

Thursday Evening Bible Class.

Name and Titles of God

29th April 2021

Study No. 5 – PATRIARCH'S ALTARS Additional Comments to Introduction by Brother Russel

There are 7 altars built by the patriarchs. However, it is worth giving a honorary mention to Noah and Moses as well.

Noah

In Genesis 8:20 we read: *And Noah built an altar unto the Lord; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.* This was received by God who smelled a sweet savour. The purpose of building the altar was as a thanksgiving, that life had been preserved, but that also he and his family had emerged to a new life. He had been saved by water, effectively buried, water under the boat, and water above in the form of rain. The family had been baptised in that sense, symbolically died and rose again to newness of life. The death of the animals was recognition that they humans deserved to die, because they were sinners like all the rest of the world that perished. The only reason, Noah and his family didn't was because they had faith and believed God. For that reason, only they were forgiven, but still a price had to be paid, for the price of sin is death. Noah built the altar in recognition of this, and sacrificed what he clearly understood as clean animals, so do we not see that Noah and his family saw the Anointed Saviour in the Altar? The first occasion of an altar being used to praise and thank God, and as a demonstration of the full appreciation of the Gospel, and this being gratifying to God. The Altar was an expression of worship, thanksgiving, unity and fellowship with God.

Abraham

Abraham built four altars, but only one he called after the YHWH name. The first was on the occasion when God promised him land, to him and to his descendants: Genesis 12:7 *And the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there he built an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him.* The second

altar he built when he relocated to a new place - Genesis 12:8 ... *a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he built an altar unto the Lord, and called upon the name of the Lord.* The third was when again he relocated and moved to - Genesis 13:18...*the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the Lord.* The last and fourth was on Mount Moriah, the place where he was instructed to take his son and offer him see Genesis 22:9 *and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood.* It was this last altar that had particular significance to Abraham, and he called the name of the place Genesis 22:14:... **Jehovah Jireh:** *as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen.*

Isaac

Isaac built one altar, and this was on the occasion when he had received the same promises from God, the same ones that had been given to his father Abraham: Genesis 26:25 *And he built an altar there, and called upon the name of the Lord, and pitched his tent there: and there Isaac's servants dug a well.*

Jacob

Jacob built two altars. Both of these he named after the YHWH name. The first was when he went to Shechem, and bought a little bit of land. Genesis 33:20 *And he erected there an altar, and called it **EllohelIsrael**.* The second was when he was told to go to Bethel and live there. He was instructed to build there an altar: Genesis 35:1: *And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when you fled from the face of Esau thy brother.* Jacob obeyed the voice of God, and did as he was told Genesis 35:7: *And he built there an altar, and called the place **Elbethel**: because there God appeared unto him, when he fled from the face of his brother.*

Calling on the NAME of the Lord

As we read through these occasions we may be struck by the number of times we read that the patriarchs called on the name of the Lord.

Genesis 12:8:... *8 and there he built an altar unto the Lord, and called upon the name of the Lord.*

Genesis 13:4:... and there Abram called on the name of the Lord.

Genesis 21:33: And Abraham planted a grove in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the Lord, **the everlasting God.**

Genesis 26:25:... And he built an altar there, and called upon the name of the Lord...

What is the Significance of this?

The Apostle Peter said this: Acts 2: 21 (quoting Joel 2:32) *And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.* Salvation is then dependant upon calling on that Name. It is therefore encumbant upon all believers to know what that name is. Take the example of Jesus Christ: 1 John 5:13 *These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.* So many so called Christians fail to know that it means the Anointed Saviour. Saved from what? Why anointed? Immediate questions that a believer must by definition know. The Name is a statement of mission. It is exactly the same with God, as we have discussed many times. It is why the Hebrew parents took great pains to name their children to reflect aspects and characteristics of God Himself, in the hope that their name will be their mission as well. So with regards to God Paul says: Romans 10: 10 -11: *For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.*¹³ *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.* The Name then must be understood, and believed in. So when we read about people calling upon the name of the Lord - as in Genesis

4:26...*then began men to call upon the name of the Lord..* it means they have a full understanding of the mission and purpose of God, being in unity with Him, and worship Him in sincerity and Truth, because they also SHARE His name, in that they take His characteristics upon themselves. They want to become part of that YHWH name. It is for this reason that the Patriarchs called upon the Name of the Lord, at critical and outstanding moments in the lives.

Jehovah-Jireh: Jehovah is a mistaken translation, and it should be Yhwh, or Yahweh, which means *I will be*. Jireh to see or provide. We recall that when Abraham was about to slay his son, the voice of God called out, and told him to stop. At that point, God gave him precious promises, specifically of a seed, and Paul reminds us (Galatians 3:16) that it was one in particular. Then Abraham, turned and saw a ram in a thicket. The ram whose head was caught in the thorns was offered instead. Earlier, Isaac saw his father had wood and fire, but no offering, he asked Abraham about that, and his reply was My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering. In the event, a lamb was provided. Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness. What did he believe? That God would provide himself a lamb. The same seed that he had been promised. That is why he called the altar Yahweh-Jireh, I WILL PROVIDE. God has provided that lamb, whose head was bound in thorns, in the person of His own son. Abraham celebrated this precious revelation by forever associated the Memorial name with Moriah, the very same spot where the Saviour would be sacrificed as a burnt offering.

ElloheIsrael: El -Elohe-Israel. This means literally the Strength of the Powerful ones with the Prince of The Powerful One. This was at the end of a long and arduous journey. Not just the journey of the great distress and danger of death by an avenging brother with his small army, who would have wiped out his defenceless family, but the journey from the tent of his mother, a young man running for his life, with nothing. Now he had been protected, cared for through all so many strange experiences, now with many sons, the beginning of a

nation. He had seen in a vision angels going up and down the ladder to heaven, teaching him how every step or rung of the ladder, every generation from him, until the receiving of the Kingdom inheritance for ever, would be overruled by God, and the Strength of angels, the Powerful Ones would watch over Israel, who was a Prince with El, the Mighty One. Yes, as a humble faithful man, Jacob, knowing he was a prince, the father of the King to come, would have been honoured to set up that Altar and thank him, for allowing him a small parcel of land, to live in peace with his family for a while. He believed God, he believed in The Name.

Elbethel: El-Bethel. The Mighty One of the House of the Mighty One. Again, associating the Memorial name with a place significant in his life, shows Jacobs' great faith. Bethel used to be called Luz, which can mean variously almond tree, separation or a bone (as in a rocky outcrop like a bone) But it was there where Jacob took a stone and anointed it, and later built an altar, where he had that wonderful dream, and where God appeared to him. The fellowship, and the promise that was given to him, enforced his appreciation of the purpose of God with a people, and with a land, and here the two had come together in himself, Jacob. Why God was part of that as well, making it all happen as He had promised, hence he described the place as God's habitation. Bethel. The house of the Mighty One. However in building the Altar and calling it El – Bethel, he was recognising that it was only through the offering that would be made that any of this purpose would be realised and come to pass, he could see through the eye of faith the Anointed One, Christ, who would be the Mighty One of the House of the Mighty One. Jesus Christ. El-bethel.

Moses

Moses of course is not described in the scriptures as a patriarch. However, he was a remarkable man, and used by God to shepherd the new nation, the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He also built

an altar. And he also invoked the Memorial Name, and so named his altar. Exodus 17:15: *And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovahnissi:*

Jehovahnissi: Yahweh-nissi. This means: He who will be my banner. The Lord is my banner. When nations fought they had standards and a king or prince or chieftom to rally around. In this case it was Moses, who held up his hands when they were winning the battle against the Amalekites. Because they were winning all the time, he had to have Aaron and Hur hold up his hands, and a rock to sit upon. Well, in all the battles of the faithful, victory is only because God gives us friends and companions to hold up our weary hands, and he has given us a Rock to keep us steady. But Moses saw that the victory was not his or the nations. It was God's. The Israelites fighting, looked to see if the hands were raised to gain encouragement, but it was God whose hands were defeating the enemy. For this reason, Moses declared that God was the standard, He was the banner. But more He is ALWAYS the banner. Moses built an altar. Like all the ones before discussed, altars built to declare unity, fellowship, thanksgiving, and a sure faith in the Sacrifice required and would be freely given. Moses saw in this Altar, that it would be the Altar who would be the Banner. This same banner the Psalmist spoke of in Psalm 20: 5: *We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners: the Lord fulfil all thy petitions. Psalm 60: 4 Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth.* Yes, the Banner speaks of the Truth, but what else? Song2: 4...*and his banner over me was love.* Jesus Christ – YHWH- Nissi. We hope you agree, that this Altar of Moses is allowed to be included in this study!

Brother Terry