

# The God that Answers by Fire – D Stewart Mott II

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Hebrew word “mizbeach” is found about 396 times in scripture. It denotes a raised place where a sacrifice is made. The altar is a place of sacrifice. It literally means to slaughter or to slay. It is also a place of distinction. It is raised and seen... The altar of God is a place of change. The altar is a place of impartation – where flesh is “paid” for spiritual blessing – most notably seen in the “change”.

Law of first mention - Noah first constructed an altar and sacrificed in Gen 8:20. God had purged the earth from unrighteousness and God required a “recommitment”.

Noah built one after the flood and made burnt-offerings on it (Gn. 8:20).

Abraham built altars to Yahweh at Shechem, between Bethel and Ai, at Hebron and at Moriah, where he offered a ram instead of Isaac (Gn. 12:6–8; 13:18; 22:9).

Isaac did likewise at Beersheba (Gn. 26:25), Jacob erected altars at Shechem and Bethel (Gn. 33:20; 35:1–7), and Moses erected one at Rephidim after the victory of the Israelites over Amalek (Ex. 17:15). The altars were evidently erected mainly to commemorate some event in which the principal had had dealings with God.

## II. THE PURPOSE OF THE ALTAR

God is a “revealer” of Himself. He reveals His image and character, our flaws, imperfections and unlikeness of Him stand out in comparison. He shows us ourselves and in the light of His image, our desires to be more like Him will provide the impetus to change. (It is the goodness of God Rom2:4; there are none good Mt 19:17) Original altars were constructed to commemorate an encounter with God... or something specific God had done. These altars were made with minimal influence from man. All of the materials were to be “God prepared or created” - wood, earth and unhewn stones. At Sinai, God reveals more of Himself... he provides temple construction plans including the brazen alter and the altar of incense. IMPORTANT: Old Testament altars foreshadow the New Testament sacrifice of Christ. Christ provides the example or “image” we are to follow. Romans 12:1-2. So we see that we have become the sacrifice. And therefore where hearts are there are “new testament” altars.

## III. FAITH

Faith is a process. Its appearance is NEVER a singular EVENT. Faith “LEVEL” is the sum of many God encounters. When we are “working” the altar, we must think STEPS of faith and not an EVENT of faith.

Faith defined:

Hebrews 11:1–6 (KJV 1900)

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. <sup>2</sup> For by it the elders obtained a good report. <sup>3</sup> Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. <sup>4</sup> By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh. <sup>5</sup> By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. <sup>6</sup> But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

At the altar, God reveals Himself to the unbeliever.

At the altar, God reveals more of Himself to the “weak in faith”.

At the altar, faith is born.

At the altar, faith is grown.

Faith provides access to God. Rom 5:1-5

God responds to faith; not NEED.

THE SIMPLICITY OF THE MATTER:

Gifted altar works identify personal need and build seeker faith to a level where God responds.

#### **IV. PROFIT-ING VOICES**

1 Corinthians 14:6 (KJV 1900)

<sup>6</sup> Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?

There are 3 “sources” of ministry. In light of “faith steps”, we must remember the altar as the place where more of God appears and less of man lives. These 3 sources are “the how” to identify a person’s need. After the need is identified, we build faith to receive.

KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge is information. Knowledge of a situation is transmitted by human interaction. God brings this information to your attention through counseling sessions, care groups, or someone simply “tells” you this info. It is perfectly reasonable and acceptable to ASK someone his or her need... The source of need identification does not add to or diminish God answering the need.

Proverbs 1:7 (KJV 1900)

<sup>7</sup> The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of knowledge:  
*But* fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Simply put, you have knowledge of a need due to human means. Pulpit ministry, teaching, altar working... knowledge is a legitimate source of need identification to build faith for God to respond.

### PERCEPTION

Man is three parts: body, soul and spirit

1 Thessalonians 5:23 (KJV 1900)

<sup>23</sup> And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and *I pray God* your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is humanly impossible to separate a person’s soul and their spirit.

Hebrews 4:12–13 (KJV 1900)

<sup>12</sup> For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. <sup>13</sup> Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

Hebrews 5:14 (KJV 1900)

<sup>14</sup> But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Perception is NOT observing human behavior... Perception is viewing a person’s inner man through the prism of their outward man.

*Examples of perception:*

Praying silently --- lack of faith

Psalms 116:10 (KJV 1900)

<sup>10</sup> I believed, therefore have I spoken:  
I was greatly afflicted:

Lowered chin, head and eyes --- lack of hope/help

Psalms 3:1–3 (KJV 1900)

- 1 LORD, How are they increased that trouble me!  
Many *are* they that rise up against me.
- 2 Many *there be* which say of my soul,  
*There is* no help for him in God. Selah.
- 3 But thou, O LORD, *art* a shield for me;  
My glory, and the lifter up of mine head.

Psalm 121:1–2 (KJV 1900)

- 1 I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills,  
From whence cometh my help.
- 2 My help *cometh* from the LORD,  
Which made heaven and earth.

Lowered hands --- no sacrifice, no surrender

Psalm 141:2 (KJV 1900)

- 2 Let my prayer be set forth before thee *as* incense;  
*And* the lifting up of my hands *as* the evening sacrifice.

Shaking or trembling – Fear of the Lord... not cold water

Jeremiah 5:22 (KJV 1900)

- 22 Fear ye not me? saith the LORD: will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand *for* the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it: and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it?

Other examples:

Slumped shoulders – heavy burden

Cut hair – rebellion

Make-up – shame

## REVELATION

Ephesians 1:15–17 (KJV 1900)

- 15 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,
- 16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; 17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

Revelation occurs when we become aware of information by God's Spirit.

Gifts of the Spirit

Word of knowledge

Word of wisdom

Vision

Revelation deals with the “hidden” things.

There are 3 main reasons people do not receive from God:

1. Understanding
2. Unforgiveness
3. Unbelief

## **VI. CONCLUSION**

The altar is the place where the unbeliever becomes aware of his or her need of God. We help to build faith and God’s presence supplies an answer to that need.

We **MUST** always leave the altar with reinforcing:

He is

He is a rewarded of those that diligently seek Him