



HORN OF SALVATION

December 17, 2025 | *Psalm 18:2-3; Luke 1:69*

Altar of Offering

If we were to enter the tabernacle by way of the outer door (in the fence), what would we see? The courtyard included the tent, of course, and two notable pieces — the Altar of Offering and the Water Laver. The Water Laver stood at the doorway of the tent (*Ex. 30:19, 21*). It was a basin where priests washed their hands and feet before entering the Holy Place (*Ex. 40:32*).

The Altar of Offering was the place of sacrifice. It was a five-cubit wooden, hollow square, three cubits tall, overlaid with brass (or bronze), with a grate near the top on which to lay the sacrificial animals (*Ex. 27:1-8*). The most fascinating elements of the altar were the corners. They were ornamented with horns (*Ex. v.2; 29:12*). Why horns?

The Horns of Salvation

The first mention of a horn is *Genesis 22:13*, when God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac. His son was spared because God provided a ram which was “caught in the thicket by its horns.” After that, in the Hebrew culture, the horn symbolized salvation.

Horns are also symbols of an animal’s power and protection (*Deut. 33:17*). Thus, there are times when a horn is used to describe God’s power or the protection which He provides for His people.

For example, the psalmist wrote, “The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the *horn of my salvation*, my stronghold. I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies” (*Ps. 18:2-3*). Here, the Lord is the psalmist’s safe place, whose mighty “horns” save him from his enemies.

In *Psalm 75:10*, it is written, “All the horns of the wicked God will be cut off, but the horns of

the righteous will be lifted up.” In other words, no matter how strong or powerful an enemy might seem, the Lord’s “horns,” or might, is greater, and His righteous people will prevail (*Mic. 4:13*).

Horns, then, were a symbol of safety and refuge. Once, when Adonijah was fleeing from King Solomon, he sought refuge in the Temple. He “took hold of the horns of the altar,” knowing what they symbolized and how important they were to the Jews (*1 Kgs. 1:50*). This fugitive was hoping to find refuge, and it worked. The horns were his salvation.

Horns were used as trumpets in battle or for sounding an alarm. Remember when the Israelites blasted their horns at Jericho, and the city collapsed? God delivered them from their enemies (*Josh. 6:5*). He was the horn of their salvation!

Finally, horns were used for containing oil (*1 Sam. 16:1*).

So then, there are several ideas wrapped up in the symbol of the horn. But let’s get to the point. What does this have to do with the baby in the manger?

Our Horn of Salvation

In *Luke 1*, John the Baptist was born. His father, Zacharias, had been unable to speak during the pregnancy, but once the baby was delivered, “Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied” about the event (v.67).

He said, “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people and has raised up a *horn of salvation* for us in the house of David, His servant.

The account continues, “As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old, salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us... being rescued from the hand of our enemies.” *Luke 1:68-74*

Zacharias, of course, was speaking about the arrival of the Messiah, Jesus, who would soon be born. The Lord had revealed to him that Jesus would be the promised King from David’s lineage (*Psa. 132:17*). He would be the one who would display power and might, who would be their refuge and protection, and who would deliver them from their enemies.

Of course, we know that the fulfillment of this prophecy will occur at Jesus’ second coming. The fact that Jesus did not deliver the Jews from the Romans at His first advent was a sore spot for them. In fact, it was a big reason why they rejected Jesus as the Messiah and labeled him as only a prophet.

But Jesus is the King of glory who the psalmist described. “Who is the King of glory,” he asked. “The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle” (*Psa. 24:8*). One day, He will return and deliver His people from evil (*Rev. 19:11-16*).

But there are other enemies that we need to discuss, spiritual enemies — sin and death. How will God deliver us from these curses through the one who is the Horn of Our Salvation? Let’s return

to the Altar of Offering.

After the tabernacle was completed and erected, the sacrificial system began. God accepted the death of an animal, and the shedding of its blood, in place of a person, as an atonement for his or her sins (*Lev. 1, 4*).

During the sacrificial ceremony, the priest would “take some of its blood with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar; and all the rest of the blood he poured out at the base of the altar” (*Lev. 4:7, 18, 25, 30*). “Thus, the priest made atonement for him in regard to his sin which he had committed, and he would be forgiven” (*Lev. 4:35*).

The sacrificial system was a bloody mess, but the imagery is striking. Sin requires death, and blood was the only offering the Lord would accept as payment for His forgiveness. But those sacrifices had to be repeated annually because the blood of animals could not remove sin forever (*Heb. 10:1-4*).

But the Lord Jesus sacrificed Himself, once for all, when He died on the cross (*Heb. 10:11-18*). His blood made possible our eternal forgiveness of sin (*Heb. 9:11-14*). His sinless life and sacrificial death triumphed over sin, and His resurrection gave us victory over death.

What Child is this in the manger? He is our Horn of Salvation, the One who saves us from our enemies!

Ponder and Pray

Which aspect of the "horn of our salvation" means most to you?

When you pray, picture yourself as Adonijah, clinging to the horns of your salvation. He will rescue you!

Have you missed some days?
Click [here](#) to access previously emailed devotions.

The reading plan and devotions were developed by Aaron Ferguson, one of our Elders and author of the *Study Guide and Daily Reflections for the One Year Chronological Reading of the Bible and the New Testament*. For more details, visit his website at BiAY.org.

