

Exodus 20:22-26

"And the LORD said to Moses, 'Thus you shall say to the people of Israel: 'You have seen for yourselves that I have talked with you from heaven. You shall not make gods of silver to be with me, nor shall you make for yourselves gods of gold. **An altar of earth** you shall make for me and sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen.

Read By: Jeff Fritz

Exodus 20:22-26

In every place where I cause my name to be remembered, I will come to you and bless you. **If you make me an altar of stone, you shall not build it of hewn stones, for if you wield your tool on it you profane it.** And you shall not go up by steps to my altar, that your nakedness be not exposed on it."

Read By: Jeff Fritz

Deuteronomy 27:1-8

Then Moses and the leaders of Israel gave this charge to the people: "Obey all these commands that I am giving you today. When you cross the Jordan River and enter the land the Lord your God is giving you, **set up some large stones and coat them with plaster. Write this whole body of instruction on them** when you cross the river to enter the land the Lord your God is giving you—a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the Lord, the God of your ancestors, promised you.

Read By: Jeff Fritz

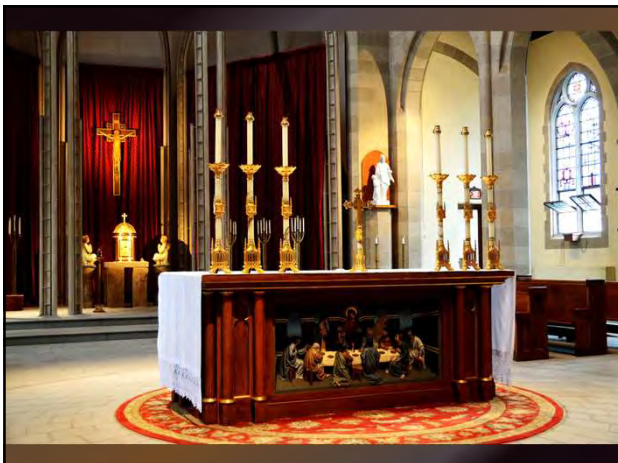
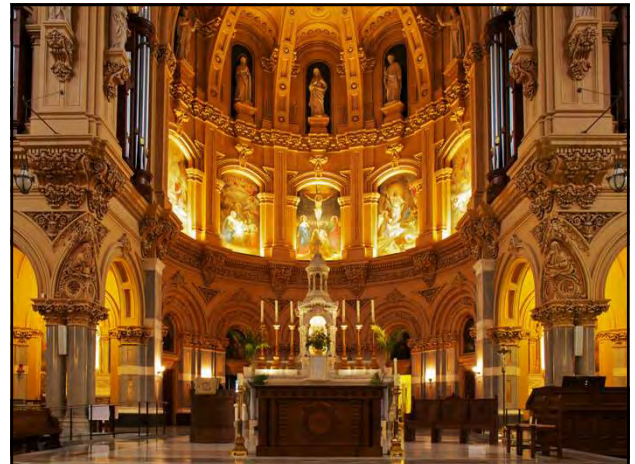
Deuteronomy 27:1-8

When you cross the Jordan, set up these stones at Mount Ebal and coat them with plaster, as I am commanding you today.

Then build an altar there to the Lord your God, using natural, uncut stones. You must not shape the stones with an iron tool. Build the altar of uncut stones, and use it to offer burnt offerings to the Lord your God. Also, sacrifice peace offerings on it, and celebrate by feasting there before the Lord your God. You must clearly write all these instructions on the stones coated with plaster.

Read By: Jeff Fritz

When you think about
“altars” ...
what comes to mind?



God's declarations...

“An altar of earth you shall make for me and sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen...”

“If you make me an altar of stone, you shall not build it of hewn stones, for if you wield your tool on it you profane it...”

“When you cross the Jordan River and enter the land the Lord your God is giving you, set up some large stones and coat them with plaster. Write this whole body of instruction on them...”

Consider God...
Master Craftsman of all the universe...
*Who fashioned stars and starfish,
 magnificent mountains and the
 smallest of flowers...*

Consider God...
Master Craftsman of all the universe...
*Who fashioned stars and starfish,
 magnificent mountains and the
 smallest of flowers...*

*Why would He be interested in the details
 of our altar-making...
 even to the selection of stones and the
 "non-use" of tools?*

Consider God...

*Think of the stones cut in Egypt to build
 the pharaoh's buildings!*

**I'm not like
 them!**

Consider God...

*He already had everything He
 needed in heaven!*

*He now desired men – delegated
 sovereigns of this earth – to participate
 in His work and share in His glory...
 ... through loving worship & submission.*

Consider God...

*The first thing He addresses in the
 Law is...*

**How to fellowship
 with Him...**

Worship!

Consider God...

*Our altars would be made of
 nothing more valuable than...*

Dirt!

The focus would be on Him!

Altars appear in many OT places...

Noah – Genesis 8:20

Abraham – Gen 12:7-8; 13:18; 22:9

Isaac – Gen 26:25

Jacob – 33:20; 35:1-7

Moses – Exodus 17:15; 24:4



Even prior to Moses...

As memorials...

To establish a testimony...

To mark an encounter or significant event...



“mizbeah”

(Strong's 4196)

altar; to kill, offer, (do) sacrifice, slay, a place of slaughter



Place of Meeting!

Sinful man might meet with God
a place of slaughter
in safety...

And full assurance of forgiveness!



“Altars are not places of beauty to be admired... They are places of sacrifice! places of death!”



Edwards – “Encountering God” - p64

They remind us... There is a holy God! We are not worthy of Him!



They are holy & beautiful because of
the service they render!

And, because of what's on them!



Not
in
themselves!

“An altar of earth you shall make for me...”

“Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust
of the earth (ground) and breathed into his nostrils
the breath of life, and the man became a
living being.”

Genesis 2:7

“... you shall not build it of hewn (cut)
stones, for if you wield your tool on it you
profane it...”

Word: ZIFB

Pronounce: gaw-zeeth'

Strong: H1486

Orig: from 1491; something cut, i.e. dressed
stone:--hewed, hewn stone, wrought. H1491

Use: תְּצַוֶּה Noun Feminine

Grk Strong: G2037

1) a cutting, hewing



“... you shall not build it of hewn (cut)
stones, for if you wield your tool on it you
profane it...”

“chala”

KJV – Polluted

NAS – Profane

NIV - Defile



“... you shall not build it of hewn (cut)
stones, for if you wield your tool on it you
profane it...”

God was adamant!

“profane” -

“wound, pollute, slay, or
prostitute.”

“For we are God's
handiwork...”

Ephesians 2:10



Deuteronomy 27:5

Then build an altar there to the Lord your God,
using natural, uncut stones. You must not shape
the stones with an iron tool...

“Uncut” –

Complete, full, just,
made ready,
peaceable, perfect,
quiet, whole...



“... you shall not build it of hewn (cut) stones, for if you wield your tool on it you profane it...”

“As you come to Him, the living Stone — rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to Him —you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

1 Peter 2:4-5

“To God, human construction on the altar stones made them unholy and profane. That’s because God knew the danger implicit in cut stones and man-made bricks. The moment we begin to adorn altars with human effort is the moment we shift the focus off of the God we praise. Instead, we admire the human talent that made the vessel or the human ability that cut the stone.

We become idolaters. Our worship becomes profane.”

HEATHER C. KING – ROOM TO BREATHE

<https://heatherking.org/2012/04/16/altars-of-uncut-stones-or-the-beauty-of-simple-obedience/>

But...

This is the 21st century!

We don’t build altars any more!

What can this ancient instruction teach us about the heart of God?

An Altar of Uncut Stone

Common!

Many... into one!

Neither bought nor imported!

As is! Not to be carved, shaped, smoothed...



An Altar of Uncut Stone

God’s interested in the SACRIFICE...

He accepts the offering...

... the GIVER, not the altar!



An Altar of Uncut Stone

He chose...

A convicted felon who stuttered!

A conniving adulterer to be Israel’s greatest king!

A man who systematically hunted down and killed Christians to spread His gospel message!

Carl Christianssen - Cicada Song Blog -

<https://cicadasong.blog/2020/07/19/an-altar-of-uncut-stone/>



Our works do not impress God.

We cannot build, craft, or fashion anything that would impress our Creator. Our best efforts are a profanity to Him. There's nothing we can do to earn God's approval. God wants us. Our lives. Our hearts. Our very selves. He doesn't want what we can do or make for Him.

Kristin Renfer – So I Fix My Eyes

<https://www.soifixmyeyes.com/exodus/altars-from-uncut-stone>

God doesn't need us. But He wants us.

He wants relationship with us. Nothing we could do will change that. So don't worry about trying to create something amazing for God or trying to impress Him with what you can do, just give Him your heart. He doesn't want fancy alters, just a heart of obedience. Just give God the gift of yourself.

Kristin Renfer – So I Fix My Eyes

<https://www.soifixmyeyes.com/exodus/altars-from-uncut-stone>

Deuteronomy 27:2-3

“...set up some large stones and coat them with plaster. Write this whole body of instruction on them...”

“...so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.”

Romans 12:5

“... you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

1 Peter 2:4-5

“Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams.”

1 Samuel 15:22

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast.”

Ephesians 2:8-9

THEREFORE...
Present yourself as a living sacrifice!

Come as you are!

... and let His transforming power shape you into the a masterpiece of His making!