

# The Bronze Altar

by Henry Law

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*Henry Law's sermon emphasizes the Bronze Altar as a symbol of Christ, highlighting the necessity of His sacrifice for atonement and the dangers of placing faith in false altars.*

**Scripture:** Exodus 27:1, Exodus 29:36, Isaiah 53:5, John 1:29, Romans 5:8, Ephesians 2:13, Philippians 4:13, Hebrews 10:12, Hebrews 13:8, 1 Peter 2:24

**Topics:** "Atonement Through Christ", "Tabernacle Symbolism"

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## Description

Henry Law preaches on the significance of the Bronze Altar in the Tabernacle, emphasizing that all worshipers must pass by it, symbolizing Jesus as the Altar of the Church and the importance of putting Christ foremost in our hearts and lives. The Altar, with its horns and perpetual sacrifices, serves as a solemn reminder of sin's consequences and the need for atonement through Christ's sacrifice. The Altar's twofold substance of wood and bronze represents the twofold nature of Jesus as both God and man, offering strength and refuge to believers in their spiritual battles.

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## Transcript

"Using acacia wood, make a square altar 7 1/2 feet wide, 7 1/2 feet long, and 4 1/2 feet high. Make a horn at each of the four corners of the altar so the horns and altar are all one piece. Overlay the altar and its horns with bronze." Exodus 27:1-2

A spacious court enclosed the Tabernacle. There was admittance by one only gate. All worshipers must pass one door. Immediately in front of this the Bronze Altar stood. This object first arrested view. Each eye must first behold, each step must first approach its hallowed structure. All heaven-taught souls acknowledge Jesus as the Altar of the Church. Most plain instruction flows, then, from this prominent position. Christ should be foremost in the heart's desires. Each thought should first go forth towards Him. He should receive the first-fruits of our love. His ear should hear our earliest praise. He should be felt, the Alpha of life's every move.

Parents and ministers mark this. In all your teaching make Christ the morning-star. Let His sweet rays precede all other light. Let other knowledge follow behind Him, and be the lowly handmaid of pure wisdom's Lord!

"Each day you must sacrifice a young bull as an offering for the atonement of sin." Ex. 29:36. The Bronze Altar faced the entrance-gate. It was a solemn sight. Perpetual fire blazed. Perpetual smoke went up.

Perpetual victims died. Perpetual blood was shed. Perpetual offerings came. Why must this carnage be? Who slew all these? What kindled such devouring flames? These questions lead us to a dreadful truth. Fire is the dreadful sign of wrath. The Altar smokes, then, because wrath is gone forth--because transgressions must pay death. These flames write glaringly, 'See what sin earns.'

Reader! you cannot weigh enough the misery and guilt of sin. It wakes eternal fury. It is the fuel of the quenchless fire. And what are you but one vile mass of sin? How, then, can you escape? There is one only hope. This Altar shows it. Come, now, and see its saving wonders. Come, seek its refuge. Come, receive pardon from its blood-stained horns. Depart from it--and you pass to bear, unsheltered, the thunderbolts of wrath.

The Altar's component parts first bid us pause. Its twofold substance presents the twofold nature of our Lord. If frequent types show forth this truth, it is that frequent thoughts may cluster round it. If this sweet flower be fragrant in all spots of Scripture's field, it is that grateful hands may pluck it at each turn. The frame is choicest wood combined with bronze. The wood alone could not suffice. The flames would quickly give it, as ashes, to the sporting winds. A mass, also, of unmingled brass would be a weight too cumbrous for a journeying host. The union fits the Altar for its destined use.

Here is our Jesus, the mighty God, the lowly man. As God, He deals with God. As man, He takes the sinner's place. The God-man saves because the God-man suffers. The pains sufficed for they are infinite. He touches heaven and earth and makes both one. The double substance aptly shows how this rare suitableness combines in Christ.

The form is square. It stands the massive symbol of solidity. It resists all efforts to overthrow it. Faith sees this and exults in its stronghold. Christ is Salvation's Rock. The raging billows of hell's fury lash Him in vain. Earth's ceaseless hate can not jar it. He sits in triumph on the shattered fragments of opposing weapons. The wit, the arguments, the sneers of man, have all fallen harmless at His feet. The cause of Christ still rears its conquering head. He reigns, and ever will reign, immovable in might. Reader! this image calls us to deeper trust. Christ's truth, Christ's word, Christ's work, can never be cast down.

This shape presents to every quarter the same appearance. Be the approach from east, from west, from north, from south, the appearance does not change. Thus Jesus meets the sinner's eye, in every age, in every place; the same. There is no averted look by Him. There is no half reception. There is one broad display of manifested and inviting grace. Sinner, four equal sides face every point. They meet you at each turn. Expanded arms bid you draw near.

Horns branch, also, from each quarter. These are a well-known sign. They speak of all-subduing might. The horned beasts (rhinoceros) move as the forest's terror. When they assail, they triumph. Christ is thus armed for conquest. The thought is precious. My soul, revolve it often. SELF is a broken arm, a pointless dart, a crumbling staff. But strong assaults must be repelled, and strong corruptions trodden down, and strong temptations baffled, and heavy trials borne. Man's sinews cannot wrestle with such foes. But Christ is near. Receive Him as your sword of strength. Leaning on Him, poor worms thresh mountains, and earth's feeblest things do valiantly. Hence the grand power of that wondrous word, 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.' It is the horn of Jesus, which prevails. It never can be broken. Therefore His people raise their heads--and victory is their crown.

These horns were more than types of strength. They were realities of refuge. The criminals who reach it must not die, but live. The sword of vengeance lost its power here. All peril died. The spot was hallowed

SAFETY. This is the full security of Christ's protecting arms. Satan can no more harm. Can He seize Christ, and drag Him from His throne? He must do this before he can pluck the weakest sinner from the breast of Christ. O my soul, let nothing part you from salvation's horns. Let all your guilt, let every view of sin, let the dread thunder of the threatening law, let the swift darts of wrath quicken your flight to Him. Adhere to Him. Hold fast by Him. Live in His wounds. There is no other spot of peace.

The Altar's main design was to receive burnt-offerings. At early morn, throughout the day, at evening's close, the flames were bright, the spire of smoke ascended. He has no Gospel-light who sees not Christ in all this blaze. Each fire-made offering typified His death. But on what Altar can Christ place Himself? The promised God-man comes to die--what arms are able to bear Him up? All things below are worse than worthless for such glorious use. If structure could be raised, in which each stone were brighter than a million suns, it would be black beside Him. Creation has no fit support. When Jehovah's fellow dies, Jehovah's fellow must sustain Himself. Men little think what burdens pressed Him down. The least transgression of God's righteous law is load beyond all thought. Its weight would sink the sinner deeper and deeper through unending ages in unfathomable gulfs. But this holy victim bears the countless sins of countless multitudes. What can support Him when the avenging fire falls? Angels have no sufficient arms. The help of worlds would crumble into dust. Earth can supply no prop or pillar. Christ alone can now uphold Himself. His Deity alone can keep humanity uncrushed. Christ's only Altar is Himself.

Reader! pause now. Behold God's Altar and God's Offering. Christ stands, the fire-applying Priest. Christ comes, the fire-receiving Lamb. Christ lies, the fire-sustaining Altar. All is sufficient, for all is divine. There is enough in all, for there is God in all. The wrath breaks forth. The fury is outpoured. Vengeance demands her due. The Law exacts its curse. But the burnt-offering fails not. Each attribute of God exults. Each sin of the whole family is expiated. Christ bears the whole, because an Altar, strong as His Godhead, bears Him to the end. There is no sweeter thought on earth, there is no louder song in heaven, than praise to the Priest who offered, to the Lamb who suffered, to the Altar who sustained.

Reader! survey again salvation's fabric in its wondrous parts. Extend your hand. Write glory on each stone. It is all worthy of Him who willed, of Him who planned, of Him who wrought it out. God comes. God comes in flesh to die. God upholds the victim in His dying. Christ is the gift, the Altar, the All. My soul, here is a remedy for all your sins. Your need is great, but the atonement is far greater.

Reader! this Altar still stands high in heaven. It stands, and sinners may draw near and use it. Heed, then, a solemn word. Do you discern it with faith's clear eye? Do you cling to it with faith's strong hand? Do you prize it, as God's best gift? Do you frequent it, as your soul's loved home? Is life's main work transacted here? Need, urgent need there is, that hearts should be thus probed.

TIME is, at most, but very short, and rapid is its ceaseless flight. Eternity with all its magnitudes is at the door. The last breath may be quivering on the lip. Undying souls are on the threshold of eternal doom! And SATAN strives, with every art, to close our eyes and lure us to his nets. The WORLD surrounds us with its poisoned baits. It checks us with its sneers and frowns. It courts us with its treacherous smiles. SELF, also, is no friend to the soul. It acts a traitor's part. It opens to the murderous foe. Hence there is need that honest lips should press home honest truth. Say, then, is Christ the precious Altar of your faith, your joy, your hope, your love, your zeal? Look inward. Search yourself.

In every age, not least in this, Satan erects his many counterfeits, and calls them Christ. He decks them with false disguises. He slopes a flowery path into the bewitching snare. He smooths with skillful hand the

slippery descent. He plants the altar of man's imagined worth. He prompts the dream, that rubbish dug from nature's quarry, and shaped by sin-soiled hands, and worked by sin-soiled tools, may form a sufficient base. He bids men to offer Christ on this altar, and then lie down content.

Reader! cast such coiled vipers from your breast. What! pile sin on sin, add filth to filth, and call it a fit pedestal for Christ! The very thought is hell's worst lie. No! Christ must be all, or nothing! He must do all the WORK, have all the MERIT, and possess all the GLORY. Would that they whose hearts turn fondly towards Rome's religious frauds, would hear. They often sound the Altar's name--but they tread down the Altar's truth. They build, indeed, a Babel-tower. They raise high steps, as an ascent to heaven. But is Christ there, the First, the Last, the All? Far otherwise. Man's merit lays the broad foundation. His tears of self-wrought penitence, his long array of self-denials, his train of vaunted charities, his ritual postures, and his external rites, construct the fabric. Such is their altar. Christ then, in name only, is added, as a fair jewel to an earth-made crown. Thus proud conceit and Satan's fraud, join hand in hand to cast down Christ.

Reader! such altars stand on ruin's ground. They decorate a downward path. Think what the end must be of Christ-denying creeds, and Christ-rejecting worship, and Christ-ignoring forms? Are you this dreamer? Awake! Awake! Hell has its altar, also! On it lost souls lie down forever. Satan's bellows will not cease to blow. Tormenting anguish will not cease to flare. But imperishable victims cannot be consumed. Awake! Awake! Behold! heaven's saving Altar is not yet beyond your reach!

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