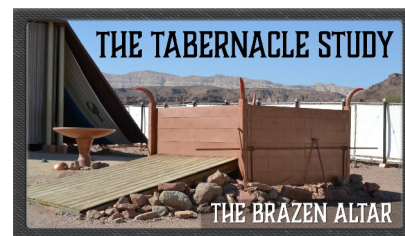


Church of God

Sunday School



THE TABERNACLE #3 – THE BRAZEN ALTAR

DAILY READINGS:

- ❑ **Monday:** The sacrifice was to be without blemish (Exodus 12:5; Exodus 29:1; Malachi 1:14).
- ❑ **Tuesday:** Because He had no sin, Jesus was the perfect Sacrifice (2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 1:19).
- ❑ **Wednesday:** The one who sinned had to bring and kill the animal (Leviticus 1:1-5; Leviticus 3:1-2).
- ❑ **Thursday:** In God's eyes, sin is very serious (1 Samuel 15:16-23; Romans 6:23).
- ❑ **Friday:** Animal sacrifices taught of a coming better and final Sacrifice (Hebrews 9:23; Hebrews 10:1-10).
- ❑ **Saturday:** Faith in the blood requires action (Exodus 12:7-13; Romans 3:25; Hebrews 11:6).

MEMORY VERSE: *"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."*
—Isaiah 53:6

A Spotless Sacrifice

The journey from the Wilderness of Sin to the Holy of Holies teaches God's plan of salvation through Jesus. Every part of the Tabernacle points to this plan. After entering the courtyard through the Gate, the first thing one saw was the Altar of Brass. This was the largest piece of Tabernacle furniture (7½ feet square by 4½ feet tall). This Altar was where sacrifices for sin were offered. The word *offering* in Hebrew means "to draw near." Bringing an offering (something valuable or cherished) represented a sincere desire to draw closer to God.

To teach people the awfulness of sin and how much they needed a Savior, God required animal sacrifices. There were several kinds of sacrifices, but this lesson focuses on the "burnt sacrifice" (Leviticus 1:3). The animal had to be "without blemish." God would not accept a defective sacrifice ("a corrupt thing"; Malachi 1:14). This points to Jesus, who had no sin (2 Corinthians 5:21). He was described as a "lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:19). Jesus' example and sacrifice prepared the way for His people today to be "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing ... holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:27).

Personal Responsibility

The man bringing the sacrifice had to "put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering" (Leviticus 1:4). Bible commentators explain he placed both hands on the animal's head and confessed his sins. This symbolized admitting his guilt and recognizing that he deserved death—but the animal would make an atonement for his sins. (The word *atonement* means "a covering.") Just as the man laid his hands on the head of the animal, God laid on Jesus "the iniquity [sins] of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). Just as the animal was precious to the owner, when we realize we deserve death, Jesus' great sacrifice becomes precious to us!



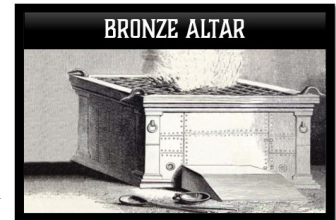
It was not the priest but the man who was guilty of sin who killed the animal (Leviticus 1:5). His own sins were the reason it had to die. God designed this to create a hatred for sin (to see sin as God sees it). Too often, we fail to see how serious sin is. Many people make excuses like, "I made a mistake" or "I messed up" or "It's not a big deal." But God says, "The wages [penalty] of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). Sin is disobedience to God's laws. God calls it *rebellion* (wanting your way instead of God's way). Read 1 Samuel 15:23 to see how seriously God views this. Not seeing sin's

seriousness makes it easier to give in to temptations to do wrong. God set up the system of sacrifices to teach important lessons. A just and holy God cannot overlook sin, sinning is serious, and consequences are painful.

The Importance of the Blood

After the animal was killed, the priests sprinkled its blood on "the altar" (Leviticus 1:5). Blood is important because "the life of the flesh is in the blood" (Leviticus 17:11). Blood carries nutrients to the cells, removes waste, and circulates white and red blood cells. Literal blood represents physical life. In the same way, spiritual life (forgiveness of sins and salvation) required the shedding of Christ's blood. Without His blood, there is "no remission [forgiveness]" (Hebrews 9:22).

In Leviticus 8:15, Moses put the blood on "the horns of the altar round about with his finger." The altar had four horns, believed to have been facing outwards, pointing in all four directions. This teaches salvation is available for everyone, everywhere ("who-soever will"; Revelation 22:17), for all time! God is "not willing that any should perish" (2 Peter 3:9).



Horns represent power (Psalm 89:17; 18:2; Luke 1:69). The blood being placed on "the horns of the altar" symbolizes that there is power in the blood of Jesus to remove man's sins. An old hymn by Lewis E. Jones says, "Would you be free from the burden of sin? There is power, power, wonder-working power in the precious blood of the Lamb."

A Better Sacrifice

The continual animal sacrifices did not make people able to stop sinning. Yet, this was God's method ("a shadow of good things to come"; Hebrews 10:1), pointing forward to when Jesus would pay the ultimate price for our sins on the Cross. When He cried, "It is finished" (John 19:30), it was the final sacrifice. It was "once for all" (Hebrews 10:10). After that, animal sacrifices were no longer needed. Everything the Tabernacle pointed to ("it is coming") had taken place!

What Is Our Part?

Jesus was "a propitiation" (Romans 3:25). *Propitiation* means "a turning away of God's anger." It is also translated as "mercy seat," which was the cover of the Ark of the Covenant (Leviticus 16:14; Hebrews 9:5). The only way to turn away God's anger and receive His mercy is through "faith in [Jesus'] blood" (Romans 3:25). Exodus, Chapter 12, helps us understand what that means. If the Israelites had faith (believed God's words) and applied the blood to their door-posts, the death angel passed over them. They were saved from the death of the firstborn.

In Joshua, Chapter 6, Rahab and her family were saved by the "scarlet thread" (representing Jesus' blood) hanging in her window. She believed and obeyed. Her faith saved her and her family.

VOCABULARY WORDS

- ★ **WITHOUT BLEMISH** – perfect, complete, without defect
- ★ **ATONEMENT** – reconciliation with God; a covering for sin
- ★ **FORESHADOW** – indications of what was coming in the future
- ★ **REMISSION OF SINS** – forgiveness of sins
- ★ **PROPTIATION** – a reconciliation with God, turning away anger; the same word is translated as "Mercy Seat"

Faith in Jesus' blood requires action. We must seek God's will and obey it. The Israelites were safe by obediently applying the blood. Rahab and her family were safe by hanging the red cord and staying in the house. Not only do we need Jesus' blood to wash away our sins, we must stay "in the house of God, which is the church of the living God" (1 Timothy 3:15).

Salvation does not mean we continue in our sinful ways. Did the Israelites stay in Egypt? Did Rahab stay in Jericho? A life lived for God ("in the house") is to "abide in" Christ and have His "words abide in" us (John 15:7). We no longer seek our ways (rebellion) but desire to keep the "Father's commandments" (John 15:10).

Bible Quiz



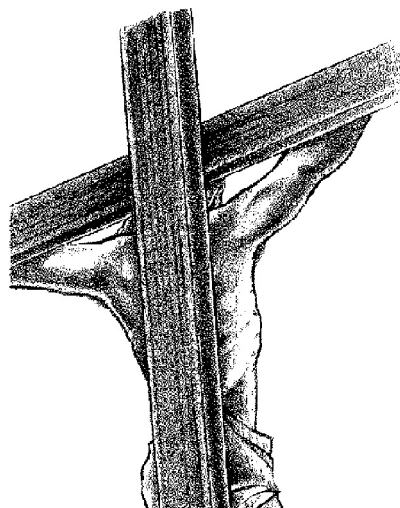
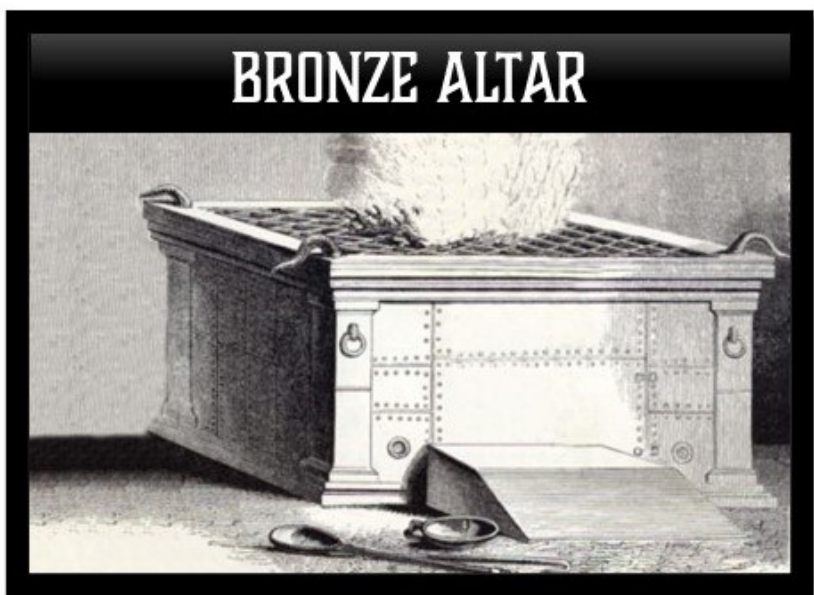
1. In the Hebrew, the word *offering* means _____.
2. Why did God require animal sacrifices? _____

3. What did it mean to place one's hands "upon the head of the burnt offering"? _____

4. Sin is disobedience to God's laws. God calls it _____.
5. Not seeing sin's seriousness makes it easier to give in to _____ to do wrong.
6. The altar had _____ horns, believed to have been pointing outward in all four directions.
7. Horns represent _____. What does the blood being placed on the horns represent?

8. What does the word *foreshadow* mean? _____
9. What did Jesus mean when He cried, "It is finished"? _____

10. "Propitiation" is the same word translated as _____.
11. What did Rahab hang in her window? _____
12. What did the children of Israel apply to their doorposts? _____
13. What does faith in Jesus' blood require? _____
14. What does a life lived for God ("in the house") look like? _____



A FORESHADOW

THE REALITY

MATCH THE FORESHADOW TO THE REALITY

- | | |
|--|--|
| _____ Sacrifice was burned completely. | A. "The wages of sin is death." |
| _____ The Altar was brass-covered wood. | B. Jesus kept His humanity under God's will. |
| _____ Man must come to the Altar before the Holy of Holies (God's presence). | C. "There's power in the blood to save from sin." |
| _____ The sacrifice was to be without blemish. | D. Jesus gave Himself completely (body, soul, and spirit). |
| _____ "He shall kill the bullock." | E. Tetelestai – "It is finished!" |
| _____ "Put [the blood] upon the horns." | F. "The LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." |
| _____ Animal sacrifices were ongoing. | G. Christ was without sin. |
| _____ "He is to lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering." | H. To come into God's presence requires dealing with our sins first. |

"In the Old Testament, the New is hidden; in the New Testament, the Old lies open."
