



The Three Altars of the Temple (in red): Note the three light gray circles originating in the centrality of the Holy of Holies, representing the presence of God, symbolically sitting on His throne facing east. All rites of the temple are before His face - “before the Lord.” This includes those special rites carried out on the Mount of Cursing farthest east, including the Red Heifer sacrifice, the animal covered in red, as was Christ in Gethsemane. His crucifixion most likely occurred in this area.

Three Altars & the Atonement / Val Brinkerhoff

There is no salvation or returning to God's presence without our Savior's atonement. At the Jerusalem temples there were *three altars* tied to returning to God's presence, symbolically represented in the all-gold Holy of Holies, located in the western most area of the temple (where the Ark of the Covenant was placed). Our Lord gave the Law and came here to fulfil it perfectly in the atonement. The three sacrifices in the old covenant are tied to it. Sacrifices were offered up on them in sequence from east to west (1, 2 & 3). Most are familiar with altars 2 and 3 located *at the temple*; altar 2 being the "*burnt offering*" altar of sacrifice positioned near the east entrance of the temple, and altar 3 inside the temple nearest the veil, "*the peace offering*" altar of incense. Most, however, have forgotten about altar 1, "*the sin offering*" altar, located farthest away on the Mount of Olives, some 2000 cubits directly east of the temple and in line with it. It was positioned at the farthest point eastward from the temple (direction of sin in scripture), and outside the boundary of "the camp of Israel," so as to not defile the temple, as this offering was tied to *sin, blood, and death*. Lepers, Gentiles, and defiled Israelites were to remain "*without the camp of Israel*" (Num. 19:3) – or outside the outer, sacred boundary surrounding the Tabernacle (2000 cubits away), while the Israelites traveled in their 40 years of wandering in the Sinai desert. These same expanding circular boundaries, three of them (surrounding 1. Holy of Holies, 2. the Holy Place, and then 3. the Camp of Israel), were also used when the architectural temples were built by Solomon, Zerubbabel, and Herod (see chap. 7 of *Seven Heavenly Witnesses of the Coming of Jesus Christ*, or chap. 7 of *The Original Location of the Temple and the Atonement*).

The Jerusalem Temple and its 3 Altars Later in Jerusalem, the setting for altar #1, "*the sin offering*" altar or "*miphkad altar*," meaning "*the appointed place*," was again outside "the camp of Israel" directly eastward on the higher Mount of Olives. The rare and very important all red heifer sacrifice was one of these "*sin offerings*." It was slayed, burnt, and offered up to God on the Mount of Olives by the High Priest there. Altar 1 was directly east of the temple, in line with it, allowing the High Priest to look towards the Holy of Holies (God's presence) as he made this special sacrifice. The red heifer is a clear type for Christ, covered in His red blood in *Gethsemane* (Luke 22:44; Mosiah 3:7; D&C 19:18), and later in *the scourging* and upon *the cross*. In them, His blood was *sprinkled* on the ground, *poured out* in the brutal lashing, and *smeared* on the wood of the cross. These are the three ways the ancient High Priest used animal blood in the temple on *the Day of Atonement* (one time per year), in an atonement ritual that he might be cleansed, along with the temple, and all Israel (he *sprinkled* the blood on the Ark, *poured it out* at the base of the Altar of Sacrifice, and *smeared* it on its horns).

Our Lord's sacrifice, and the red heifer sacrifice, both took place on the Mount of Olives at "*the appointed place*" for this and other special offerings, as Paul explains in Hebrews 13. "For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the *high priest* for sin, are *burned without the camp*. Wherefore *Jesus* also, that he might *sanctify* the people with **his own blood**, *suffered without the gate*" (Heb. 13:11-12). The grayish-white ash from the burned animals on this altar, especially the red heifer, was used to purify priests and lepers anciently, after the ash was mixed with the living waters of the Gihon Spring. A similar ash mixture (of the nine previous red heifer sacrifices - Christ being the 10th - a number tied to perfection) will again be mixed with living water from the Gihon Spring, for the purpose of cleansing the place of the new temple in Jerusalem. It will be built there soon.

Christ is "the Great Deliverer." His sacrifice in the meridian of time delivers us all from the effects of **sin** (*sin offering* – altar 1), **death** (*burnt offering* – altar 2), and **hell** (separation from God – *peace offering* – altar 3). Prior to His sacrifice as the Lamb of God, Christ delivered the Israelites from bondage in Egypt in the first Passover, when lamb's blood was *smeared* in three places upon the lintel and side posts of Israelite doorways to their homes in Egypt. It was a rudimentary **Tau** mark, a *sealing mark* for those passed-over by the destroying angel this Passover evening, a full moon on Nisan 14. The Israelites left Egypt quickly the next day. This day (Nisan 15) later becoming the Feast of Unleavened Bread, day 1 of a 7-day celebration of "*deliverance*" and freedom from slavery (for a sealing to Christ or Satan, Mos. 5:15 & Alma 34:35).

The *miphkad altar* setting on Olivet (the 3rd, southern peak of the Mount of Olives) was "*the appointed place*" for not only *the sin offering* of Christ for all of us, but the appointed place for the counting of heads in a census for the armies of Israel. They were mustered there before and after battles – for the purpose of *counting heads*. It was "*the place of the head*," not "*the place of the skull*" ("Golgotha"). It was also the appointed place for both executions (by stoning) and sacrifices tied to blood, sin, and *death*. Today it is the site of many Israelite graves. Nearby was Gethsemane and the site of the crucifixion of our Lord. It was the setting of sin, blood, and death.

Before the Lord's Face All three sacrifices (*sin, burnt, and peace offerings*) had to be done "*before the LORD*" or "*before the LORD's face*" (Lev. 4:4-7; Num. 6:25, 19:3; 1 Sam. 5:3; Luke 10:1), which was directly east of the Holy of Holies of the temple, where God (the Father in this case) was symbolically positioned on His throne to observe them (the Ark was a footstool for the throne behind it). These sacrifices and their altars were part of *the old covenant*, fulfilled in Christ's atonement, that we might return to Christ, the Father of our Salvation, and to Father and Mother in heaven. These offerings coincide with the **three freewill offerings** we are to make today in a *new covenant* with God, wherein we "**repent and come unto Christ**" as addressed in Moses 6:57-60. They are; (1) faith in Christ leading to **repentance** (purification); (2) baptism in pure living water (justification); and (3) baptism by fire and the Holy Ghost (sanctification). In them we take Christ's name upon us and we become His sons and daughters. He becomes the Father of our salvation (see Mos. 5).