

• LESSON 3 (January 18) •

Altars of the Patriarchs

The Old Testament word that we translate into English as *altar* is formed from the Hebrew verb root for “slaughter.” *Altar* literally means “slaughter place.” In the ancient world, altars were raised structures built from natural objects or man-made materials. Their purpose? These were the places that sacrifices could be presented to a deity.



Genesis documents the fact that men of faith constructed altars for worshiping God before the days of the Tabernacle. Our taking the time to study their actions and the subsequent reactions of God will enhance our overall understanding of what was involved when the LORD eventually said, “Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst” (Exo 25:8).

Noah • Genesis 8:13-22

- What does this tell us about Noah?
- What does this tell us about God?
- What do we learn about altars from this passage?

Abraham • Genesis 12:1-8; 13:2-4, 18; 22:1-18

- What does this tell us about Abraham?
- What does this tell us about God?
- What do we learn about altars from this passage?



Isaac • Genesis 26:23-25

- What does this tell us about Isaac?
- What does this tell us about God?
- What do we learn about altars from this passage?

Jacob • Genesis 33:1-20; 35:1-7

- What does this tell us about Jacob?
- What does this tell us about God?
- What do we learn about altars from this passage?

Moses • Exodus 17:8-16

- What does this tell us about Moses?
- What does this tell us about God?
- What do we learn about altars from this passage?

POINTS TO PONDER:

- ❖ In connection with altars God said, “I will come to you and bless you” (Exo 20:22-24).
- ❖ He also added, “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” (Exo 20:25-26).

CLOSING THOUGHT: In describing the “better” blessings that Christians now enjoy, Hebrews 13:10 tells us, “We have an altar from which those who serve the tent have no right to eat.”