



Breaking Altars

Their heart is faithless; now they must bear their guilt. The Lord will break down their altars and destroy their sacred pillars.

Hosea 10:2

The feature verse above is a promise of judgment for wilful and continued disobedience. "Their heart is faithless; now they must bear their guilt." But the phrase that struck me is the second half of this verse: "The Lord will break down their altars and destroy their sacred pillars."

The foundational truth of God is that He is God alone; there is no other. He is a Jealous God. He will not share His throne. He requires all of us, not a pantheon of gods set up on medium-sized thrones in our hearts. Those He calls to Himself are to have no other altars, no other thrones, no other sacred pillars holding them up. I have been in both camps: the one with many altars and the one with only One.

The wording of the phrase in the feature verse makes me think of angry vengeance, beating and breaking apart the things that keep our hearts from God. But I can tell you from my own experience that that is not what He does. Yes, He breaks apart our altars, but it is done from a heart of love, a weeping, compassionate heart that knows the altars we have built to others are destroying us from the inside out.

I had many altars set up in my heart, many pillars that propped up my life. One by one, Jehovah knocked them all down. Oh how I railed in the process! I was *dependent* on those things and He took them away from me! But it was when He got me by myself, stripped of all the things I clung to, that I could see Him for Who He is. It was only then that I could hear His loving Voice. It was only then that I found all the love that I had searched for all my life. It was only then that His love began to heal me. All the wickedness, all the depravity that I had wallowed in was washed away in the cleansing flow of the blood of Christ. Clean, for the first time in a decade, I could survey the barren landscape of my life and watch Him building His own altar in my heart.

Yes, the feature verse, these chapters in Hosea that I have been reading and meditating on, are of judgment. The nation of Israel had turned her back on her Redeemer and been faithless. He broke down her altars and destroyed her pillars because He knew she wouldn't, she couldn't, any more than I could. It was painful for them; it was painful for me. But I am thankful that He broke down my altars, that He knocked away everything that I used to prop myself up. Leaning on Him, I have found that He is all I need. Surrender your altars to Him today. Better that than Him having to break them down.

Father, we thank You for Your patient and righteous love for us. We thank You that You will not allow us to deceive ourselves and hold on to any idol we have set up. Be the only One we worship; set up Your throne in our hearts. Our hearts are Your home.