

# The Eternal Sacrifice of God

by G.W. North

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*The sermon explores the eternal sacrifice of God, revealing its significance in Scripture and its fundamental role in creation.*

**Scripture:** Hebrews 10:1

**Topics:** "Sacrifice and Redemption", "The Altar"

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## Description

G.W. North emphasizes the significance of the altar throughout Scripture, illustrating how it represents a profound truth that unfolds from Genesis to Revelation. He explains that while the New Testament has few references to a literal altar, it reveals the deeper spiritual meaning of sacrifice, culminating in Christ as the ultimate Lamb of God. North highlights that the concept of sacrifice predates human altars, indicating its essential role in creation and eternal life. The sermon encourages believers to seek a greater understanding of this truth, which is vital for entering into God's life and experiencing His pleasure.

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## Transcript

The Altar theme is one of the most important truths of scriptural revelation. Either by direct or indirect mention, or in parallel or closely associated ideas, the truth of the altar is presented to us from beginning to end of the Book. Part of the purpose of this issue is to trace and develop the truth related to the altar as it unfolds from Genesis onwards throughout the two testaments. To do this exhaustively is altogether too great a task; in some connections, however, we shall pause to inquire into the text more fully than in others. This will be necessary for the sake of the truth which God wishes us to understand, that understanding, we may give Him greatest pleasure by entering into His life.

One of the wonderful things about truth is that it is greater than our understanding of it. God has sent forth the Spirit of truth to guide us into it though, that entering in the enlightened heart should see the truth to be as vast as God Himself. It is therefore not surprising that what is often at first thought to be the truth about a thing is soon discovered to be only a part or partial view of the whole truth. Because this is so, every new discovery ought to be regarded only as a truth, or a facet of truth about the truth. Certainly this is so about the truth of the altar, as we shall see.

As is so often the case, the New Testament supplies the key to this subject. At first this may seem more than a little strange, for in it there are so few references to the altar. This is because under the New Covenant there is no place for a literal, earthly altar. With the passing of the Old Covenant and the earthly priesthood there remains no need for any of the means or instruments or place of service necessary to its

function. Upon the rare occasions when the altar is referred to in the New Testament, it has mostly to do with the former earthly legal system given by Moses. From the time of the death and resurrection of Christ this became obsolescent and has long since passed away. Other than in this connection, it is mentioned either with regard to the order of priesthood now functioning under Melchizedek in heaven or with reference to heathen religion, or else with the intention that it be understood only in a figurative and spiritual sense. Nevertheless, in whichever connection it may be mentioned in the New Testament, what is said about it furnishes us with a key to its meaning in the Old Testament.

Perhaps even stranger still, the New Testament passages which provide us with the best lead to the understanding of the whole range of truth associated with the altar do not in fact mention the word. For instance Peter speaks of 'the Lamb (of God) without blemish or spot, who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you', and John says that Jesus was 'the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world', but neither of them mentions the altar. How long before the foundation of the world Jesus was foreordained to be its redeeming Lamb we are not told, nor do we know the precise occasion when He was slain, but the knowledge that sacrifice and death took place long before men ever made an altar on earth introduces a new element into our thinking about it all. Evidently sacrificial offering as known and practised by man is not an idea that originated with him, neither is it an emergency measure devised by God as of political expediency; it is an absolute necessity, apart from which eternal life could not be. This is brought out to us by the revelation that the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world.

Except God had told us this we should never have known, but being in possession of the fact, we see that sacrifice is so fundamental to being that without it the world itself could never have been created.

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