

Battle of the Altars



Biblical vs Pagan



vs



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THE BATTLE OF THE ALTARS

Altars are found from the very beginning of time.

Both Biblical altars and pagan altars are evidenced by archeological sites.

Many of these altars reflect similar attributes in both the style and the building models.



THE PRINCIPLE OF CAUSE AND EFFECT

Paul in his letters reflects on the way we should approach GOD.

He makes sure that we understand that the physical and the spiritual domains are both real and connected.

1 Corinthians 15:45-49 *“So it is written (in Scripture), “The first man, Adam, became a living soul (an individual);” the last Adam (CHRIST) became a life-giving spirit (restoring the dead to life). However, the spiritual (the immortal life) is not first, but the physical (the mortal life); then the spiritual. The first man (Adam) is from the earth, earthy (made of dust); the second Man (CHRIST, the LORD) is from heaven. As is the earthly man (the man of dust), so are those who are of earth; and as is the heavenly (Man), so are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the earthly (the man of dust), we will also bear the image of the heavenly (the Man of heaven).”*

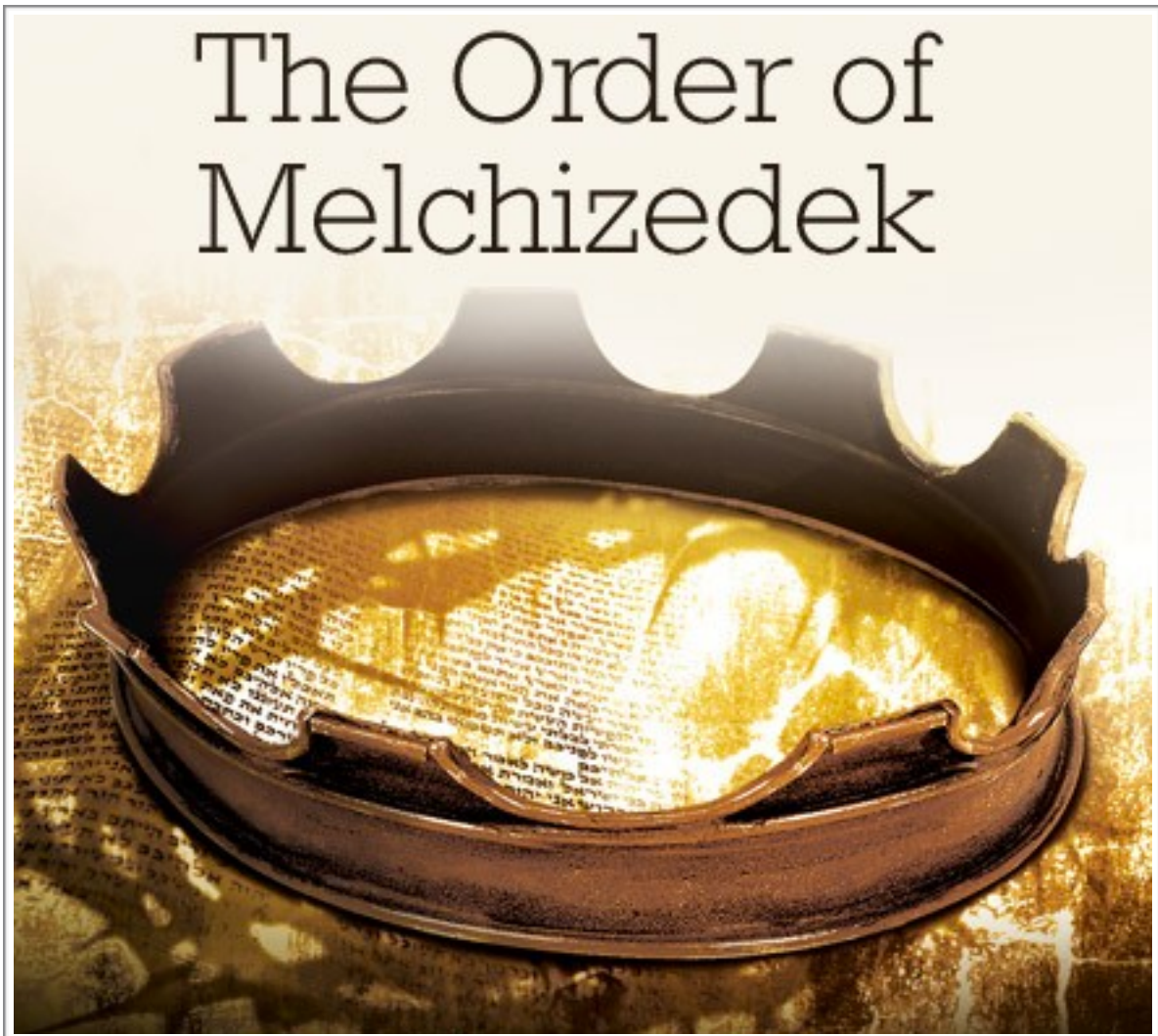
What does Paul wants us to understand?

1. That we can only impact the spiritual realm if we take an active part in the physical domain.
2. That every prophetic action in the physical will reflect in the spiritual domain.
3. That this will be true for both Biblical and evil prophetic actions.

Peter in his letters to the churches tells us that we are to be PRIESTS in a Heavenly Tabernacle.

He described this Tabernacle as the one made up of LIVING STONES.

More importantly, he tells us that JESUS is the Great High Priest in the ORDER of MELCHIZEDEK in that Tabernacle.



1 Peter 2:1-6 *“So put aside every trace of malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander and hateful speech; like newborn babies (you should) long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may be nurtured and grow in respect to salvation (its ultimate fulfillment), if in fact you have (already) tasted (a)the goodness and gracious kindness of the LORD. As Living Stones. Come to Him (the risen LORD) as to a living Stone which men rejected and threw away, but which is choice and precious in the sight of GOD. You (believers), like living stones, are being built up into a spiritual house for a holy and dedicated priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices (that are) acceptable and pleasing to GOD through Jesus CHRIST. For this is contained in Scripture: “Behold, I am laying in Zion a chosen stone, a precious (honored) Cornerstone, And he who believes in Him (whoever adheres to, trusts in, and relies on Him) will never be disappointed (in his expectations).”*

1 Peter 2:7-10 *This precious value, then, is for you who believe (in Him as GOD's only Son—the Source of salvation); but for those who disbelieve, "The (very) stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief Cornerstone," and, "A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense"; for they stumble because they disobey the word (of GOD), and to this they (who reject Him as Savior) were also appointed. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation, a (special) people for GOD's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies (the wonderful deeds and virtues and perfections) of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. Once you were not a people (at all), but now you are GOD's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy."*

WHAT IS THE SPIRITUAL EFFECT OF AN ALTAR ?

A study of the Bible reveals to us the following attributes of an altar.

These various attributes also highlight the importance of an altar.

(1) Altars have the power to release blessing or curses.

The classic story of a blessing to read this is the one where Jacob is leaving the land to go to stay with his relatives until Esau has calmed down.

He will go to sleep and dream, not only of the time that lies ahead, but also of his return to his own land.

Genesis 28:11-15 *"And he came to a certain place and stayed overnight there because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down there (to sleep). He dreamed that there was a ladder (stairway) placed on the earth, and the top of it reached (out of sight) toward heaven; and (he saw) the angels of GOD ascending and descending on it (going to and from heaven). And behold, the LORD stood above and around him and said, "I am the LORD, the GOD of Abraham your (father's) father and the GOD of Isaac; I will give to you and to your descendants the land (of promise) on which you are lying. Your descendants shall be as (countless as) the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and the east and the north and the south; and all the families (nations) of the earth shall be blessed through you and your descendants. Behold, I am with you and will keep (careful watch over you and guard) you wherever you may go, and I will bring you back to this (promised) land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."*

Genesis 28:16-22 Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and he said, "Without any doubt the LORD is in this place, and I did not realize it." So he was afraid and said, "How fearful and awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of GOD, and this is the gateway to heaven." So Jacob got up early in the morning, and took the stone he had put under his head and he set it up as a pillar (that is, a monument to the vision in his dream), and he poured (olive) oil on the top of it (to (d)consecrate it). He named that place Bethel (the house of GOD); the previous name of that city was Luz (Almond Tree). Then Jacob made a vow (promise), saying, "If GOD will be with me and will keep me on this journey that I take, and will give me food to eat and clothing to wear, and if (He grants that) I return to my father's house in safety, then the LORD will be my GOD. This stone which I have set up as a pillar (monument, memorial) will be GOD's house (a sacred place to me), and of everything that You give me I will give the tenth to You (as an offering to signify my gratitude and dependence on You)."

Numbers 23:1-3 "Then Balaam said to Balak, "Build seven altars for me here, and prepare for me seven bulls and seven rams here." Balak did just as Balaam had said, and Balak and Balaam offered a bull and a ram on each altar. Then Balaam said to Balak, "Stand beside your burnt offering and I will go. Perhaps the LORD will come to meet me; and whatever He shows me I will tell you." So he went to a desolate hill."

(2) Altars stand as a memorial to those who constructed them.

In this case I refer you to the life of Abraham.

(i) He will build an altar of PRAYER.



Genesis 12:1-7 "Now (in Haran) the LORD had said to Abram, "Go away from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you; And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you (abundantly), And make your name great (exalted, distinguished); And you shall be a blessing (a source of great good to others); And I will bless (do good for, benefit) those who bless you, And I will curse (that is, subject to My wrath and judgment) the one who curses (despises, dishonors, has contempt for)

you. And in you all the families (nations) of the earth will be blessed.” So Abram departed (in faithful obedience) as the LORD had directed him; and Lot (his nephew) left with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his nephew, and all their possessions which they had acquired, and the people (servants) which they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of Canaan, Abram passed through the land as far as the site of Shechem, to the (great) terebinth (oak) tree of Moreh. Now the (b)Canaanites were in the land at that time. Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, “I will give this land to your descendants.” So Abram built an altar there to (honor) the LORD who had appeared to him.”

(ii) He will build an altar of HOLINESS.

He will move to stay in between Bethel (the House of GOD) and Ai (the heap of stones).

He is symbolising the walk of holiness that we all have to take..we must leave behind the heap of rubbish which reflects the works of the flesh
And the effect of generational curses and move towards a life of purity and holiness.

Genesis 12:8-10 *“Then he moved on from there to the mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD (in worship through prayer, praise, and thanksgiving). Then Abram journeyed on, continuing toward the Negev (the South country of Judah). Now there was a famine in the land; and Abram went down into Egypt to live temporarily, for the famine in the land was oppressive and severe.”*

(iii) He will build an altar of PEACE.

His own close family, as well as Lot and his family, will battle of the rights to grazing and water.

Abraham chooses to walk in peace.

Genesis 13:14-16 *“The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had left him, “Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are standing, northward and southward and eastward and westward; for all the land which you see I will give to you and to your descendants forever. I will make your descendants (as numerous) as the dust of the earth, so that if a man could count the (grains of) dust of the earth, then your descendants could also be counted.*

Genesis 13:17-18 *Arise, walk (make a thorough reconnaissance) around in the land, through its length and its width, for I will give it to you.” Then Abram broke camp and moved his tent, and came and settled by the (grove of the great) terebinths (oak trees) of Mamre (the Amorite), which are in Hebron, and there he built an altar to (honor) the LORD.”*

(iv) He will build an altar of PROVISION.

GOD will ask him to go to Mount Moriah with his son Isaac ..there he will prepare a sacrifice and live in faith that GOD will resurrect his son.

Genesis 22:9-14 *“When they came to the place of which GOD had told him, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood, and bound Isaac his son and placed him on the altar, on top of the wood. Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to kill his son. But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” He answered, “Here I am.” The LORD said, “Do not reach out (with the knife in) your hand against the boy, and do nothing to (harm) him; for now I know that you fear GOD (with reverence and profound respect), since you have not withheld from Me your son, your only son (of promise).” Then Abraham looked up and glanced around, and behold, behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up for a burnt offering (ascending sacrifice) instead of his son. So Abraham named that place The LORD Will Provide. And it is said to this day, “On the mountain of the LORD it will be seen and provided.”*

(3) Altars speak on our behalf.

This verse proclaiming the end times reveals this truth.

Revelation 16:7 *“And I heard (another from) the altar saying, “Yes, O LORD GOD, the Almighty (the Omnipotent, the Ruler of all), Your judgments are true and fair and righteous.”*

(4) Altars open the doors to the spiritual realm.

Elijah tells us that while he is standing on earth before an earthly / fleshly king, he is also standing in the Presence of GOD.



1 Kings 17:1 *“Eliyahu from Tishbe, an inhabitant of Gil’ad, said to Ach’av, “As Adonai the GOD of Isra’el lives, before whom I stand, there will be neither rain nor dew in the years ahead unless I say so.”*”

1 Kings 18:1-20 *“Now it happened after many days that the word of the LORD came to Elijah in the third year, saying, “Go, show yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the face of the earth.” So Elijah went to show himself to Ahab. Now the famine was severe in Samaria. Ahab called Obadiah who was the governor of his house. (Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly; for when Jezebel destroyed the prophets of the LORD, Obadiah took a hundred prophets and hid them by fifties in a cave, and provided them with bread and water.) Then Ahab said to Obadiah, “Go into the land to all the sources of water and to all the streams; perhaps we may find grass and keep the horses and mules alive, and not have to kill some of the cattle.” So they divided the land between them to survey it. Ahab went one way by himself and Obadiah went another way by himself. As Obadiah was on the way, behold, Elijah met him. He recognized him and fell face downward (out of respect) and said, “Is it you, my LORD Elijah?” He answered him, “It is I. Go tell your master, ‘Elijah is here.’” But he said, “What sin have I committed, that you would hand over your servant to Ahab to put me to death? As the LORD your GOD lives, there is no nation or kingdom where my master has not sent messengers to seek you; and when they said, ‘He is not here,’ Ahab made the kingdom or nation swear that they had not found you. And now you are saying, ‘Go, tell your master, “Behold, Elijah (is here).”’ And as soon as I leave you, the Spirit of the LORD will carry you to a place I do not know; so when I come to tell Ahab and he does not find you, he will kill me. Yet your servant has (reverently) feared the LORD from my youth. Has it not been told to my LORD (Elijah) what I did when Jezebel killed the prophets of the LORD, how I hid a hundred of the LORD’s prophets by fifties in a cave, and provided them with bread and water? And now you are saying, ‘Go, tell your master, “Elijah is here”’; and he will kill me.” Elijah said, “As the LORD of hosts (armies) lives, before whom I stand, I will certainly show myself to Ahab today.” So Obadiah went to meet Ahab and told him; and Ahab went to meet Elijah. When Ahab saw Elijah, Ahab said to him, “Are you the one who is bringing disaster on Israel?” Elijah said, “I have not brought disaster on Israel, but you and your father’s household have, by abandoning (rejecting) the commandments of the LORD and by following the Baals. Now then, send word and gather to me all Israel at Mount Carmel, together with the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of (the goddess) Asherah, who eat at (Queen) Jezebel’s table.” So Ahab sent word to all the Israelites and assembled the (pagan) prophets together at Mount Carmel.”*

(5) Altars empower the force of generational curses..



We are told that the effect of curses continues until the 3-4th generation - and in the case of illegitimacy - 10 generations. If they are not repented of, they can continue for many generations.

Any altar built to a pagan / occult god will therefore continue to affect the family until that force has been dealt with.

WAR BETWEEN ALTARS

A. We can have personal altars.

In the classic story of Gideon, we are told that his father built an altar to Baal in his house.

The people of Israel are under bondage.

GOD has chosen Gideon to go out as the leader and judge of the people ...

However, HE makes sure that Gideon understands that he has NO right to do so, UNLESS he first destroys his father's altar.

The powers of that evil altar had a right to rule in that house BECAUSE his father had opened that portal by building the altar.

Judges 6:25 *“Now on that same night the LORD said to Gideon, “Take your father’s bull, the second bull seven years old, and tear down the altar of Baal that belongs to your father, and cut down the Asherah that is beside it;”*

- ◆ Gideon had to destroy the altar.
- ◆ Gideon had to offer a sacrifice to “cover“ the sin of that evil altar BEFORE he could lead the people.

We learn that you cannot go to war unless you have dealt with family altars.

B. We can also have an altar built by a pagan priest grouping ... i.e. at “church” level.

The Classic story that reveals this is the battle between Elijah and the Baal priests of Jezebel.

1 Kings 18:21 *“Elijah approached all the people and said, “How long will you hesitate between two opinions? If the LORD is GOD, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.” But the people (of Israel) did not answer him (so much as) a word.”*

We see a confirmation of this principle in:

Matthew 6:24 *“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve GOD and mammon (money, possessions, fame, status, or whatever is valued more than the LORD).”*

Elijah asks the people .."how long are you going to switch alliances...at one time serving GOD ... on another serving Pagan gods”?

We read that 450 pagan priests gather together to represent their gods.

In the evil domain, you will always find large numbers of people that want to serve at these pagan altars.

On the other hand, we find one true prophet ... although the Old Testament reflects this as one man, we come to understand from the works of Paul, that this represent the One New Man ... or in other words the Body of Messiah ... all those who walk in unity.

By applying the teaching of Paul, we know that every person is equal but unique ... each person has been empowered with a unique gift that is essential for the completeness of the BODY.

In order for the Body of Messiah in a city to stand up to this level of pagan forces, we need to have UNITY in the Body.

What are the prophetic actions that we must learn from Elijah and apply today?

(i) We must rebuild the GODLY altars.

Importantly, Elijah shows us that we must have TWELVE stones ... one for every tribe. ... in New Testament language ... we must have all of the GIFTS represented.

1 Kings 18:30-32 *“Then Elijah said to all the people, “Come near to me.” So all the people approached him. And he repaired and rebuilt the (old) altar of the LORD that had been torn down (by Jezebel). Then Elijah took twelve stones in accordance with the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD had come, saying, “Israel shall be your name.” So with the stones Elijah built an altar in the name of the LORD. He made a trench around the altar large enough to hold two measures of seed.”*

(ii) We must anoint that altar with water.

Elijah has the people pour water over his altar.

He is making sure that it is GOD that is acting - and no one will doubt that it's the work of GOD.

Our lifestyle should role model the Fruit of the Holy Spirit so that the sceptics amongst the other people in the city ... who doubt the reality of GOD, will know beyond doubt that they have witnessed the TRUTH in action.



1 Kings 18:33-35 *“Then he laid out the wood and cut the ox in pieces and laid it on the wood. And he said, “Fill four pitchers with water and pour it on the burnt offering and the wood.” And he said, “Do it the second time.” And they did it the second time. And he said, “Do it the third time.” And they did it a third time. The water flowed around the altar, and he also filled the trench with water.”*

(iii) We must pray in PUBLIC.

All too often the Body of Messiah wants to remain behind closed doors. Or, if we do venture out, we find that leaders act with presumption and in own ego, but in order to reveal the works of GOD.

We must be bold ... we must humbly stand and declare our faith in GOD ... we must be prepared to be “set apart”.

Just like Elijah, we must call out with a “loud voice” knowing that GOD always hears us cry.

1 Kings 18:36-37 *“At the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, Elijah the prophet approached (the altar) and said, “O LORD, the GOD of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel (Jacob), let it be known today that You are GOD in Israel and that I am Your servant and that I have done all these things at Your word. Answer me, O LORD, answer me, so that this people may know that You, O LORD, are GOD, and that You have turned their hearts back (to You).”*

(iv) We must EXPECT a response.

As we wait for the victory, we must maintain our faith..we must live with the expectation that victory is eminent.

Just like Elijah ... we must know that GOD is not too busy that He will not respond ... that GOD is not on a journey that He cannot be present ... that GOD is not asleep and that He is constantly watching us.

1 Kings 18:3 *“Ahab called Obadiah who was the governor of his house. (Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly;”*

Hebrews 12:28-29 *“Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, and offer to GOD pleasing service and acceptable worship with reverence and awe; for our GOD is (indeed) a consuming fire.”*

C. We can have an altar built by a king ... in today's language - by a governmental authority - pastors, spiritual leaders.

Jeroboam is elected the king over the TEN tribes ... over what becomes known as The House of Israel.

Keep in mind that the “king” is an ambassador of YHVH - any one that accepts this role, would be expected to live to the standard of the post, for example: would not accumulate chariots, would write his own copy of the Bible, and so forth. (**Deuteronomy 17:16,17**)

He knows that GOD has declared that Jerusalem is the place where HE will be found.

Jeroboam however, reacts as an earthly king, and creates his own centres of worship.



We can describe this as an ALTAR OF MAN's EGO.

If you consider the events described in this story, you will note a strong correlation with the events at Mount Sinai.

Man decides to do his own thing:

- ◆ He does not wait on YHVH's timing
- ◆ He builds a golden calf
- ◆ He worships as he pleases

What is extremely wicked about this version of an altar is that it is a misrepresentation of GOD.

Unfortunately, people (although they may be inherently good), often fail to study the Bible and the Character of GOD.

Because of this failure MANY will perish ...

We need to understand the spirit of Jeroboam

1. The spirit of Jeroboam works in people fulfilling leadership positions

The calling to lead GOD's People starts off with the requirements that you will serve.

1 Kings 12:31-37 *“He also made temples on high places and appointed priests from among all the people, who were not of the Levites. And Jeroboam appointed a feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month like the feast that was in Judah, and he offered sacrifices on the altar. So he did in Bethel, sacrificing to the calves that he made. And he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places that he had made. He went up to the altar that he had made in Bethel on the fifteenth day in the eighth month, in the month that he had devised from his own heart. And he instituted a feast for the people of Israel and went up to the altar to make offerings.”*

This service implies that you will be prepared to lift up the arms of those who are your followers - the picture that we should keep in mind, is that of the two men who continue to hold up the hands of Moses whenever he got tired.

Unfortunately, the world / military system of the “boss” has left its mark on the Body of Messiah.

And man's EGO tends to like the ‘boss’ model far more than the “serve” model.

One important criteria for any believer, is to stand back and observe the characteristics of the leader BEFORE rushing in to join their group.

2. The spirit of Jeroboam will reveal an insecurity about the loyalty of the people

People with an ego tend to think that they are the only ones who can do something properly.

- ◆ They will also always be in control - *“you will do things my way”*
- ◆ They will demand that you serve them
- ◆ They will demand that nothing is done outside of the express authority of themselves.

So he builds an altar at Bethel and one in Dan.

Let us look at these altars ...

Bethal

- ◆ This is the place of the first altar
- ◆ It is the place where the Tabernacle stood for hundreds of years
- ◆ It is the place where everyone feels comfortable

If you think about this carefully, you will realise that this is the place where religion rules:

- ◆ Where traditions of men are the norm (this is the way our fathers did it ... don't rock the boat).
- ◆ Where culture and ritual are more important than the WORD or the Holy Spirit.
- ◆ Where traditional / ritual fulfil the needs of man, who does not want to be ACCOUNTABLE to GOD at all.

Matthew 15:7-9 *“You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said: “This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”*

2 Timothy 4:3-4 *“For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.*

Dan

The Altar of Dan is set up near the pagan high places.

If you visit the site today, you will find the supposedly Godly temple, not very far from the pagan altar.

The message - it is great / fine / acceptable to mix Godly worship with anything else that you feel like.



Dan speaks to convenience:

- ◆ You see, it is far to walk to Jerusalem - now you can just go around the corner, and it is all alright.
- ◆ You see, this way you save both time and money - after all, this temple will not expect a tithe as there are no real Levites here!!

Laziness is an integral part of the human spirit ... if we can find an easy way to serve GOD - it is all grace and no obedience - then why not.

Dan speaks of empty worthless, man-made worship.

Matthew 7:13-14 *“Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.”*

There Jeroboam will set up temples in high places, appoint priests, and build golden calves.

1 Kings 12:27 *“Then Jeroboam built Shechem (as his royal city) in the hill country of Ephraim and lived there. He went out from there and rebuilt Peniel (as a stronghold). Jeroboam (doubted GOD’s promise to him and) said in his heart, “Now the kingdom will return to the house of David. If these people go up to the house of the LORD in Jerusalem to offer sacrifices, then their heart will turn to their LORD, to Rehoboam king of Judah; and they will kill me and return to Rehoboam king of Judah.” So the king took counsel (and followed bad advice) and made two calves of gold. And he said to the people, “It is too much for you to go (all the way) up to Jerusalem; behold your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.” He set the one (golden calf) in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan.*

3. The spirit of Jeroboam will attack the reverence of GOD

We often look at these scriptures and then think - how crazy were these people - surely they could have seen that this was a “golden calf” moment? Surely there was someone in the tribes that had heard the story from Mount Sinai?

Anytime a leader starts to speak exclusively about his church or his network of churches as the only and most important, or starts to break down other pastors or church movements, then you can be sure that you are standing in front of another golden calf.

There is only ONE authority - that is, GOD ALMIGHTY - whenever a man determines that they can make decisions that are not in line with the Bible, or Biblical principles, then we are standing in front of the “wrong” authority - we are standing at the golden calf again.

1 Kings 12:28 *“So the king took counsel and made two calves of gold. And he said to the people, “You have gone up to Jerusalem long enough. Behold your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.”*”

Holiness is when we do things GOD’s Way - and not our way - it is when we accept that GOD can use whoever He desires - its when we accept that we are only a small part of the bigger picture, that we will be walking in Holiness

What prophetic actions do we learn from this story?

That there is a different spiritual message between the altars of a king / pastor / government and those of the pagan / occultism domains.

The latter are altars that have spiritual power...as there is pagan worship that is associated and accumulated.

In the case of church leadership / government altars, the same is not true... these are works of man’s own ego - but that still gives satan power!

A true prophet of GOD will react to the prompting of the Holy Spirit and speak out.

I note THREE attributes of such a prophet:

- i) They will PERSONALLY stand in the gap
- ii) They will PUBLICLY stand in the gap
- iii) They will GUARD the mandate that they have been given

Hosea 4:6 *“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge (of My law, where I reveal My will). Because you (the priestly nation) have rejected knowledge, I will also reject you from being My priest. Since you have forgotten the law of your God, I will also forget your children.”*

Hosea 6:7 *“The more they multiplied (in numbers and increased in power), the more they sinned against Me; I will change their glory into shame.”*

What are these altars today?

- ◆ Acts of corruption
- ◆ Acts of nepotism.
- ◆ Acts of brutality and abuse.
- ◆ Acts of injustice



1 Kings 13:1-5 *“Now behold, there came a man of God from Judah to Bethel by the word (command) of the Lord, while Jeroboam was standing by the altar (which he had built) to burn incense. The man cried out against the (idolatrous) altar by the word of the Lord, “O altar, altar, thus says the Lord: ‘Behold, a son shall be born to the house of David, Josiah by name; and on you shall he sacrifice (the bodies of) the priests of the high places who burn incense on you, and human bones shall be burned on you.” And he gave a sign the same day, saying, “This is the sign which the Lord has spoken: ‘Behold, the altar shall be split apart and the ashes that are on it shall be poured out.” When the king heard the words which the man of God cried out against the altar in Bethel, Jeroboam put out his hand from the altar, saying, “Seize him!” And his hand which he had put out against him withered, so that he was unable to pull it back to himself. The altar also was split apart and the ashes were poured out from the altar in accordance with the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the Lord.”*

ALTAR OF SACRIFICE NEDERLAND

Altars are evidenced by the deeds of courageous men and women - people who act within the realms of God's Will, even in times of great danger to themselves.

There are many stories of the Dutch that stood up against the Nazi empire. However, this one celebrates the act of saving lives - more critically, saving young children, who still had the opportunity to go on to develop to their full potential.

- ◆ The man's name - Johan Van Hulst
- ◆ He was the director of a seminary.
- ◆ Jewish men and women were taken to a theatre from where they were moved to Sobibor in Poland.
- ◆ The school is adjacent to a nursery where the Jewish children under 13 were taken
- ◆ The grounds / gardens of the school and the nursery blend seamlessly.
- ◆ From May 1943, local university students begin lifting children over the hedge and into the school.
- ◆ These children were then taken out of the school in laundry bags or baskets and fostered with Protestant and Catholic people.



In his telling of the events, he struggles with the torment ... if there are 80/90-/100 children standing there and you can only save some – who do you take, and how many - in the end, on that last day he took 12 and still asks himself, why not 13?

In many ways this reminds us of Abraham ... he asked to save 50/40/30 and finally 10 from the destruction of Sodom.

We can only do that for which we have faith.

- ◆ An ALTAR of courage stands
- ◆ Simply because one man thought to react to the news of the day - that the Germans would eradicate the Jews.

We stand today in times when the world seems upside down - where all sorts of corruption / anti-Semitism / hatred / has caused all sorts of problems ...

In Europe today, refugees are increasing in number, and with it comes the ever-increasing threat of terrorism.

We also see the abuses in power / position / the increasing effect of occult powers, and the war against the truth of the Body of Messiah's message.

We have an ALTAR here on which we can build.

People with strong Biblical values can build a prayer altar on top of those actions of men and women who sacrificed their lives in saving the children of Jacob.

A FINAL THOUGHT

We are told to look out for false prophets - these are not only the ones who speak prophetic words - but more often, the church leaders who lead the sheep astray with false teachings.

You have a GOD-given mandate - to “keep and guard the Garden”

- ❖ Discover your Garden
- ❖ Work in your Garden
- ❖ Guard your Garden

Produce the harvest of good deeds from your Garden and give GOD the first-fruits offering that He demands.

Matthew 7:15-16 “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?”

AMEN

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Dutch Christian man saves up to 1,000 nursery children from death!



In 2012, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu presented Johan van Hulst with a Hebrew Bible and appreciation on behalf of Israel for saving Jewish lives. (CIDITV YouTube Capture)

It's May of 1943, Amsterdam. The Nazis have occupied the Netherlands for three years and have been rounding up the Jews since summer of 1942.

Men and women are taken to the local theatre. Their babies and children under 13 are being placed in the nursery across the street.

Thirty-two-year-old Johan Van Hulst directed the Christian seminary next door to the nursery where the children were being held for impending death.

He wanted to help. But how?

While Dutch Christians were taken to concentration camps for speaking out against the Nazi New Order, van Hulst pursued a different kind of strategy.

He recalled the Book of Esther in the Bible, which recounts how a Jewish girl became queen and interceded to save a whole generation of Jews from death.

"I thought: I am the director of this school. This school is adjacent to the nursery, the gardens seamlessly blend. I thought: maybe I was put in this place to do something," van Hulst said in an interview at age 101. (nrc, translated)



1925 photo of the Christian Kweekschool (left), which Johan van Hulst directed and the nursery to the right of the school, with the white window frames. (*Joods Cultureel Kwartier, fair use*)

In his role as the the school's director since 1942, Van Hulst allowed the facility to become a critical link between death and freedom for as many as 1,000 children.

He recalled that the deportation process began with a raid of Jewish homes, facilities and neighborhoods. Jewish adults were taken to the theatre across the street from his school, while their infants and toddlers were taken to the nursery next door to the school.

"The children were not yet registered at that time," said van Hulst. "If the Germans, for example, brought 32 children [to the nursery], we [members of the resistance team] entered on the list that there were only 25." (noc, translated)

One of these children was 4-year-old Lies Caransa: "I was not allowed to say goodbye and did not hug my mother and grandmother because that might have caused a scene. I just waved. I felt alone and lonely." (nrc, translated)

A hedge connected the garden of the nursery to the garden of van Hulst's school.

Lies recalls, "I was lifted over a wall and put in a jute bag, which I thought was awful, but as a child I realized that I should not cry or scream. To date, I cannot bear the smell of jute, which reminds me of desolation, anxiety, and fear."



Hollandsche Schouwburg was a luxurious theatre in a vibrant Jewish neighborhood of Amsterdam. Here, 80,000 Jews were collected between 1942–1943 for deportation to death camps. It is now the National Holocaust Memorial of the Netherlands.

Resistance groups and university students smuggled the children out of the school in laundry bags or baskets.

At times, they would wait for the streetcar to stop in front of the school, blocking the sight of the Nazi guards at the theatre across the street, and cycle away with a child in the bag or basket. Or they might get on the car itself with a child.

The resistance groups placed the children with families, both Protestant and Catholic. Lies was placed with a good friend of her mother, who had contacted the resistance group beforehand.

Johan van Hulst and the resistance team didn't take children without the consent of their parents.

He recalled how a mother refused to let her children go, saying, "They need a strong mother." Sighing, Van Hulst said, "They were all killed. I had read *Mein Kampf* in 1933. In the chapter 'I Am an Anti-Semite,' it says that he [Hitler] will destroy 'the rats of society.' I knew it. But the people were blinded." (nrc)

Nearly all of the adults transported through the theatre were murdered in the Nazi extermination camp located at Sobibor, Poland, including Lies' family members. But, gratefully, her mother survived a deportation to Auschwitz.

With two daughters of his own, ages four and six, the operation was especially risky. Van Hulst could have been sentenced for treason and perhaps his entire family taken prisoner and executed, as happened to other resistance members. That weighed heavily on him, but he said, "I had to do it."

"You knew that every child you did not help was dead, some of the adults had come back, not one of the children; it was unimaginable," said van Hulst.



This 1943 illustration by Arthur Szyk tried to publicize the truth that innocent Jewish children were being condemned to die by the Nazis. The drawing first appeared in the *PM New York Daily* newspaper and later on prints and fundraising stamps for Peter H. Bergson's Emergency Committee to Save the Jewish People of Europe. (USHMM)

The first children to be lifted over the garden's hedge with the help of local university students began in May 1943.

"It started with the request of the [nursery] director Henriëtte Pimentel to allow children to sleep in the garden. Soon we put beds in a room ... It is incomprehensible that the Nazis never noticed anything. What we did was probably too bold to be true."

When a Dutch Education Ministry inspector heard babies crying and asked if they were Jewish, van Hulst replied, "You don't really expect me to answer that, do you?"

The government official replied, "In God's name, be careful," and walked away without reporting it, recalled van Hulst. (*Smithsonian*)

Yet, Hulst doesn't consider himself a hero. Rather, he saw his actions as a duty:

"It cannot be said of me: 'He was there and he looked at it.' I saw what was going on; I saw what kind of help was needed and I tried to help, albeit to a modest extent, where possible."

"For me the war never goes away. I have seen with my own eyes how all those children left on train 9, and how two Nazis picked up a Jewish girl's toy doll. Those images are forever burnt on my retina." (*2011 interview, nrc translated*)



Train track ending at Auschwitz Concentration Camp.

Sixty years later, it still deeply distressed van Hulst that he did not save at least one more child.

"Try to imagine 80, 90, perhaps 70 or 100 children standing there, and you have to decide which children to take with you.... That was the most difficult day of my life," he recalled of the time in 1943 when the nursery was to be cleared out. (*Smithsonian*)

"You realize that you cannot possibly take all the children with you. You know for a fact that the children you leave behind are going to die. I took 12 with me. Later on I asked myself: 'Why not 13?'"

At age 101, van Hulst met Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who presented him with a Hebrew Bible and comforted him with these words:

"We say, those who save one life saves a universe. You saved hundreds of universes. I want to thank you in the name of the Jewish people, but also in the name of humanity."



These children were liberated from Auschwitz by the Red Army in January 1945.

Van Hulst, by all accounts, should not have lived beyond age 34, since he had been sentenced to death in 1945 by the Germans (in absentia) for saving Jewish lives. But a knock came on the door of the school. A Jewish woman he did not know warned that the Germans were coming for him.

He fled to his parents' home and remained there without being discovered until after the war ended in September of that year.

At the age of 61, van Hulst received the honor of [Righteous Among the Nations](#) by Israel's Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial organization—an honor bestowed on non-Jews who risked their lives to save Jewish People in the Holocaust.

As well, the Dutch film *Süskind* (2012) recounts the heroic efforts of van Hulst along with Walter van Süskind, a Jewish member of the Dutch Judenrat (Jewish Council), appointed by the Nazis to manage the Hollandsche Schouwburg theatre operation.

In that trusted capacity, Süskind could adjust the records and help coordinate rescue efforts between the nursery, school, and resistance groups.

[Salvation was a team effort.](#)



Johan van Hulst was an avid chess player, winning the Corus Chess Tournament for (former) Dutch politicians at the age of 95 and again at 99. *(Max Euwe Center Amsterdam YouTube capture)*

Lessons for Today

Even with the courage of people like Hulst, Süskind, and some 5,593 other Righteous Gentiles in the Netherlands, the second highest in the world (next to Poland), this nation with 140,000 Dutch and immigrant Jews also had the lowest rate of Holocaust survival in Western Europe — about 27%. (Netherlands Ministry of Justice)

Belgium had nearly 60 percent survival; France, 75 percent.

One important reason for this difference is the high rate of naiveté among the Dutch regarding the motives of the Nazis to exterminate the Jews.

The Dutch people had been relatively free of anti-Semitism before the war, so they did not conceive that man could plot such evil against Jews just because they were Jews.

They chose not to hear or believe the clear plans for Jewish eradication in Hitler's writings and speeches. Just as people today don't hear or believe the many Islamic threats, including Iran's clear plans to launch nuclear weapons into Israel to exterminate the Jewish people.



Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei published a nine-point plan on Twitter to eliminate Israel, November 4, 2014.

Moreover, the Dutch people had a high sense of duty to their governing authority, so Jewish citizens generally cooperated with the Nazis, even after deportations began, still not believing that death would meet them at the end of their train ride.

Another factor that gave the people a false sense of security is that the Nazis did not immediately deport the Jews when they took control of the Netherlands in 1940. Rather, Jews were appointed to serve on councils, which helped the German administration update their records of the Jewish People in the nation, making it easier for deportation when the time came in 1942.

Likewise, the Iranian regime has used naive leaders in Europe and the US to make it easier for them to produce the weapons necessary to exterminate Israel, such as with the signing of the Iranian Nuclear Deal.

Johan Van Hulst, however, was not naive. He understood the true motives of the Nazi regime, the risks for resisting; and yet, **he used his position (as Queen Esther did) to save as many lives as possible.**

[He continued serving his fellow man as a senator in the Dutch Parliament](#) from 1956 until 1981. During the last thirteen years of that service, he led the nation's Christian political party.

At the age of 107, Van Hulst entered eternal peace with His Lord and Savior, Jesus, the Messiah. We believe that on arrival, he heard the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant." **(Matthew 25:21)**

