

## (re)BUILD | PART 2

### PASTOR NATHAN ELMS

Last week we talked about Elijah rebuilding the altar of the Lord...

God will not build your altar...

#### SIGNIFICANCE:

An altar is a structure upon which offerings such as sacrifices are made for religious purposes. The altar was a raised platform with a flat surface. In the Scriptures, there are over 400 references to altars. The word altar is first used in Genesis 8:20 when Noah built an altar after leaving the Ark. The idea of an altar is present in Genesis 4:3-4, where Cain and Abel brought their sacrifices to the Lord, which was done most likely on some type of altar.

#### Examples of Altars in the Bible

An altar also represents a place of consecration to the Lord. Before the time of Moses, when the Lord gave the Law to Moses, men made altars out of available materials. Such an altar was built to commemorate an encounter with the Lord and to signify the event between the Lord and man at that time. Examples of this include the following:

Abram (Genesis 12:7)  
Isaac (Genesis 26:24-25)  
Jacob (Genesis 35:5)  
David (1 Chronicles 21:26)  
Gideon (Judges 6:24)

All these men built altars and worshiped the Lord at them. An altar represents a genuine desire of the person to give themselves wholly to the Lord because of His work in them to memorialize that work.

During the time of Israel's rebellion and idolatry, altars began to fall into disrepair. Elijah confronted the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel and "repaired the altar of the Lord, which had been torn down" (1 Kings 18:30). Elijah's restoration of the altar is critical because of the paganism of his day. Additionally, Elijah symbolized the unity of God's people in the construction of altars (1 Kings 18:31-32). It was here, on this rebuilt altar, that the Lord rained down fire and put the Baal worshipers to shame (1 Kings 18:38-39).

God will not build your altar.

But since we are building ... let us be remind that God did not build the temple ... and there are lessons in this...

Let's begin by recalling that the building of a temple was David's idea, not God's. Also, a significant part of David's motivation was that he had built an extravagant palace for himself, and this was in great contrast to the tent where the ark of the Covenant was kept.

*1 The king settled into his palace, for the LORD gave him relief from all his enemies on all sides. 2 The king said to Nathan the prophet, "Look! I am living in a palace made from cedar, while the ark of God sits in the middle of a tent" (2 Samuel 7:1-2, NET)*

God made it very clear that this temple was not His idea, and that it was not really necessary:

*4 That night the LORD told Nathan, 5 "Go, tell my servant David: 'This is what the LORD says: Do you really intend to build a house for me to live in?' 6 I have not lived in a house from the time I brought the Israelites up from Egypt to the present day. Instead, I was traveling with them and living in a tent. 7 Wherever I moved among all the Israelites, I did not say to any of the leaders whom I appointed to care for my people Israel, 'Why have you not built me a house made from cedar?'" (2 Samuel 7:4-7)*

In the following verses of 2 Samuel 7 God turned the tables on David. Did David wish to build a house for God? He didn't need one. No, but God would build a "house" (a dynasty) for David, an eternal house:

*8 "So now, say this to my servant David: 'This is what the LORD of hosts says: I took you from the pasture and from your work as a shepherd to make you leader of my people Israel. 9 I was with you wherever you went, and I defeated all your enemies before you. Now I will make you as famous as the great men of the earth. 10 I will establish a place for my people Israel and settle them there; they will live there and not be disturbed any more. Violent men will not oppress them again, as they did in the beginning 11 and during the time when I appointed judges to lead my people Israel. Instead, I will give you relief from all your enemies. The LORD declares to you that he himself will build a dynastic house for you. 12 When the time comes for you to die, I will raise up your descendant, one of your own sons, to succeed you, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He will build a house for my name, and I will make his dynasty permanent. 14 I will become his father and he will become my son. When he sins, I will correct him with the rod of men and with wounds inflicted by human beings. 15 But my loyal love will not be removed from him as I removed it from Saul, whom I removed from before you. 16 Your house and your kingdom will stand before me permanently; your dynasty will be permanent'" (2 Samuel 7:8-16).*

**JUST AS DAVID BUILT GOD A HOUSE, WE ARE THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY GHOST.  
WE ARE BUILDERS!**

## WHAT DO WE BUILD? WE BUILD CHARACTER!

### NOT AS A PLAN FOR SALVATION, BUT AS AN ACT OF LOVE! WE ARE SAVED FROM SIN AND ORDAINED FOR GOOD WORKS:

*Matthew 5:16 says, "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).*

**Men see your good works. And they glorify God. This is the righteous ordering of all things. We are the ones doing the works. But God gets the credit.**

**Ephesians 2:10 tells us why:**

*"...God prepared [our good works] beforehand, so that we would walk in them."*

### WE DON'T EARN SALVATION, BUT WE BUILD...

Why do you think God gives these commands? Be honest with yourself. To control us, to keep us in line? To have a reason to punish us for messing up? To make us self-improved, better people? To create a point system to separate the best of the world from the losers of the world?

If those thoughts resonate with you, you are thinking like an unbeliever.

Unbelievers say Christianity is a religion just like every other religion — a way to control the masses, a deluded way to find fulfillment. But that is not biblical Christianity. Why does God give us commands? The Bible says for His honor and our joy. Why do we obey? The Bible says because we delight to obey God.

Remember, Christians don't do good works to become Christians; Christians do good works because they are Christians. Christians do good works because they have believed and still believe the gospel. As Ephesians 2:10 says:

*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.*

## WE BUILD!

*Romans 5:3-5 ESV*

*More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.*

*Philippians 4:8 ESV*

*Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.*

*Galatians 5:22 ESV*

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,*

*Galatians 6:7-8 ESV*

*Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.*

*Acts 3:19 ESV*

*Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out,*

*Colossians 3:12-14 ESV*

*Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.*

*Ephesians 4:1-32 ESV*

*I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ...*