

there. So it was not felt that it was a place to which they had a right to come and be saved. It would not fill that need anyway. If you are going to stay ten years to be safe, you cannot hang onto an altar for ten years. You need a city where you can move about, to get some exercise and to have some way of earning your living. So the altar was not a satisfactory place of asylum! And it does not say anywhere that God said that a person who had killed someone accidentally may flee to the altar and cling to it. And it does not say in those two instances that those people knew of any law that the altar was a place of protection. These people who were in danger simply grabbed the first device they could think of and ran to the altar.

We read in I Kings 1:50 that Adonijah feared Solomon because they had been going to make Adonijah king and David had made Solomon king. So Adonijah feared because of Solomon and went and caught hold on the horns of the altar. He was not a man who had killed someone accidentally, and needed to go to the city of refuge. It was an entirely different situation. He caught hold of the horns of the altar and it was said to Solomon, "Behold Adonijah feared King Solomon. He has caught hold on the horns of the altar, saying, Let Solomon swear to me today he will not slay his servant with the sword." And Solomon said, "I will not swear this way at all. If he shows himself a worthy man, there shall not a hair of his head fall to the ground, but if wickedness shall be found in him, he shall die." So Solomon would not swear not to hurt him and had him brought down from the altar, and he came and bowed to King Solomon, and Solomon said, "Go to your house," and he did. Solomon refused to make him any promise. The man was simply in a desperate position and said, "I will not leave here until Solomon swears not to hurt me." Well, he could not hang onto the altar indefinitely.

I think it is a natural idea which would occur to anybody. We find in the next chapter (1 Kings 2:28), that tidings came to Joab "and Joab fled to the tabernacle of the LORD, and caught hold of the horns of the altar. And it was told King Solomon that Joab was fled to the altar." He was in the tabernacle of the LORD, hanging to the altar. Then Solomon said, "Go, fall upon him." So he was killed, hanging to the altar.