

# FURTHER STUDY GUIDE

## THE BRONZE ALTAR: CHRIST OUR SACRIFICE | Exodus 27:1-8, Hebrews 10:1-14

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The bronze altar was the first major object encountered when the Israelites entered the tabernacle courtyard. It was located near the entrance, emphasizing that sinful people could not simply walk into God's presence without sacrifice.

The altar was made of acacia wood and overlaid with bronze. It was the place where Israel's sacrifices were offered to God. Animals were sacrificed as substitutes for the people, and their blood was associated with atonement and forgiveness.

But these sacrifices were never intended to be the final solution. Hebrews 10 explains that the sacrifices of the Old Covenant were a “shadow” of the good things to come. They could point toward forgiveness, but they could not ultimately remove sin.

Jesus fulfills what the altar anticipated. He did not bring another animal to sacrifice. He offered Himself. Unlike the repeated sacrifices of the Old Covenant, Christ's sacrifice was offered once for all and is completely sufficient.

The movement of the biblical story is powerful:

**Altar → Sacrifice → Atonement → Forgiveness → Freedom → God's Presence**

## ICEBREAKER QUESTION

If you could remove one burden, regret, or mistake from your past—what difference would that make in your life?

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## GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### THE ALTAR AT THE GATE — Read Exodus 27:1-8

The bronze altar stood at the entrance of the tabernacle courtyard. Before approaching the holy place, Israel first encountered the altar.

This teaches an important biblical truth: sin must be dealt with before sinners can approach a holy God.

The altar also reminds us that forgiveness comes through substitution and sacrifice. An innocent animal died in the place of the guilty worshiper.

The altar wasn't the destination—it was the way toward God's presence.

Ultimately, it points us toward Christ, who would say:

“I am the way, and the truth, and the life.” — John 14:6

1. Why do you think God placed the bronze altar at the entrance to the tabernacle rather than somewhere farther inside? What does this teach us about approaching God?

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2. The altar required a sacrifice for sin. What does sacrifice communicate about the seriousness of sin and the holiness of God?

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3. How does the bronze altar help us understand what Jesus accomplished through His death on the cross?

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### **THE PERFECT SACRIFICE OFFERED — Read: Hebrews 10:1-14**

Hebrews makes the contrast between the Old Covenant sacrifices and Christ unmistakable.

The sacrifices of the Law were repeated continually. If they had completely removed sin, there would have been no need to keep offering them.

Hebrews 10:4 declares:

*“For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.”*

The sacrifices were shadows. Christ is the substance.

Jesus entered into the world to accomplish what the sacrificial system could never accomplish. He offered His own body in obedience to the Father.

And then comes the great declaration of Hebrews 10:12:

*“But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God.”*

The priests stood because their work was never finished. Christ sat down because His sacrificial work was complete.

4. According to Hebrews 10, why were the sacrifices of the Old Covenant unable to completely remove sin?

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5. What is the significance of the statement that Jesus offered Himself “once for all”? How does this differ from the repeated sacrifices of the Old Covenant?

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6. How should Christ's finished sacrifice affect the way we think about our own attempts to earn God's forgiveness or acceptance?

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**FROM FORGIVEN TO FREE — Read: Hebrews 10:10-14 again, Romans 12:1, 1 John 4:18**

The cross doesn't merely change our record before God; it changes our relationship with God.

Hebrews 10:10 says:

*“By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”*

And verse 14 says:

*“For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.”*

There is a beautiful tension here. In Christ, believers have been perfected—their standing before God has been secured—while they are also being sanctified as God continues transforming their lives.

We don't obey God in order to become forgiven. We obey because we have been forgiven.

The altar therefore leads us beyond guilt and condemnation into freedom. Christ's sacrifice doesn't give us permission to continue living in sin. Instead, His finished work gives us the freedom and confidence to live a new life surrendered to God.

7. What is the difference between trying to earn God's forgiveness and living from the assurance that Christ has already secured your forgiveness?

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8. Hebrews 10:14 speaks of those who have been “perfected” while also “being sanctified.” How can both realities be true in the life of a Christian?

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9. If Christ has completely paid the price for your sin, what should freedom from condemnation look like in your everyday life? What should it produce—gratitude, obedience, holiness, worship, mission?

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# PERSONAL DEVOTIONAL

## THE SACRIFICE IS ENOUGH

Read Hebrews 10:10–14 slowly two or three times.

The bronze altar reminds us that sin is serious and that approaching a holy God requires sacrifice. But Hebrews takes us beyond the altar to the cross.

Jesus didn't offer an animal. He offered Himself. He didn't make another temporary provision for sin. He dealt with sin once for all.

And He didn't remain standing at the altar waiting for more sacrifices to be offered. He sat down. His work was finished.

Take a few moments to consider:

- Am I still trying to earn God's acceptance for something Christ has already accomplished?
- Do I genuinely believe that Christ's sacrifice is sufficient for my sin?
- Is guilt from my past keeping me from experiencing the freedom Christ has given me?
- Because I am forgiven, how is God calling me to pursue greater holiness and obedience?

## QUESTIONS | REFLECTIONS | OBSERVATIONS

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