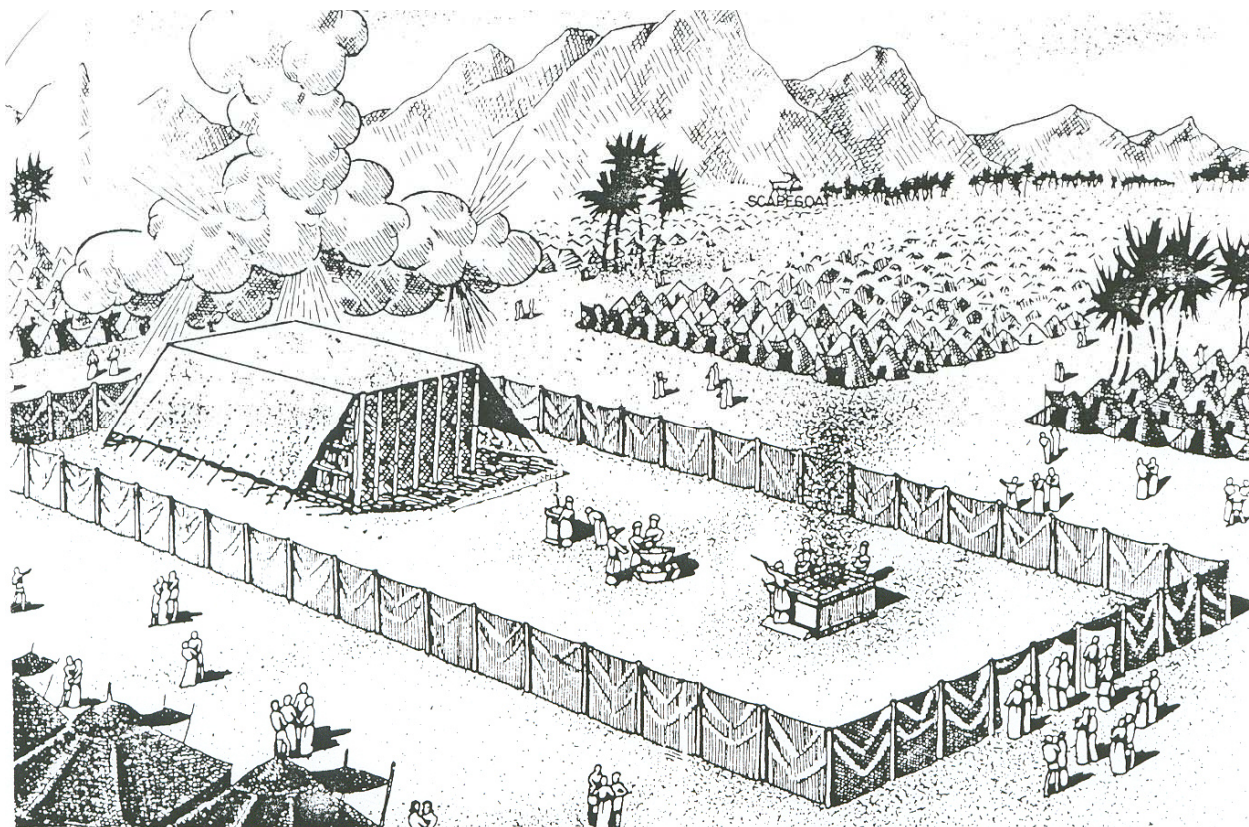


A Study of the Old Testament Tabernacle



One of the most enlightening portions of the Bible is that which concerns the Jewish Tabernacle. The Tabernacle illustrates in a great, historic object lesson that God's plan of redemption has been the same throughout the ages. Different times and ages have varied in their spiritual perception however, the central truths of God's redemptive process have never changed. To an age that knew little about God, the Tabernacle showed the way to communion with God and foreshadowed the coming of the great high priest, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Tabernacle of the Old Testament was the worshiping place of the Hebrew people from the time of their wandering in the wilderness [around the 13th or 15th century B.C.] to the early days of the Hebrew kings [about 1,000 B.C.]. Later the figures and types of the Tabernacle were also built into the Temple in Jerusalem; they were the shadow of which Christ was the reality! It was as if a great light were shining from the future, casting the shadow of Christ over a thousand years ahead of His time.

The fact that the Tabernacle typified the redemptive process of Christ is well established in the Scriptures. The book of Hebrews states concerning Christ that "*we have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man*" (Hebrews 8:1-2). Hebrews also states that the Tabernacle prefigured that which was revealed in its fullness in Christ Jesus.

*These lessons are in search of truths
concerning Christ Jesus found in the Tabernacle*

Careful reading of the book of Hebrews in the New Testament -- especially chapters 8 & 9 -- will show the relationship between the Old Testament saints and the New Testament Christians. Overlooking the valuable lessons of the Tabernacle, one misses a great opportunity to fully understand and appreciate the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. The student of Scripture must understand that the principles of salvation have *never* changed. God's plan of salvation was established "*before the foundation of the world*" and those who chose to be followers of God have observed its principles since time began -- whether it was Abel offering his "*excellent sacrifice*" at the beginning of history; the Israelites offering their sacrifices at the Tabernacle in the wilderness; or you and I accepting by faith the propitiatory work of Jesus Christ today. God's plan of salvation for mankind has always been the same.

The Tabernacle performed a particularly special role in revealing God's principles and plan of salvation, especially to the Jews. Too often the student of Scripture forgets that Christianity has its roots in Judaism. Jesus was a Jew, and all but one of the writers of the New Testament was a Jew. This makes it all the more important that we understand the relationship between Judaism -- [the Tabernacle sacrifices] -- and Christianity -- [the sacrifice of Jesus Christ]. The laws and history given in the *Pentateuch* -- [the 1st 5 books of the Bible] -- are the platform upon which the rest of the Bible stands. Misunderstanding in this area can lead to false teachings about God's character and His plan of salvation.

Although the differences between worshipping God at the Tabernacle under the Old Testament Covenant and worshipping Him under the New Covenant are profound, the *principles* are identical. How else can one understand the Bible when it speaks of Christ's death as from the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8)? Also, in Romans 3:25-26,

Speaking of Jesus Christ [See verse 24] Paul writes, "*Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.*"

We see the efficacy -- [or effectiveness and value] -- of Christ's death for Old Testament saints as well those of the New Testament. The same is expressed in Hebrews 9:15, "*And for this cause He is the Mediator of the New Testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament -- [Old Testament] -- they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.*"

For this reason, I believe the salvation experiences of the Old Testament saints were identical to ours today! Who can say they didn't experience, at least, inwardly, the same shameful awareness of their sinfulness, the same contrite heart, and repugnance at

what is unholy and a dependence of God's sacrifice for the atonement of their sins? Keeping this in mind, we can see there need not be any difference in God's dealing with mankind, only the revealed stage of God's plan of redemption has changed.

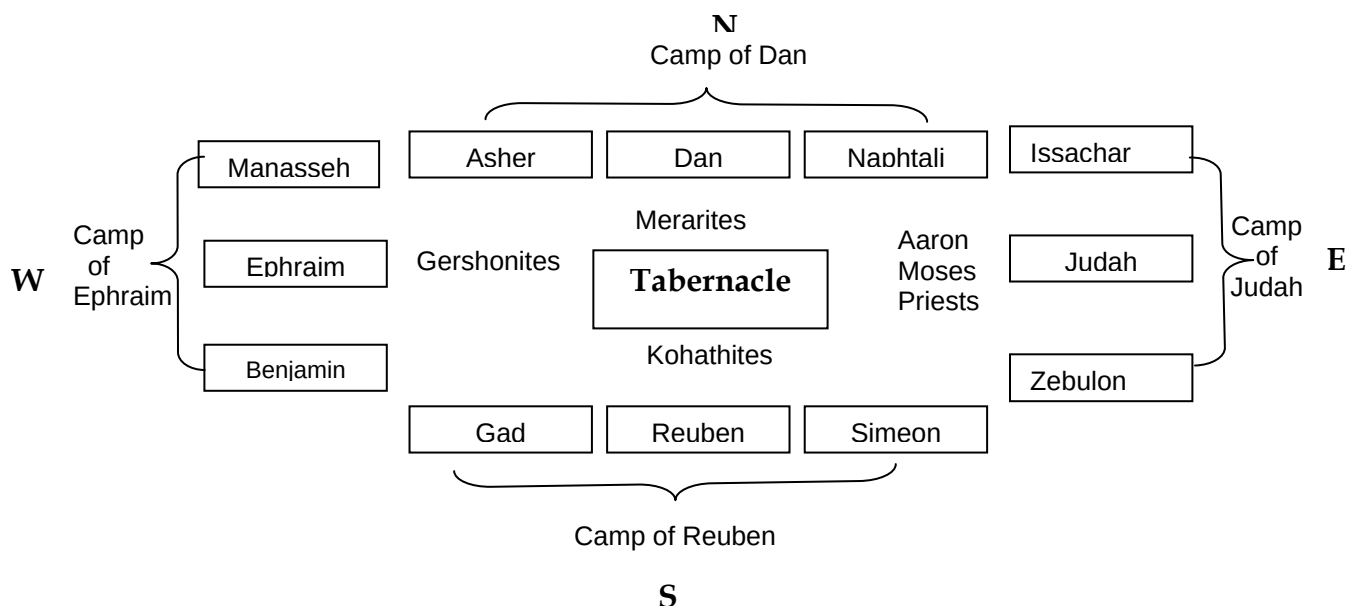
The writer of the book of Hebrews, speaking of the sacrifices of the Tabernacle, states, "*And the Holy Spirit uses all this to point out to us that under the old system -- [Revealed in the Old Testament] -- the common people could not go into the Holy of Holies as long as the outer room and the entire system it represents were still in use. This has an important lesson for us today. For under the old system, gifts and sacrifices were offered, but these failed to cleanse the hearts of the people who brought them. For the old system dealt only with certain rituals -- what foods to eat and drink, rules for washing themselves, and rules about this and that. The people had to keep these rules to tide them over until Christ came with God's new and better way*" (Hebrews 9:8-10 – From the Living Bible).

Even though God has used various means to express His plan of redemption, the requirement for man to appropriate it hasn't changed. It has always been by faith in the propitiation of Christ's accomplishments. The substantial rituals of the Mosaic laws with its observance at the Tabernacle *never saved a soul!* It only served to portray the reality of God's reconciliation to His people and therefore served as a tangible way in which they could express their faith in the sacrifice God provided. Though the ceremonial aspects made their expression of faith more physical, it did not lessen the relationship they could have with God, for if the heart was not right and there was not a recognition of the divine intention, it availed them nothing.

While worship at the Tabernacle was central to the spiritual well being of the Israelites -- (and only as we understand that God dealt with them as He does with us) -- will we begin to see the tremendous importance of the Tabernacle.

Perhaps another reason few see the importance of the Tabernacle has to do with the general belief that it was used for only forty years when, in fact, it was used for **647 years!** In addition, when the Tabernacle was no longer in use, Israel came to Jerusalem to worship God in Solomon's Temple, which continued the exact same means of approaching God. Therefore, the nation of Israel from its birth to the death of Christ, a period of 1,700 years, approached God with the same system initiated originally with the Tabernacle in the wilderness. The fact that the Israelites used the Tabernacle and its system of worship for hundreds of years should certainly indicate its importance. Present day Christians may still glean something from a study of the Tabernacle, as the writer of Hebrews so wonderfully reveals.

Another factor that emphasized the Tabernacle's importance was its location at the center of the camp and the position of the Levites, who camped nearby to guard against unlawful approach. The other tribes also camped around the Tabernacle but at a distance. The Tabernacle was also at the center of the nation during marches (Numbers 10:17).

The Camp of Israel – (Numbers 2:1 through 3:39)

The events surrounding the giving of the pattern for the Tabernacle also point to its importance. The pattern was given to Moses on his sixth ascent to Mount Sinai when God gave the law. Therefore, with the giving of a greater revelation of God's law, there was also a giving of a greater revelation of God's reconciliation with His people. This is a tremendously important fact that is often overlooked. It was also an important occasion for mankind; for God, in giving His moral standard to the Israelites, also gave them to the world. "What nation is there so great that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all these Jews" (Deuteronomy 4:8). These laws pertained to every aspect of their lives, guiding them in their infancy as a nation, setting them apart as a peculiar [treasured] nation, even to this day. It has taken other nations, apart from the Biblical revelation, many hundreds of years to understand the need of laws similar to those God gave the Israelites.

The Bible records how great these laws are, but, just as importantly, it reveals the result of neglecting them – which is God's divine punishment. The seesaw relationship Israel had with God was always as a result of their obedience or disobedience to these laws.

Listen to Hebrews 3:8-19, "And since Christ is so much superior, the Holy Spirit warns us to listen to Him, to be careful to hear His voice today and not let our hearts become set against Him, as the people of Israel did. They steeled themselves against His love and complained against Him in the desert while He was testing them. But God was patient with them forty years, though they tried his patience sorely; He kept right on doing His mighty miracles for them to see. 'But,' God says, 'I was very angry with them, for their hearts were always looking somewhere else instead of up to Me, and they never found the paths I wanted them to follow.' Then God, full of this anger against them, bound Himself with an oath that He would never let them come to His place of rest. Beware then of your own hearts, dear brothers, lest you find that they, too, are evil and unbelieving and are leading you away from the living God. Speak to each other about these things every day while there is still time so that none of you will become hardened against God,

being blinded by the glamour of sin. For if we are faithful to the end, trusting God just as we did when we first became Christians, we will share in all that belongs to Christ. But now is the time. Never forget the warning, 'Today if you hear God's voice speaking to you, do not harden your hearts against Him, as the people of Israel did when they rebelled against Him in the desert.' And who were those people I speak of, who heard God's voice speaking to them but then rebelled against Him? They were the ones who came out of Egypt with Moses their leader. And who was it who made God angry for all those forty years? These same people who sinned and as a result died in the wilderness. And to whom was God speaking when He swore with an oath that they could never go into the land He had promised His people? He was speaking to all those who disobeyed Him. And why couldn't they go in? Because they didn't trust Him" (Living Bible).

God's justice demands punishment for disobedience. When penalty is not inflicted, it encourages rebellion. However, God desired to extend mercy to the Israelites. This had to be undertaken wisely. As good as laws are, once broken, they can only bring condemnation and demands the infliction of a penalty. Paul said, *"If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law"* (Galatians 3:21). The principle involved here is that once a law is broken it can never justify, only demand that its penalty be inflicted upon the lawbreaker. This does not make the law bad at all. What law can justify once it is broken? The problem that confronted God was how He could extend mercy to the Israelites and, at the same time, uphold His law. To do this without consideration for His law would encourage rebellion.

Therefore, it is not difficult to realize the great importance of the Tabernacle because it was through the Tabernacle that God demonstrated, in *shadow*, how He would extend His mercy without abolishing His law. Through the Tabernacle, the Israelites had the Gospel preached to them: *"For unto us was the Gospel preached, as well as unto them"* (Hebrews 4:2). This is the most important lesson of the Tabernacle, and one that should continually be kept in view. Failure to see this central theme has possibly led to much confusion of God's Word. The Gospel preached to them by *object lessons* -- (through the Tabernacle; its priesthood; rituals; offerings and furniture) -- was based upon the same principles found in the New Testament Gospel.

If the Tabernacle is to be a true type of the Gospel then the similarity between them must be real! God didn't have two Gospels; rather, when Christ came He revealed the Gospel that was concealed in the *"types and shadow"* of the Tabernacle. This in no way moderated the salvation of the Israelites, for the law never *justified* them; rather, they were justified by faith just as we are presently. The only thing lacking in the Gospel preached through the Tabernacle was that Christ had not yet died as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Exodus

The book of Exodus, the book that gives us the Tabernacle, logically follows the book of Genesis -- because Genesis tells the story of man's failure. It begins with the sublime expression, "*In the beginning God...*" and closes with the symbolic words, "*In a coffin in Egypt.*" The book of Genesis is the story of man going from a perfect creation to sin and death. However, the book of Genesis gives the hope of a promised Redeemer. Thus, the story of Genesis!

Then, follows the book of Exodus, ***the book of Redemption!*** It covers 40 chapters, 13 of which have to do entirely with the Tabernacle in the wilderness, and the priests who were to minister therein.

However, before any mention is made of the Tabernacle, the story of redemption is written in language that cannot be mistaken. The opening chapter of Exodus tells the story of slavery -- a picture of the sinner's bondage to Satan and sin. The children of Israel were given a deliverer from the bondage of Egypt in the person of Moses. (We are offered the only Savior from bondage to Satan in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ.)

The story of the birth of Moses and his call from God to deliver Israel is told in the early chapters of Exodus. Then, follows the record of God's righteous judgment upon those who turned an unheeding ear toward God, the only Deliverer. The ten plagues upon the Egyptians are a picture of judgment on all who refuse to accept God's salvation in Christ Jesus. The last, of which was associated with the first Passover in Israel, is a type of Christ the Paschal Lamb.

Exodus is a continued story of God's redemption. Immediately after the Passover, Israel was delivered from the hosts of the Egyptians at the Red Sea, another beautiful picture of God's redemption for all who will put their trust in His Beloved Son.

From the Red Sea on, the story in Exodus is one of Israel's wilderness wandering for forty years as God took care of His children.

In order to show Israel how helpless they were in their own strength, their need of the promised Redeemer, and that they could never measure up to God's perfect standard of holiness apart from this promised Redeemer, God gave them the Ten Commandments and the detailed explanation of their meaning.

This is the story of Exodus up to the beginning with chapter 25 where we have the description of God giving the pattern for the Tabernacle.

Men attempt to *cut* portions from God's Word and to present a mutilated *shorter* Bible. All Scripture is inspired and, yet, do we not commit virtually the same sin through neglect of some portions of God's Word? The bare enumeration of materials, quantities and dimensions relating to the Tabernacle may be regarded by the casual reader as "*uninteresting*" and "*unimportant*," until one considers that the Holy Spirit has borne record that "*All Scripture is God-breathed and is profitable to all*" (2 Timothy 3:16).

The account of the Tabernacle begins in Exodus 25, as Moses receives instructions from God during his 40 days on Mount Sinai. It is important to note that God gave Moses *two* important things on the mountain -- the Ten Commandments and detailed instructions for the building of the Tabernacle.

The Israelites, in bondage 430 years (Exodus 12:40 & Galatians 3:17), was now delivered from the rule of Pharaoh. Since that time Moses had been their leader, he, in turn, received his instructions from God. In Exodus 18:5-6, God proposed to give them laws. God was now their King. This was the beginning of the Theocracy. Naturally two events followed:

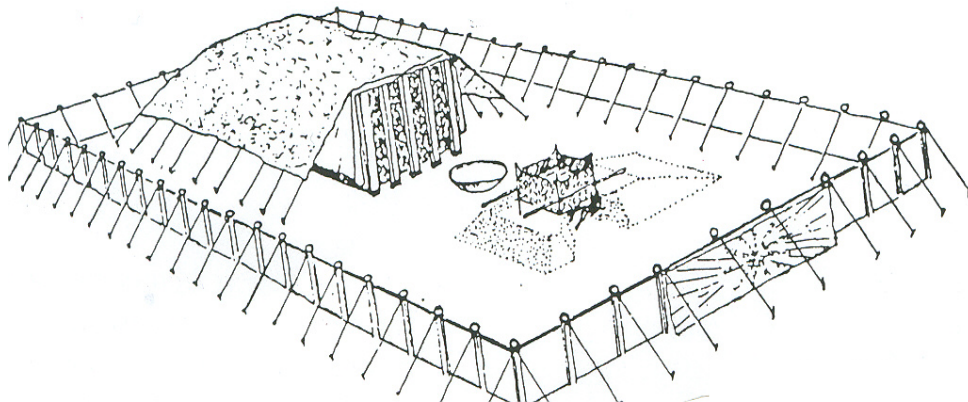
1. A code of laws was made (Exodus, chapters 20 through 24)
2. A dwelling place for the King was build (Exodus, chapters 25 through 40)

The very first mention of the Tabernacle is in Exodus 15:17. This was God's dwelling place among men. The word "*Tabernacle*" means, "*dwelling place*."

From the completion of the Tabernacle until the present time God has never been without a dwelling place on earth. After the Tabernacle, the Temple was God's house, and, then its glory had departed, God came to earth in the Person of His Son, Jesus Christ (John 1:14 & Colossians 2:9).

When Jesus left this earth, He sent the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, and He dwells in the hearts of individual believers today (1 Corinthians 3:16-17). And, so the whole body of believers forms the true Church, the habitation of God in this present Church Age (Ephesians 2:21-22 & Exodus 25:8 with Matthew 18:20).

Moses, at God's command, went up in the mount, and for six days waited for God's voice. He was forty days getting the pattern of the Tabernacle, as God was showing him into the heavenlies, and telling him exactly how the pattern of the Tabernacle should be built.

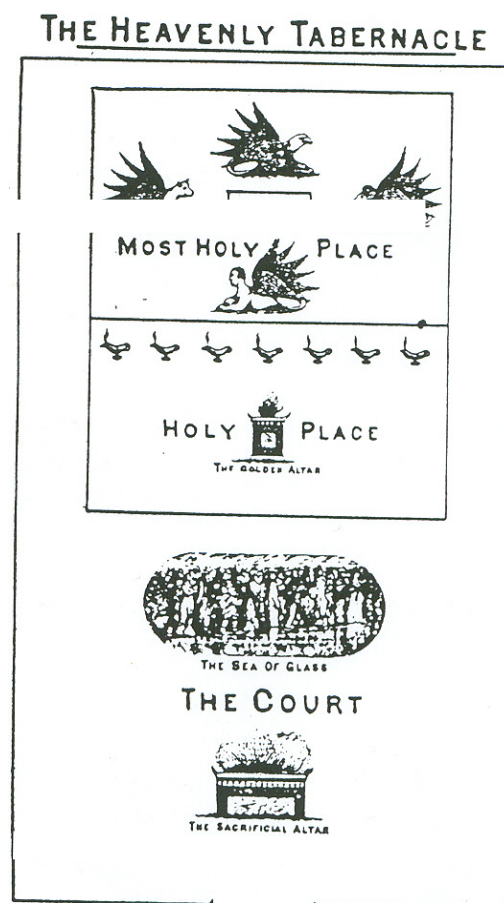


When Moses came down from the mount, after getting the pattern for the Tabernacle, his face shone! He had beheld God's glory and had seen the true Tabernacle in the heavenlies (Acts 7:44).

Note the striking similarity between the Heavenly Tabernacle and the earthly one - on the previous page.

A study of the Tabernacle is, without question, one of the most enlightening studies in the Word of God. The importance of the Tabernacle cannot be missed because of the fact that God devoted so much of His Word to reveal its construction, its meaning, its priesthood, and worship instructions to this Tabernacle. There are 13 chapters in *Exodus* -- 18 in *Leviticus* -- 13 in *Numbers* -- and 4 in *Hebrews* dealing with the Tabernacle. This is remarkable when one considers that only two chapters in the Bible are devoted to describing the creation of the entire universe.

Not only the amount of information in the Bible about the Tabernacle points to its significance, but, when we begin to realize the cost of its construction that God ordered the Israelites to assemble, the implication of lessons implicated in the Tabernacle are remarkable. Without doubt the Tabernacle was the most



expensive and beautiful portable house of worship ever built, but more than that, there has never been such a costly prefabricated structure of any kind constructed. More over, constructed according to the pattern God gave to Moses in the Mount, it was amazingly simple to dismantle and reassemble.

When God told Moses to build the Tabernacle in the wilderness according to a specific pattern, He said to construct it *"according to all that I show thee, after the pattern of the Tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments (furniture) thereof, even so shall ye make it"* (Exodus 25:9).

God inspired the writer of the book of Hebrews in the New Testament to explain the *spiritual* significance of the Tabernacle. Hebrews 8:1-2 states, *"Now the things which we are saying — [that is, the things written in the book of Hebrews] — is this: We have an High Priest such as has been described — [described previously in the book of Hebrews] — Who has taken His seat at the right hand of God's majestic throne in heaven: where He ministers in then Sanctuary in the true Tabernacle, built by the Lord and not by human hands."*

Moses' writings especially the book of Exodus that deals with spiritual redemption, points to Christ. This is obvious from the words of the Christ Himself, who stated in Luke 24:26, *"Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter His glory."* Then verse 27 He goes on to state, *"And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning **Himself**."*

Jesus said in John 5:39, *"You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about Me."* And in verse 46, He said, *"If you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me."*

The Tabernacle symbolically foretold of Christ and His death for the forgiveness of sin. God painted a portrait of Christ through the Tabernacle, and some 1,500 years as John says, *"the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us"* (John 1:14). Interestingly, the Greek word translated as *"dwelt"* here is actually the same word as *"tabernacle,"* or actually, *"tabernacled."* Through the Tabernacle God foreshadowed many beautiful lessons about Christ that will greatly enhance our appreciation for the Savior.

The Purpose of the Tabernacle

The purpose of the Tabernacle was threefold: First, it was to give the Israelites a much needed physical symbol of God's presence in their midst. The natural tendency of the Israelites, even after all God had done for them, was to turn from God (Exodus 32:1-6). In Numbers 17:7-8 the Tabernacle is twice called *"the Tabernacle of witness."* Thus, the Tabernacle was to be a physical witness of the **PRESENCE** of God among His people, as the Lord said in Exodus 28:8, *"that I may dwell among them."* It was to be a sanctuary, a place set apart, for God to dwell among His people.

The second purpose of the Tabernacle was to foreshadow the One in whom all the symbolism and sacrifices would be fulfilled. Hebrews 9:22-26 explains the spiritual purpose of the Tabernacle, when it states,

"The law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. It was necessary, then, for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifice than there. For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; He entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. Nor did He enter heaven to offer Himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now He has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of Himself."

The third purpose of the Tabernacle was to represent a divine means through which sinful humanity could approach a holy God. It was to reveal how the broken relationship with God caused by sin could be restored, ultimately through the Supreme High Priest, Jesus Christ.

The Tabernacle was to be a *portable* structure so that it could be moved along with the Israelites as they traveled to the Promised Land. Today the dwelling place of God is still portable and is still intended to be a witness of God's presence in the world and of the way of redemption.

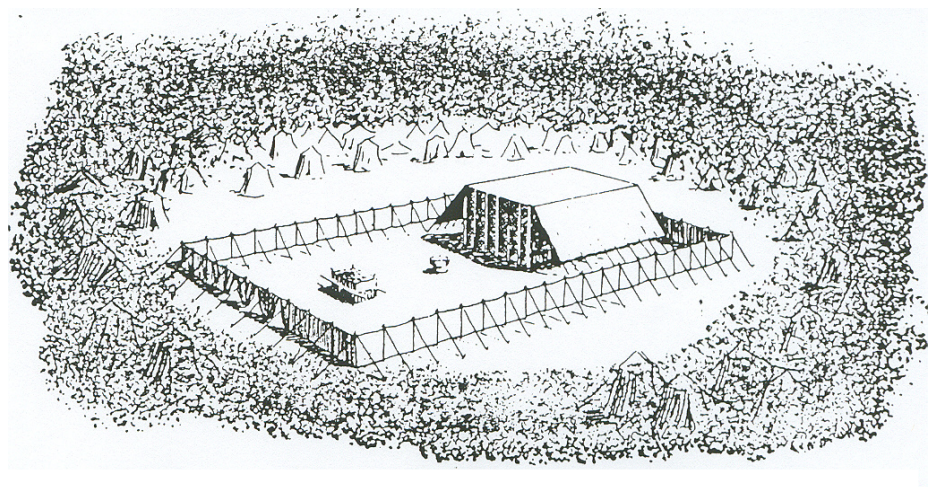
2 Corinthians 6:16-18 states,

"And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, 'I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters,' saith the Lord Almighty."

And, Acts 1:8 states, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and YOU will be My witnesses."

After Israel left Egypt,-- Moses received clear instructions from God for the building of the Tabernacle -- revealed in the book of Exodus.

(1) Exodus, chapters 20-24 give the code of God's laws, (2) Exodus, chapters 25-40 give



instructions for the dwelling place of God.

Before beginning a *detailed* study of the Tabernacle, I like for us to take a “bird’s eye” view of this tent in the wilderness. The Tabernacle was the worshiping place of the Hebrew people from the time of their wandering in the wilderness to the early days of the Hebrew kings.

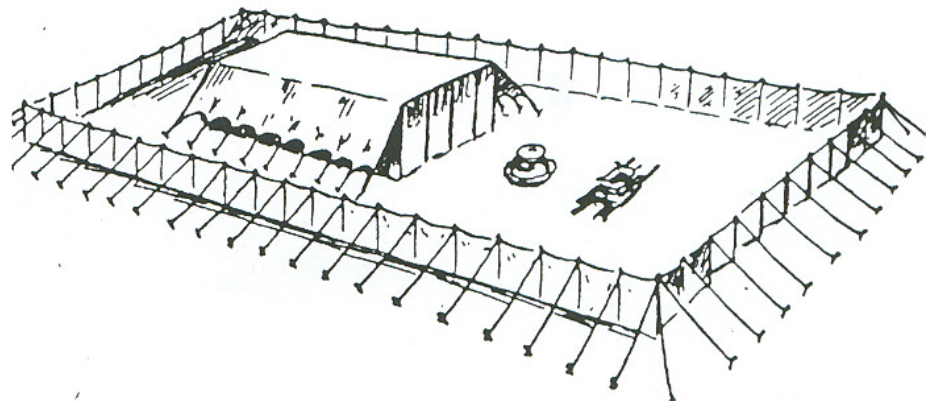
GOD, the ORIGINATOR and ARCHITECT

God entrusted the actual building to Moses, however, He as the Superintendent of construction.

Not only did God give the plans for the Tabernacle, He had a “model” in Heaven to go by from which He gave His blue prints – (See Hebrews 9:23).

The Tabernacle was a “portable, moveable, cartable” tent, enclosed by a hanging fine twined linen wall (or fence) that surrounded the Tabernacle, leaving a large open space, referred to as, “the court yard.”

THE TABERNACLE

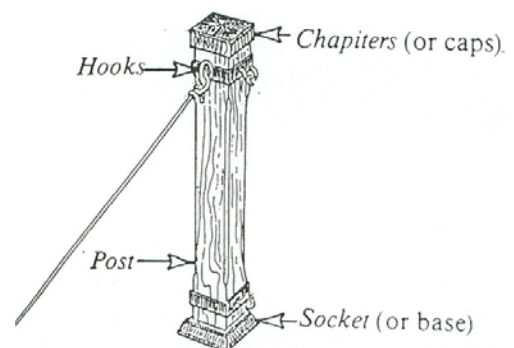


God gave Moses very detailed instructions as to how to construct the Tabernacle in the wilderness. Before we journey through the gate to the innermost part of the Tabernacle proper, let’s look at the fence and gate.

Every aspect of the Tabernacle offers deep insights into the spiritual truths that are ultimately revealed throughout the New Testament. These various elements of the Tabernacle demonstrate such truths such as: the separation caused by sin; the penalty for sin; confession of sin; redemption from sin; true worship; why we need a high priest; prayer; sanctification; and many other wonderful Scriptural truths. There is not any part of the Tabernacle that is not connected with at least one spiritual truth.

Surrounding the Tabernacle was a perfectly rectangular court twice as long as it was wide. This court was enclosed by a fence high enough to keep anyone from entering or from looking over into the court.

The material used in the construction of the fence around the court consisted of fine twined linen (Exodus 27:9), held up by 60 pillars.



The finest, white linen was hung on beautiful pillars. There were 20 pillars each on the north and south (Exodus 27:9-11) and 10 pillars each on the east and west (verses 12-13). The pillars were made of acacia wood. Exodus 27:17-18 describes the materials use in making these pillars seen in the diagram to the right.

The pillars were kept at equal distance apart by silver connecting rods attached near the top of each pillar and were held upright with rods tied from the silver hooks to brass tent stakes driven into the ground.

This open courtyard, surrounding the Tabernacle was 75 feet by 150 feet. It was 7 and ½ feet high, supported by these 60 brass pillars, having hooks of silver. The gate of the court, in the center of the East side, was 30 feet wide and was wrought with needlework of blue, purple, and scarlet of fine twined linen.

Within the court fence one can find revealed many deep spiritual truths, some of which were not revealed unto the writing of the New Testament. This courtyard fence clearly and distinctly created a barrier or a separation between God and man.

This fence, separating those on the outside from God's presence on the inside, certainly sheds light on Isaiah 59:2, that teaches, "*Your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear you.*"

The fact that the fence that surrounded the Tabernacle was made of shining white fine linen also represents "*the righteous acts of the saints,*" according to Revelation 19:8 that states, "*...for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints.*"

The fine white linen fence taught that God was encircled with righteousness, and when approached on God's terms and conditions He could make humanity righteous as well.

This fine twined linen fence that encircled the court spoke eloquently of the sinlessness and righteousness of God and of what He requires of those who would come into His holy presence then, as well as now. Instead of meeting God's requirements and doing what He demands in order to obtain righteousness, so many today -- like the Jews in Paul's day -- made a very serious mistake.

Paul writes, "*Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God*" (Romans 10:1-3).

The Gate

The gate through the fence, giving entry to the Tabernacle, was on the east and was the only entrance into the court. It was suspended on four pillars, that were exactly like the other pillars of the fence. The gate was in the center of the east fence, with ten cubits -- (15 feet) -- of court fence on either side.

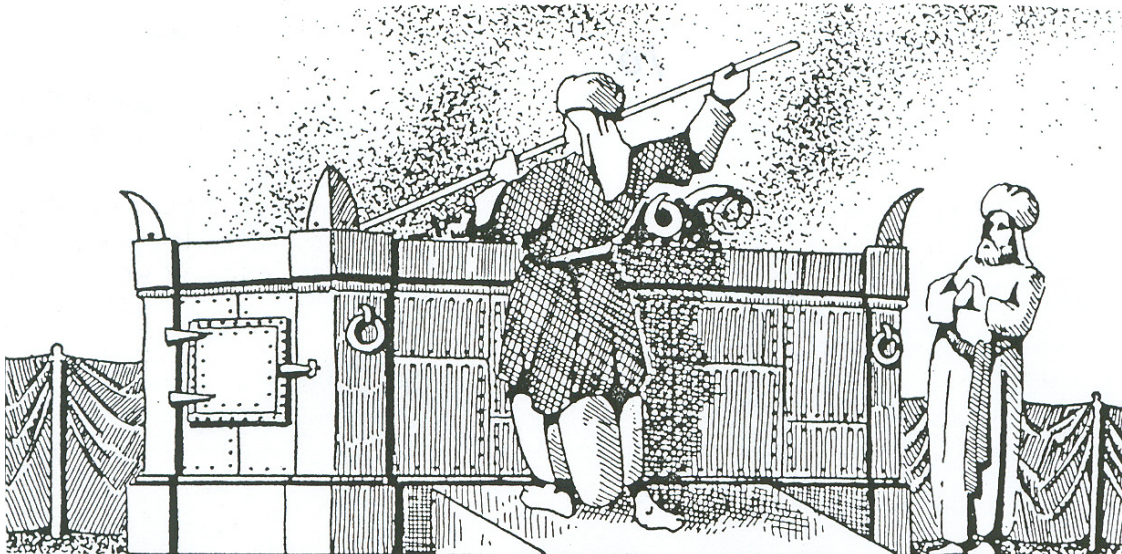
The fence that encircled the court yard was shining white with no color, but the gate was quite different – Exodus 27:16 states, “*And for the gate of the court shall be an hanging of twenty cubits [30 feet] of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, wrought with needlework: and their pillars shall be four, and their sockets four.*”

The gate with its beautiful colors stood out from the rest of the fence, drawing attention to itself as the one and only entrance into God’s presence. The Israelites knew that only way into the presence of God was through the beautiful gate on the east.

Entering the courtyard, the first object one sees, just inside the gate was the **Brazen Altar**, where sacrifices were offered. It was the largest of any of the pieces of furniture of the Tabernacle -- being 7 and ½ Feet Square and 4 and ½ feet high. It has horns on each corner and rights for staves on two sides, in order to carry it while traveling in the desert.



The Brazen Altar was large and massive! It was so large that all of the other Tabernacle furniture could have been place inside of it. The Israelites had to sacrifice on this Brazen Altar before they could enter any farther into the Tabernacle.

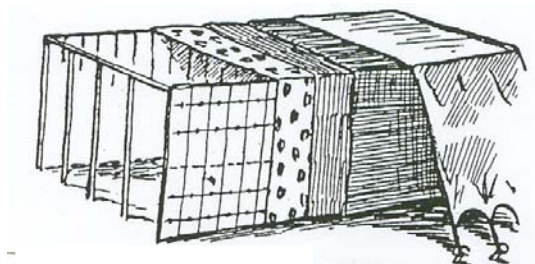


Just beyond the Brazen Altar was the “**Laver**” -- a washbasin -- the only other article of furniture in the courtyard. This Laver was constructed with pure metal, made of melted-down brazen mirrors that had the women brought from Egypt. There was a peculiarity of this Laver that distinguishes it from all the other furnishings of the Tabernacle, in that there was no specific measurement given by God. The exact size of every other article of furniture in the Tabernacle is given, but for the Laver for cleaning this was no so. The exact measurement for the Laver is not given anywhere in Scripture.



The priest, walking bare foot on the ground, killing and offering sacrifices, must wash at the Laver every time he passes, which would have been several times during the day.

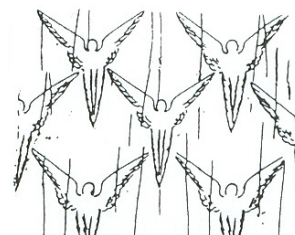
The Laver was a brass “*tub*” on a stand,. Its purpose was to be a reservoir for the water that the priests used to ash their hands and feet before returning to the Brazen Altar or going into the Tabernacle. It is interesting to note that they did not wash in the Laver, but rather, they washed with water from the Laver.



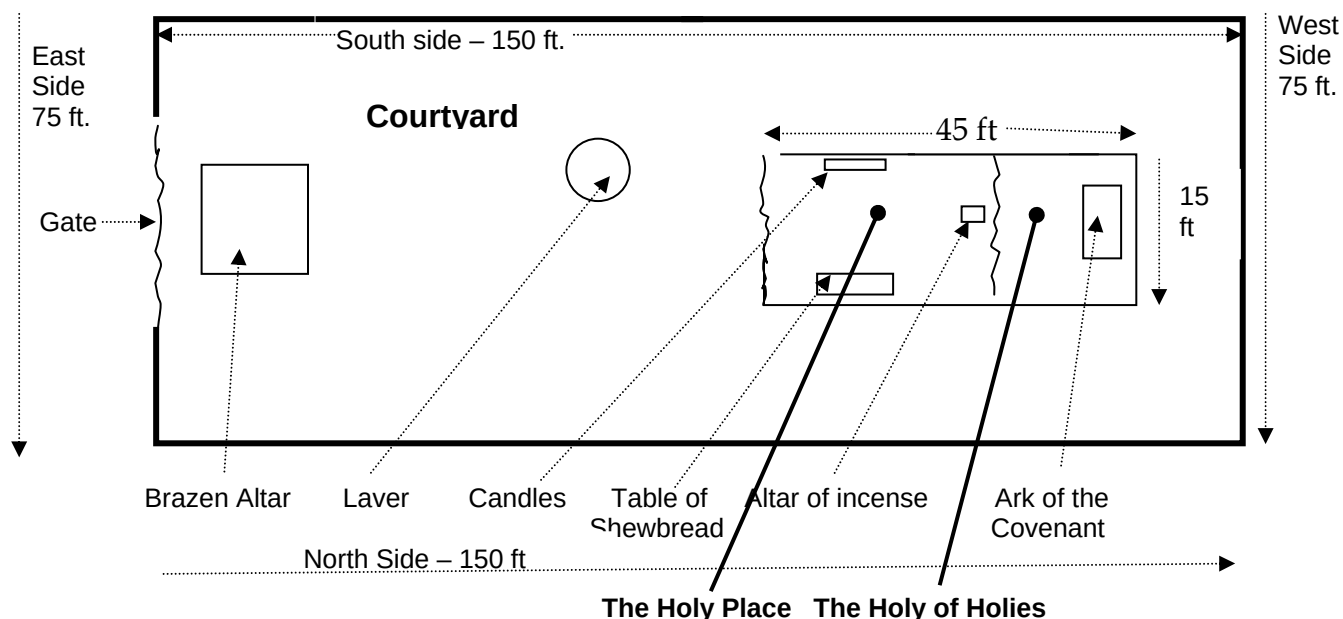
Arriving at the Tabernacle itself, the roof consisted of four layers of material:

- (1) Badger’s skins for the outer covering to protect it as it was exposed to the sun, rain and storms.
- (2) Just underneath the outer covering was Ram’s skins, dyed red.
- (3) Goat’s hair was the next covering, and finally . . .
- (4) Fine-twined-linen – embroidered with blue, purple and scarlet – covering the open space of the top, forming the ceiling of the Tabernacle.

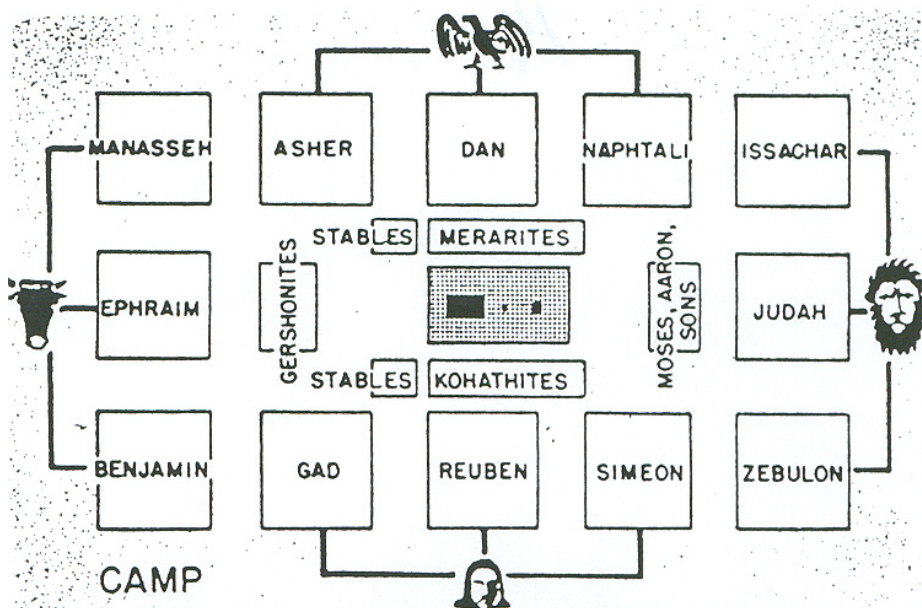
This 4th layer of covering for the Tabernacle covered the entire top of the Tabernacle. There was no other roof for the Tabernacle than these layers of material, so, this covering of the Tabernacle – embroidered with figures of Cherubims, formed the ceiling, visible to those inside as the looked up.



In order to keep an accurate picture of the Tabernacle here is a “*bird’s eye*” view of a blue print of the Tabernacle and its courtyard:



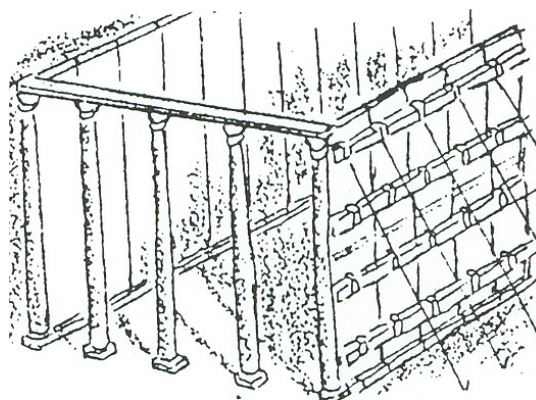
When the children of Israel would camp, the Tabernacle was situated like the hub of a great wheel, with the twelve tribes encamped in their proper locations on all sides of the Tabernacle.



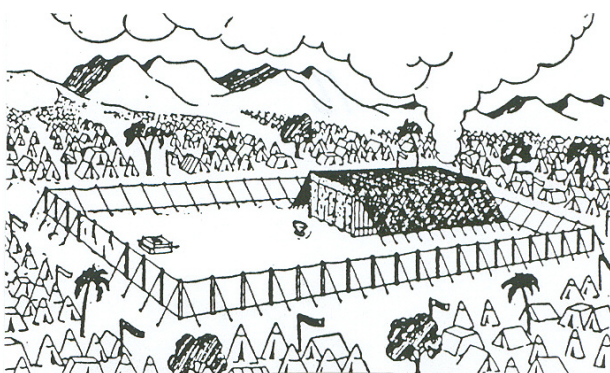
The Tabernacle proper was constructed of **BOARDS, SOCKETS, and BARS**.

There were 48 boards made of acacia wood – 13 feet long and 2 feet wide – covered with gold. Each board rested on, and was fixed in a foundation (“socket”) of silver.

The entire Tabernacle rested on these sockets, or “blocks” of silver. They were 100 in number and weighed 100 pounds each. The total weight of these sockets was *five tons!*



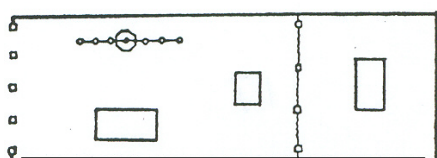
These boards were bound together with bars of acacia wood. There were five bars binding the boards together on the north side, five on the south side, and five on the west side. Leaving a door into the Tabernacle on the east side. Four of these bars on each side of the Tabernacle held the boards together by running through rings on the *outside* of the boards, while one bar on each side of the Tabernacle ran through the center on the *inside* of the boards, from one end of the Tabernacle to the other.



Passing through the courtyard, after examining the boards, sockets and bars of the Tabernacle proper, one comes to the **DOOR OF THE TABERNACLE**. This beautiful,

massive door, 15 feet wide and 15 feet high, was a veil made of fine-twined-linen, embroidered with blue, purple and scarlet and was covered with Cherubims. It hung on five pillars of acacia wood, overlaid with gold, each pillar setting in a socket of brass.

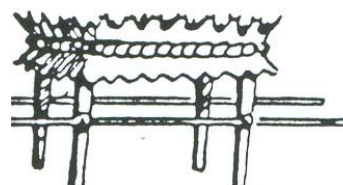
Wide-eyed and full of reverence, as one realizes that here is the dwelling place of Almighty God, he enters into the first room -- (called "*The Holy Place*") -- and finds three articles of furniture. As one lifts the beautiful colored tapestry of the door (veil) and steps in between the golden pillars into the "*Holy Place*," his eyes become accustomed to the dim light of the lamps. He's impressed with the sweet fragrance of burning incense. The wall to his right and left are of burnished gold and the veil in front of him is of many colors with golden needlework. Yet, with all of this luster he is moved by the very simplicity of the furnishings.



The "*Holy Place*" takes up about two-thirds of the entire space of the Tabernacle however it has only three pieces of furniture. One on the right is the Table of Shewbread; on the left is the Golden Lamp stand, with all seven lamps burning brightly, their flaming light reflecting off the dazzling golden wall behind them.

Straight ahead is the Alter of Incense from which a tin wisp of smoke ascends toward the tapestried ceiling.

On the north side of the "*Holy Place*" to the right, is the *Table of Shewbread*, a small table of gold-covered acacia wood, only 36 inches long, 18 inches wide, and 27 inches high with rings on either side through which staves are placed to transport it.



On the table are twelve flat cakes, called, "*shewbread*," that are placed in two stacks with frankincense place on top of each stack.

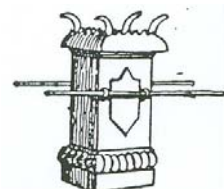


Across the room, to the left is the Golden Lamp stand, made of beaten pure gold, weighing about one hundred pounds.

The Golden Lamp stand has a central stem with three branches. Each branch is a semi-circle reaching down to the central stem from one side and, then, reaching back up on the other side, making comparable branches on each side of the lamp.

The closer the six lamps are to the central stem, the smaller are the branches. At the foot of the main stem there is a base to hold the whole structure upright. The lamps were almond-shaped, olive oil lamps, each with a wick that burned *continuously*. There is much fine beaten work of flowers and bowls engraved throughout the whole lamp stand.

The third, and last, remaining article of furniture in the "*Holy Place*," stands directly in front of the veil on the western



side. It is the *Altar of Incense*. It is 10 inches square at the base and 36 inches high and has rings for its two staves and a crown-like periphery, or border, on the top. It is made of acacia wood and covered with gold. With it is a golden censer that is used to carry burning incense into the *Holy of Holies*.

At the western end of the *Holy Place* is a veil, a heavy curtain that separates the *Holy Place* from the *Holy of Holies*. It serves a practical purpose – for to approach the Ark of the Covenant was a serious and dangerous action. This veil separates the priests from the pure presence of Almighty God. Even the high priest could enter this *Holy of Holies* only once a year, except when the camp moves. And, even then, this *Ark of the Covenant* is moved extremely carefully and in the strictly prescribed manner that God had given.

The *veil*, separating the *Holy Place* from the *Holy of Holies*, was 15 feet square, made of similar material to the linen covering the whole Tabernacle -- (and, of course, the same colors of blue, purple, scarlet, on a white background) -- Cherubims were also embroidered on it in fine, cunning needlework!

This veil was a superb piece of tapestry, and was, also, used to cover the Ark of the Covenant when the Israelites were traveling.

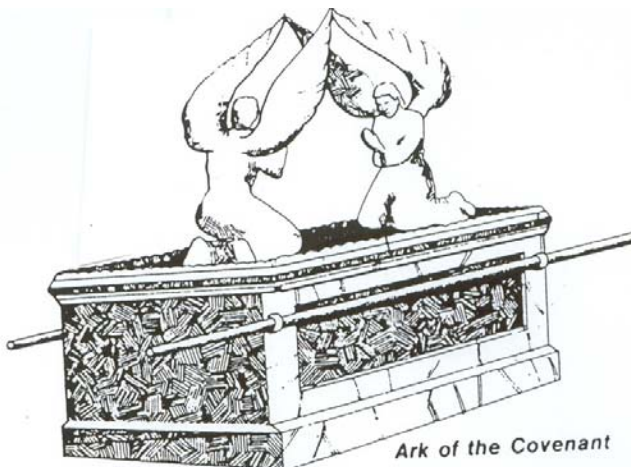
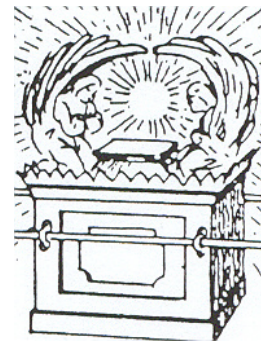
[A later veil, similar to this one, only **FOUR INCHES THICK**, would hang in Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem – (later, the Temple built by Herod), protecting the Ark of the Covenant.]

The four acacia pillars covered with gold, resting upon sockets of silver, supported this veil. There is a narrow “*rent place*,” -- a division or split in the curtain -- through which the high priest can pass through.

This veil provides a beautiful background for the *Holy Place* and hangs as a protecting mystery of the *Holy of Holies*.

The one piece of furniture in the *Holy of Holies* is the Ark of the Covenant with its cover – the *Mercy Seat*. The *Mercy Seat* was a cover for the *Ark of the Covenant*. It is a magnificently made resting place for the *Shekinah Glory* of God.

The *Mercy Seat* was made of solid gold, beautifully sculptured to form two Cherubims. The wings of these heavenly creatures spread upward toward each other, bowing down to gaze at the top of the Ark of the Covenant.



The *Mercy Seat* served three functions: (1) It was a covering for the Ark of the Covenant; (2) It was a dwelling place for the *Shekinah Glory* of God; and (3) It was the place where the blood of the sacrifices was sprinkled.

The Cherubims were the only graven images that God ever allowed. They must have been heavenly creatures to whom God gave some very important ministry.

If the *Mercy Seat* -- (the covering for the *Ark of the Covenant*) -- were to be removed, the *Ark of the Covenant* would appear to be a golden box, 45 inches long, 27 inches wide and 27 inches high.

There were four rings of gold through which the gold-covered, acacia, staves were placed to carry the *Ark of the Covenant* - carefully covered by the veil - when the Israelites traveled.

The Ark of the Covenant, made of acacia wood, was covered with gold both inside and out. There were three articles in the ark: (1) The Ten Commandments on the tablets of stone; (2) a pot of manna; and (3) Aaron's rod that budded.

This concludes our "*bird's eye*" tour of the Tabernacle, its courtyard, and its furnishings within the *Holy Place* and *the Holy Holies*. Now let's learn what it all means and what God is saying to us through the spiritual teachings of the symbolizes given through the Tabernacle.

Exodus, the book that gives us the description of the Tabernacle, logically follows the book of Genesis. Genesis tells the story of man's failure. It begins with that sublime expression, "*In the beginning God...*" and closes with the symbolic words, "*In a coffin in Egypt.*" The story of Genesis is the story of man falling from a perfect creation into sin and death. However, God gave man a hope of a promised Savior - *a Redeemer!* --- then follows Exodus, the book of Redemption!

Exodus covers 40 chapters, 13 of these chapters have to do entirely with the Tabernacle, and the priests who were to minister therein.

Before mention is made of the Tabernacle in Scripture, the story of redemption is written in language that cannot be mistaken. The opening chapter of Exodus tells the story of slavery - a picture of the sinner's bondage to Satan and sin. The children of Israel were given a deliverer from bondage of Egypt in the person of Moses -- sinners are offered the only Savior from bondage to Satan in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The story of the birth of Moses, and his call from God to deliver Israel, is told in the early chapters of Exodus, after which, follows the record of God's righteous judgment upon those who turned an unheeding ear toward God, the only Deliverer. The ten plagues upon the Egyptians is a picture of judgment on all who refuse to accept God's salvation in Christ Jesus. The last, of which was associated with the first Passover in Israel -- a type of Christ, the Paschal Lamb.

Exodus is a continued story of God's redemption,. Immediately after the giving of the first Passover, Israel is delivered from the hosts of the Egyptians at the Red Sea -- another beautiful picture of God's redemption. [Israel's passing through the Red Sea was a figure of Water Baptism, according to 1 Corinthians 10:2]

From the Red Sea on the story is one of wilderness wandering for 40 years as God took care of His children.

Exodus then shows how helpless the children of Israel were in their own strength. And to show them that they could never measure up to God's perfect standard of holiness apart from the Promised Redeemer, God gave them the Ten Commandments and the detailed explanation of their meaning.

That is the story of Exodus up to the part that tells of the Tabernacle. The description of the Tabernacle begins with chapter 25.

Man attempts to "*cut portions*" from God's Word and to present a mutilated *shorter* Bible. While we would never be guilty of doing this because we believe that **all** Scripture is inspired, nevertheless, are we committing virtually the same act through neglect?

The enumeration of materials, quantities and dimension in relation to the Tabernacle may be regarded by the casual reader as uninteresting or unimportant, until one considers that the Holy Spirit has borne record that all Scripture is God-breathed and is profitable to all (2 Timothy 3:16).

God, Himself, emphasizes the importance of the study of the Tabernacle by:

1. THE LENGTH OF TREATMENT

Only two consecutive chapters in the Bible are given to the account of Creation, while *forty-three*, (that's 43!) chapters are given to the Tabernacle and its ceremonies - Exodus 25 through 40 and the book of Leviticus.

2. REPETITION

Exodus, chapter 25 to 28, is *detailed* instruction from God on how the Tabernacle should be built. And then, chapter 35 to 40 is an accurate account of how it *was* built. Verse-after-verse of these two passages are identical except the tense is changed.

3. THE MANY NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCES TO THE TABERNACLE

The New Testament book of Hebrews is an invaluable commentary on the Tabernacle, however, references the New Testament are not confined to Hebrews alone, references concerning the Tabernacle are found in the Gospels, in Acts; and mentioned time and time again throughout the Epistles and in the book of Revelation.

Now that we have a *general* idea of the Tabernacle and its furnishings, let's travel again step by step through the Tabernacle, this time being very careful to halt at every location -- and giving attention to the Gospel found there and the truth God has for us!

CONSIDER THE TABERNACLE'S HISTORICAL SETTING

The Israelites had recently been freed from the rule of Pharaoh where they had been in bondage for over 400 years. Since the time of this recent deliverance Moses had been their leader, he in turn receives his instructions from God

In Exodus 19:5-6 God, Who was now their King, proposed to give them laws. This was the beginning of the Theocracy. Two events followed:

- (1) A code of laws was made – Exodus, chapters 20 to 24
- (2) A dwelling place for the King was built – Exodus, chapters 25 to 40

The first mention of the Tabernacle is Exodus 15:17, where God's "*dwelling place*," among men is mentioned

– [The Hebrew word translated as "*Tabernacle*" means "*dwelling in their midst*"]

From the completion of the Tabernacle until the present time, God has never been without a dwelling place on earth. After the Tabernacle, the Temple was God's house, and then, when its glory had departed, God came to earth in the Person of His Son – John 1:14 & Colossians 2:9.

When Jesus left this earth, He sent the Comforter – the Holy Spirit – and He dwells in the hearts of individual believers today by the indwelling Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:15-17). Today, the whole body of believers forms the true Church, the habitation of God in this age – Ephesians 2:21-22, Exodus 25:8 with Matthew 18:20.

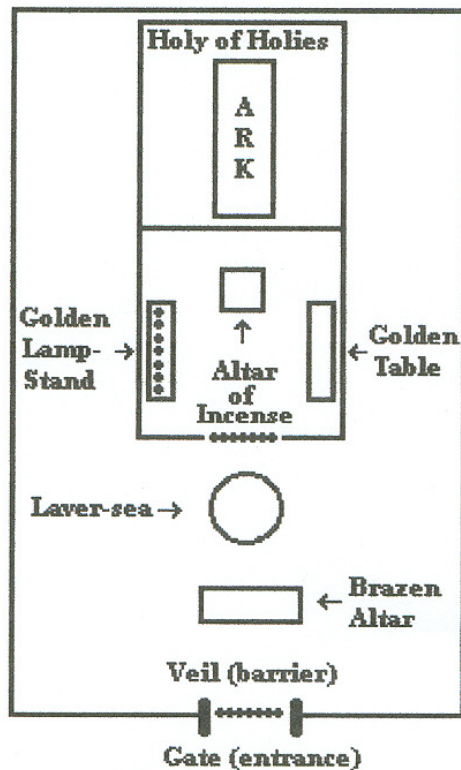
GETTING THE PATTERN FOR THE TABERNACLE

Moses, at God's command, went up into the mount, and for six days waited for God's voice, after which he was forty days receiving the pattern of the Tabernacle. God was showing him into the heavenlies, and telling him exactly how the pattern of the Tabernacle should be built.

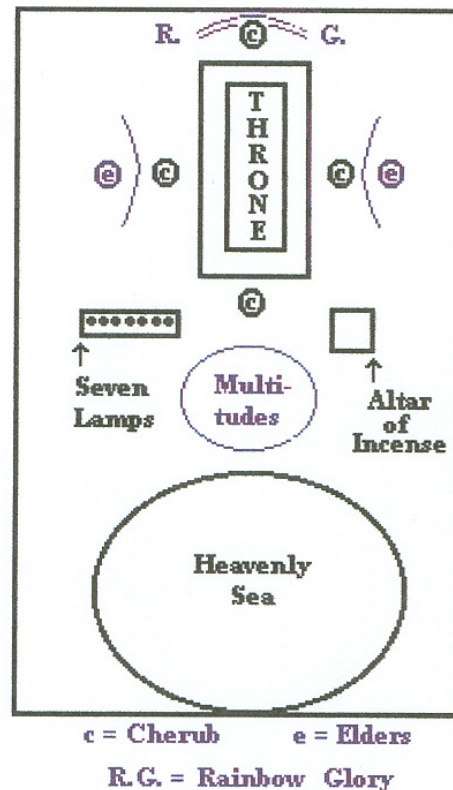
When Moses came down from the mount after getting the pattern for the Tabernacle, Scripture tells us that "*his face shone*" because he had beheld God's glory as he had seen the true Tabernacle in the heavenlies – Acts 7:44.

This is the experience of every believer who gives God a chance to reveal Christ as a pattern for his life. God's glory fills the believer's heart, his personality, and ultimately his whole life. *Oh, to have God's glory to fill our life as He filled His Tabernacle of old!*

Revelation, in several places, especially chapter 4, describes a "*Heavenly Tabernacle*," which, evidently, the earthly Tabernacle was patterned after. Note the striking similarity between this "*Heavenly Tabernacle*" and the Tabernacle God commanded Moses to build for a house of worship. [Diagram on next page] They each had a center for God to dwell – the Ark of the Covenant and the Throne of God; and they each had the seven candles, or lamps; they each had an Alter of Incense. And one could find comparisons in the Laver in the Old Testament Tabernacle and the Glassy Sea of the Heavenly Tabernacle. Evidently there are similarities that are very distinctive according to Exodus 25:5 & 40 and Hebrews 8:5 & 9:23 – (Later David saw the model of the Heavenly Temple – 1 Chronicles 28:11-19)

**Earthly Tabernacle**

(not to scale)



c = Cherub e = Elders
R. G. = Rainbow Glory

Heavenly Temple

Financing

The most precious of metals, jewels and finest of raw materials were used. For instance, it would take - **2,400 pounds of gold**; **8,400 pounds of silver**, and **8,400 pounds of brass**, and this is not counting the hard work, fabrics, skins, oil, dyes, and precious stones.

It is estimated that the Tabernacle would cost well over **two million dollars** - without counting the labor.

15 KINDS OF MATERIAL WERE USED FOR THE TABERNACLE

- | | | |
|------------------|--------------------------|--|
| 1. Gold | 7. Fine linen | 13. Spices for anointing oil and incense |
| 2. Silver | 8. Goat hair | 14. Onyx stones (28:6-14) |
| 3. Brass | 9. Badger skins | 15. Precious stones for breastplate of High Priest |
| 4. Blue linen | 10. Rams skins, dyed red | |
| 5. Purple linen | 11. Acacia wood | |
| 6. Scarlet linen | 12. Oil for light | |

How Was This Raised?

God's leader, Moses, had to present the need of materials to the people and these people, fresh from slavery, remember all that God had done for them, rushed forward as one body to lay their wealth at the feet of Moses (Exodus 35:4-9, 36).

Here is an excellent example of how God desires that provisions be made for performing His work – *an offering from His people!* The materials used in constructing the Tabernacle came as an *offering* from God's people. Therefore, an offering was taken to build this Tabernacle that would cost approximately a hundred million dollars today.

A misunderstanding arises because of the word "*borrow*" in Exodus 11:1-3 in the King James Translation. It simply means, "*to ask*" in the original language. God was allowing them to collect back wages as they "*asked*" the Egyptians and received, these jewels of gold.

Another interesting thought is, that badger's skins were used for shoes (Exodus 16:10). Therefore God literally asked these traveling people for the shoes off their feet – that they gave willingly – until God had to restrain them! The, God caused their shoes to last forty years (Deuteronomy 29:5)!

The procedure to be followed was very simple. Every man was to give willingly with his heart (Exodus 25:2). From the offering for the Tabernacle until this day the proper attitude and motive of giving to God has been the same – 2 Corinthians 9:7.

The Israelites cheerfully brought offerings ranging from gold to goat's hair (Exodus 25:3-7). Where did the Israelites get all of these provisions? Exodus 12:36 states that "*the Lord gave the people favor -- [well-disposed in the eyes of the Egyptians – inclined the Egyptians so favorably toward the people] -- in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent – [supplied, gave them gladly] – unto them such things as they required. They spoiled the Egyptians – [took payment]. Verse 35 says, "The children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed – [requested, asked for] -- of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment."*

The problem of God's house not having all the provisions it needs has never been that God's people haven't had enough to give, but, rather, it is a matter of attitude, primarily because we forget a very important spiritual truth tucked away in Deuteronomy 8:18, which states, "*Thou shalt remember the Lord thy God; for it is He who give you power to get wealth."*

All the provisions, property, and prosperity we enjoy are the result of God's blessing upon us. However, God did not require offerings from only the wealthy Israelites, but even the humble offerings of goat's hair were requested for the construction of the Tabernacle.

Soon after Moses made God's request known concerning the provisions of the Tabernacle a unique problem arose. Exodus 36:5 states, "*The people brought much more than enough.*"

Who Where The Builders?

No building is erected without plans, therefore, an architect must be secured who drafts the plans and, then from his fertile brain comes forth the structure in every detail. It is inconceivable that God – Who is orderly, systematic, and thorough in every detail of whatever He does – would neglect this most important detail. Not only did God have a plan, He had a "model" in heaven to go by from which He obtained His blue print (Hebrews 9:23).

God was the Originator and Architect of the Tabernacle –
Independent of any man – (Romans 11:32-36 & Ephesians 1:5, 9, 11)

God was not the actual builder of the Tabernacle, nevertheless, He entrusted this part to Moses, who became His superintendent of construction. The "workers" who did the actual building of the Tabernacle, were all of the Israelites. Nothing could have been done without them. They all had their part to do, even, if it was only to "*weave goats hair.*"

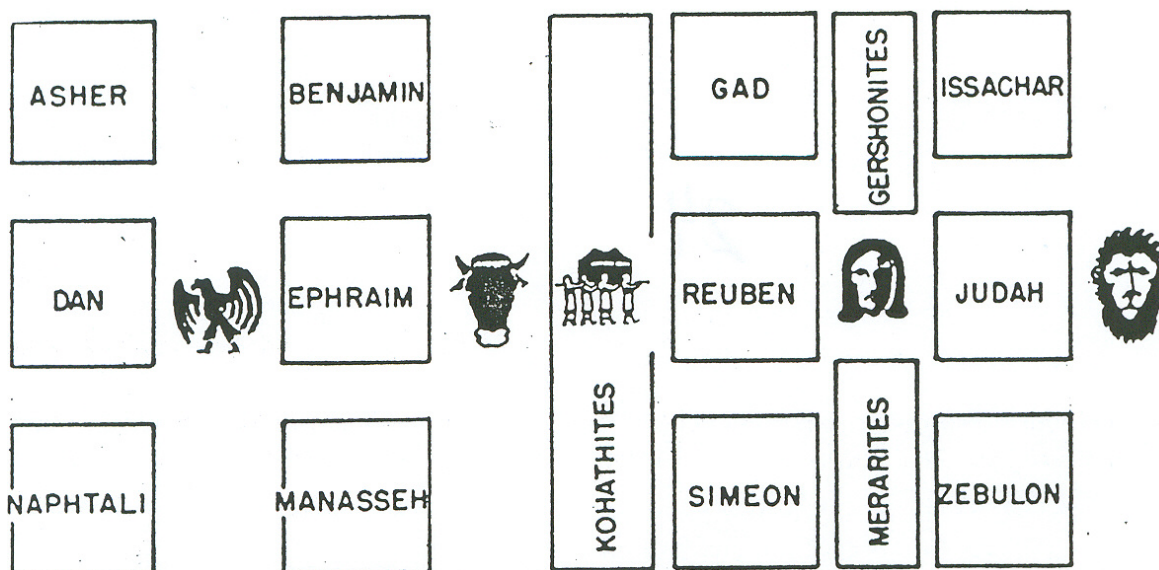
These uneducated brick makers knew nothing about building a Tabernacle nevertheless, God gave them a teacher, *Bezaleel* (The name means, "In the shadow of God"). He was a beautiful type of the Holy Spirit – (John 14:26, 15:26 & 16:13).

Everyone did their part, they all worked together, with the result that the Tabernacle was finished in nine months – according to Exodus 4:1-2

The second chapter of Numbers gives the locations of the tribes:

The tribe of Judah was on the East, directly in front of the gate. Christ was to come from this tribe. On the east also were the tribes of Issachar and Zebulun. On the South were the tribes of Reuben, Simeon and Gad. On the West were the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh and Benjamin. On the North were the tribes of Dan, Asher and

Nephtali



Between the tribes and the Tabernacle were the tents of Moses, Aaron and the priests on the East, then the 3rd chapter of Numbers gives the locations of the Levites (sons of Levi) - Gershon, Kohath and Merari. The Gershonites lived on the West of the Tabernacle and had charge of the curtains, coverings, veils and the hangings of the court, according to verses 25-26. The Kohathites, on the South, had charge of all the furniture, according to verses 29-32. The Merarites, on the North, had charge of the heavy framework, such as the pillars, bars, sockets and pins, according to verses 36-38.

When Israel was camp, the Ark of the Covenant was in the middle of the camp, but when they marched, the Ark went before them, seeking a "resting place." What a beautiful picture of Christ in our midst, and yet, we are seeking a resting place as we are led by the Lord.

An In Depth Study of The Tabernacle!

I now invite you to enter with me into a *detailed* study concerning the meaning and the typical teachings of all the various parts - their construction - and - their arrangement. **Every part, and detail, of this Tabernacle is designed and patterned to present Jesus Christ!**

Its structure, materials, furniture, as well, as the ministry in the Tabernacle, reveals some particular aspect of the infinite graces, virtues, attributes, personality and work of our Savior, Jesus Christ - See Hebrew 9:2.

As we survey the furnishings of the Tabernacle, we see that they are arranged in the form of a cross. If we draw a straight line from the Brazen Altar, near the gate, to the

Ark of the covenant, in the Holy of Holies, bisecting the Altar of Incense, and then draw a line at right angles to this line from the Table of Shewbread to the Candlestick, we see the form a perfect figure of a cross. It is as if the cross of Calvary stands at the beginning of the New Testament and casts its shadow back through the "rent veil" until it lies plain to view and can be clearly traced across the pages of Exodus and Leviticus, as indeed it can be seen across every page of the Old Testament.

[See diagram on the next page]

This Tabernacle in the wilderness has been the only building ever constructed on this earth that was perfect in every aspect from its beginning -- never needing attention, addition, or alteration!

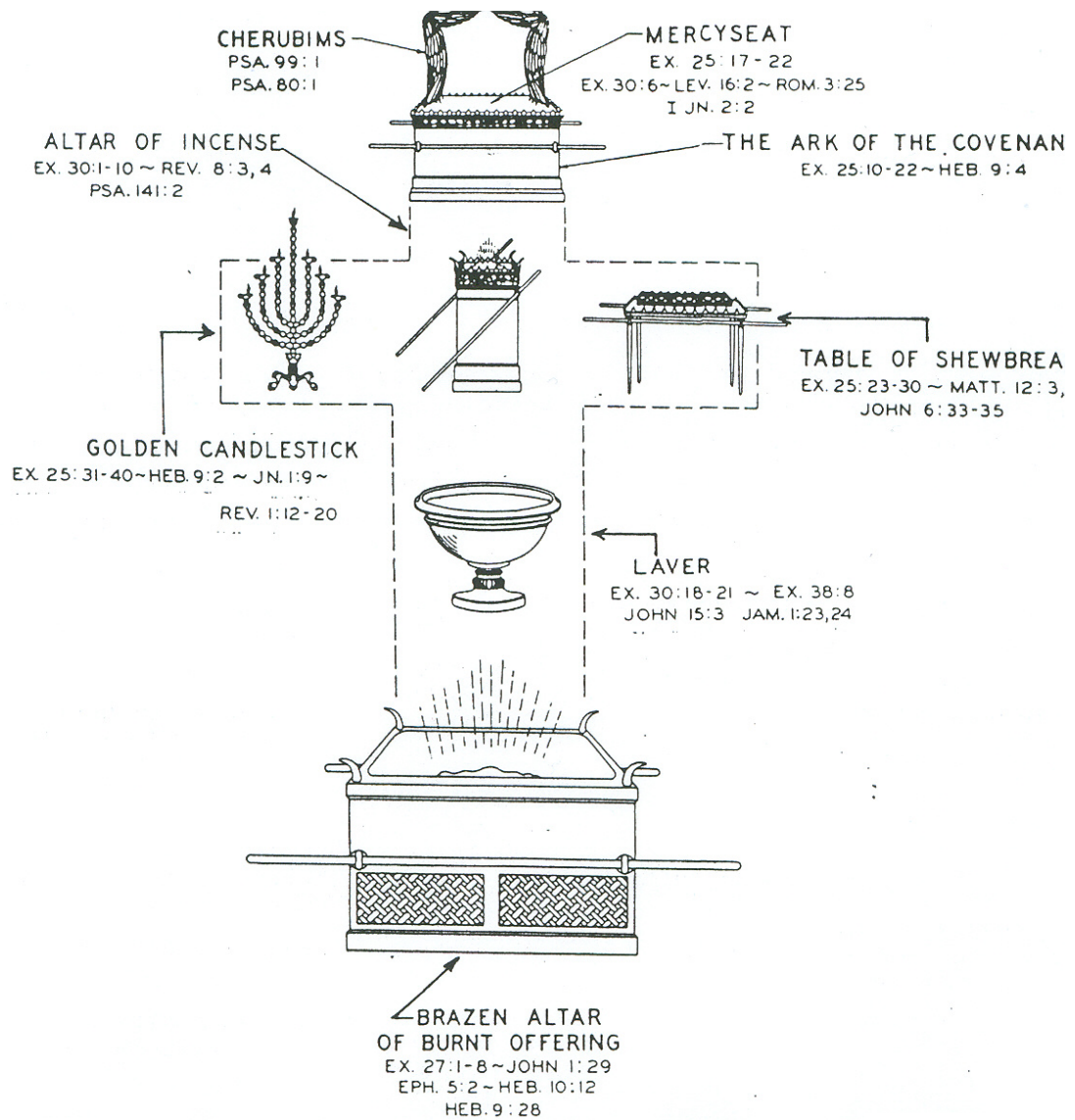
The Tabernacle, and its furnishings, speaks of one thing, namely, the salvation provided by Jesus Christ and the work of Christ performed for us upon the cross of Calvary. Almighty God designed every detail – every part had a prophetic, redemptive, and typical significance. No portion of Scripture is richer in meaning or more perfect in its teaching of the plan of redemption than the description of this divinely designed building – *the Tabernacle!*

God's The Architect of Grace

"And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering...And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it" (Exodus 25:1-2; :8-9).

The blueprint, the pattern, the plan, the design and all of its specification were minutely made in Heaven, and were committed unto Moses on Mount Sinai for the children of Israel shortly after their deliverance from Egypt.

God gave *every* detail of the Tabernacle, *not one single detail* did He leave to Moses' choice or judgment. Why? Because every detail had a heavenly significance and was a type of Christ – See Hebrews 9.

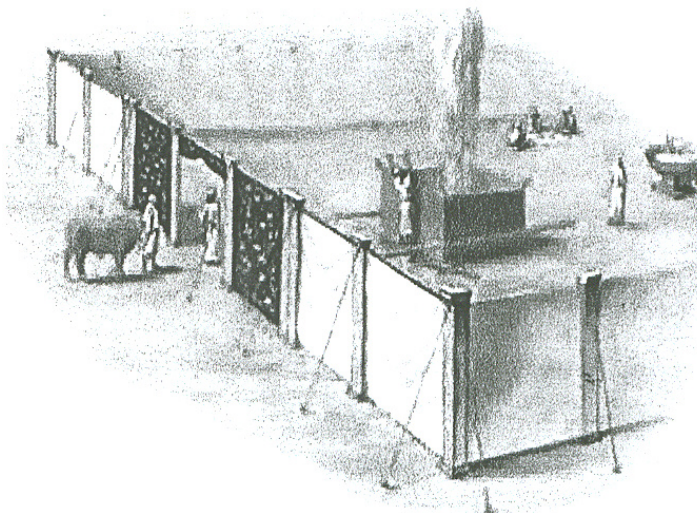


Jesus Christ is the perfect, eternal, dwelling place of God. It was after the pattern of the Lord Jesus that every part and detail of the Tabernacle was designed.

The Tabernacle was enclosed by a wall, or hanging of fine twined linen – 75 feet wide and 150 feet long. It was 7 and ½ feet high, supported by 60 brass pillars having hooks of silver (Exodus 27:16-17).

The Gate

The gate, 30 feet wide, was on the East side of the court yard and was beautifully



wrought with needlework of blue, purple and scarlet of fine twined linen,

In this gate we see Christ, whom the New Testament reveals as, “*The door*” who provides a way into the presence of God for all mankind

“*Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me’*” (John 14:6).

[Also read John 3:14-16; Titus 2:11; 1 John 1:2 & Hebrews 2:9]

There was no color in the wall that formed the courtyard, however, the gate was brightly colored “*blue, purple and scarlet of fine twined linen wrought with needle work.*”

1. “Blue” – is the color of heaven and speaks of Christ’s divinity. Christ was the Heavenly One, veiled in flesh, living among men

(John 1:1, 14, 18; 1 Timothy 3:16).

2, Purple – is the color of royalty (Judges 8:26) and speaks of Christ’s kingly power and dignity (Philippians 2:9-11; 1 Timothy 6:15; Revelation 11:15; and 19:11 through 20:5).

3. Scarlet – is the color of blood and speaks of Christ’s sacrifice (1 Peter 1:19-20; Acts 2:23 & 4:38).

The Pillars of the Gate

There were four pillars of the gate to uphold, that which represented Christ Jesus – as the Door, the Way to God – and there are four Gospels setting forth Christ in His four-fold character.

MATTHEW – Presents Christ as King, the son of David, son of Abraham

MARK – Presents Christ as the faithful Servant of God (Mark 10:45)

LUKE – Presents Christ as the “*Son of man*” (Luke 19:10 revealing Christ’s humanity as the son of Adam (Luke 3:38)

JOHN – Presents Christ as the “*Son of God*” revealing His Deity (John 1:1-10)

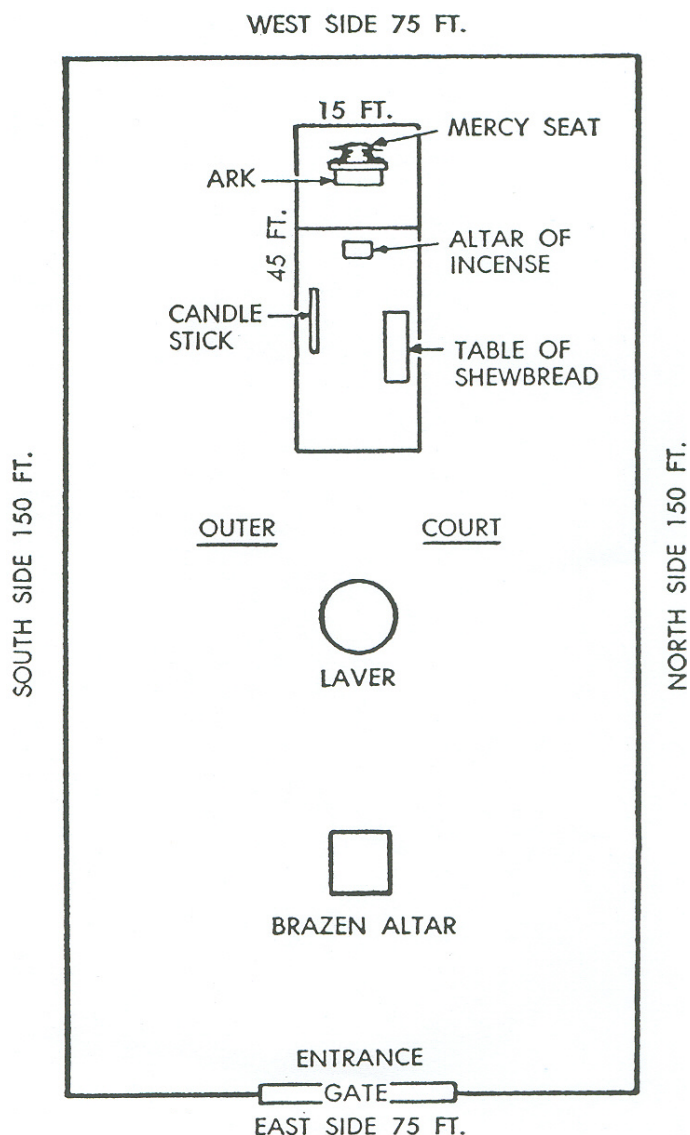
There was only one gate, speaking of the only way of access unto God – and so it is today – only ONE way – and that is through Jesus Christ, God’s Son (John 14:6 and Acts 4:12)

Viewed From The Outside

One might “*live a good life,*” however, if he was outside, he was considered, “*afar off*” from God – according to Ephesians 2:12-13. As one steps close to the white hangings of the courtyard that speak of Christ’s righteousness, he see that his righteousness is as filthy rags.

The Wall – or – Hangings

Surrounding the Tabernacle was a rectangular shaped courtyard, with only one entrance (Exodus 27:9-18 & 38:9-20).



These hangings created a curtain-wall around a courtyard, 150 feet by 75 feet, and were made of made of fine twined linen hung on pillars of brass, that were set in sockets of brass. The hooks at the top of the pillars were made of silver, from thee hooks the white linen hangings were fastened. -- [See diagram on page 11] -- There were 60 of these pillars, and they were 7 ½ feet high.

There was absolutely no way to enter the courtyard except through the gate!

These linen hangings were a type of the righteousness of Christ and speak of His sinless, spotless, life (Revelation 19:8). It is the lack of righteousness that shuts man from the presence of God (Romans 3:10 & 23). Except through the gate – (Jesus Christ) – God’s presence is surrounded by this white curtain of “*fine twined linen,*” with only one opening (the gate) and it was too high for man

to see over.

The penalty was death to all who might seek to enter by some other way than the way of God's provision (Numbers 3:38).

THE HIGHT OF THE WALL was so high that none could see over, speaking of man's being unable to understand the "*things of God*" (1 Corinthians 2:9-16). Natural man is blind to the things of God.

THE PILLARS AND SOCKETS were of brass. Brass speaks of the judgment of God – (Numbers 21:9 & John 3:14). Judgment falls upon sinners however Jesus Christ bore our judgment for sin – (*as we will see in the Brazen Altar*).

As the white linen hangings, reminding us of the righteousness of Christ, were held up by the brazen pillars, so, apart from Calvary -- (where sin was judged) -- there can be no righteousness for man. God's righteousness to man rests upon Christ's finished work of redemption.

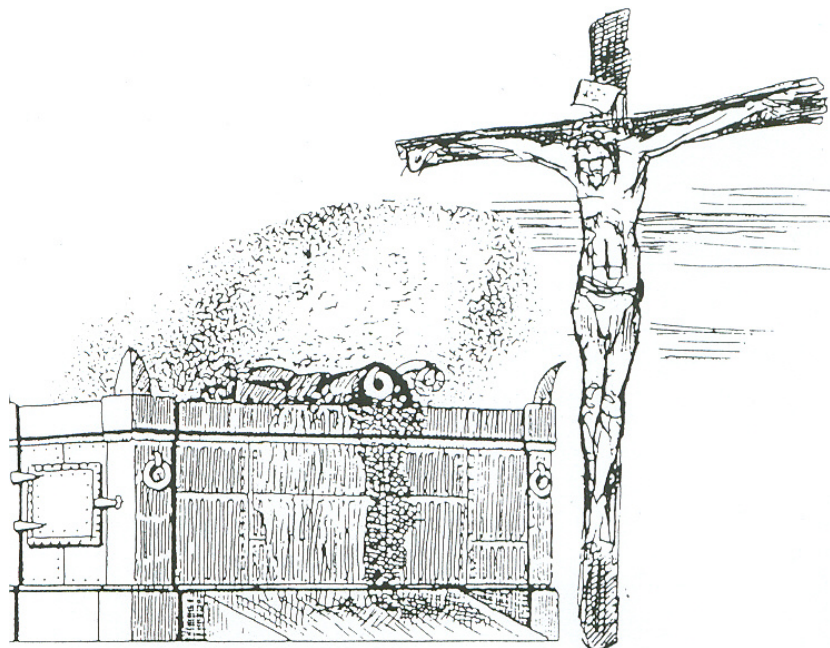
THE HOOKS WERE OF SILVER and were symbolic of Christ's atonement. The pillars were ornamented with silver. Silver was a part of the "*redemption*" money given by the children of Israel (Exodus 30:11-16 & 38:25-29). Before an Israelite could be a soldier for God, he had to present unto the Lord "*a ransom for his soul.*" Before we can become a soldier of the Cross, we must be redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ. The Israelite looked up to the beautiful *tops* of the pillars surrounding the courtyard and saw what would have reminded him of the atonement money. We look up *unto* Jesus and see the costly price as a ransom for our souls (1 Peter 1:18-19).

What a sight it must have been. It must have been impressive to behold those pillars of brass, the white linen hangings fastened to hooks of silver, and the ornamental silver crowns on top of those pillars – all glistening in the sunlight!

However, how much more impressive is Christ – our Righteousness, our Sin-Bearer, and our Redeemer!

The Brazen Altar
[Exodus 27:1-8 & 38:1-7]

Passing through the gate and entering the courtyard, the first piece of furniture that confronts us – (also the largest piece of furniture of the Tabernacle) – is



the **Brazen Altar**. The Hebrew word that is translated as “altar” in our Bibles is translated from “mizbrech” meaning, “slaughter place,” and that’s exactly what the Brazen Altar was for. It was here close to the entrance of the Tabernacle courtyard. At this altar the animals were slaughtered and their blood put on the horns of the altar. No doubt millions of animals were sacrificed over the centuries. Why were all these animals killed? Would it not have been better to give the food to the poor?

Without understanding the spiritual significance and prophetic meaning of the Brazen Altar all this slaughtering of animals seems like a vast waste. But, let’s consider .

The Brazen Altar was 7 ½ feet square and 4 ¼ feet high. It was made of acacia wood and covered with brass. God was very particular with this altar, just as He was with every detail of the Tabernacle. He said to Moses in Exodus 27:8 concerning the Brazen Altar, “...as it was showed thee in the mount, so shall they make it.”

This massive, strong, altar standing at the entrance of the courtyard was used more often than any other furniture of the Tabernacle. For instance, the high priest would go into the Holy of Holies only once a year to make atonement, other priests would go into the Holy Place *each morning and evening*, but at the Brazen Altar people came anytime throughout the day to offer their sacrifices.

This whole idea of slaughter, blood, and sacrifice seems morbid, even gruesome, to our modern way of thinking, mainly because it seems natural to our culture to want a religion that doesn’t demand a sacrifice. But the penalty for sin is awesome – requiring the shedding of blood! However, sacrifice has always been the only way to God, and should be prominent in the preaching and teaching of the Gospel message.

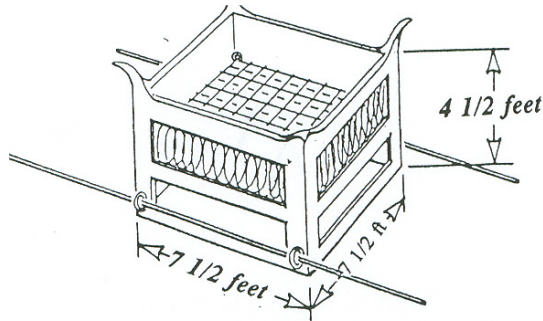
The New Testament makes it very clear that this Brazen Altar of the Tabernacle foreshadowed the Cross of Jesus Christ.

Exodus 20:24-25 states, “An altar of earth thou shalt make unto Me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen: in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee. And if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it” – showing that the place of sacrifice was prepared by God, not tooled by man. The sacrifice could not be made on anything that was “tooled” by man.

In 1 Corinthians 2:2 Paul, the great apostle, states, “I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” When the sacrifice of Christ on the cross is left out of our preaching and teaching, the Gospel has been gutted, diluted and watered down. Much of today’s preaching and teaching never mentions the crucifixion, and when that is omitted, everything is lost. There is no forgiveness of sin apart from sacrifice. We must never forget that! A gospel without the sacrifice made at the cross is no gospel at all.

Two materials went into the making of this altar of burnt offering – a very durable hard wood called, “acacia,” and a complete covering of brass. These brass-covered boards formed a hollow box open at the top and the bottom. This Brazen Altar

was outside the Tabernacle proper, and located in the open courtyard – visible to all who entered the gate, reminding them that *“the wages of sin is death”* and *“without the shedding of blood there is no remission for sin.”*



The hard wood of acacia was completely encased with brass, sealed in, airtight, by the surrounding brass. It was subjected to the intense heat of continual sacrifices, however, it was not consumed because, of the fact, that it was protected in brass. In the same manner, we are subjected to the intense heat of God's wrath upon our sins – **BUT** -- *“The Lord hath laid on Him [Jesus Christ] the iniquity of us all”* (Isaiah 53:6).

The Brazen Altar was completely square, offering equal opportunity to all. God is no respecter of persons. It rested on the ground within reach of all – only 4 ½ feet high.

At each corner of the altar there was a horn, or projection, that was to be one piece with the altar (Exodus 27:2), in order that the innocent victim could be bound (Psalm 118:27). Just as Christ's cross was stained with blood, these horns were sprinkled with blood. It was also to these same *horns* of the Brazen Altar that God provided a means that the guilty person, fearing for his life, could flee for refuge (1 Kings 1:50-53 and 2 Samuel 22:3).

Exodus 29:10-12 states, *“And thou shalt cause a bullock to be brought before the tabernacle of the congregation: and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the bullock. And thou shalt kill the bullock before the LORD, by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And thou shalt take of the blood of the bullock, and put it upon the horns of the altar with thy finger, and pour all the blood beside the bottom of the altar. [Also see Leviticus 8:15].”*

At the offering of the sacrifice at the Brazen Altar an Israelite would bring a designated animal to die for his sin -- *taking his place*. He would lay his hands on the head of the animal and confess his sins, thus transferring his sin to the animal (Leviticus 5:5). Then the animal – laden, not with any wrong that he had done but rather, with the person's sin – was killed. The priest then caught the blood, sprinkling some of the blood on the four horns, and pouring the remaining blood at the base of the altar.

All of this was only a shadow of the ultimate sacrifice to come. There is no doubt that after the Last Supper as Jesus walked to the Garden of Gethsemane to be betrayed, He knew that He was about to be sacrificed, and that all the sacrifices on the Brazen Altar were only a picture of His death on the cross. As horrible and nauseating as the sacrifices of the animals in the Tabernacle seem to us, they were all mild compared to the brutal scourging and the agonizing sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

There were “*brazen rings in the four corners*” of the Brazen Altar through which the *staves* (poles) of *acacia wood*, overlaid with brass, were put through to carry the altar whenever the altar was being transported (Numbers 4:13-15).

Staves, or poles, that went through rings on the furniture, carried all of the furniture of the Tabernacle. The rings on the furniture in the courtyard were made of brass, or bronze, and the poles were covered with brass. The rings on the furniture *inside* the Tabernacle proper were made of gold like the furniture; also the poles were covered with gold. Before the furniture was moved the priests would cover it. Everyone who entered the courtyard was able to see the Brazen Altar and the laver, however, only the priests ever saw the vessels in the Holy Place, and *only* the high priest ever saw the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies and then only once a year on the day of Passover. Why? The answer is because God was teaching the Israelites to worship the One of Whom these sacred objects spoke and not the objects themselves.

Interestingly, the height of the “*grate*” of the Brazen Altar was exactly the same height as that of the Mercy Seat in the Holy of Holies, showing a beautiful truth – stated in Psalm 85:10, “*Love and faithfulness meet together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.*” God’s justice demanded the shedding of blood to pay for sin, however, His mercy provided the sacrifice to put sin away.

No Blood – No Access To God!

Any Israelite had to sacrifice on this Brazen Altar before he could enter any farther into the courtyard, or the Tabernacle. So it is today, it is only by the blood of Jesus Christ that one is entitled to approach the dwelling place of God – (Hebrews 9:22).

At this Brazen Altar, the innocent bore the judgment of the guilty – So, today, the innocent (Jesus Christ) bore the judgment of the guilty – (you and me) – at the altar of Calvary (Romans 4:25 & Isaiah 53:3-6). At the Brazen Altar God met with man (Exodus 29:42-43) so, it is that today, we meet God only at the cross (John 14:6; Acts 4:12 and Ephesians 2:12-18).

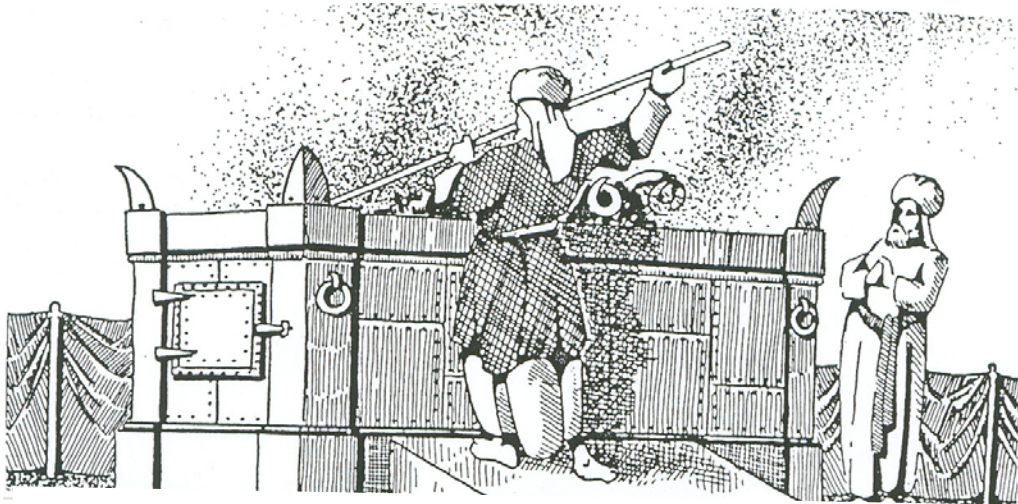
The Brazen Altar was to be continually burning (Leviticus 6:13). God was teaching Israel that He was *always* ready to accept their offering. He will never turn a penitent sinner away. Interestingly, there was no chair anywhere in the Tabernacle, showing that the priest’s work was never done. His was a continuous job, however, Christ *finished* the work of redemption, and “*sat down*” at the right hand of His Father (Psalm 110:1; Hebrews 1:3 and 10:18).

Another interesting fact concerning the Brazen Altar – is the fact the “*light*” for the Golden Candlestick and the “*fire*” for the Altar of Incense, was taken from this Brazen Altar, thus showing, in type, that, before one can know Christ as the Light of the world – and the Bread of Life – he must, first, meet Him at the foot of the cross.

This Brazen Altar cries out about the cross outrage of sin in the eyes of God. As the Israelites walked into the courtyard – smelling blood, burning flesh, and death -- knowing it was the only way to get right with God -- God was showing them -- (and us) -- that no one should ever take sin lightly!

Until one realizes just how horrible all sin is, he will never appreciate God's provision for forgiveness. However, not only does the Brazen Altar reveal that sin is morbid and is hated by God, but also there is another truth that must not be missed. Leviticus 6:12-13 state, *"There fire on the altar must be kept burning; it must not go out. Every morning the priest is to add firewood and arrange the burnt offering...The fire must be kept burning on the altar continuously, it must not go out."*

The was to burn day and night, teaching that God was always ready to accept their offering for sins, that He was always ready and anxious to forgive, and that He would never turn away a repentant sinner. Christians today have those same assurances found in the promises of 1 John 1:9, *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."*



Now that we have considered the brazen Altar itself, lets look at . . .

The Accessories of the Brazen Altar

There were several articles that went with the brazen Altar. Exodus 27:3 states, *"And thou shalt make his — [referring to the Brazen Altar – as if it had personality] — pans to receive his ashes, and his shovels, and his basons, and his flesh-hooks, and his fire-pans: all the vessels thereof thou shalt make of brass."*

Five accessories were used to serve at the Brazen Altar – All made of brass or copper:

1. The *pans* were used to carry out the ashes
2. The *shovels* were used for picking up the ashes and for tending the fire
3. The *basons* held the blood of the sacrificial animal
4. The *flesh-hooks* were for keeping the sacrifices in the middle of the fire so it would be totally consumed

5. The *fire-pans*, or censers, were used to carry fire from the Brazen Alta to the Alter of Altar of Incense in the Holy Place. The fire for the gold-covered Altar of Incense could only be taken from this one source and brought to the veil before the presence of the Lord.

[In Leviticus 10:1-3 we find an account of Nadab and Abihu who failed to follow this procedure.]

Before the death of Christ on the cross, God refused to be approached other than by the means of the Brazen Altar of sacrifice. Likewise, today He refuses to be approached except by the way of the cross. Leviticus 17:11 states, *"For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar -- [the Brazen Altar] -- it is the blood that makes atonement for one's lie."* The New Testament equivalent of this truth states in Hebrews 9:22, *"Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness."*

The Laver

As we have seen, when anyone enters the gate of the Tabernacle, the first thing he encounters is the Brazen Altar -- showing the necessity that for one to get right with God, a sacrifice is required. The Brazen Altar was the place where a person, *through a sacrifice*, would attain a new relationship with God.

The *second* object one comes upon in his journey into the courtyard -- standing between the Brazen Altar and the outer veil of the Tabernacle proper -- is the Laver. The Hebrew word that is translated as, *"laver,"* in our Bibles, simply means, *"a large basin to wash in."* Its modern equivalent might be the word, *"lavatory."* The Bible student knows very little about the construction of the Laver because no information is given in Scripture concerning its shape or size. However, we do find some definite information about the materials from which it was to be made. Exodus 38:8 states, simply, *"He made the laver of brass, and the foot of it of brass, of the looking-glasses (mirrors) of the women."*



the laver of brass, and the foot of it of brass, of the looking-glasses (mirrors) of the women."

When studying concerning the Laver, and the various suggestions that man think it might of looked like, we find a variety of shapes and sizes - a multitude of different designs and configurations. Some feel that the laver was simply a large brass tub on a simple stand, while others feel that, perhaps it was more intricate, elaborate, and more complex than just plan, smooth, brass.

All we really know concerning the Laver, as far as God's Word is concerned, is that it was made of brass that had been melted down from the mirrors of the women. It was constructed of pure metal (brass) and was to be a reservoir for the water that the priests used to wash their hands and feet before going into the Tabernacle. They did in wash the Laver, but they washed with water from the Laver.

Whenever the priest entered near the Tabernacle he had to wash his feet – and, evidently, from what Scriptures seems to imply, he had to wash whenever he passed the laver (Exodus 29:4). The Brazen Altar typifies regeneration, while, “*washing at the Laver*” typifies sanctification – daily cleansing. Titus 3:5 states, “*He save us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal of the Holy Spirit.*”

[Interestingly, the word “*washing*” is the exact same Greek word as the word, “*laver*.”]

The New Birth is not repeated again, however, daily cleansing is repeated again and again – over and over!

The Material of the Laver

Highly polished brass – (copper) - mirror were used by the ancient Egyptians, and the Israelites women brought these mirrors out of Egypt. It is significant that this laver was made of mirrors, since mirrors are what one uses when he is concerned about what he looks like on the outside. Pride causes one to look into a mirror on a daily basis because he worries about what people might think. There is nothing wrong with looking nice and neat, just as long as one does not become more concerned with how he looks on the outside to other people than how he looks to God on the inside.

The Position of the Laver

This Laver stood between the Brazen Altar and the Tabernacle (Exodus 30:18). At the Brazen Altar – that prefigured the sacrifice of Christ – sins were forgiven through the blood sacrifice. The Brazen Altar was the place where the sinner came into new relationship with God.

Scripture teaches us that the moment one accept the sacrifice upon the Alter of Christ's cross, he is saved. However, this is only the beginning of one's relationship with God. Salvation begins at the cross, but it does not end there. After the Altar comes the Laver of cleansing. At the Altar one is justified, at the Laver, he is sanctified, cleansed day by day.

Aaron and his sons were instructed to wash their hands and their feet before entering into the Tabernacle – where God's presence dwelt (Exodus 30:20). They must be cleaned before service of worship.

To serve God one must be cleansed from sin on a *daily* basis, and thus it was required of the priests that before they could serve others at the Brazen Altar or in the Tabernacle proper, they must first wash themselves at the Laver. The position of the laver teaches that even the best of God's children -- in this case the Old Testament

priests – need cleansing on a regular basis after redemption (or salvation). This truth is one of the first things that all Christians should be taught. *They will sin after they are saved!* However, they should also be taught what to do when they do sin. 1 John 1:8-9 teaches, *“If we claim to be within sin, we deceived ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He (Jesus Christ) is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us (cleanse, or wash, us) from all unrighteousness.”*

The Procedure At The Laver

The Lord was very specific about the procedure at the Laver, because He said in Exodus 30:19, *“For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat.”* The people who were to wash at the Laver were the priests. God then adds verse 20, *“When they go into the Tabernacle of the congregation they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the alter to minister, to burn offerings made by fire unto the Lord.”*

The Laver teaches us that in order to serve the Lord most effectively one must not only be saved but also be cleansed from all sin. What a solemn warning God gave to the priests about not properly following this procedure of washing at the Laver -- *“that they die not!”*

This awesome warning is for all who would serve the Lord. Serving God has always been a serious business with very high standards. 1 Peter 2:5 states, *“YOU (that is, every born again believer) also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to god through Jesus Christ.”* Verse 9 continues, *“But YOU are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that YOU may declare the praises of Him who called YOU out of darkness into His wonderful light.”*

The unmistakable spiritual truth taught by the procedure at the laver is that those who serve the Lord – and that is every believer – must be CLEANSED of sin.

The Purpose Of The Laver

The priests were in constant contact with dirt because there was no floor either in the courtyard or the Tabernacle proper. They lived in a dirty world, yet to serve God they must be clean.

Around the Tabernacle the priests of God applied water daily for cleansing. For believers today cleansing comes from the application of God’s Word, according to what Jesus said to His followers in John 15:3, *“You are already clean because of the Word I have spoken to you.”* Ephesians 5:25-27 teaches, *“Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the Word, and to present her to Himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.”*

As the believer examines his hands (symbolic of his service) and his feet (symbolic of his walk) as seen in the Word of God, he is conscious that his need for daily cleansing

from the defilement of sin. The Laver was filled with “*pure water*,” representing God’s Word (See Ephesians 5:26; John 13:3 and 17:17).

God’s Word points out the sin that is in our life and, as we apply its teaching, we are cleansed. It is interesting that the Laver was made of mirrors, for James uses a person looking into a mirror to describe our walk, when he states in James 1:22-24, “*Be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the Word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholds himself, and goes his way, and straightway forgets what manner of man he was.*”

However, James 1:25 promises, “*But whoso looks into the perfect law of liberty, and continues therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the Word, this man shall be blessed in his deed.*”

The reason that so much of what we do is so ineffective is that we are “soiled” in our daily walk and need to be clean before God -- if we are “*to be blessed in what we do.*” **We should heed this truth!**

A believer who is not clean cannot have a deep level of spirituality with God. A priest could not enter the Tabernacle proper without first washing at the Laver. In the Holy Place was the Table of Shewbread -- (representing spiritual food) -- the Golden Lamp-stand -- (representing spiritual enlightenment) -- and the Altar of Incense -- (representing prayer). The reason that so many Christians do not find enlightenment and food as they read God’s Word and do not have power in their prayer life is because, in some way, their life is soiled by this world’s dirt. As a result, they are out of fellowship with God. Therefore, they cannot enter the Holy Place but are still in the outer courtyard – *spiritually speaking!*

The Laver teaches something else – it teaches that God’s people must not only be cleansed from the open vices of the flesh that even the world would condemn, but also the unnoticed sins of the heart – such as anger, bitterness, envy, pride, greed, etc. Often when we come to “*the Laver*” of the Word of God, we feel clean until we let God – through His Word – cut away the false piety and expose *the real thoughts and intents of the heart* – (Hebrews 4:12).

We need to pray as David prayed in Psalm 139:23-24, “*Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*”

Remember, however, that a mirror cannot cleanse us, likewise God’s Word reveals our defects, but it does not remove them. God’s Word reveals our sin, but does not cleanse us. The Laver contained water for cleansing, so the Bible points us to the cleansing power – “*and the blood of Jesus, God’s Son, purifies us from all sin*” (1 John 1:7).

Keep in mind the special peculiarity of the Laver. It was different from any other furniture of the Tabernacle in that it had no specified form or measurement given in Scripture by God. The exact size of every other article of furniture is given in Scripture,

but with the Laver – that has to do with cleansing -- this is not so! There is no limit to its size, or the amount of water that it might hold, given anywhere in Scripture.

Why is this?

Why would God's Word give the measurement and details of the Laver?

What could the absence in Scripture of the details of the Laver mean?

All references in Scripture to the laver, unlike the other furniture of the Tabernacle, are lacking in detail. There is no mention of any accompanying utensils, but, with all probability, bowls were used for washing. The other furniture had either a bar or staves used to carry them – but none is mentioned for the Laver. There is no mention of a covering for travel and, unlike the other furniture; no size – or even its shape – is indicated in Scripture.

The reason the Laver is not described in the Bible, no doubt, is because cleansing, in our walk, is *limitless* in its application! The priest, walking bare footed on the ground and killing the sacrifices, must wash at the laver *every time* he passed, which would have been several times during the day's activities. The fact that "*cleansing*" for the child of God has no limit is, no doubt, the reason that God gives no limit to the size of the Laver.

How interesting that the brass to construct the laver was obtained from the Jewish women who donated their mirrors to the service of the Lord (Exodus 38:8). They were willing to give up their prized possessions that they had taken from a spoil of the Egyptians before they left the land of bondage.

Think about this! -- These mirrors revealed their *natural* beauty! How they must have delighted to see their reflections in these highly polished brass mirrors. Brass is the Bible type of judgment for sin. For it was by these that these Jewish women (and no doubt the men too) judged their outward appearance. They gave up that **outward** judging for the **spiritual** judging and willingly turned these mirrors over to the work of the Tabernacle. The mirrors were used to construct the Laver for the washing of hands and feet. These women gave up the desire for natural beauty – *outward adorning* – in preference to that beauty that comes from within – (Read 1 Peter 3:3-5).

Mirrors, the material from which the Laver was originally created, indicate the intense desire of mankind to appear beautiful **outwardly** to impress others and attract attention to self. But the purpose of Christ's redemption is to change all that, applying beauty to the soul, when the most important desire becomes adorning the **inner** man. When the beauty of the Lord of hosts shines forth from the life, the attention of onlookers will be attached to Christ, Who is altogether lovely.

The Laver is a type of the Word of God – God's mirror – into which we look and judge ourselves. It is the mirror of God's Word that we see our own reflection and it is also within its pages that we see the remedy provided for our cleansing.

The picture seems quit clear: When one arrives at the Laver, the Brazen Altar has already been experienced. (It is for the sinner's cleansing) However, the Laver is for the child of God. One meets God first at the Cross and is cleansed by the blood of the sacrificed Lamb of God, Christ Jesus. Then, afterward one must come daily for cleansing by the water of God's Word -- represented by the Laver.

- The Brazen Altar is for saving and shows what Christ is, however, the Laver is for cleansing in one's Christian walk and shows what we are!
- At the Brazen Altar one learns that what Christ has done meets the need of the sinner, while the Laver, one learns that what Christ is meets the need of the Christian.
- The Brazen Altar reminds one that only Christ's blood can make one safe, while the laver reminds one that only God's Word can make one sure.

The Laver was located at the door of the Tabernacle. Here was a copper basin situated before the "*Tabernacle of the congregation*" -- or the Holy Place -- where the Table of Shewbread was. We will see in our study that the Table of Shewbread speaks so beautifully of the experience of feasting with the Lord, however, before that can take place, there must be the experience of cleansing.

Before the believer is entitled to come to the breaking of bread at the table in the Holy Place he is commended to "*examine himself, so let him eat, for is we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged*" (1 Corinthians 11:28, 31).

God commanded the priests to go "*thereat*" -- (not "*there in*") -- at the side of the Laver. Evidently they would use smaller basins, taking water out of the larger basin to wash themselves. If a priest would cleanse his hands and feet in the Laver, the water would become polluter for the next priest. The Word of God must not be defiled by man's imaginations, doctrine, opinions, or explanations, but rather it is to be clear, pure, and clean. It is illumined to our hearts by the Holy Spirit undefiled - We wash *thereat*!

The Laver is a type of God's Word, giving a reflection of ourselves whereby we can judge ourselves, however, it also contains the water whereby we are to cleanse ourselves. The Lord Jesus said to His disciples, "*Now are ye clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you*" (John 15:3). And, we also read, that the Lord Jesus gave Himself for His Church that He might cleanse it by the word of the Word (Ephesians 5:26).

David declared in Psalm 119:9, "*Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?*" -- then he gives the answer -- "*by taking heed thereto according to God's Word.*" The Lord Jesus requested in His prayer to His Father concerning His followers, "*Sanctify them -- (that I, "cleanse them") -- by Thy truth; Thy Word is truth*" (John 17:7). David refers to washing (at the Laver) as an illustration of innocence (See Psalm 26:6).

The priests wee to wash their *hands* and their *feet* - a type of showing that God's people are to have clean hands and feet. "*Who shall ascend unto the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in His holy place? - He that hath clean hands and a pure heart*" (Psalm 24:3-4). Our

work (*hands*) and our walk (*feet*) are to be cleansed by the water of God's Word! No one can life in the filth of sin and expect to live in fellowship with God.

The priests did not stand off from the Laver to admire it, nor did they just speak of its beauty, its attractiveness, or its usefulness – but they obeyed the commandment of the Lord and *used the water the Laver contained to cleanse themselves*. Likewise, it is not enough that we admire God's Word, talk at length about it, approach it, look at it, know its history, its characteristics, and know all about the miracles contained in it - even able to quote from it, and expect that *this is all that is necessary to cleanse us*.

THE LAVER DOES NOT WASH ANYONE, but for it to be effective there must be application of the water the Laver contains. Self-examination (self-judgment) is not merely thinking about the Word of God, but it is *applying* the water of the Word to our hands and our feet. Then will we be rightly worshipping God in the Holy Place.

Even though the priests had met God at the Brazen Alter of sacrifice and had been cleansed of their sins, yet, ever afterward, there was daily defilement that must be washed away. And, so, even though we have been cleansed of our sins by accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, we must keep on being cleansed by the Word of God daily, in order that we may walk with God and have intimate fellowship with Him.

The words of Jesus, "*He that is bathed does not need to wash, except his feet, he is completely clean,*" are an example of this truth. When Christ was on earth, the custom of people was to bathe at home, however, they found it necessary to wash their feet often because their sandaled feet become soiled from walking through miry streets. Just so, the Christ, who has been cleanse d whenever he accepts the blood of Jesus Christ to cleanse him from his sins, however, is walking through the world, his *feet* contracts defilement and needs cleansing often.

Hebrews 10:22 teaches this same truth when it states, "*Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.*"

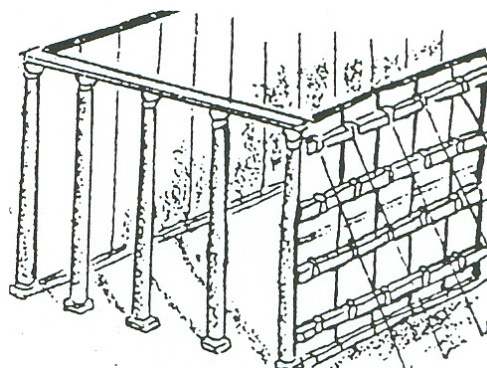
Continuing our journey step by step through the Tabernacle we come to the Tabernacle proper. Thus far in our journey we have discovered that God was very specific about the construction of the Tabernacle. He specified that there was to be a fence-curtain around the courtyard, teaching that there is a separation between the sinful man and the holiness of God. However, in the wall of curtain around the Tabernacle there was a gate – only one gate, showing there is only one approach to God. On entering through the gate we encounter the Brazen Altar, teaching that a sacrifice is required for a person to have a relationship with God and to be forgiven of sin.

Journeying past the Brazen Altar, we come to the Laver where the priests must wash several times daily before they could enter inside the Tabernacle – teaching that if we are to serve God, we must not only be saved, but also have daily cleansing from sin.

Passing the Laver and continuing westward, we encounter the Tabernacle itself. The boards used in the outer walls being 15 feet long and 2 feet wide each, furnishes a

massive structure, 150 feet long, 75 feet wide and 13 feet high (Exodus 26:15-30). Each board rested on, and was “fixed” in the foundation of socket of silver.

As we will see, the boards represent sinners -- “*saved by grace*” -- as Ephesians 2:19-22 states, “*You are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the chief cornerstone. In Him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in Him you too are being built together to become a dwell in which God lives by His Spirit.”*



View of Construction

Just think of it -- each board had a past history! It was once a stately tree, beautiful to the natural eye and drawing its support and sustenance from the *earth*! But, God had need of the acacia tree for building His dwelling place and, so it was cut down -- its connection with the earth was severed.

Likewise, we were once in the world, drawing our support and sustenance from what the world could give. Then, one day the axe of truth -- “*quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword*” -- fell upon our heart and, then our connection with the world was severed.

The boards were prepared by one named, Bezaleel. All the workers were under his direction (Exodus 35:30-34). How interesting that the name “Bezaleel” means, “*the shadow of God,*” -- it is a type of the Holy Spirit, guiding us in our journey to holiness!

Can you even imagine how these boards of the Tabernacle must of looked like, covered completely with gold, gleaming in the sunlight? They once had their imperfection, but there they stood in their place in the structure of God’s house -- reflecting God’s glory -- just as we reflect Christ’s beauty. Their natural beauty had been taken away as they wee stripped of boughs that formerly had been its pride. Likewise, the one who yields to God’s voice and is willing to take his place among other believers in the building of God’s house is today -- stripped of superfluous habits and interests.

A natural question comes to mind . . .

How was it that these boards could stand up,
and remain firm, in a given position on the desert sand?

Two things made this possible:

1. THE FOUNDATION, CALLED “SOCKETS”

The foundation for these boards was made of pure silver. The entire Tabernacle rested on there “*blocks of silver.*” There were 100 of these sockets, or blocks, and they weighed 100 pounds each. The total weight of these sockets was **five tons**.

This silver was obtained not by the free-will offering, but rather by the “ransom” – or atonement money – for the soul (See Exodus 30:11-16).

Every person was required to give an offering of half a shekel (about 35 cents) as a ransom for his soul. Failure to furnish the silver meant death and (being cut off from the assembly of Israel). The sum was the same for all, however, it was such a small amount that no one was unable to give.

This “ransom” was a type of the price that was paid for man’s atonement for sin – The blood of Christ (See Leviticus 17:11; 1 Peter 1:18-19; 1 Corinthians 3:11). The offering for our soul has been paid and is in reach of us all – “***Jesus paid it all!***” On this foundation of the blood of atonement the Tabernacle of our redemption is built!

2. THE BARS THAT HELD THE BOARDS TOGETHER

The boards were bound together with bars (Read Exodus 26:26-29) that run, unseen, through the boards, holding them tightly together. What an adequate type of believers who are not only united to Christ, “*our Foundation*,” but, also in a harmonious and helpful relationship with fellow believers – “*Fitly framed together*” as Ephesians 2:20-22 states.

At times we will come into contact with some fellow Christian that may seem “*unlovely*,” nevertheless, we must remember that Christ has redeemed them at a tremendous cost and had given them a place in His temple – the Church.

The bars represent the bond of unity and fellowship that exists among believers. This mysterious unseen bond unites true believers and makes them “*one*” the world over – (Ephesians 4:2 & 16).

When the Tabernacle was set up – the “*sockets*” were put into place *first*. Just as there could be no Tabernacle apart from the sockets there can be no true Church apart from its foundation – *Jesus Christ crucified!*

“*On Christ the Solid Rock I stand!*” – (1 Corinthians 3:11)

1. Entering the gate of the **Courtyard** -- teaching there is only one way to God;
2. Passing the **Brazen Altar** -- teaching that a sacrifice is required for one to have a relationship with God
3. Stopping to view the **Laver** -- teaching the need of daily cleansing in our walk with the Lord
4. Arriving at the Tabernacle proper and analogizing the boards on its side -- teaching the unity and support of believers

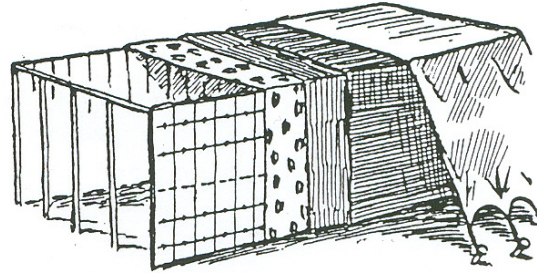
We notice that the Tabernacle has “*coverings*” over its roof and sides.

Protecting the Tabernacle are four coverings – one of badger skins, one of ram skins, another of goat hair, and a linen cover for the ceiling (Exodus 26:1-14 & 36:8-19). These coverings formed the ceiling and the roof of the Tabernacle. They consisted of two outer coverings – the badger’s skins, because of their durability, was the *outer* covering -- beneath that was a covering of rams’ skins (Exodus 26:14). Then there were

two *inner* coverings – one of goat's hair (Exodus 26:7) and the *innermost* covering, forming the ceiling for the inside for the Tabernacle was beautiful linen of four colors – blue, purple and scarlet, with cherubims embroidered throughout.

The badger skin took the punishment of the blistering rays of the sun in the desert climate of the Sinai, as well as the rain and snow of the Promised Land.

Remarkably these four layers of material – that the roof consisted of – each hold a message concerning the Person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ.



Remember that the Tabernacle was made of “*walls*” of boards standing upright, fifteen feet high, with an open top. These four coverings covered the top, sides and back of the Tabernacle proper.

1. THE OUTER COVERING OF BADGER'S SKINS

The outward demeanor of the Tabernacle had no beauty, but rather was drab and dull in appearance. Badger skin was tough and, not dyed, would be unattractive. This was what was exposed to the sun, rain, and the storms of the desert. This was the covering visible to the outsider. There certainly was nothing appealing to it from the outside view.

The outward covering was a picture of the “*humanity*” of Christ (Isaiah 53:2.). It is only as one passes *into* the Tabernacle that he can behold the breath-taking, exquisite, indescribable beauty *inside* – a type of Christ being “*altogether lovely*.”

2. THE COVERING OF RAM'S SKINS

Underneath the badger skin, the second covering was made from ram skin dyed red (Exodus 24:14 & 36:19). These skins were taken from the rams sacrificed upon the Brazen Altar and dyed into the color of blood, creating a perfect type of Christ's role as Substitute for sinners.

3. THE COVERING OF GOAT'S HAIR

The covering just beneath the ram's skins was goat's hair. Reading Leviticus 16:19-22, we see that these goat's skins picture Christ as sin-bearer. Our guilt was “*laid on Him*” (Isaiah 53:6; Hebrews 9:28 & 2 Corinthians 5:21).

4. THE CEILING OF FINE TWINED LINEN

The inside covering was embroidered fine twined linen colored with blue, purple, and scarlet. The covering provided the ceiling for the entire inside of the Tabernacle and was embroidered with figures of cherubims. This covering was the only one visible to those inside the Tabernacle.

[The colors here have the same significance as the floors within the “*gate*”]

Blue speaks of Christ's heavenly character; purple of His royalty and scarlet of His sacrificial work. The cherubims were guardians of God's holiness and demand the sinner be barred from God's presence *unless he comes in by the way provided* (Genesis 3:24).

To enter into God's presence we must believe that Jesus -- represented in the badger's skins -- is "*God in the flesh.*" Turning back this "*outer coverings,*" we see Christ typified in the ram's skins dyed red and realize that we must accept Christ's sacrifice for our sin -- accepting Him as Savior. However, we need to go further and enter into a deeper Christian life. Turning the second covering, made of ram's skins dyed red, we are brought a step further to the goat's hair coming and realize there must be a full acceptance of Christ as "*Sin bearer*" (1John 1:7-10).

Underneath these three coverings -- visible to those who enter inside and look up -- we view a beautiful, embroidered linen covering with a number of cherubims covering it. No matter in what part of the Tabernacle the priests were they were constantly beneath the presence of these heavenly beings.

Cherubims speak of fellowship with God

We see Christ pictured in the linen coverings in a fuller sense than before -- (that is, than in the badger's skins; the ram's skins, dyed red; or the goat's hair). These outer coverings conceal the *real beauty* of Christ from the person outside.

This linen covering, beneath the outer coverings, revealed the life within.

1. The badger's skins reveal that there must be an acknowledgement of Christ's humanity (John 20:31; 1 John 4:1-3; 2 John 1:7)
2. The ram's skins dyed red reveals Christ's death and atonement
3. The goat's hair reveals that there must be an acknowledgement of Christ as our Sin-bearer and of consecration to Him
4. The linen covering points to a revelation of our deeper life in Christ Jesus.

The Door Into the Tabernacle

In our journey step-by-step through the Tabernacle we obtain entrance into the Holy Place of the Tabernacle through the door (Exodus 26:36-37).

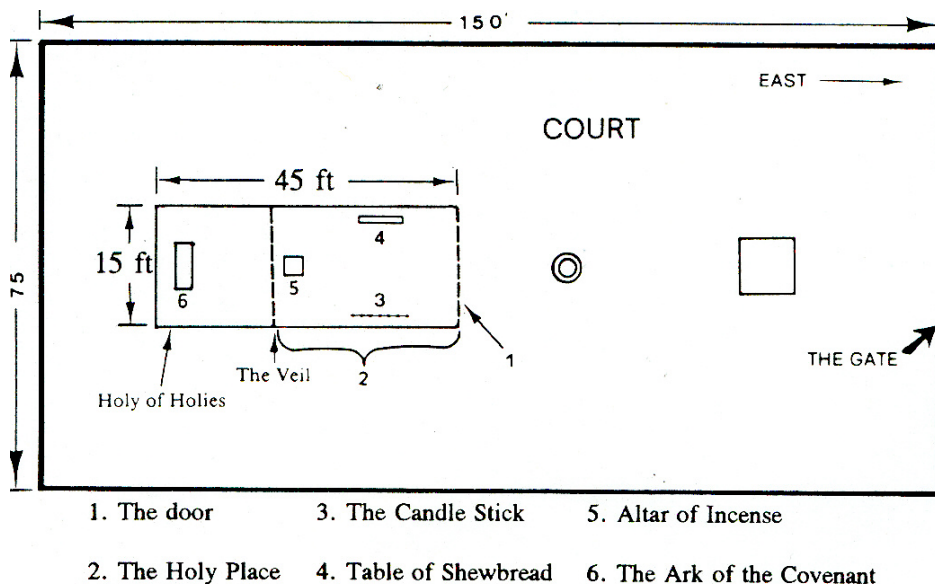
The door gives access to the Tabernacle proper, and, like the gate to the courtyard, was positioned on the East side. The colors, materials, and design of the door were the same as the gate. However, Exodus 27:16-17 states, concerning the gate,

"And for the gate of the court shall be an hanging of twenty cubits, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, wrought with needlework: and their pillars shall be four, and their sockets four. All the pillars round about the court shall be filleted with silver; their hooks shall be of silver, and their sockets of brass.

While Exodus 26:36-37 states, concerning the door,

And thou shalt make an hanging for the door of the tent, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, wrought with needlework. And thou shalt make for the hanging five pillars of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold, and their hooks shall be of gold; and thou shalt cast five sockets of brass for them.

The door into the Tabernacle was cloth, or a hanging curtain, made of pure white linen with blue purple, scarlet and white, that denoted Christ's incarnation, royalty, shed blood, and righteousness.



Jesus said, "I am the door, by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved" (John 10:9). This door, or curtain, into the Tabernacle included the whole Easter end of the Tabernacle, and was fifteen feet square. The gate into the courtyard was 30 feet wide.

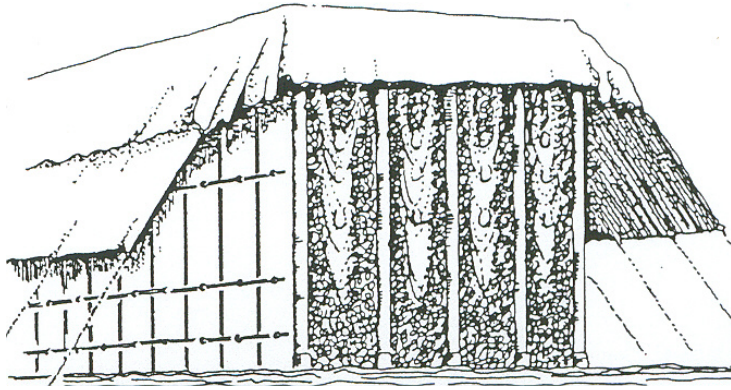
The gate is twice as wide - 30 feet - teaching that *whosoever* may come, however, the door into close, intimate, fellowship with God, was narrower - 15 feet wide - because there are some things one must leave behind when he enters here.

One may be a Christian and still hold fellowship with the world for a time, however, he cannot be a growing, maturing, spiritually developing, Christian and continuing this life-style.

While the hanging of the gate of the courtyard had four pillars -- (depicting the four Gospels that give us the four-fold character of Christ) -- here, at the door into the Tabernacle we have five pillars, that speak to us of the five writers of the Epistles -- (who uphold Christ as the object and pattern of the believer). The ordinary Jew could **NOT** enter through this door into the Holy Place. Only the priests had this privilege of fellowship and close communion with God.

Thus, the true believer may enter the door that leads from the courtyard into the Holy Place. This requires just as definite an act of faith as was required to enter the gate into the courtyard. However, many Christians have not taken this step.

The person who is *inside* the courtyard is a picture of one who is saved, but is this enough? In the courtyard the believer is still struggling continually with the old nature. God is asking us, *"Will you enter through the door into the inner life in Christ Jesus?"* As one cannot know the meaning of salvation until he is inside the courtyard neither can one know the joys of the yielded life until he is fully consecrated to Christ.



The door provided a beautiful entrance into the Holy Place, into a relationship of the coverings of the Tabernacle - into the *sheltered place*.

The door of the Tabernacle, being 15 feet high, was exactly twice the height of the gate. No one but the priests could ever see what was on the inside.

Ordinary Israelites could enter the gate into the courtyard and offer sacrifices by the Brazen Altar, but that was as far as they could ever go. They could only wonder what it must be like to have direct access to God because for them to set foot beyond the door would mean instant death.

Hebrews 10:19-22 certainly takes on new meaning when it states, *"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; And having an High Priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."*

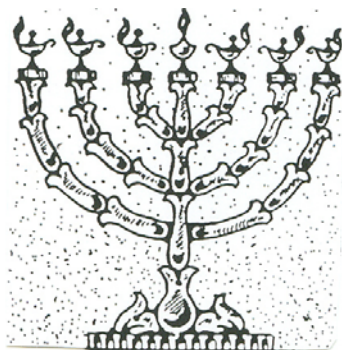
The Holy Place, the first compartment of the Tabernacle proper -- contained three pieces of furniture -- the *Candlestick* -- the *Table of Shewbread* -- and the *Incense Altar*. These furnitures like the Brazen Altar in the outer courtyard, represent the various ministries of Christ. At the Brazen Altar we see men reconciled to God through Christ's death portrayed through animal sacrifices. The Brazen Altar corresponds to the cross of Christ. The outer courtyard symbolically represents Earth where Christ lived and died for mankind's sins.

Christ's ministry in heaven is portrayed by the ministry of the priests in the Holy Place (Hebrews 9:24). Because of this typical significance, the common Israelite could not enter the Holy Place as he did the outer courtyard. Only the priests were permitted to go into the Holy Place. Each piece of furniture in the Holy Place represents a ministry of Christ.

In our journey – *step by step through the Tabernacle* – we enter through the door into the Holy Place, where we see the three pieces of furniture.

The first piece of furniture that we behold is the . . .

The Lampstand



Outside, in the courtyard, there was the light of the sun, moon, and stars – or the “fiery pillar by night” – however, inside the Holy Place, the Lampstand was the only light provided. It was “lit” from the perpetual fire from the Brazen Altar – a fire that was provided by God. The light, or “fire” of the Lampstand was kept burning continuously by the oil provided by the people.

Within the Holy of Holies is the supernatural light of the Shekinah glory of God!

- Outside, in the world, is the fluctuating light
- In the Church the light of the Gospel must shine, kept burning by the Holy Spirit
- In the land of eternal life, God, Himself will be the light, and in Him is no darkness (1 John 1:5).

There were no windows, or any kind of *natural* light, in the Holy Place. The only source of light was the Golden Candlestick, or Lampstand. Without the light of his Golden Lampstand the other pieces of furniture could not be seen or used. To better understand the location of the Lampstand we need to read Exodus 40:24, that states, “He placed the Lampstand in the Tent of Meeting opposite the Table [of Shewbread] on the south side of the Tabernacle.”

The description of the Golden Lampstand is found in Exodus 25:31-40 – (Also Exodus 27:20-21; 30:7-8; 37:17-24; Leviticus 24:1-4 & Numbers 8:1-4). It was to be made of solid gold, having a central shaft with three branches coming out of opposite sides. Thus. It was a seven-lamped candelabrum. There are no Scriptural specifications as to the dimensions of the Lampstand, yet from the brief description given it was clearly very ornate. It has been estimated that it was probably two feet wide. Its value by today’s gold standards has been estimated at more than five million dollars. The purpose of the Golden Lampstand was to give light so that the priests could see how to minister in the Holy Place. To fund the spiritual significance of the Lampstand, we must note the words of Christ in the following references:

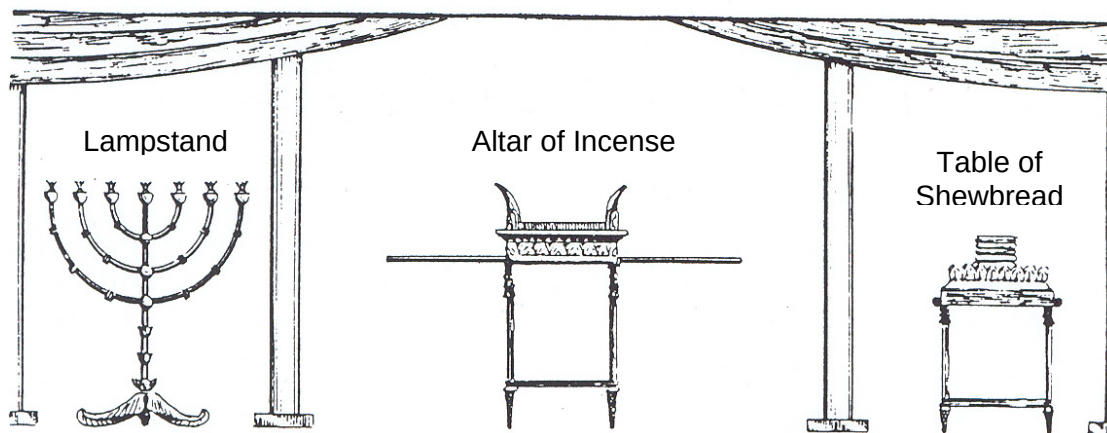
John 8:12, “When Jesus spoke to the people, He said, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.’”

John 9:5, “While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

We proceed, with bowed heads, and a deep sense of reverence, into the Holy Place, reserved for the priests unto God – for it is the dwelling place of God.

The priests hold back the beautiful colored tapestry of the door and we step in between the golden pillars into the Holy Place.

Are we entitled to this close relationship with God?



The steps we have taken to get this far:

1. We have passed through **THE GATE** that stands for the Gospels, that is, we have accepted Christ in His four-fold character.
2. We have been to the **BRAZEN ALTAR**, a picture of Christ's cross, that is, we have come to God by way of the cross.
3. We visited the **LAVER**, that represents being cleansed, or separated, from the world and things that defile. This means that we have been washed in "the Laver" of God's Word.

Upon entering the Holy Place we view the room 30 feet long, 15 feet wide, and 15 feet high. At first, our eyes must become accustomed to the dim light of the lamps, and we cannot help but be impressed with the sweet fragrance of burning incense. The walls are burnished gold, and the veil -- we have just passed through -- is of many colors with golden needlework.

In spite of all this luster, we note the simplicity of the furnishings. To our right is the Table of Shewbread; to our left the Golden Candlestick, or Lampstand, and directly in front of us, across the room, is the Altar of Incense.

This "*Candlestick*" is actually seven lamps with pure olive oil for fuel -- and wicks that needed to be trimmed occasionally by tongs provided for that purpose (Exodus 25:38).

The care of the lamps was a daily and continual responsibility, given in Exodus 30:2-8. Every morning the priests would trim the wicks and keep the lamps filled with pure olive oil, checking them again every evening, to make sure that they were burning

brightly. The priests were provided with a pair of golden scissors and snuffers for this purpose. If the light burned low, the priests would refill the lamp, and, if the wick became charred, they would snuff and trim the wick and light the lamp again.

Beside the pure beaten-gold candlestick, with its beautiful carving of flowers and branches, were little cups to hold the oil. There were seven cups – three on one side and three on the other side – shaped like almonds.

In each oil-lamp was a wick that was to be trimmed with the air of pure gold tongs. The trimmings, or ashes, were to be held in a pure gold snuff-dishes (Exodus 25:38) One of the duties of the priests was to trim the wick to prevent the light from dimming, or going out altogether.

The light was never to go out but was to be *continually* tended by Aaron, that required that he *daily* add pure olive oil (Leviticus 24:2) This oil was a type of the Holy Spirit. And, in order for our light as Christians to shine continually – Ephesians 5:18 states, “*be filled with the Spirit!*”

Because the candlestick was to burn continually before the Lord, according to Exodus 27:20-21 and Leviticus 24:4, it was necessary for the priests to replenish it with oil and trim the wick twice daily, morning and evening – Exodus 30:7-8; Leviticus 24:3.

Only once in Scripture is it recorded that the lamps went out (1 Samuel 3:3 & 11-14). This was indicative of the backslidden condition of the priesthood at the time.

There are many believers today who need to let our High Priests, Jesus Christ, trim their wicks because their lights are flickering dimly.

This Candlestick gave its light on the Altar of Incense and the Table of Shewbread. It seems that many today do not see the need of the Alter of Incense (representing *prayer*) and the Table of Shewbread (representing *Bible study*). Could it be that they have forgotten to trim their wicks, and let their light grow dim? It just may be that their lamp needs to be trimmed of indifference, laziness, gossip, greed, etc.

To keep our light burning brightly it takes re-filling our lamps with the pure oil and “*snuffing*” – or snipping the charred wick.

Unlike the Brazen Altar, that was open to all, only priests (Today, “*believers*”) received the blessings of the Holy Place. The ministry at the candlestick was only for those who had been to the Brazen Altar first, and, in godly sorrow for sin, prepared themselves for the Holy Place. We read in 1 Corinthians 2:9-16:

But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely

given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ."

Light is used in Scripture as an expression of God's and the Christian's character. (See Luke 2:32; 1 John 1:5; Matthew 5:16; Ephesians 5:8) Consequently, men who walk contrary to God are said to *"be in darkness"* (John 3:19 & 1 John 1:6).

Light is linked to Christ, and He identifies Himself as *"the Light of the world."* The means of imparting light in the Holy Place was accomplished when the priest poured the pure olive oil into the lamps that produced the illumination, speaking of the illumination that is imparted by Christ.

There is a beautiful picture here, in that the central stem is typical of Christ and the branches representative of the Church, because the Church is also the *"light of the world,"* yet, what light it does have comes forth from Christ. Jesus said, *"I am the vine, ye are the branches"* (John 15:5).

The branches were constructed so that they could not possibly be used for anything unless they were attached to the central stem. They were *"curved"* so that they could not *"stand alone."*

Because we, as believers, are *in* Christ, we have become *"blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation in which we shine like stars in the universe"* (Philippians 2:15), and *"we were once in darkness, but now we are light in the Lord,"* and we, thus, *"live as children of light"* (Ephesians 2:8).

Each of the seven lamps on the Lampstand gave an individual light, yet all were untied to the one central branch that literally was *"in the midst."*

John said in Revelation 1:12-13, *"And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and a golden sash around His chest."* Then Christ said to John in verse 20, *"The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks . . . is this, the seven candlesticks which you saw are the seven churches."*

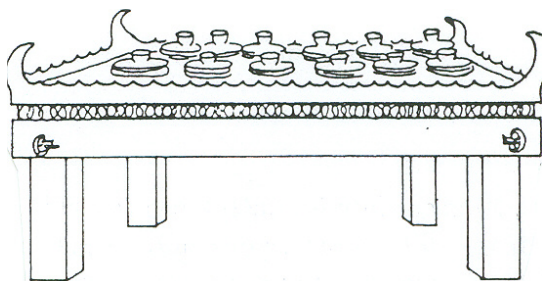
Though each candlestick (churches) was independent of each other, all were attached to the central shaft. The Lord Jesus Christ.

Each branch of the Lampstand was to have hammered out *"a knob and a flower in one branch; and three bowls made like almonds"* (Exodus 25:33). It is generally believed that the knobs were pomegranates and the flowers were lilies. The emphasis is clearly on the almond design, reminding us of Aaron's rod from an almond tree that

budded (Number 17:1-11). Aaron's dead almond limb came to life in the Tabernacle, an undeniable picture of resurrection – *the dead coming to life*. The almond tree is the first to bloom after winter, and, with its snow-white blossoms, proclaims new life. 1 Corinthians 15:20 states, "*Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.*"

The Table of Shewbread

Exodus 25:23-30 & Leviticus 24:5-9



In our journey, step by step through the Tabernacle we have come through the gate, past the Brazen Altar and Laver in the courtyard and, then passing through the door of the Tabernacle proper, we entered the door into the Holy Place – a beautifully elegant room, 30 feet long, 15 feet wide and 15 feet high. On the left we saw the Golden Lampstand, and just opposite it on the right stand the Table of Shewbread.

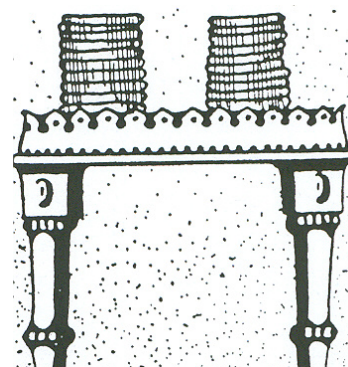
Once inside the Holy Place, the priests were surrounded by immaculate beauty. The walls of the Holy Place were made of boards of acacia wood standing up (Exodus 26:15). The boards were overlaid with gold (Exodus 26:29).

Inside the Tabernacle proper, with the exception of the beautiful four-colored ceiling embroidered with images of cherubims, one is completely surround by wall and furniture made of approximately *one and one-fourth tons of pure gold!* This is the atmosphere in which the priests ministered at the Table of Shewbread.

The specifications of the constructions of the Table of Shewbread are given in Exodus 25:23-24 – It was 36 inches long, 18 inches wide, and 27 inches high.

The edge of the table top has a golden molding, or crown., very beautiful, ornate in design. Exodus 25:24 describes, "*a border of a handbreadth round about the table a golden crown that went around the edge of the table top.*" This means that a rim protruded up "*a hand breadth*" – (4 and ½ inches) – probably to contain the bread and various vessels that sat on the table.

I show two very different conceptions of what the Table of Shewbread must of looked like because it is not clear from the Hebrew language whether the shewbread was in two "*piles*" or in two "*rows*." — [so I show you both thoughts]



Let's see exactly what Scripture teaches. In Leviticus 24:5-6 we find these words. "*And thou shalt take fine flour, and bake twelve cakes thereof: two tenth deals shall be in one cake. And thou shalt set them in two rows, six on a row, upon the pure table before the LORD.*"

This is from the King James Translation. The word translated as “rows” here is from the Hebrew word, “*ma'areketh*,” that means, “*an arrangement*.” This is not the same Hebrew word that means to designate rows side by side as is found in Exodus 28:17-20 & 39:10-13 and 1 Kings 6:36 & 7:2-42. The Hebrews word “*ma'areketh*” can refer to cakes stacked one on the other in a *pile*, as some Bible students interpret it, or this Hebrew word could just as well refer to cakes laid out in *rows* on the Table of Shewbread.

Leviticus 24 goes on to describe that a “*gold dish of frankincense at the top of the shewbread*.” The burning of the frankincense at the top of the stacks made the showbread an offering by fire to God, as mentioned in Leviticus 24:7. The loaves were not burned *in* the fire, because they were to be eaten by priests in the Holy Place as the most holy of the offerings (Leviticus 24:9). They became “*a memorial, even an offering made by fire*” through the bowls of burning frankincense on top of the shewbread.

The showbread was to be on this table that was covered with pure gold and pure frankincense was burned on the pure table, signifying that all things connected with the worship of God was to be pure. This typifies the purity of life of the worshipers who came before God.

At the four corners of the Golden Table of Shewbread were gold rings through which the staves, or poles, were placed so that the table could be carried by the Israelites as they marched from place to place. The staves were also made of acacia wood covered with pure gold. Like all the other pieces of furniture in the Tabernacle proper the Table of Shewbread was never seen -- except by the priests as they ministered in the Holy Place. The priests would carefully cover it and put the staves through the gold rings before the Levites carried it on the wilderness journey.

The specifications of the Table of Shewbread also include some accessories found in Exodus 25:29, that states, “*Thou shalt make the dishes thereof, and spoons thereof, and covers thereof, and bowls thereof, to cover withal; of pure gold shalt thou make them.*”

The vessels -- dishes, bowls, and spoons were made of pure gold (Exodus 25:29 & 37:16). These were with the Table of Shewbread to use for the incense, meat and drink offerings with the twelve loaves of bread that symbolized the twelve tribes being in the Divine Presence. The twelve loaves of shewbread were placed on the table; exchanged for fresh loaves every Sabbath. Incense was burned in a container placed on the top of each loaf, signifying the worship of the twelve tribes (Exodus 25:30 & Leviticus 24:5-9). The dishes were receptacles in which the shewbread was mixed. The spoons were small censers in which incense was burned (Numbers 7:14, 20, 26, 32, 38, 44, 50, 56, 62, 68, 74, 80, 86). The bowls held the blood of sacrifices and offerings (Exodus 25:29 & 37:16; Numbers 4:7). The covers were large goblets or cups that held wine to be poured out before the Lord every Sabbath when the bread was changed. The Hebrew word for cover means to pour, so whatever the bowls were used for, the contents were to be poured out. The Septuagint reads, “*make its plates and its incense vessels and its libation vessels and the cups with which thou shalt pour out libations*” (Exodus 25:29).

A cloth of blue covered the table on which were placed the platters for the bread, the censers for incense, the goblets for wine, and the cups for pouring out the drink offerings before God (Numbers 4:7). The table was placed on the north side of the Tabernacle in the Holy Place (Exodus 26:35) -- the direction of heaven (Isaiah 14:12-14 & Psalm 75:6-7). In travel a cover of scarlet and then one of badger skins was placed over the table and its vessels (Numbers 4:8). See Exodus 35:13 & 39:36; 1 Kings 7:48; 1 Chronicles 9:32; 23:29; 28:16; 2 Chronicles 2:4; 13:11; 29:18; Nehemiah 10:33; Hebrews 9:2.

The "*dishes*," or plates, were to hold the loaves. The "*spoons*" were small cups that were filled with incense and burned on top of the shewbread (Leviticus 24:7 & Numbers 7:14). The "*covers*" are believed to have been "*flagons*," or "*chalices*" used in the rite of the drink offering (Numbers 28:7).

Exodus 40:22 states, "*And he (Moses) put the table (the Table of Shewbread) in the tent of the congregation (the Tabernacle) upon the side of the Tabernacle northward, without the veil, (outside the veil separating the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies.)*"

The Table of Shewbread was only 37 ½ inches high – indicating that all of the provisions of God are within reach of anyone.

Exodus 40:23 states, "*And he (Moses) set the bread (the Shewbread) in order upon it (upon the Table of Shewbread) before the Lord; as the Lord had commanded.*"

This Table of Shewbread standing in the Holy Place, on the north side, opposite the Lampstand, was unlike all the other furniture, in that its significance was not found in the table itself, but rather with *what was upon it*. Upon this table were 12 loaves of bread called, "*shewbread*," or, in the literally Hebrew, "*bread of my face*."

God said to Moses in Exodus 25:30, "*And thou shalt set upon the table shewbread before Me always.*" The shewbread was made of fine flour (Leviticus 24:5). Some Bible students believe that the shewbread was placed in *two* stacks, or piles, of six loaves each in each pile -- while others interpret Leviticus 24:6 to mean, "*two rows*" with six loaves in each row. The Scripture simply does not speak conclusively on this issue. However, we do know that, on each loaf – or each stack of loaves – was a golden censer filled with incense.

Imagine this golden Table of Shewbread with twelve flat cakes called "*shewbread*" -- meaning "*bread of my face*" – or – "*The Bread of Presence.*" The incense of frankincense was placed on top of the loaves in golden dishes, or containers. Every Sabbath new shewbread was "*arranged*" in order before the Lord. What happened to the old shewbread? Leviticus 24:9 states, "*It (the old shewbread) belongs to Aaron and his sons, who are to eat it in the Holy Place, because it is a most holy part of their regular share of the offerings made to the Lord by fire.*"

It was considered sacrilegious for anyone except the priests to eat this leftover shewbread (1 Samuel 21:2-3 & Matthew 12:4).

The Shewbread was reserved for those who worshipped and served the Lord. The priests were given other food to sustain them, however, the eating of this bread was with a deep awareness of its spiritual significance and holiness.

Bread is typical of the provisions of life, and represent God providing for His people who dwell in His midst.

In the New Testament bread is symbolic both of the living and the written Word of God. Jesus said, *"I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst"* (John 6:35) and in verse 51, He said, *"I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."*

Jesus Christ is the origin of spiritual life, but to remain in good spiritual health one must have regular nourishment from the Word of God.

This bread constituted the food for the priests. About this table the priests worshiped and fellowshiped daily -- on the basis of the blood of the sacrificial animal slain on the Brazen Altar, and the cleansing of the water of the Laver! Christ is not only our *"Life-giver"* - He is also our *"Sustainer,"* as well.

Around this Table of Shewbread the priests gathered for joyous communion.. We, as New Testament priests, ministering unto the Lord, coming by way of blood and the cleansing Laver of His Word, seek close fellowship and worship with other saints.

As we learn more of Jesus -- our Bread of Life -- (by way of His Word) -- we are *"feeding on Him,"* like these priests fed upon the Shewbread. Christ provides bread that satisfies the soul (John 6:35, 48 & 51). The assembly of the saints should be a time of worship, devotion, and feasting upon Chris, the Living Bread.

Job said, *"I have treasure the words of His (God's) mouth more than my daily bread"* (Job 23:12).

Jesus said, *"Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God"* (Matthew 4:4).

Eating of good food is delightful and rejuvenating. Similarly, Jeremiah describes the ingesting of God's Word as, *"When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart's delight, for I bear Your name, O Lord God Almighty."* (Jeremiah 15:16).

The fact that only the priests could eat the shewbread is very significant. We have already concluded, *all Christians are priests unto God!* As Christians we all have the same relationship to God, nevertheless, we do not all have the same degree of fellowship. To use an illustration from the Tabernacle, many Christians are still in the courtyard, refusing to daily wash at the laver, while others - who have confessed and forsaken all known sin - are serving God in the Holy Place. It is only in the Holy Place of the Christian life -- (close fellowship with God) -- that the Word of God can be the joy and rejoicing of the believer's heart.

The Table of Shewbread was in the Holy Place, a place where the priests were separated from the cares, desire, and distractions of the world. This surely, speaks of some location where we can be alone to partake of God's written Bread of Life, if God is to be all that He intends to be in our life.

The priests were to eat at this table "**STANDING UP.**" There were no chairs for them to sit down. This was not a place of ease and entertainment, but rather it was a place of work and service. They ate "*standing up*," ready to do about the business of serving the others. Any moment they might receive orders to move on and they must be ready to pick up and leave (1 Corinthians 11:26).

Lessons To Be Learned

1. The Shewbread was made of "*fine flour*," – picturing Christ's perfect humanity. In Him is no roughness or unevenness. He is flawless, without sin.
2. There was to be "*no leaven*" in the shewbread – picturing Christ's sinlessness (1 Corinthians 5:6-8).
3. The Shewbread was "*baked with fire*," – picturing Christ's suffering.
4. Frankincense, the incense that was used, pictures Christ's fragrant life.

Ever wondered why some Christians read the Bible and seem to get so much out of it, while others find it so boring and confusing? The reason is that some believers are serving the Lord in the "*Holy Place*," (the place of God's divine presence) while others are still lingering in the courtyard. If God's Word has lost its joy and rejuvenating power, maybe we need to come into the place of close fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ by way of the Brazen Altar and the Laver

The Veil

(Exodus 26:31-33)

The veil covered the entrance to the Tabernacle's innermost room, called the Holy of Holies. Behind the veil was only one piece of furniture – *The Ark of the Covenant!* This veil separated the two rooms in the Tabernacle proper. The first room, the Holy Place – 30 feet long and 15 feet wide – while the innermost room, the Holy of Holies, was cube shaped, with each of its dimensions being 15 feet.

The veil that divided the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies was upheld by four pillars of acacia wood, overlaid with gold (Exodus 26:32). The veil was much like the gate and the door, with one major difference – embroidered on the veil were cherubims (Exodus 26:31). Cherubims are angels that protect the holiness of God. On the veil they represented protection of the inner room where God was, and the penalty for anyone other than Moses or the high priest entering the Holy of Holies was death. The veil, therefore, kept everyone from God's presence.

After the wanderings and the establishment of the nation of Israel, Solomon built the first *permanent* building – the Temple – to house the furniture of the Tabernacle. The Temple also had a Holy Place and a Holy of Holies that were separated by the veil.

Matthew 27:50-51 tells us, when Jesus died on the cross, “Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, He gave up His spirit. At that moment the curtain of the Temple was torn in two from top to bottom.”

Interestingly, Christ died precisely at 3 o'clock in the afternoon and, at that very moment the sacrifice would have been offered at the Brazen Altar. It was the week of Passover and multitudes of people would have been gathered around the Temple. The outer court would have been full of people crowding around the door and the gates that led into the Sanctuary.

Can you picture the scene? The priest, in his colorful vestments, takes the sacrificial knife, the lamb that is to be sacrificed is before the Brazen Altar – its blood is about to be shed at the hour of three. Multitudes were looking on! Behind the priest hangs the veil, hiding the Inner Sanctuary. There, cherubims spread their wings over the Mercy Seat. God, Himself, evidenced by His Shekinah glory, was there. People are bending to get a glimpse of the beautiful veil, with its colors of pure white, scarlet, and purple, embroidered with golden Cherubims. No one can enter behind that veil except the high priest, and even he could enter only once a year, and that only with blood.

The eye of every one there was directed toward that veil. The hour of 3 arrives, the priest takes the sacrificial knife and is about to slay the lamb, but behold, an unseen hand tears the veil apart from top to bottom! The Mercy Seat, unseen by ordinary man before, is open to view. The Cherubims are there; the Ark of the Covenant, sprinkled with blood, is there. *It is the Holy of Holies!*

Does the priest drop the sacrificial knife; does the lamb go free, as the Lamb, “slain from the foundation of the world,” dies for mankind?

The way into the Holy of Holies is now opened, as a new, and living, day is here. Man can never put up a veil to the way to God again. Never again can only a priest enter into God's presence. A way, whereby, humanity – oppressed and downtrodden – from all over the world, can find the way to the Mercy Seat – into the very presence of God.

Hebrews 4:14-16, *"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."* And, Hebrews 10:19-22 states, *"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."*

Hebrews 9:8 tells us that during the Old Testament time, before Jesus came to die as man's sacrifice, *"the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest..."* The veil was only meant to be temporary until, the way to God was made clear by Christ and His ultimate sacrifice at Calvary.

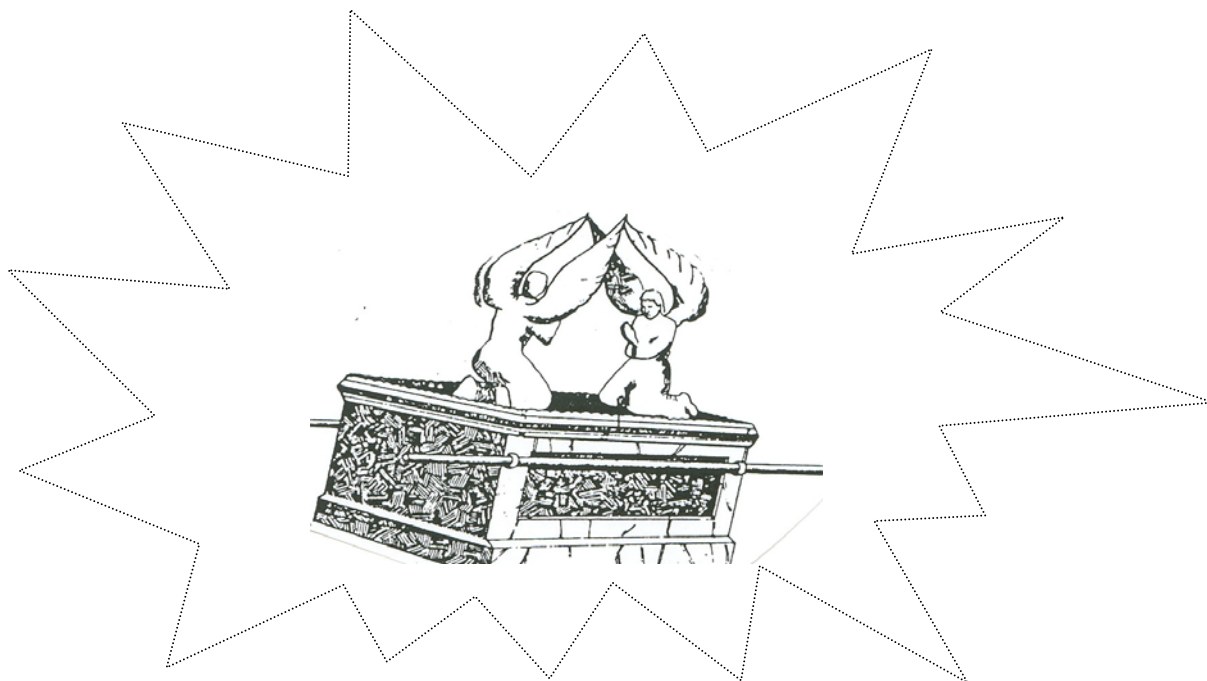
In Exodus 26:33, God said that they were to *"hang up the veil, that thou may bring thither within the veil the Ark of the Covenant."* (See Exodus 25:10-22)

The Ark of the Covenant was God's dwelling place in the Tabernacle!

The Holy of Holies was behind the veil and was the place of God. Two Cherubims, with outspread wings, gazing down at God's Mercy Seat, covered the Ark of the Covenant, becoming its lid, or cover.

Here was the purpose of the Tabernacle – it was that God might dwell in the midst of His people. God's Shekinah glory remained in the Holy of Holies, the rear one-third of the Tabernacle proper, where it was guarded with golden walls on there sides and a heavy veil on the inside.

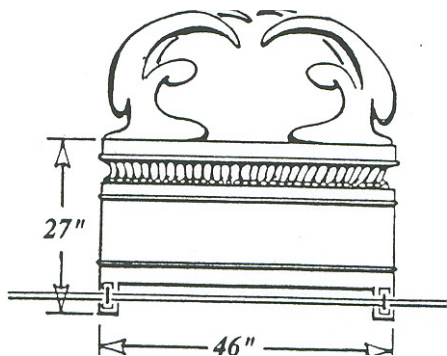
In this hidden, windowless room the presence of God dwelt with the children of Israel. Everything else about the Tabernacle was intended only to point men to this Holy room. Many people came through the gate with their sacrifices however they could go only so far. Many could not go past the Brazen Altar, or even to the Laver, much less into the Holy Place. They had to be represented by the priests, who could go into the Holy Place. However, only the high priest could go past the inner veil, entering into this most holy and sacred place – the Holy of holies – and even he could only enter once a year, on the Day of Atonement.



There, in the actual presence of Almighty God, over the Mercy Seat, was such an intense and celestial experience that even the high priest could only enter once a year, and then, only with the "*blood of atonement*." The slightest mistake on his part could bring immediate death! The high priest wore bells on the bottom of his robe, so that those outside could hear him moving about and would know that he was still alive.

The Most Sacred Place

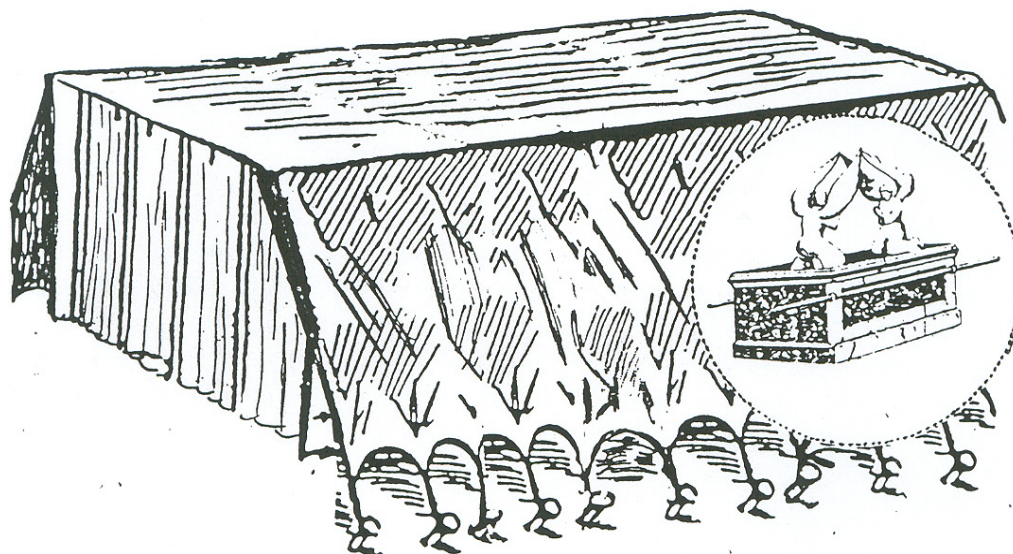
The Ark of the covenant and the Mercy Seat were actually two separate articles, very closely related, therefore often referred to as one. The importance of the Ark of the Covenant can hardly be overemphasized. The Bible makes reference to it more than 170 times, with such names as "*the Ark of the Covenant*", "*the Ark of the Testimony*", and "*the Holy Ark*." It was a chest made of acacia wood and covered inside and out with pure gold. The top of the ark was a lid or covering made of pure gold – called "*the Mercy Seat*." The ark, itself, was approximately 46 inches long, 27 inches wide and 27 inches high (Exodus 25:10-11).



There were four rings of gold through which the gold-covered acacia staves were placed for carrying the Ark while traveling (Exodus 25:12-14). The staves, or poles, were *never* to be removed from the rings, but rather were always to "*remain in the rings of the Ark*" (Exodus 25:15). The reason the staves were never to be removed was so that no one would ever touch the Ark of

the Covenant because the penalty for touching the Ark of the Covenant was immediate death.

Resting on top of the Ark of the Covenant was a lid of pure gold, the same length and width as the Ark. On the lid were solid gold figures of Cherubims (Exodus 25:18-19). God said in Exodus 25:20, *"And the Cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the Mercy Seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another, toward the Mercy Seat shall the faces of the Cherubims be."*



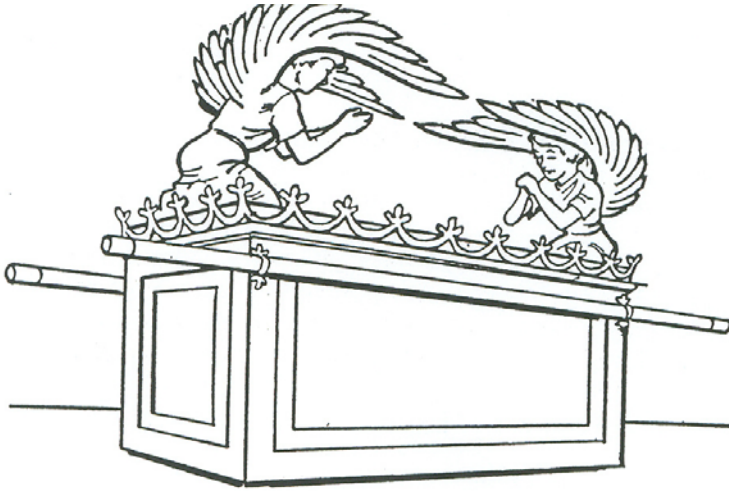
God said to Moses, in Exodus, *"There, above the cover between the two cherubim that are over the Ark of the Testimony (that is, the Ark of the Covenant) I will meet with you and give you all My commands for the Israelites."* Numbers 7:89 states, *"When Moses entered the Tent of the Meeting (the Tabernacle) to speak with the Lord, he heard the voice speaking to him from between the two cherubims above the atonement cover on the Ark of the Testimony. And He spoke to him"* – (that is, "God spoke to Moses.")

The word "Mercy Seat" is translated from the Hebrew word, *"kapporeth,"* that, interestingly means *"a place of covering for sin."* The English word *"propitiatory"* best conveys the idea intended by this word – meaning, *"making a propitiation for sin"* – or – *"appease or make provision the payment for sin."*

On the Day of Atonement the high priest, Aaron, would enter the Holy of Holies and sprinkle blood of the sacrificed lamb on the Mercy Seat, thereby making atonement for the sins of the nations of Israel.

God is a holy God, and sin is a heinous offense to His holiness. Therefore, God's holiness and justice demands that sin be fully punished, but because of His fathomless love – God has provided a way to justify the sinner and has made provision to forgive sin. This took place at the Mercy Seat, where propitiation was made for sin. However, the Mercy Seat was only a picture of Christ's ultimate fulfillment.

John states in 1 John 2:1-2, *"My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense. Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world."*



Exodus 25:20 states, “*toward the Mercy Seat shall the faces of the Cherubims be.*” These Cherubims were to look at the Mercy Seat where blood would be sprinkled to obtain forgiveness for sin. 1 Peter 1:12 says that Christ’s sufferings were things “*the angels desire to look into,*” – indicating that the angels of heaven yearn for the salvation of sinful humanity. Thus, we might better understand why, “there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that

repents (Luke 15:10). Angels are thrilled, overjoyed, and anxious over our salvation and we should be too!

There were three articles in the Ark of the Covenant (2 Kings 11:12; Exodus 16:33; Numbers 17:10 and Hebrews 9:4) These three articles were:

1. THE TEN COMMANDMENTS ON TWO TABLETS OF STONE

The tables of the law in the Ark of the Covenant were reminders that Israel had sinners and needed the blood-sprinkled Mercy Seat, or else they would be condemned. They were a continual reminder of God’s righteousness and man’s sinfulness. These tablets of the laws of God were a constant reminder that mankind could never keep God’s commandments, and that there must be a sacrifice for sin – (We, today, can only keep God’s law’s through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

2. A GOLDEN POT OF MANNA

This “*manna*” was the food that God had miraculously supplied to the Israelites during their wilderness journey. The word “*manna*” in Hebrew means, “*what is it?*” None of the natural substances can be identified as that which was provided to Israel by God. In Deuteronomy 8:3, Moses said that God, “*fed you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.*”

This manna, that God fed His people in the wilderness, usually spoiled if kept for more than one day, however this portion within the Ark of the Covenant was miraculously preserved for many years because it was a picture of something better than bread, that was to come down from heaven. Jesus said in John 6:49-51. “*I am the bread of life. Your forefathers ate the manner in the desert, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If a man eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bred is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.*”

Revelation 2:17 states, that his manna, "*hidden in the Ark,*" refers to the spiritual food that feeds our souls, that is the life of Christ Jesus.

3. AARON'S ROD THAT BUDDERD

Aaron's dead rod was nothing but an old dead stick to begin with, however, God miraculously gave it life (Numbers 17:1-11). It is an undeniable picture of resurrection -- *coming from death to life!* Like Christ, Aaron's rod rose to life and produced fruit. The resurrection life of Christ is ever present -- producing God's glorious life within the believer.

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The Ark of the Covenant with its contents was the focal point of the entire Tabernacle. In Leviticus 16 a detailed set of instructions is given concerning the preparations and ceremonies to be followed on the Day of Atonement. This was the most important day of the year for the Israelites because the high priest would atone for the sins of the nation Israel with the blood of animals. However, this had to be done once each year and was only a picture of Christ Who was to come and, by His blood, pay the price for the sins of the world.

Hebrews 9:11-12 states, "*But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.*"

The Living Bible states it, perhaps, clearer to our understanding when it states, "*He [Christ] came as High Priest of this better system that we now have. He went into that greater, perfect tabernacle in heaven, not made by men nor part of this world, and once for all took blood into that inner room, the Holy of Holies, and sprinkled it on the mercy seat; but it was not the blood of goats and calves. No, He took His own blood, and with it he, by Himself, made sure of our eternal salvation*" (Hebrews 9:11-12, Living Bible).

