

GOD'S FIRE-PIT

EXODUS 27:1-8



Have you ever wanted to meet someone, but when you get your calendars out to arrange it, it's almost impossible to find a time that suits both of you? You want to meet, they want to meet, but your different lifestyles, obligations, and schedules make it almost impossible.

We see a similar conflict in the Tabernacle. The different pieces of Tabernacle furniture said to the Israelites, "God wants to meet with you." But when they started walking towards the Tabernacle to enter the front door, what's the first thing they saw? Blocking their way was a big metal altar with flames leaping out of it (Exodus 27:1-8). God wanted to meet with them, they wanted to meet with God, but there was a big obstacle in the way. Why did God design it in this way? What message was he communicating to Israel and to us?

LEARNING

THE ALTAR IS IMPORTANT

What's the first thing you see when you enter the grocery store? Usually it's a big promotional display of some kind, isn't it? It's what the store manager has decided to promote that week. Sometimes it's food, other times a drink, or perhaps a toy. Whatever it is, the manager wants us to see it and buy it. She therefore puts it in the first place and gives it a big place. By her placement of the product and the pile of the product, she's saying, "This is important. I want you to pay attention to this and hopefully pay for it too." The product may not have been on our shopping list, but the manager wants it first on our list.

So, when we see that God give the first place and the most prominent place to the metal altar, God was saying, "This is important. I want you to pause and pay attention to what I'm doing here."

DEALING WITH SIN MAY NOT BE ON OUR LIST,
BUT IT'S FIRST ON GOD'S LIST.

Why was the altar so important? Because it was addressing a serious problem.

THE ALTAR IS SERIOUS

Most promotional displays are arranged to be attractive and enticing. Bright colors, fun pictures, happy signs, and clever messages are used to draw us in.

But that's not what the Israelites saw at the altar. Quite the reverse. It was a holy altar with a huge fire on it. Around it was the blood of animals and on it were burning animal carcasses. This was not a bright, cheery sight. What was happening here was serious and solemn. God was dealing with sin.

GOD DEALS SERIOUSLY WITH SIN
BECAUSE WE ARE SERIOUS SINNERS.

Did it work? Was it effective?

THE ALTAR IS POWERFUL

The altar was made of brass, a metal which is associated with strength and endurance (Dt.28:33; Jer.1:18; Rev.1:15). It also had a metal grating inside it which supported the sacrifice while the fire consumed it. On each corner of the altar were metal horns, which were often used in Scripture to represent strength. The metal, the grating, and the horns were all combining to say, whatever happens here is powerful and strong.

SIN IS TOO POWERFUL FOR US,
BUT GOD IS TOO POWERFUL FOR SIN.

LOVING

God wants to meet us. We want to meet God. But there's an obstacle, a problem in the way. Our sin. We can't remove that, but God can and does. How? The Apostle points to Jesus's work on the cross and says, **We have an altar!** (Heb. 13:10). God put the cross at the entrance to the Christian life and through it said: This is important, this is serious, and this is powerful. It's important that we deal with sin, God deals with sin seriously, and God powerfully removes sin so that we can meet with him. **We have an altar!**

LIVING

Connect with God through Christ the connector.
