

## Abraham's Altar at Shechem Altar Series Part 2

In many ways **Abraham's life is a journey from one altar to the next altar.**

Anyone who wants to follow me must **put aside his own** desires and conveniences **[self]** and **carry his cross** with him **every day** and **keep close** to me! **Luke 9:23 (TLB)**

### What is an altar?

**Most Literally**, an altar is **a place of slaughter** or **sacrifice** where blood was shed.

**More Practically**, an altar is **a place where something is offered or sacrificed** to a deity. Today, especially, the physical or outward elements that make an altar are really secondary to the inward elements that make an altar.

**Spiritually...** **an altar is a place of spiritual transaction where God and man meet.** Altars are places where...

- **heaven meets earth...**
- where **human nature and divine nature interact...**
- where the **physical and spiritual worlds collide.**
- Altars are the **collateral** of a spiritual transaction.

**WHAT IS AN ALTAR?** IT IS A PLACE WHERE WE COME TO MEET GOD AND TRANSACT SPIRITUAL BUSINESS WITH HIM.

**PRINCIPLE:** WHENEVER GOD LEADS ME TO AN ALTAR IT IS TO BRING SOME MEASURE OF DIVINE FAVOR INTO MY LIFE!

### **ABRAHAM'S ALTAR OF PROMISE AND OBEDIENCE** PRINCIPLE: OBEDIENCE EQUALS PROMISES REALIZED!

The Lord had said to Abram, 'Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father's family, and go to the land that I will show you.'

'I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others.

'I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you.'

So Abram departed as the Lord had instructed, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran.

He took his wife, Sarai, his nephew Lot, and all his wealth — his livestock and all the people he had taken into his household at Haran — and headed for the land of Canaan.

When they arrived in Canaan, Abram traveled through the land as far as **Shechem**.

There he set up camp **beside the oak of Moreh**. At that time, the area was inhabited by Canaanites.

Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, 'I will give this land to your descendants.'

And **Abram built an altar there** and dedicated it to the Lord, who had appeared to him." **Genesis 12:1-7 (NLT)**

### **WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR US?**

"The path of life leads upward for the wise; they leave the grave behind."

**Pro. 15:24 (NLT)**

"My child, pay attention to what I say. Listen carefully to my words. Don't lose sight of them. Let them penetrate deep into your heart, for they bring life to those who find them, and healing to their whole body." **Pro. 4:20-22 (NLT)**

To walk with God means...

- To walk a path less travelled... to live in the minority...
- To move ever upward... suggesting it won't always be easy...
- To pay attention to and listen carefully to the leading and direction of the Holy Spirit, who will show you the way. **He is our teacher!**
- To trust **God as our strength, protection, and provider** along the way.
- **To walk in faith is a decision to follow God in obedience!**

The **NT equivalent altar** is **SALVATION!** And the **NT response** needs to be one of **faith and obedience**, even as Abraham's was.

- Knowing Christ as SAVIOR reflects my FAITH in Him.
- Knowing Christ as LORD reflects my OBEDIENCE to Him.

“As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient... For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” **Eph. 2:1, 2, 10 (NIV)**

**PERSONAL CHALLENGE:** THE CHALLENGE THE **ALTAR AT SHECHEM** PRESENTS TO US IS WHETHER OR NOT WE WILL GENUINELY BECOME FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST WHERE FAITH AND OBEDIENCE COME TOGETHER TO MAKE JESUS SAVIOR AND LORD!