

Personal Altars and the Kingdom of God

Bethesda Cathedral; Sat 10 Sep 2016

Singapore: *Shiok* or *Siong*?

If a demon got assigned to Singapore from another nation, would it consider this a reward or punishment?



Abraham's Altars

1. Shechem (Gen 12:7)
2. Bethel (Gen 12:8)
3. Hebron (Gen 13:18)
4. Moriah (Gen 22:9)

Abraham's altars in Canaan



Abraham's Altars: Shechem

Associated with Promise of Land to descendants

⁶ Abram passed through the land to the place of **Shechem**, as far as the terebinth tree of Moreh.^[a] And the Canaanites *were* then in the land. ⁷ **Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land."** And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him.

- Gen 12:6-7

Abraham's Altars: Bethel

Associated with Rest and Worship

⁸ And he moved from there to the mountain east of Bethel, and he pitched his tent with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; there he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD. ⁹ So Abram journeyed, going on still toward the South. ^[b]

- Gen 12:8-9

Abraham's Altars: Hebron

Associated with *Dispute Resolved; Promise Rejuvenated*

¹⁴ And the LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: "Lift your eyes now ... all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever. ¹⁶ And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth ... ¹⁷ Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you."

¹⁸ Then Abram moved *his* tent, and went and dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamre, which *are* in Hebron, and built an altar there to the LORD.

- Gen 13:14-18

Abraham's Altars: Moriah

Associated with *Sacrifice*

⁹ Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood.

¹⁰ And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.

- Gen 22:9

Core Components of an OT Altar

- **Minister**
- **Structure**
- **Offering**
- **Fire**



Can a believer set up an altar today?



Believers can set up altars today

Core components of an altar:

- **Minister**
- **Structure**
- **Offering**
- **Fire**

“But you *are* a chosen generation, a **royal priesthood**, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light”

- 1 Pet 2:9



Believers can set up altars today

Core components of an altar:

- Minister
- **Structure**
- Offering
- Fire

“... For **you are the temple of the living God**. As God has said: “I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people.”

- 2 Cor 6:16



Believers can set up altars today

Core components of an altar:

- Minister
- Structure
- **Offering**
- **Fire**

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, **by the mercies of God**, that you present your **bodies a living sacrifice**, holy, acceptable to God, *which is your reasonable service.*"

- Rom 12:1



Altars Today

- Personal Altars
- Family Altars
- Community/Corporate Altars
- City/National Altars

Impact of Altars

1. Altars are places of spiritual presence
2. Altars bring long-term change in spiritual atmosphere of a place
3. Altars mark out spiritual claim on territory
4. Altars act as spiritual forts of God's Kingdom

Altars are places of spiritual presence

- Presence of God at Tabernacle during Israel's Exodus journey
- Unholy altars can have demonic presence

¹⁸ Observe Israel after the flesh: Are not those who eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons.

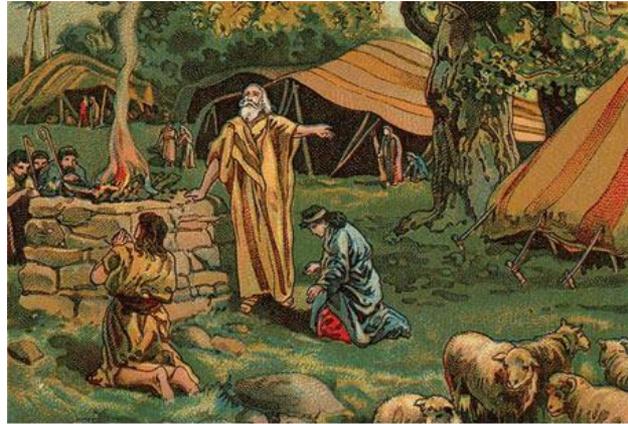
- 1 Cor 10:18-20



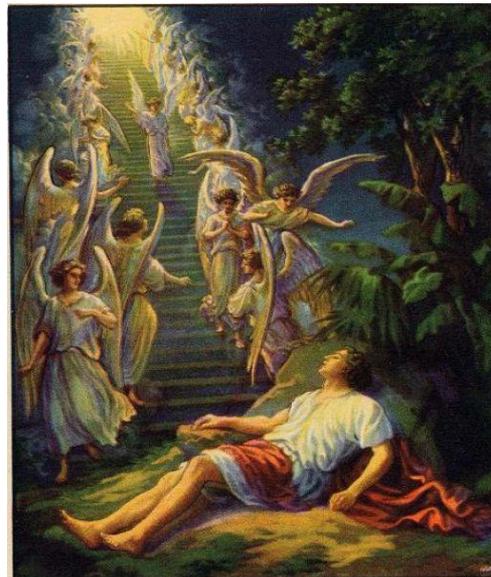
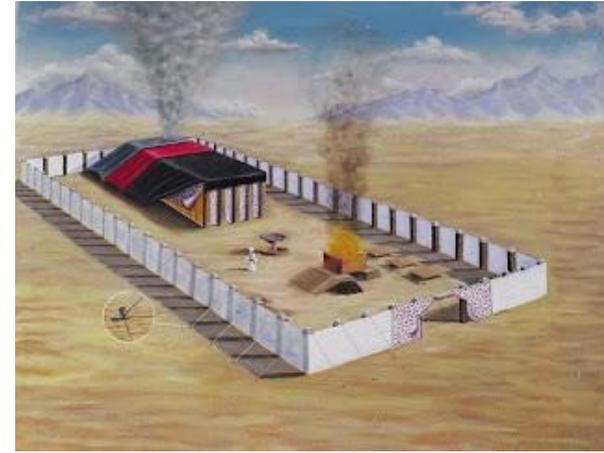
Altars bring long-term change in spiritual atmosphere of a place

Bethel

- Abram's altar (Gen 12:8)
- Jacob's ladder (Gen 28)
- Tabernacle in the Promised Land during time of judges (Jdg 20:26-27)
- Jeroboams' idolatry with two calves (1 Ki 12:28-33)



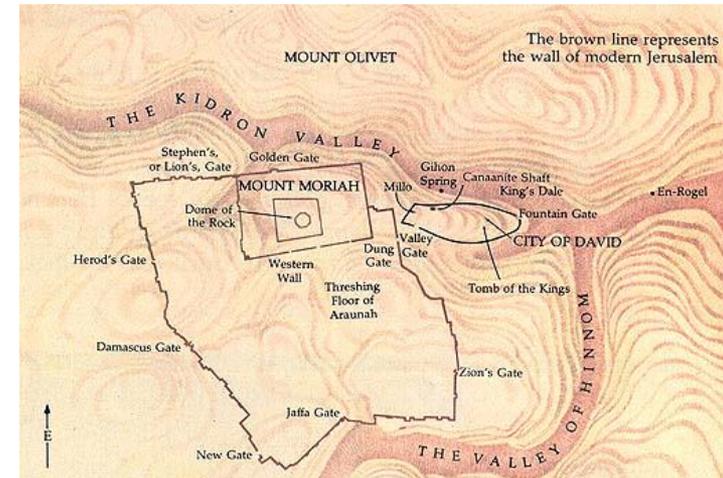
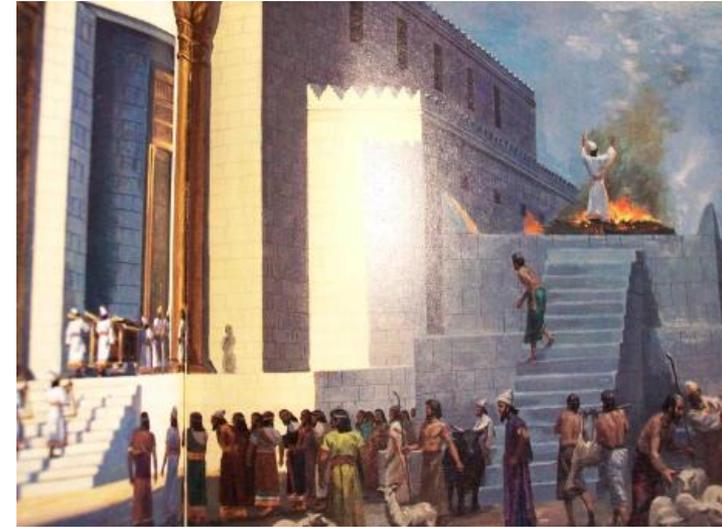
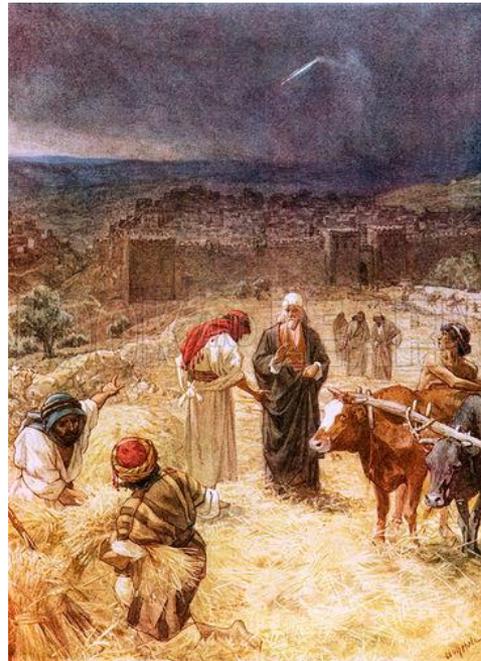
Bible card published in 1906 by the Providence Lithograph Company.



Altars bring long-term change in spiritual atmosphere of a place

Moriah

- Abram's altar of sacrifice (Gen 22)
- Halt of the plague at threshing floor of Araunah during David's time (2 Sam 24)
- Solomon's temple (2 Chron 5)
- Rival religious claims on site



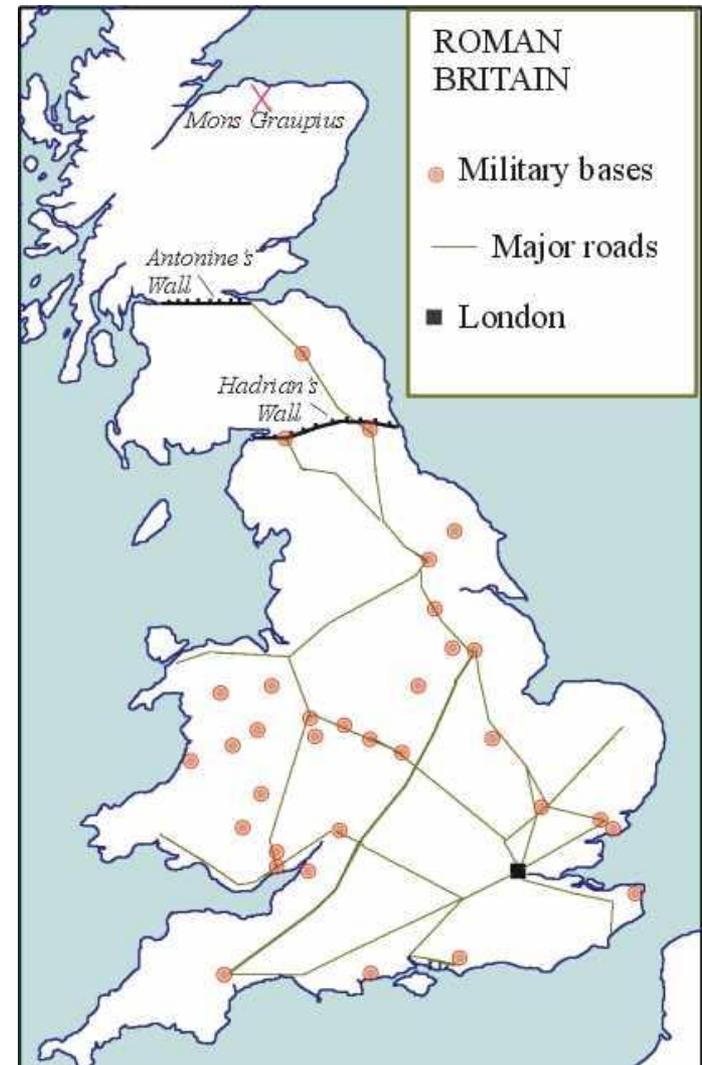
Altars mark out spiritual claim on territory

Military bases spread out throughout Britain during Roman occupation

Biblical peoples believed in territorial nature of their gods

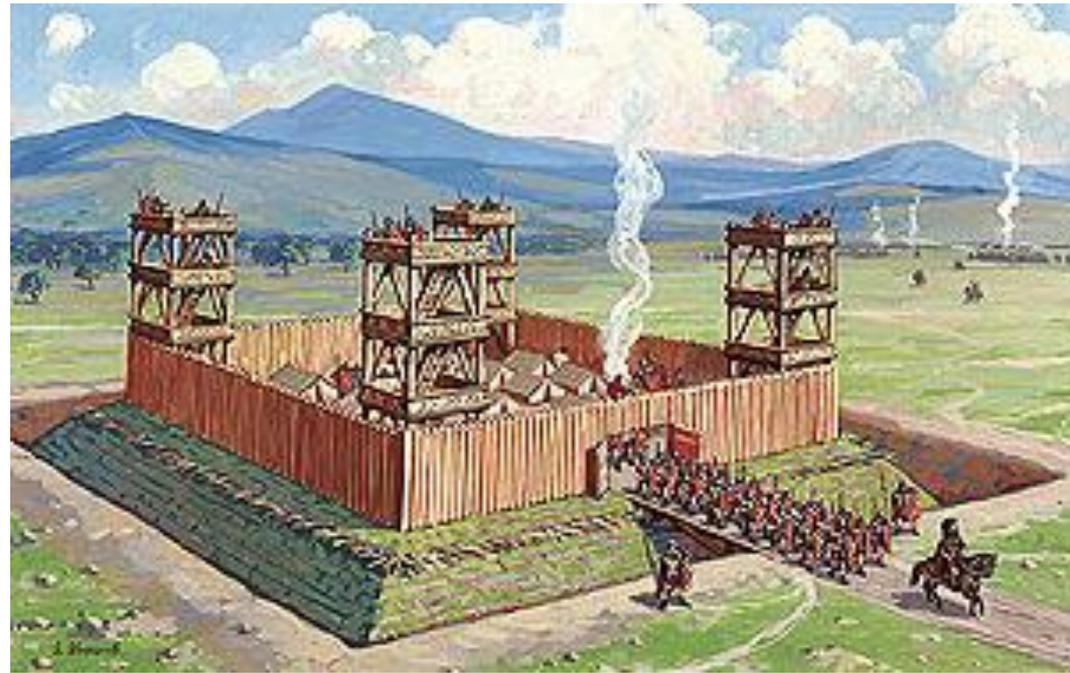
“ ... Their gods *are* gods of the **hills**. Therefore they were stronger than we; but if we fight against them in the plain, surely we will be stronger than they.

– 1 Ki 20:23



Altars act as spiritual forts of God's Kingdom

- When he is present, the King resides in the fort
- Forts project territorial extent of a Kingdom
- Forts can be attacked, so need to maintain strong defenses
- Forts also need to maintain regular resupply to remain effective



What does one do at their personal altar?

Do I want to set up
an altar to God in my
life?



Maintaining Strong Defenses

MIND

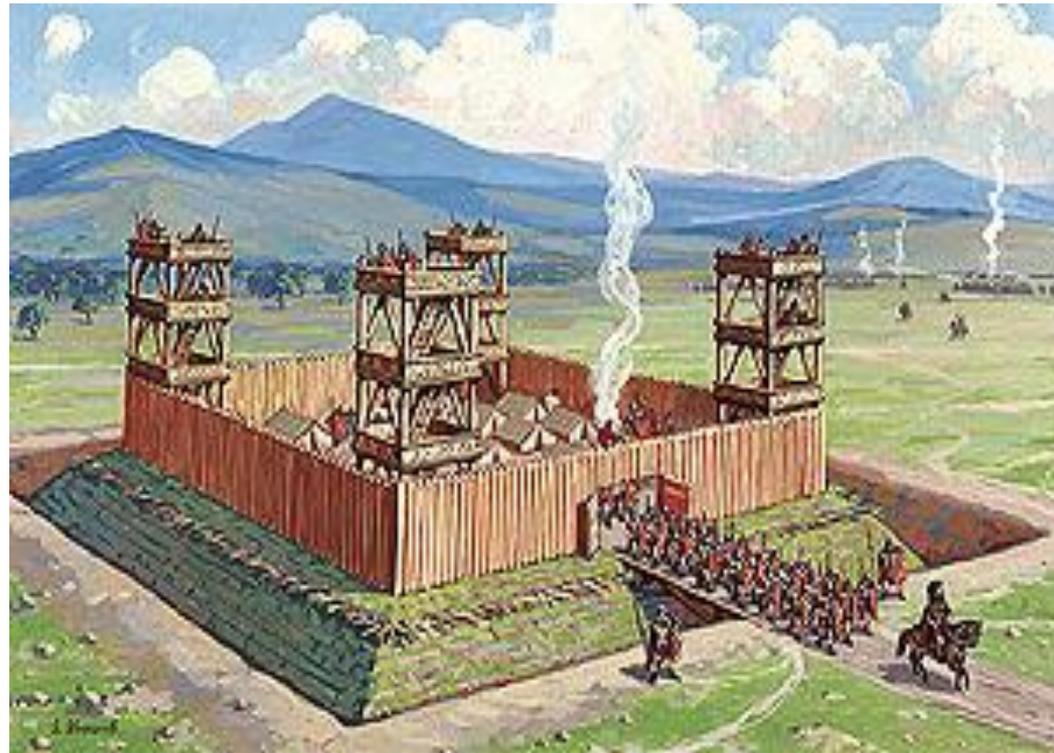
- Spiritual strongholds are primarily in the mind (2 Cor 10:3-5)

HEART

- Heart is a spring of life and requires diligent tending (Prov 4:23)

MOUTH

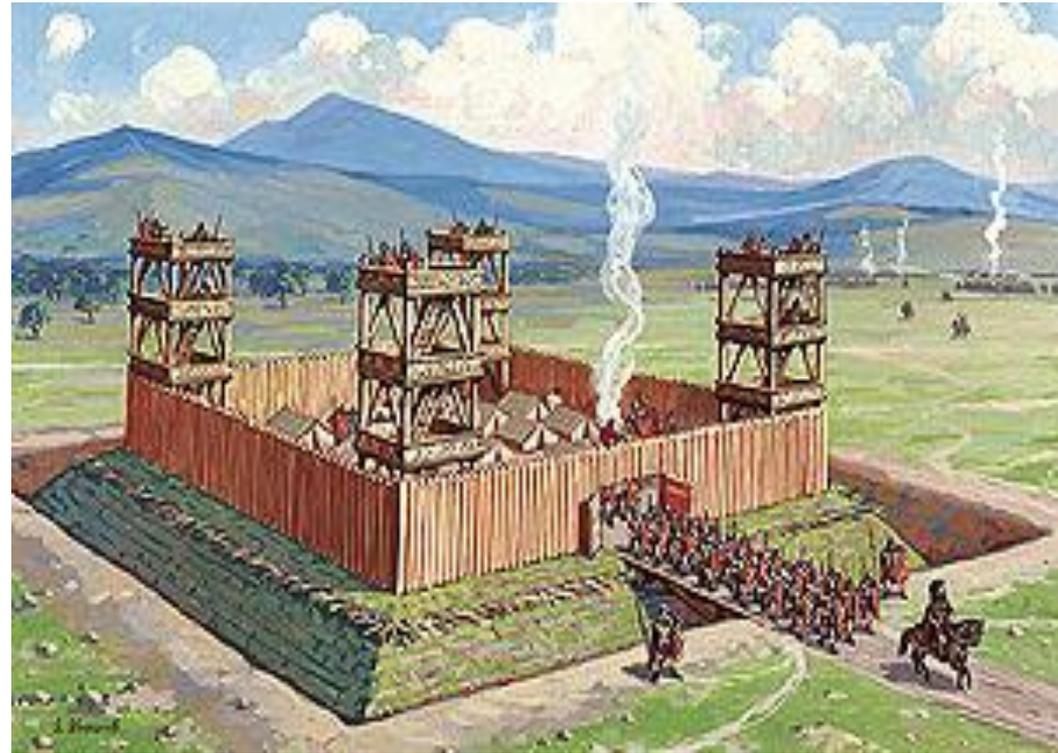
- How we use our tongue can lead to either death or life (Prov 18:21)



Maintaining Strong Defenses

MIND

- Thoughts can erode spiritual defenses:
 - **Misplaced criticism** backs up the “accuser of our brethren” (Rev 12:10)
 - **‘Good intentions’, not ‘God intentions’** (Matt 16:23)

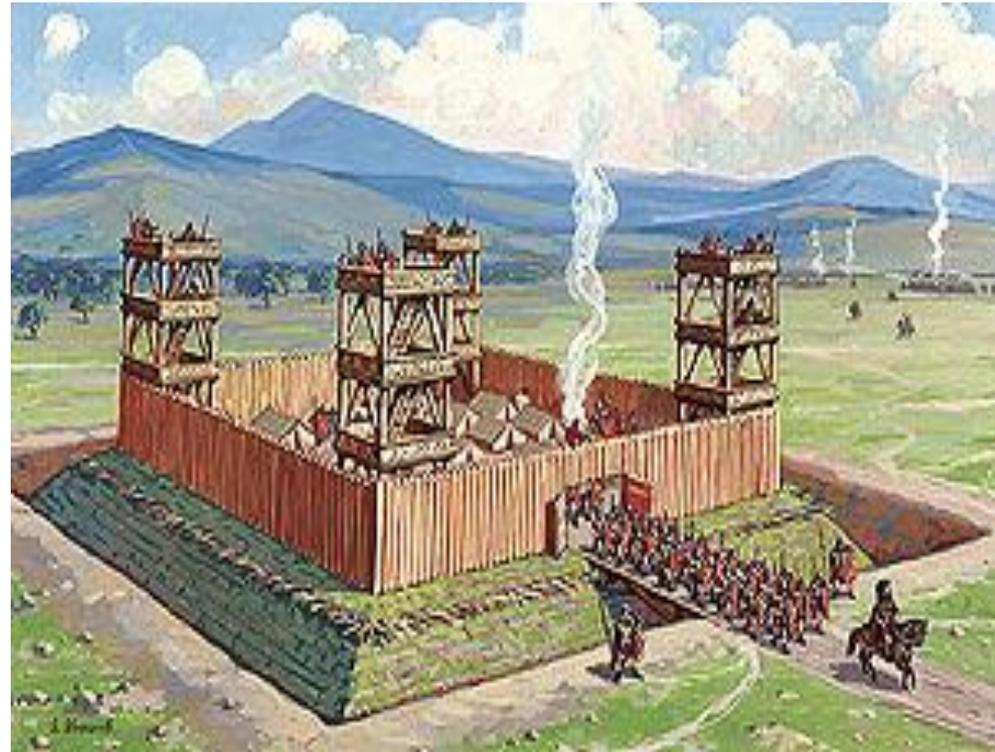


Defending our personal altar 'fort':
MIND, HEART, MOUTH

Maintaining Strong Defenses

HEART

- Guard **Attitudes/Emotions** as much as **Actions**
 - “Be angry but do not sin ...do not let the sun go down ...nor give place to the devil” (Eph 4:26-27)
 - Bitterness defiles (Heb 12:14-15)

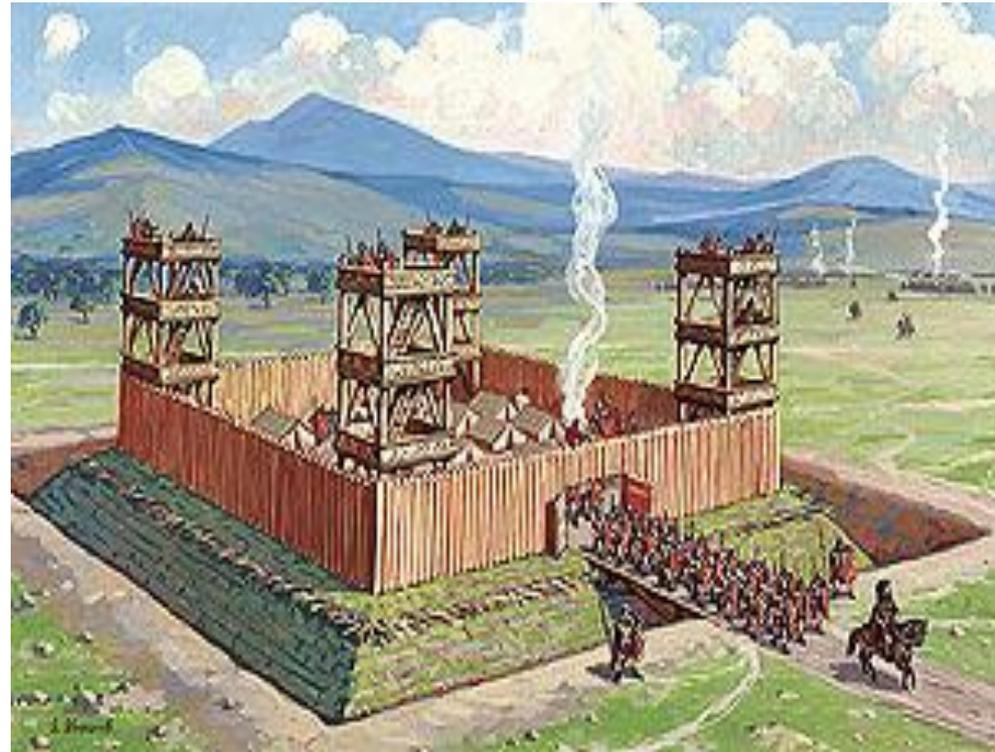


Defending our personal altar 'fort':
MIND, HEART, MOUTH

Maintaining Strong Defenses

HEART

- Lessons from 1 Pet 5:6-7
 - Humility (= God's perspective)
 - No worry/anxiety
 - Awareness of spiritual environment (sober) and alert to enemy traps and attacks
 - Willingness to embrace suffering for Kingdom

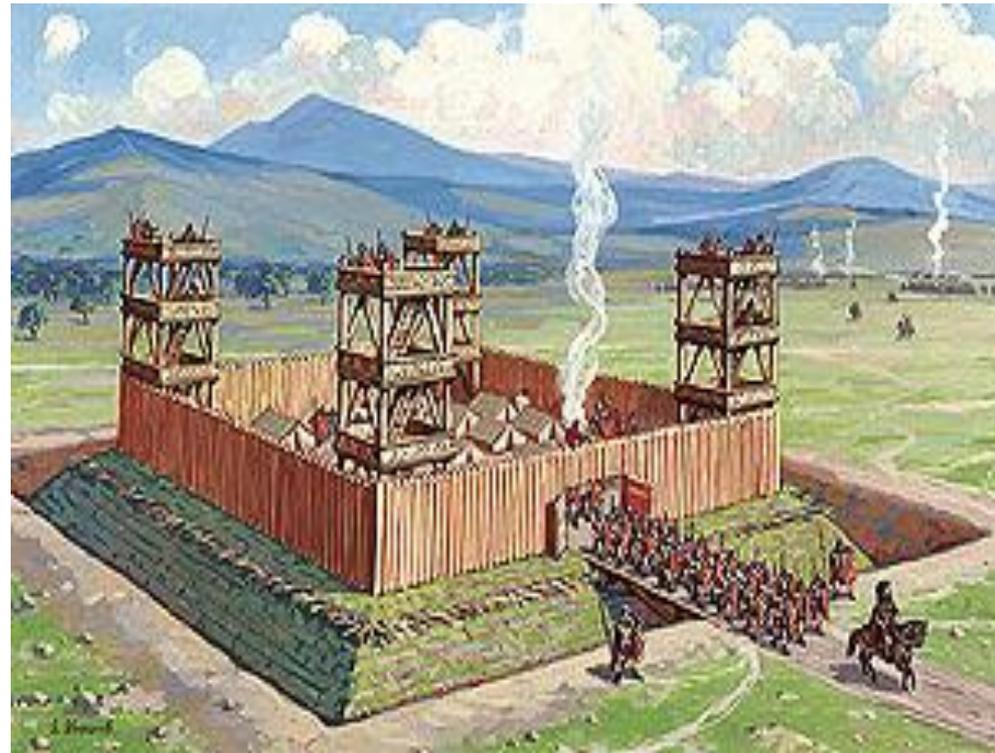


Defending our personal altar 'fort':
MIND, HEART, MOUTH

Maintaining Strong Defenses

MOUTH

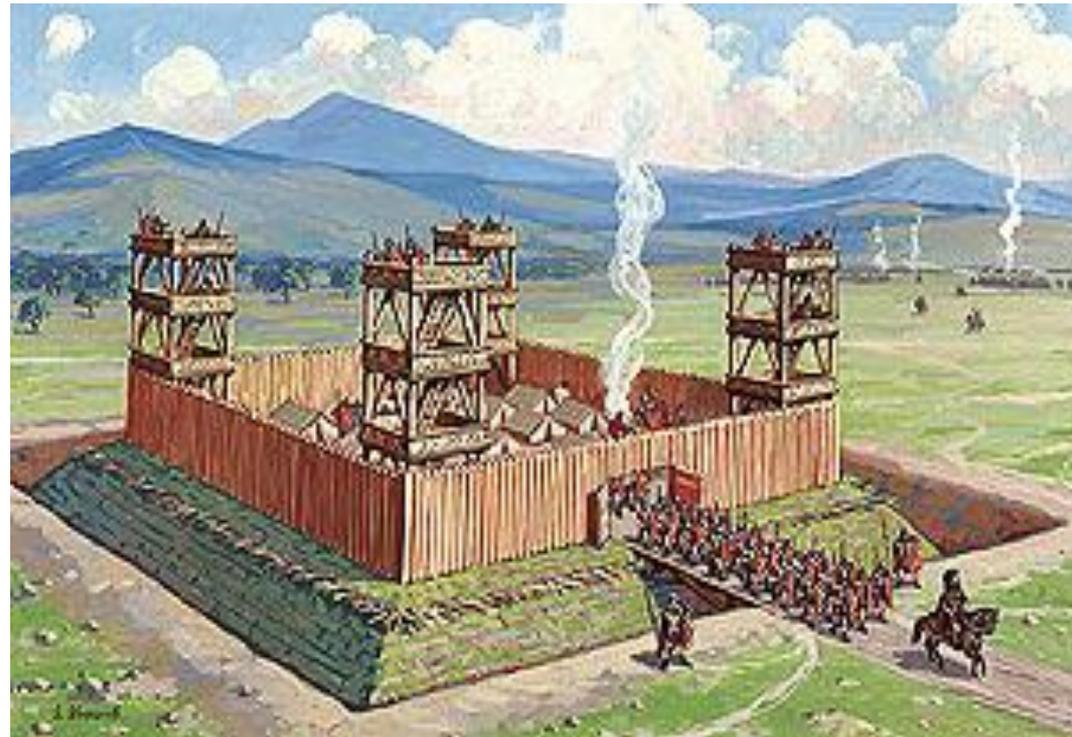
- Need for a guard over our tongue (Ps 141:3)
- Job complained but was “never disloyal to the character of God”. Satan could not get inside Job.
- A small snowball can start an avalanche:
comment > observation >
concern > criticism >
accusation



Defending our personal altar 'fort':
MIND, HEART, MOUTH

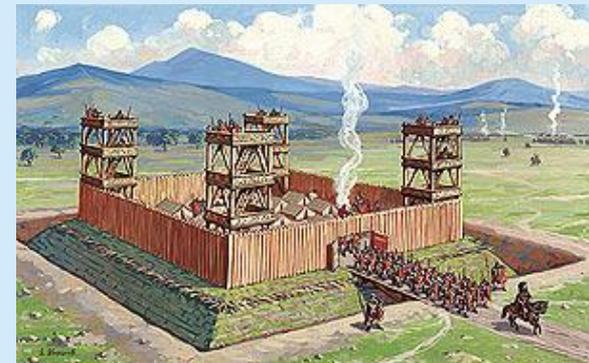
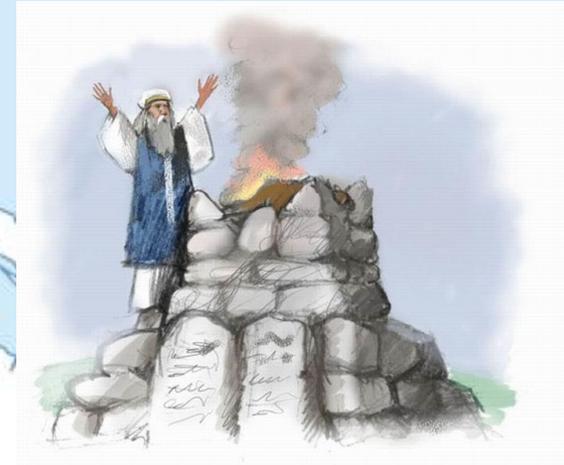
Maintaining Regular Resupply

- Time to read/study **God's Word**
- Seek **sensitivity to Spirit**; prophetic insight
- **Humility and Gratitude**
- **God-focused prayer**
– to seek God and birth and assign time to God's purposes



Summary

- **Christ has qualified us** to set up altars in our lives
- Altars **honor the Presence of God** and **change the spiritual atmosphere** around its vicinity
- Altars are like **forts marking where the Kingdom of God rules**
- Basic to maintaining an **effective personal altar** are strong defenses and regular resupply
- **Today, will we start** to maintain our personal altar for God's Kingdom?

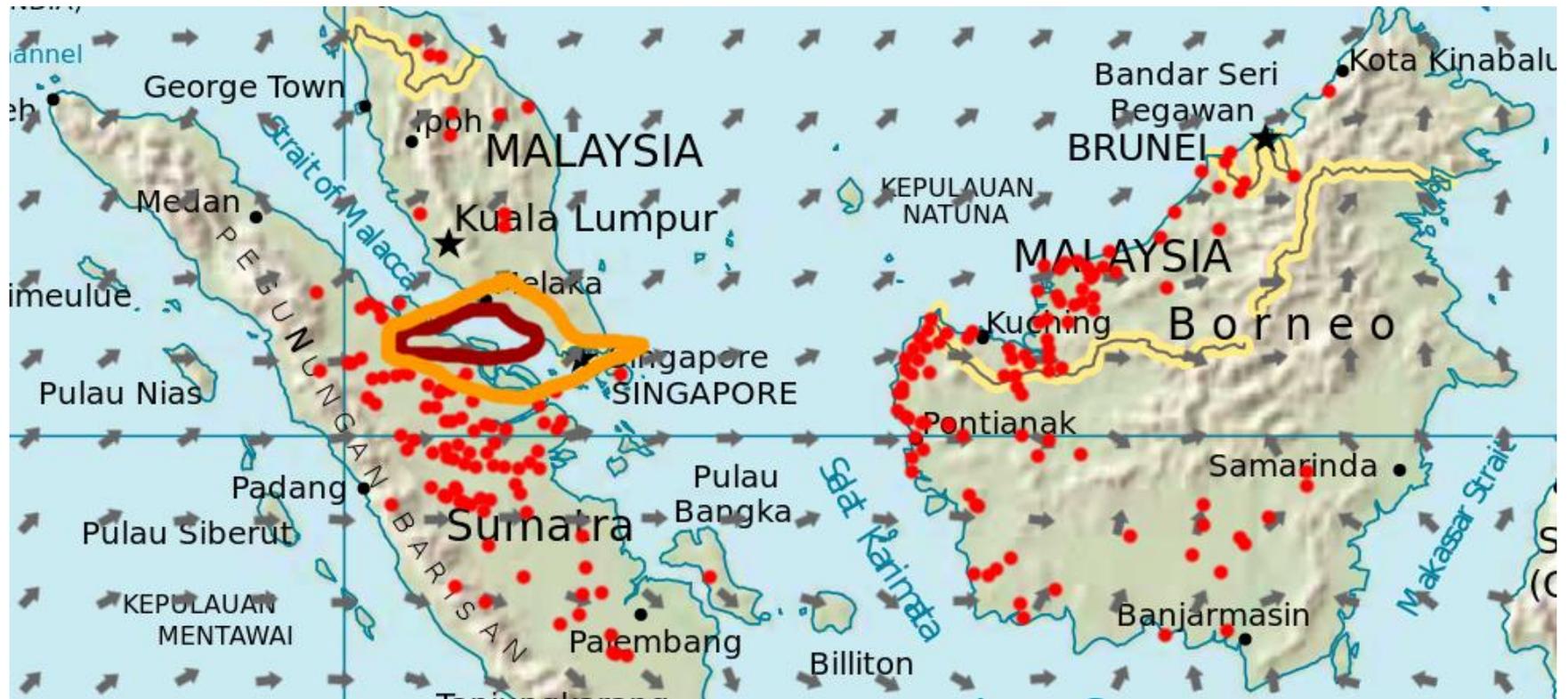


Singapore: *Shiok* or *Siong*?

Q: If a demon got assigned to Singapore from another nation, would it consider this a reward or punishment?

A: *Shiok* if the territory is full of demonic altars (or at least no godly altars); *Siong* if Singapore is full of altars creating multiple 'hotspots' for God's Kingdom

Every altar a 'hotspot' for the Kingdom



Do I want to set up an altar to God in my life?

MIND

- Spiritual strongholds are primarily in the mind (2 Cor 10:3-5)

HEART

- Heart is a spring of life and deserves diligent tending (Prov 4:23)

MOUTH

- How we use our tongue can lead to either death or life (Prov 18:21)



- Time to read/study **God's Word**
- Seek **sensitivity to Spirit**; prophetic insight
- **Humility and Gratitude**
- **God-focused prayer** – to seek God and birth and assign time to God's purposes

Shalom!