

BOOK OF 1 KINGS
THE ALTAR OF THE LORD-PART 2
1 KINGS 18:30-46

Introduction

We have seen that this was a very dark time in Israel as God's people were in a crisis situation! We said that anytime and anywhere and on any level that sin reigns there is a crisis situation! *Proverbs 14:34—“Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.”*

We saw how the spiritual condition of the nation was shown

1) By its leadership and 2) By its people! (Vs 17-18, 21)

If King Ahab had delivered a “*State of the Union*” address to Israel at this time, no doubt he would have given a glowing report of his reign and would have pointed out how his opposition—the prophets of God—were responsible for the only problem of not hopping aboard the Baal bandwagon!

But the reality of the problem was that Israel as a nation was broken:

They were broken politically! (Ungodly, corrupt leadership)

They were broken morally! (A nation of fornicators/idolators!)

They were broken spiritually! (A nation of fence straddlers when it came to choosing between God and Baal!)

The problem was that the people of God did not want to wholly commit unto God—They wanted the Lord God Jehovah when they were in trouble! But they wanted Baal too because the worship of Baal appealed to their flesh!

Their great need was for revival! (Not a series of meetings, but revival!)

What they needed was a recognition of their sins!

What they needed was repentance in their souls!

What they needed was to return to their God!

They needed Revival!

God had said in the days of Solomon:

2 Chronicles 7:13-14 “If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people; 14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”

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Last time we were looking at how the spiritual condition of the nation was shown by the condition of the altar of the LORD! (vs 30)

We were focusing on this broken down altar and its need of repair.

I. THE PURPOSE OF THE ALTAR!

The altar was a SACRED PLACE where a man got into contact with God!

A. The Altar Was To Be A Place Of Thanksgiving And Praise!
It was a place where man was to be humbled and the LORD was exalted!

*But the altar of the LORD had been broken down!
That means that there wasn't any humbling before the LORD!
That means that there wasn't any exaltation of the LORD!
That means that there wasn't any Thanksgiving and Praise!*

In this age, our heart is the altar!

- 1. God is looking for humility in our hearts and lives!*
- 2. God is to be exalted in our hearts and lives!*

B. The Altar Was To Be A Place Of Confession!
*But the altar of the LORD had been broken down!
So, the nation was not confessing its sins!*

Proverbs 28:13—“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.”

One of the reasons why there was no confession is because there was no brokenness over sin! There was no contriteness in their heart and spirit over sin!

The SELF-life is the enemy of brokenness! Our will and our attitudes are often dominated by the self life, and so, self must be broken! We cannot have our own way and the LORD's way at one and the same time! (Vs 21)

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That's where we left off last week and where I want to pick up today and see some additional things about the altar:

THE PURPOSE OF THE ALTAR:

The Altar Was To Be A Place Of Thanksgiving And Praise!

The Altar Was To Be A Place Of Confession!

C. The Altar Was To Be A Place Of Sacrifice!

1. There a man would offer up **his firstfruits** to the LORD!
2. There a man would set apart or consecrate **his best** to the LORD!

But the altar of the Lord had been broken down!
In fact, Baal was getting what belonged to the LORD!

Sadly, for many folks today, **if they give God anything**, it is more likely to be **what's left over** rather than **their first fruits and their best!**

God wants **our best**, He doesn't want **our leftovers!**
i.e. God wants **what's RIGHT**, not **what's LEFT!**

Romans 12:1-2—"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

D. The Altar Was To Be A Place Of Death!

It was to be a continual place of death.

But the Altar of the Lord had been broken down!

In Genesis 22, Abraham built an altar on Mt. Moriah to be obedient to God and to sacrifice his son Isaac to the LORD.

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But listen, Abraham had to die to himself before ever thinking about offering up Isaac!

We have to die to self before we will ever be obedient to God the way we should!

Mark 8:34—"Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."

The apostle Paul said in *1 Corinthians 15:31*—"I die daily."
That is what we are to do as believers! Die to self daily!

We are to die to self and live unto God! We are to die to self so that Christ can live His resurrected life through our lives!

But listen, it's hard in our day and time just to get believers to die to self on Sunday!

The Altar Was To Be A Place Of Death!

E. The Altar Was To Be A Place Of Communion!

It is there where men would **call on the name of the LORD and meet with God!**

But the altar of the Lord had been broken down!

Jeremiah 33:3—"Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not."

Isaiah 59:1-2—"Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."

THE PURPOSE OF THE ALTAR!

The Altar Was A Place Of: Thanksgiving And Praise, Confession, Sacrifice, Death, and Communion.

II. THE POLLUTING OF THE ALTAR!

What caused the condition of the altar?

A. The Altar Had Been Misused!

Often when the nation of Israel turned from the LORD, **that which was previously dedicated to the LORD was used or rather misused to sacrifice to other gods!**

Listen, you can't sacrifice that which belongs to the LORD to Baal and then expect fire from the LORD when you need it!

We can't just turn our spirituality on and off like a water faucet!

"Oh I need the LORD in my life!" Let me turn on the spigot!

That's basically what is happening by and large in our nation! Our leaders have kicked the LORD and His Word and prayer out of our schools and out of other places in our nation!

That is, until something tragic happens! Then the leaders call for us to get all spiritual!

That is a misuse of the LORD!

1 Corinthians 6:19-20—"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

People are misusing God's temple and the altar is in the temple—the heart!

Proverbs 4:23—"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."

The Altar Had Been Misused!

B. The Altar Had Been Abused!

The condition of it was such that it was broken down!

Things are abused when they are regarded lightly!

Things are abused when people have an attitude of *"it doesn't really matter!"*

Many show that they take the things of God lightly when they use them for their own purposes!

Some Have Abused God's Local Church!

To Some It Is Somewhere To Be Married!

To Some It Is Somewhere To Be Buried!

To Some It Is Just Another Place To Be Entertained!

To Some It Is Just Another Social Club!

To Some It Is Just Another Place! Nothing special!

Some Have Abused Prayer!

Some folks only talk to God when they are in trouble or want something from God!

People live their lives unto themselves and their heart is full of self and the world and everything contrary to God and then trouble comes along and they cry out to God and then they wonder why their prayers don't seem to get answered!

The Altar Had Been Misused...The Altar Had Been Abused.

C. The Altar Had Been Neglected.

Something that is neglected will not get better, but will only deteriorate. (e.g. An automobile; a house; a Church building)

The same holds true for our walk with the LORD!

We need the Word of God! (*"The Bible will keep you from sin or sin will keep you from the Bible."*)

We need Prayer! (*"Pray without ceasing" "...be instant..."*)

We need the Assembly! (*Hebrews 10:24-25*)

*THE PURPOSE OF THE ALTAR.—Thanksgiving and Praise,
Confession, Sacrifice, Death, Communion.*

THE POLLUTING OF THE ALTAR—Misused, Abused, Neglected

III. THE PREPARATION OF THE ALTAR.

A. Elijah Recognized The Condition Of The Altar!

Some people are blinded to the fact that their altar is broken!

We won't have the fire of God until we open our spiritual eyes and recognize the awful broken down condition that the altar of our heart is in!

As long as we deceive ourselves into thinking that nothing is wrong with the altar, we'll never make the needed repairs in order to see the fire of God fall in our lives!

B. Elijah Repaired The Altar!

Sacrifice on a broken altar is unacceptable to the Lord.

1. We've Got To Become **Dissatisfied** With The Condition Of The Altar.
2. We've Got To Become **Determined** To See God Work.

C. Elijah Set Things In Order Upon The Altar! (Vs 33)

D. Elijah Removed All Human Possibility! (Vs 33-35)

E. Elijah Reverenced God! (Vs 36-37)

F. Elijah Relied Upon The Word of God! (Vs 36)

G. Elijah Requested Action On The Part Of God! (Vs 37)

Conclusion

What shape is your altar in today? I'm talking about your heart! Not the beating organ! I'm talking about that within you that responds to the LORD!

How can we see the fire of God fall in our lives today? I'm talking about having Revival! Because that's what you see here!

Well we won't see it in some things:

1. **It Is Not In The Numbers!**
(That is, fitting in with the majority—450 to 1) (Vs 22)
2. **It Is Not In The Noise!** (That is, how loud we cry) (Vs 26, 28)
3. **It Is Not In The Activity!**
(That is, how much busyness we are involved in) (vs 26, 28)

We will see it in the right things:

1. **It Is In Choosing To Serve The Right God!**
2. **It Is In Proper Preparation Of The Altar!**

Revival is not going to just happen in our lives, in our families, in our Church, or in our nation! We have to prepare for it!