

# THE TABERNACLE

## Day One: The Altar of Sacrifice

Abraham Offers Isaac

Genesis 22:1-14

### Introduction:

1. As the children of Israel travelled through the wilderness, they were led by God – in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night (Exodus 13:21-22).
2. When the pillar stopped moving, the Israelites would stop walking and they would set up the Tabernacle.
3. They would remain in that location until the pillar lifted up and began to move again (Exodus 40:34-38; Numbers 9:15-23).
4. When they remained in one place, the Israelites were to encamp around the Tabernacle according to their tribes (Numbers 1 – 2).
5. While encamped, they could approach the Tabernacle to offer sacrifices to God.

### I. The Altar of Sacrifice

- A. The first thing one saw and approached in the outer court was the altar of sacrifice.
- B. The instructions for it are given in Exodus 27:1-8.
- C. The altar was made of shittim (acacia) wood and covered with brass (or, bronze).
- D. It was foursquare – five cubits long by five cubits wide (about 7 ½ feet on each side).
- E. There was a horn on each corner of the altar.
- F. There were 5 types of offerings made by the Jews at the altar of sacrifice (Leviticus 1 – 7).
  1. **Burnt Offering** – *Voluntary offering for sin*
    - a. The animal offered was completely burnt – none of it was to be eaten.
    - b. The animal was to be a male without blemish (bull, lamb, goat, pigeon or turtledove).
    - c. The priests would cut the animal into pieces, wash parts of it, and then place it on the altar.
    - d. The blood was to be sprinkled upon the altar.
    - e. The life of Jesus was given completely as an offering for the sins of the world.
  2. **Meal Offering** – *Voluntary offering of honor and worship to God*
    - a. The “meal” offered was usually some kind of grain; though, the firstfruits of the vegetable harvest were also offered.
    - b. All grain offerings were to be without leaven or honey, but with oil and salt.
    - c. A part would be placed upon the altar, but the rest was given to the priests to eat.
    - d. Jesus voluntarily gave Himself completely to the service of God.
  3. **Peace Offering** – *Voluntary offering to show gratitude to God*
    - a. An animal without blemish – either male or female – was to be brought.
    - b. The fat and entrails were offered upon the altar and burnt.
    - c. The rest was eaten by the priests and the worshippers.

- d. Jesus's sacrifice made fellowship and peace with God available.
- 4. **Sin Offering** – *Required offering for unintentional sins*
  - a. There were different offerings for different people – the High Priest, the priests, or the people.
  - b. On the Day of Atonement, this offering was made for the entire nation.
  - c. The death of Jesus paid the price for all sins.
- 5. **Trespass Offering** – *Required offering for sins against God and others*
  - a. This was similar to the Sin Offering; but, it included restoring that which had been taken from another.
  - b. Thus, it was an offering of an animal and an offering of money.
  - c. Jesus has paid the price to remove the guilt of sin.
- G. The common people could only bring their sacrifices to the priests at the altar.

## II. Symbolism of the Altar of Sacrifice

- A. The continual burning fire at the altar of sacrifice was a constant reminder of the sins of the people.
- B. The river of blood that flowed from the sacrifice of animals was a reminder of the terrible cost of sin – bloodshed and death.
- C. The offering of animals was a reminder of the innocent suffering for the guilty.
- D. All of these things pointed to the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus upon the cross for the sins of the world.

## III. Abraham Offers Isaac as a Sacrifice

- A. A story that powerfully illustrates the nature of sacrifice is found in Genesis 22.
- B. Abraham was told by God to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice.
  - 1. Isaac was the son of promise – the one God had vowed to give Abraham to establish the seedline of the Messiah.
  - 2. Abraham had waited 25 years for God to keep this promise.
  - 3. Now, he was being told to kill his beloved son.
- C. This was a test of Abraham's faith – his trust in God – and of his faithfulness – willingness to obey the Lord.
- D. Abraham took Isaac to the mountain that God had commanded, built an altar, bound his son, and laid him upon the altar.
- E. As he was about to kill Isaac with a knife, God called out to Abraham and told him not to hurt his son.
- F. Abraham had proved his faith and his faithfulness.
- G. However, the real lesson of this story is found in what happened next.
- H. God provided a ram – whose horns were caught in a thicket – to be offered as a sacrifice in the place of Isaac.
- I. God's provision of a substitute sacrifice foreshadowed the coming of Jesus to be offered on the cross in the place of all mankind.

## IV. Similarities in the Sacrifice of Isaac and Jesus

- A. Both were not spared by their fathers.
  - 1. Abraham sacrificed Isaac (Genesis 22:1-12; Hebrews 11:17-19).
  - 2. God, the Father sacrificed His Son (John 3:16).
- B. Both were men of age, but submissive to their fathers' will.
  - 1. Isaac was around 30, but submitted (Genesis 22:9).
  - 2. Jesus was around 33, but submitted (Luke 22:42).

- C. Both carried the wood for their sacrifice (Genesis 22:6; John 19:17).
- D. Both were returned to their fathers.
  - 1. Isaac was raised from the dead in a figure (Hebrews 11:17-19).
  - 2. Jesus was raised from the dead in reality (Mark 16:6, 19; Daniel 7:13-14).
- E. There is one important contrast between the two.
  - 1. There was a substitute provided for Isaac – a ram (Genesis 22:13-14).
  - 2. Jesus is the substitute for all men (John 1:29; 1 Peter 1:18-22; Revelation 13:8).