

WORSHIP SERIES

BUILDING AN ALTAR

The people of God have lived so long in this world that they regard doubt as a normal part of life. We need to understand that doubt and unbelief are like sicknesses. I used to ask God, "O God there is a burning desire in my heart to see all the works of Jesus and the greater works of Jesus manifested in my life and in my ministry and in the church here and in every place where we go." And the Lord has told me, "Son, there is one reason why I cannot do what I have done – unbelief and doubt." Remember when Jesus could do no mighty works, it is because there is such an atmosphere of unbelief, doubt and secular humanism that is soaked into ninety-nine percent of the body of Christ. So when we are talking about raising a person from the dead immediately you have one hundred doubters. We have grown so used to the mental state of doubt that we don't understand what it is to live constantly in faith. We need to know that God can do what you believe Him for if you will not doubt. There is no God like our God. There is no God in the universe as the Lord Jesus Christ. He lives forever more and He can do all that we can believe Him for.

In this message, we want to talk about building an altar onto the Lord. We find in the Old Testament especially in the book of Genesis and in the book of Judges that the people of God built an altar onto the Lord at special times and special occasions. In the book of Genesis, they did not have a common place to worship God yet. It only took place only after Moses and then subsequently after Solomon. The people of God in the early days of Genesis didn't really have a common place to worship God and so they have to build altars onto the Lord.

And here in the book of Genesis we find one of the first few altars.

Let's look at the book of Gen. 8 when Noah came out from the ark he came into a different world. The world before and after the Flood was different. The atmospheric situation was different. The weather was different. Everything was different. The world had four seasons. Before that, it never had four seasons. Many changes had taken place. So here is Noah stepping out of the ark to this strange new world. And in verse 20 the first thing that he did was to build an altar. *Then Noah built an altar to the Lord, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a soothing aroma. Then the Lord said in His heart, "I will never again curse the ground for man's sake although the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth, nor will I again destroy every living things I have done. While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cloud and heat, winter and summer, and day and night shall not cease."*

Noah built an altar to the Lord and God was pleased. God didn't ask him to do it. An altar is something initiated by us out of an expression of our life. That doesn't mean that we are going to build physical altars like they do among the heathens. You notice that the building of altars officially stopped during the time the tabernacle was built. But then after they neglected the tabernacle they went back to the altar building in the book of Judges and in the book of Samuel. Then they start all over again when the temple was built. After Solomon built the temple, you find that the building of altars in the Old Testament sense ceased. However, the principles behind building the altars apply. An altar is something initiated by man because of certain things. Out of a heart of thanksgiving, or fear of God, we build an altar and worship God.

We are studying on worship. The Old Testament folks learn to build an altar and worship God there. Now the altar was not filled with any images. It was just an altar for sacrifice to God. So it's not in a similar sense like a religious altar among other religions. Why did he build an altar? What was the purpose of the altar? And what are the principles behind the building an altar.

We will base the answer for simplicity sake on the life of Abraham. But let me point before I go to Abraham to some lives that never know how to build an altar to the Lord, never know how to worship God in their lives and they failed miserably both in their personal life, family life and career.

Turn with me to the book of I Samuel where we find the story of king Saul. Now God specially chose Saul in chapter 10 of I Samuel; he was anointed, appointed and ordained, inaugurated and set forth as a king for all Israel. At first, he functioned very well in chapter 11. And in chapter 12, Samuel turned over the leadership of Israel to Saul. Then in chapter 13, he started disobeying God. He started making mistakes in his life, critical mistakes, mistakes that cost him both his personal life in the end and his kingdom. He made an unlawful sacrifice in chapter 13. Then when he went against the Philistines, other mistakes were made. As I examine this life, I can only conclude one thing. This man did not know how to put God first. Here is an example in chapter 14. As they went after the Philistines, he uttered a very rash oath. He said that nobody is supposed to eat anything until he conquers his enemy. And all the soldiers kept fighting until they were hungry and they reached a point where they were so hungry the moment they saw an animal, they cut it off and ate it raw and that broke Moses' commandment. It was a state of their hunger. You may ask how could they do such a thing? Wait till you haven't eaten for a long time. Anybody who had gone on a long fast you will have a little bit of what they experienced. If you are new to fasting and your mind is not fully renewed and you are attempting your first three-day fast without food and water, I tell you by the end of the first day anything looks good. By the second day, if you visit a village, the live chicken will look like Kentucky Fried Chicken running around. These soldiers were so hungry when they saw those cattle they saw B.B.Q. steak. They must have imagined that it was cooked and ran and cut it and ate it. And they broke Moses' law of eating blood.

And finally when he could not help it in I Sam. 14:34 *Then Saul said, "Disperse yourselves among the people and say to them. Bring me here every man's ox and every man's sheep, slaughter them here, and eat and do not sin against the Lord by eating with the blood." So every one of the people brought his ox with him that night and slaughtered it there. Then Saul built an altar to the Lord. In fact, this*

was his only altar that he built correctly - the others are not counted in a full sense. This man should have done it at the beginning. But this is a man who is moved by circumstances. He will worship God only because he needed God. Or he will worship God because circumstances compel him to worship God. That's all wrong. The root cause of his failure is that he is not a man who worships God.

David who took over the kingdom from him was a different man. He was a worshipper of God. You could say many things about David - that he succeeded because of his skill, he succeeded because of his talent, he succeeded because of his looks, he succeeded because of the people that helped him. But let's be honest - he succeeded because he was a worshipper of God. Before the anointing came on his life, before he had any ability when he was just a little shepherd boy he knew how to worship God. Learning how to worship God will bring us a long way in any field of work or profession. If you own a supermarket and you are a worshipper of God, your supermarket is different. If you own a business and you are a worshipper of God, your business is different. Whatever field of endeavor you are in being a worshipper of God makes whatever you touch different. There are many great pianists out there who don't know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior play nice music but when you have a born again believer to play the same piece like Beethoven or something like that there will be a difference because that pianist is a worshipper of God. Being a worshipper of God affects not only some areas it affects all areas for we were made to worship God. And worship is the lifeblood of the creation of God. Even the atoms, the molecule, the trees of the field, the mountains, the hills, praise God. It is life itself.

Let's look over now at Abraham and we want to study the three altars that Abraham made, and any other altar made by any other person. Noah built an altar to the Lord. Jacob built an altar to the Lord. David built an altar to the Lord. Moses built an altar to the Lord. But all the different altars can be combined in an outline based on the altars that Abraham built.

Let's look at his life in Genesis 12 and as we study the altars that this person made remember this. Each man of God in the Bible represents something. When we think of Noah, what does Noah represent? The number eight always surrounds Noah, new life, resurrection but a statement is made in Gen. 6 about Noah. Noah

found grace in the eyes of God. Noah represents grace. Noah built an altar. Remember Noah's altar represents an altar of grace.

Moses built an altar. In the book of Exodus he had just come out from the land of Egypt and they faced the first battle against the Amalekites in chapter 17. They had a victorious and successful battle because the Lord was with them. And verses 15 and 16 of Exodus 17 *And Moses built an altar and called its name, The Lord is my banner.* Noah's altar represents grace. Who is Moses and what does he represent? He represents the law. The Pharisees and Sadducees called it the Mosaic Law. So, when you think about Moses he represents law, the law of God. And what Moses built was an altar of law.

In Genesis Jacob built an altar to the Lord when he was running away from his brother partly because of his own mistakes. In Gen. 28, Jacob was running and while he was sleeping on a stone, he had a vision of what we call Jacob's ladder. Verse 16 *Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it," And he was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." Then Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put at his head, set it up as a pillar, and poured oil on the top of it.* The anointing of oil is a custom that came even from the book of Genesis and it still stays up to James 5 in the New Testament. Verse 19 *And he called the name of that place Bethel; but the name of that city had been Luz previously.* Now you had Jacob building an altar. Now what does Jacob represent? Jacob's name is wrestler. Jacob represents prayer.

Each man of God represents something. Noah represents grace, Moses the law and Jacob prayer. The altar that he built was an altar of prayer. Now all the altars are for worship. But the men who built the altars symbolize something. And that's where we are going to go into some teaching.

One more altar before we go into Genesis 12. That is in the book of I Chronicles the altar that David built. Chapter 21:26 and we know the background of the story how David disobeyed God and numbered Israel and God sent judgment and he

fell on the mercy of God. *And David built there an altar to the Lord, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and called on the Lord, and, He answered him from heaven by fire on the altar of burnt offering.* So David built an altar to the Lord. The question is now if Noah represents grace, Moses represents law and Jacob represents prayer, what does David represent? How do we get bible typology? By watching the essence of what that man did. Jacob was praying all his life and wrestling. Moses was giving the law all his life. What did David do? Praise and worship.

Any typology has to be consistent from Genesis to Revelation. David is also known for the tabernacle of David, which is a place of praise and worship. And just to support that interpretation, we know that David is a king but kingliness results from worship not worship from kingliness. Lets look at I Chron. 25:1 *Moreover David and the captains of the army separated for the service some of the sons of Asaph.* Now who did it? David and the army. So it was David who sanctioned and sanctified praise.

Now David is known as a man of war. He was called a man of war but haven't you heard in Psalms 149 that praise and high praise is war like. David didn't fight his battle based on his own strength. He says its God who trains my hand for war. He was a shepherd boy untrained; he has never been to any military school. But he has been to the school of praise and worship. And we know that praise and worship can be used for war. It has been used in Jehoshaphat's time. It was David who separated the people for praise and worship. David has his call not as a warrior but as a worshipper. Ps. 149 says with the high praises of God in my mouth and a two-edged sword in my hand, we will march right on. In Ps. 149 it is even more specific. Ps. 149:6 *Let the high praises of God be in their mouth and a two-edged sword in their hand to execute vengeance on the nations and punishments on the peoples.* Everything that is done David did it. But his weapons were the weapons of praise and worship.

You read the book of Psalms he was surrounded countless times and its because of praise and worship his enemies cannot triumph over. If you read the book of Psalms he always say, "Lord if I die who is going to praise you?" So God says, "You are right - there are not many worshippers." So David lives and he

organizes praise and worship. David knew that there were not many worshippers. So God says, "You shall not die. If you die I don't have anyone worshipping Me." There are a lot of creatures worshipping Him in heaven but God wants us to worship Him too. So David's altar was an altar of praise and worship.

Lets go to Gen. 12 Some time a visitor visited me and said, "Your church worship is very long." (Our church worship is about two hours, followed by another two hours of teaching the Word and finally one hour for ministering – making the Sunday service last about 5 hours.) I said, "Yes, because Sunday is a day we dedicate to the Lord. It's not a day where you go to church and quickly come home and wash your car. Its not a day where you go to church and quickly come back and do gardening. I told my church members to set aside Sundays to worship God." So the people set themselves apart to worship God. It's a new breed that we want to raise who understands that Sunday to the world is a holiday but Sunday to the church is a holy day. That's the difference.

Jessie du Plantis who have been to heaven say heaven is very strange. Whenever somebody says, "Praise the Lord," he always gets a reply. You must understand there are tens of thousands people there. One person says, "Praise the Lord," the rest will also say, "Praise the Lord." Thousands of voices praising the Lord all because somebody says praise the Lord.

Gen. 12:1 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."

Did you notice God says, "I will make your name great." I have understood that God uses your name, gives it honor and uses it as a dividing plumb line. God doesn't allow anyone to share His glory but God shares His honor. Verse 4 *So Abram departed as the Lord had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. When Lot went with him that was when the disaster followed him. Abram was not a man*

who puts God second. He always put God first. So he started packing and in those days they don't travel light. He passed through all those places and in those days, he also had to travel with his animals. Finally, in verse 6, he passed through all those places and when he reached the area where God wants him to be in verse 7 the Lord appeared to him.

Verse 7 And there he built an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him. 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. That's altar number two that he built onto the Lord. Later on, he came back to the altar after he sidetracked into Egypt in chapter 13:3 and he got back to God again. And he went on his journey from the South as far as Bethel to the place where his tent had been at the beginning between Bethel and Ai. When you turn aside from the path that God wants you to walk and when you come back, do you know you have to start where you left the road? It's like Pilgrim's Progress. Right where you left the road you have to go right to the exact spot where you left the walk of faith. Wherever you left the walk of faith God will not let you move one inch further. You have to start where you left the road. So he came back again where he had left for Egypt although he had a blessing there.

Gen. 13:3 And he went on his journey from the South as far as Bethel to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, to the place of the altar which he had made there at first. And there Abram called on the name of the Lord. That was the second altar.

Now there are many things in his life possibly there are other altars that he built onto the Lord in each place and each area that he moved into. Lets look at the place where Lot left him verse 14 onwards. *And the Lord said to Abram, "Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are northward, southward, eastward and westward, for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever. And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth, so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, then your descendants also could be numbered. Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you." 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. Physically it was his third one.

But we are going to look at that afterwards but lets begin to outline it. We are going to study the altars that Abraham built that have a name. So we want to classify the first two that are mentioned in Gen. 12 The one in verse 7 and the one in verse 8 as equal in spiritual state. There can be many physically places he went to but our lines are demarcated by our spiritual experiences.

There was a turning point in my life in 1986 when Jesus appeared to me. It was a turning point. There was a turning point in my life when God called me to the full time ministry in 1975 and I went into the seminary in January 1976. In 1975 I was praying on the rooftop of a four-storey apartment and my life turned around when God called me into the ministry at about 5 a.m. in the morning. So our lives are demarcated by spiritual points encounter with the Lord. There could be many small, small little altars you built along the way but the main ones are your demarcation points.

So for Abraham I am going to consider chapter 12:7-8 as his first altar. And the name of it because its near Bethel, you notice its between Bethel and Ai. Ai represents a place of victory. And Bethel is God's place, the house of God. And that's the name of that place that he has built. Later on when he moved back into the altar in chapter 13 after he left Egypt, it says that he passed Bethel. The emphasis is on the name Bethel the house of God. Lets consider that the first demarcation altar. It is not physically his first altar but the demarcation point in his life. In that point, he had reached the land. It is important that we see how, why and in which way the altar came about. The first demarcation point altar came about when God appeared to him when he had walked the walk of faith. Remember God said, "Get up, go out," and he got up and went out. It took faith. It may have taken some months to travel. And when he reached the place God was there and appeared to him. He had obeyed the walk of faith to a certain extend. God appeared to him. He built an altar there, Bethel the house of God. That was the first demarcation altar. It was God's place, and he met God there.

The second demarcation altar or the second point was in chapter 13 when Lot separated from him. There was strife between Lot's people and Abraham's people. Lot was being blessed because of Abraham. Sometimes unbelievers don't know that they were being blessed because of the believers. But it is true. Until they leave the umbrella of blessing then they realize they were blessed because of Joseph. We were blessed because of so and so. Some people do know. Potiphar knew he was blessed because of Joseph. We carry a blessing on our life. Blessed are those who blessed me. Cursed are those who curse me. Some people don't know that there is an umbrella of blessing. When you associated with some people, the blessing of God on their lives comes on you.

The day Lot separated from Abraham he was outside the umbrella. In the end, he lost his wife, his whole family except two daughters. He lost all his possessions. He lost all his cattle. He lost all his goods. He got only himself and two daughters left. God didn't bless Lot because of Lot. God didn't bless Lot because of his faith. He didn't show much faith. He was quite a worldly man. He would be a typical example of a Christian who is worldly. God blessed Lot because of Abraham.

Some of you have wives or husbands who are not really walking with the Lord. Do you know that God blesses your spouse because of you. But don't get proud about it. Don't you go home and he or she is probably watching the T.V. and say, "Dear do you know that you are blessed because I am blessed?" You don't have to tell them. You just have to know it so you don't be discouraged because sometimes I see people get discouraged because they don't see the Lord. Do you know that when you don't see the Lord you get discouraged? How can you get discouraged if you always see the Lord? It's when the clouds and the mists block the view of God from your life and you can't see God for the circumstances you get discouraged. So when you get discouraged the first thing you do is check your eye sight. Go to a spiritual optician. Go to the men of God and ask, "What is wrong with my spiritual eyes?" You can't hear God because you can't see God. There is no such thing as discouragement to those who know the Lord, to those who walk in God. Discouragement doesn't exist in the kingdom of God. It exists only in the kingdom of the enemy.

So here, we have Lot being separated from Abraham. Although God told Abraham, "Leave your kindred," Lot, his relative came along. So Abraham didn't fully obeyed God. He obeyed God partially. Good enough for the first altar but not enough for the second altar. The second altar was built only after Lot separated from him. Gen. 13:14 *And the Lord said to Abram* I could imagine God wanted to say that to him all the time but God couldn't because Abraham wouldn't. There is a couldn't in your life, you couldn't do this, couldn't do that. Check carefully because in your life there is a wouldn't. I wouldn't do this I wouldn't do that. Abraham wouldn't separate from Lot. Don't talk about wouldn't too long you soon will be a wooden piece of deadwood. God couldn't because Abraham wouldn't. One day Abraham would so God came. And God said to Abraham: *after Lot had separated from him*. God appeared and repeated His blessings. I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth etc.

Verse 17 he got a new command. You must walk up and down in your inheritance. A lot of people got their inheritance but instead of walking up and down they choose to live on an anthill. God said, "The land is yours." "O Thank you Lord for this little patch." Now it was not Abraham's yet. The Canaanites were still there. But God said, "Abraham put your foot there." God said, "Healing is yours." God said, "Deliverance is yours." But instead of fighting the devil on every corner, you only fought the devil on one tiny corner. Where? In church on Sunday. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday you don't fight the fight of faith. On Sunday, you come in and praise the Lord for the healing by faith. On Monday, you ask, "Why Lord?" Tuesday, "Why Lord?" We must be more bold than that.

If you own a supermarket, you have the authority to walk around it and say, "Praise the Lord." You say, "Brother it may offend some people." "I thought you own it?" "No, I don't want to be fanatic." "That's why you never receive your inheritance." "For whosoever would deny Me before men I will deny him before the Father in heaven." That means your angels cannot work for you. He says whoever confesses Me before men, I will confess before my Father and the angels in heaven.

When you sit with your unbelieving friends everyone of them order beer. They ask, "What do you want?" You are a top businessman and you say, "Orange juice." They all laugh. And you are there trying to be nice. You don't want to be a fanatic. They begin to curse. They begin to use vulgar words. They begin to blaspheme God. And you don't say anything. They can call in the name of Satan. And you are sitting there sucking your orange juice. Let's look at it this way. If the people around you have the right to curse, you have the right to praise. If they can curse and blaspheme God you can rise up and say, "Listen if you want me to sit with you while you are drinking beer don't curse my God." While they are drinking and getting drunk, you got freedom of worship. You can lift up your hands and say praise God. I can assure you all the blaspheming will stop. Instead of being quiet like a little mouse and drinking your orange juice you can pray in tongues and wondering why God didn't send an angel and bash their heads and knock some sense into them. And God is waiting for you to take your position of authority.

Some will make fun of you but let me point to this fact when you stand up for God, God stands up for you. If they dare to come against you, they are coming against God and that's no joke. I have known people who come against God and die. People began to fear the Lord because you are there. Never are we told in this bible that those who are born again shall be like mouse. We are told that we are His sheep. We will be gentle, humble, we don't want to cause any trouble but remember you got as much right to worship God as much as they blaspheme God. I could imagine when you rise up and say praise God, Gabriel smiles, God smiles, heaven smiles. There is my little soldier down there among all those Goliaths. David was like that.

So here when Abraham separated from Lot in verse 17, he was walking the length and breadth of his inheritance. Christians are not bold to confess God's Word. I found this that the miracle depends on what you say publicly and privately. If you are ashamed of talking about your miracle publicly, God is ashamed of working on your behalf. He will not confess you before the Father in heaven. So some people have a corner in their life. They claim to be serving the King of Kings and Lord of Lords but they don't dare to walk. How do we walk spiritually? By your mouth. People are polluting the atmosphere you live in with curses and blasphemies. This is your territory so you surround it with God's

Word. It all depends on what you say.

Remember when Jesus ask His disciples in Matt. 16, "What do men say about Me?" Peter says, "Thou are the Christ the Son of the living God." And Jesus turned around and said, "Blessed are you Simon Bar-Jonah for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven reveals this onto you. And upon this rock I shall build My church and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I give to you the keys of the kingdom of heaven." When He asked that question there were many others who wanted to say it. In their hearts, they knew that He is the Christ. He is the Son of the living God. But not a single one of them dare to make their stand. While Peter says, "You are the Christ," the others would want to get twenty-five more confirmations first. But Peter in spite of his mistakes here and there, he was always very fast with his mouth but here is one time when he got a plus. All the others were scared of confessing. Peter said, "You are Christ the Son of the living God." Other probably said, "I wanted to say the same thing too." But only Peter received the blessing. Jesus didn't bless the others who kept quiet. He said, "Blessed are you Simon Bar-Jonah." Did you miss out your blessing because you are afraid to confess Christ? That's how you walk the length and breadth of your place. If you don't own the place its different. I mean you don't go to your neighbor's house and say praise the Lord. Your neighbor has a right to call the police to drive out the maniac. But in your house, you have the right.

Gen. 13:18 Then Abram moved his tent, and went and dwell by the terebinth trees of Manre, which are in Hebron, and built an altar there to the Lord. Now his second altar came about after Lot separated from him. It is an altar at Hebron and Hebron is the key word there. Hebron is famous as a place where king David was for seven years before he moved to Jerusalem to be king. David ruled forty years; seven of those years he ruled from Hebron before the ten tribes came to him and then he shifted his headquarters to Jerusalem.

One last altar of Abraham a demarcation point in chapter 22 and that one is known as Moriah. God told him the place, the location and what to do in the sacrifice that was necessary. Verse 6 *So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son, and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife,*

and the two of them went together. Verse 9 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 later on, God delivered Isaac and he called the place Jehovah Jireh, the Lord sees (or the Lord provides). That is the third altar in Abraham's life. These are the three demarcation points in Abraham's life.

Let me show what they are. The first altar is called Bethel. It is a place where you begin. It is a place called the house of God. Jacob represents prayer and Jacob's altar was also at Bethel. It is by no coincidence that Jacob also built an altar at the exact place at Bethel. This was the place where there was a ladder going up and down to God. The revelation is consistent. Noah in the book of Genesis we were not told where he built the altar. But we do know that on the altar he sacrificed a clean animal and God made a covenant with him. The first altar is an altar of grace, an altar of prayer, is when you first begin. Remember Noah has separated from the old world.

The three altars represent different things. The first altar at Bethel is where you are translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light. It was there that Jacob made a covenant with God. He says, "God if you would take care of me and make sure I have food to eat and clothing to wear I will give you my tithes." The word used is, "I will bring a tenth to you." The law of the tithe applies to every covenant person. So there are a lot of sub-principles involved but basically, this is what the altar is about. Each altar is a separation point. I am talking about worshipping God. When you worship God you have to go through these three demarcation altars.

The first point is that you have broken through the law of sin and death. There are three separate areas. The book of Rom. 7 talks about the law of sin and death. And see how the law of sin and death is crushing the old man, killing the old man. And Paul has to cry out, "O wretched man that I am. Who will deliver me from this body of death?" The first altar represents a cut off point from sin. Let me tell you, you cannot worship God if you got sin in your life. God doesn't accept that worship. Remember the other altar that was built by Cain and Abel.

The main reason why God accepted Abel was because there was blood. And blood was a covering for sin until Jesus came. And Cain brought his offering without blood. All our righteousness is like filthy rags, all our works, all our talents, all our ability are nothing to God. He wants to see blood that He can show grace. If you really want to worship God in the inner sphere up above and ascend into the heights of heavens, the only way to get there is to get in the plane of worship, and break free from the law of sin and death. You are in a state of free fall when you have passed the law of gravity. That's the first thing. As long as the law of sin holds our life, you can be in the most anointed worship but if sin has dirtied your hand and your life you can never worship God. You will feel mud around you all the time. You need to confess your sin and ask the precious blood of Jesus to cleanse you from all sins and then God will meet with you. Then God will appear to you. And you enter into a realm of worship, you break pass the gravitation pull of the law of sin and death. Now you know why some people find it hard to worship God. It is because sin pulls them down. When you have something wrong in your life and your conscience is troubling you, you try to worship God. You can't because the more you come to God the louder your conscience scream until the blood of Jesus Christ touches your conscience and cleanse you.

Noah's altar and Jacob's altar are the altar of prayer and the altar of grace. We have to overcome sin. Sins are what you do. Sins are the state of your physical body still subject to the law of this life. Paul says in Rom. 7 the law of sin dwells in the body. And only the power of the Holy Spirit and the fire of God can modify the body of flesh. So on one side we need grace. Grace is given. Jesus Christ died on the cross, rose from the dead after three days so that all your sins are dealt with. But sin has to be dealt with through prevailing prayer. The habits in your life, the sins you often fell into and repent each time you come to God. Those are habits that have to be broken through strong prevailing prayers, sometimes through fasting and prayer. And so there is a sin nature and the works of sin that need to be dealt with at the altar of Noah and the altar of Jacob before we can worship God at the first point.

Then after you get passed the first point you get deep into worship. And you thought this is love. I am in the house of God. I am in Bethel. I know the presence of God. I have the presence of God. But there is a strange thing that

takes place. You have moved out of the law of sin, you are somewhere in the spirit realm, but yet you find that you cannot get in. It is just like you have got out of the Outer court and you want to move into the Holy place and you can't. There is something more. You see the common people when they come to worship they have to come through the Outer court where there is offering taking place. It is just like you have moved into some area in the Outer court. Remember the Outer court has the presence of God. The fire of God that came down in Solomon's time came on the Outer court. So there is a presence of God there. You know of some presence but there is something that says there is some more of God that I need. There is something more of the presence of God that I want to move into. Every time you see those priests go into the presence of God. And you know the table of showbread is there and the incense altar is there and you know the candlestick is there. And you haven't seen it before because you are not a priest. But in the New Testament, all are kings and priests. And you know there is something more that you can get into.

If you want to know how to get in you reach a point where you hunger and thirst for God and there is a second altar that you need to reach. The first altar is separation from sin. The second altar is when Lot separates from you as Lot separates from Abraham. Lot represents the things of this world. Remember Jesus said we are in the world but not of the world. The second point is when all worldliness in your life has died. All believers have a measure of worldliness. We have come out of Egypt at the first altar. But Egypt needs to come out of you. You have been saved. You were pulled out of a drowning situation. You were pulled out from the seas that you nearly drown in. But the sea is still in you, you got to pump the water out from you. And there is always something that blocks you from entering the Holy place. You got through the Outer court. At least that is better than some who have not got through the Outer court. If you want to enter into the second place, this is what God says to you, "Die to the things of this world."

Now dying to sin and dying to the things of this world are different. It is not sin to have a Mercedes or a Rolls Royce or a B.M.W. The Ten Commandments didn't say this but it does give a reflection of being worldly. And so you make your choices and you decide you will not be worldly. There are things that are legal for me but they are not expedient. Paul calls that the things that are lawful but

not expedient. It doesn't help a man of God to drive a Rolls Royce. If you were to drive something else, you may win another ten thousand souls. That's the difference between breaking sin and breaking worldliness. Breaking worldliness is just like, it doesn't mean that it may be wrong for anybody, just take it in the context, breaking worldliness is like when you don't need a palatial mansion and you just want a mansion. You just want to have it. It is not expedient for you but its lawful for you. It's important to take note that we got to break from worldliness out of our life. The first is breaking the law of sin and death. The second is a bit harder because it is breaking the spirit of the world. It's not a law but it's a spirit. Paul calls it the spirit of the world. In the book of I John, it says those things that are in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. These things are not of the Father and those who have it the Father is not in them.

So the second important demarcation point is to note that we must become unworldly. Now this doesn't mean that you live like a hermit, dressed in animal skin and eat honey. But it does mean that when you make decisions in this life you don't based it on wanting to be in the world. You have a separated life from the world. If you have the world's goods, no problem; if you don't have them, it won't make any difference. You have died to the world like Paul says, "I have been crucified in Christ." And you can pray like what Jesus said in Jn. 17, "I have sanctified Myself that those who are with me will be sanctified." He has separated Himself onto God. That's when you move into the second level of worship. When you bow down to worship God, time doesn't affect you now because you are no more controlled by the world. Do you know that worshipping for long hours has nothing to do with sin nature? It has to do with our worldliness. We got this program on, stock market to watch, car to wash. All these are things to this world. In heaven, you don't have to wash cars any more. I got to paint my house. I got to trim my garden. All these are in the world. It is these things that occupy your mind so that when you want to worship God you keep thinking of them. And you cannot get into the deep depths of God. You cannot unless you break free from the spirit of the world. The spirit of the world is anxiety, worry about the things of this life. The cares of this life chopped the Word. You worry about your child's education. You worry about your insurance. All these are the spirit of the world. It doesn't mean that you become complacent about taking care of your family. But it does mean that you obey the law of Jesus, "Thou shall not worry." Add that to the Eleven Commandments. Matt. 6 He says,

"Don't be like the gentiles." He says, "Don't worry. Don't you know that the birds of the air don't know where the food is coming but the Heavenly Father takes care of them? How much more will the Father take care of you, O you of little faith." When we break free from the spirit of the world, you are no more in the same realm of worship. You have passed the second demarcation point. Something takes place in your worship and you get into the Holy place. You began to see the table of showbread. You began to see the altar of incense. You began to see some of those things that others never see. You began to taste of the things of the Spirit because the candlestick represents the things of the Spirit. So you remain in the second level. Something in your life is different. Something that is very unworldly of you. And people know it. A single thing that happens on this earth does not affect you. There is otherworldliness in you because you are not of this world.

But one day as you are worshipping in the Holy place you saw something else. You saw the veil between the Most Holy place and the Holy place. Now in the New Testament the veil has been done away. You saw the light coming from the ark inside. And there is something on our inside that says, "I want more of God. And I will give anything of my life to have that." Like Moses he cried, "God I have seen you in the burning bush. God I seen you on the mountain. But God show me your glory." There is something on your inside that says, "I know there is some more of God." And you hunger and thirst for that.

Then you enter the third altar. Let me tell you what the third altar is. The first altar is to break free from the law of sin and death and you reached Bethel. The second altar is Hebron and you start moving into some of the things of God like David did. He moved into Hebron and reigned for seven years. The second altar is when you break free from the spirit of the world. Let me tell you I meet a lot of ministers, leaders, Christian businessmen who are still controlled by the spirit of the world. And as far as God is concerned, they are still at the first altar. But I have also met many who have broke free from the spirit of the world. And when you talk to those people, you notice there is something unworldly about them. They don't think like the world. They don't act like the world. There is a greater force in fact a greater Holy Spirit moving in their lives, making decisions in their lives, setting goals and objectives in their lives. I have met businessmen who were unworldly, Christians who are unworldly, ministers who are unworldly. But

let me tell you there are many out there who have not broken into the second realm. And worldliness still rules their lives. That's why even fewer still reach that third altar.

You know what the third altar is. The first altar you break free from the law of sin and death. The second altar you break free from the spirit of the world. The third altar you break free from yourself. That's the greatest achievement you could ever reach. Freedom from your own self until all that occupy you is God and God alone. That is why the third altar God dealt with Abraham. He says, "Abraham give me your son." For Abraham to give up his son is like giving up his life. Isaac was his very own blood and flesh. It was like God said, "Abraham I want an absolute surrender of yourself." Some of you have no idea of what true surrender is like. God tells you not to sleep you don't sleep. When God tells you not to eat, you don't eat. When God wakes you at four in the morning you don't argue. When God tells you I will not let you sleep until four you don't sleep. Its like you are a slave, a bond slave to Him. That's the greatest realm of worship you could reach. And David's altar is the third altar. It's an altar that must cost you something. He told Araunah who wanted to give him the place because he loves the king. He says, "King, if you want this place for an altar, take it." David said, "I will not worship God with something that doesn't cost me anything. I want it to cost me something, cost a part of my life, cost a part of my finances, cost me something to worship God." (cf 2 Samuel 24: 18-25) The first two altars are only surrender. The third costs you something. And that's what Paul talks about in Corinthians when he says that the death of Christ constantly is upon our lives.

Turn to II Corinthians and understand the impact of what he is saying here. Chapter 4:11-12 only people who have touched the third altar understand this. *For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake.* Paul can't even live for himself. Not only has he to be separated from the world and be free from sin he can't even live for himself anymore. His only reason for existing is for the church and for Jesus. He doesn't care for anything else in this life. Not even for his own necessities, food, clothing and shelter. Because we are told that many times he had gone hungry, naked, all for Jesus. Before you can sing, "All for Jesus," you must sing, "All to Jesus." One day God will get you singing, "All for Jesus." Verse 12 *So then death is working in us.* What is he talking about? He was not talking

about any sickness or disease. He is talking about a level of life, a quality of life in the world. It is such a quality where he only exists as a slave to God. He says he is bound by the Spirit and he constantly only live for the church. Verse 17 *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* Only when you reach that level does your worship enters that realm that is the most holy onto the Lord. That is the third altar. The question we ask you this morning which altar are you at?