute, and confess the sins of the people, and by object lesson teach all the guilt and burden of sin was transferred, imputed, or laid upon the substitute and it was removed from them.

**Now again remember, the animal, or its blood did not remove sin, but it was an object lesson to teach the people, as they looked forward to Calvary by faith.**

(Let me use a poor example of this - think of school fire drills, the children are being prepared for a fire in the building, so what happens they teach by object lesson, they put the fire alarm on, the children leave the building, go to certain locations, and while there is no fire, yet what is being taught by the procedure, causes all to think of a day when there would be a fire, and all that will take place.)

Christ the promised Saviour, would be their substitute, and sin bearer. He was viewed and treated guilty, taking the responsibility of our sins upon Himself.

**Mark 10:45** *“For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.”*

The little words translated **for** literally means **‘instead of’ or ‘in place of’**. It is taking the place of another. Christ’s life was given in the place of, in room of sinners.

Therefore, the nature in the giving of Christ’s life was substitutionary.

The Brazen Altar, taught the people sin is put away, by the blood of a substitute acceptable to God.

**3 It’s purpose was to be satisfactory.**

Once the offering was completely burned or consumed, **Lev 1:13** *“an offering made by fire of a sweet savour unto the Lord.”*

The word **Sweet** comes from another word meaning **rest**, it has the idea of something finished, at end in view, think of **Gen 8:4** *“the ark rested.... upon the mountains of Ararat.”*

The word, **Savour** signifies **fragrance**. A sweet favour a fragrance of rest.

The same phrase is used in Genesis just after Noah built an altar and offered a burnt offering **8:21** *and the Lord smelled a sweet savour. The margin reads a savour of rest.*

Paul teaches what this means in **Eph 5:2** *“Christ give Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour.”*



It's not that the burning of the animals flesh pleased God, but the offering that was presented with perfection pleased Him.

God was pleased with the work of Christ on Calvary. Christ's blood-sacrifice brings infinite delight and satisfaction to the Father, the wrath of God was satisfied.

His wrath was turned away from the sinner and flamed on His Son.

This is why Christ was accepted in the sinner's place.

In the OT on **the altar the fire consumed the sacrifice**, but when we come to Calvary where God's wrath burned in all its fury, **the sacrifice consumed the fire**. Jesus Christ satisfied the wrath of God.

The purpose of the Brazen Altar taught the people Christ has done all that was required to forgive sin. Since Christ paid it all in full, God will not demand payment twice.

Believer, Your sin will never come back to Judge you, **Heb 10:17**  
**"There sins and iniquities will I remember no more."** **Ex 12:13**  
**"when I see the blood I will pass over you."**

### **III THIRD, THE PARTS FOR THE BRAZEN ALTAR.**

**Verse 3** lists 5 different vessels used in connection with the Brazen Altar. **"and thou shalt make his pans to receive his ashes, and shovels, and his basins and his fleshhooks and his firepans, all the vessels thereof thou shalt make of brass.**

The very fact there was ashes signified the sacrifice was accepted and completed.

The **pans** were used **to gather the ashes**.

The **shovels** also gathered the ashes and then put the burning coals unto the firepans.

The **firepans** were censers to carry the burning coal from the brazen altar to the altar of incense within the veil.

The **basin** gathered the blood which was sprinkled on the mercy seat.

The **fleshhooks**, were used to cut the sacrifice for examination.

All this is vital in thinking about the gospel.

**Lev 6:11**, gave instruction about the removal of the ashes from the altar, taking them to a clean place, to speak of purity no corruption.

We read in **Matthew 27**, that Joseph of Arimathea took the body of Christ and prepared it with clean linen ready for burial.

**Matthew 27: 60** *“and laid it in his own new tomb which he had hewn out in the rock...”*

Christ was laid in this **new tomb** that had not been used before. From this Tomb, **Matt 28**, testifies Christ's body experience no corruption, He rose from the dead, confirming God accepted His sinless offering, and guaranteeing the resurrection of all believers. Because He lives, I can face tomorrow, and we shall live also.

The Tabernacle taught the gospel, Christ His death, burial and resurrection for forgiveness and then fellowship with God.