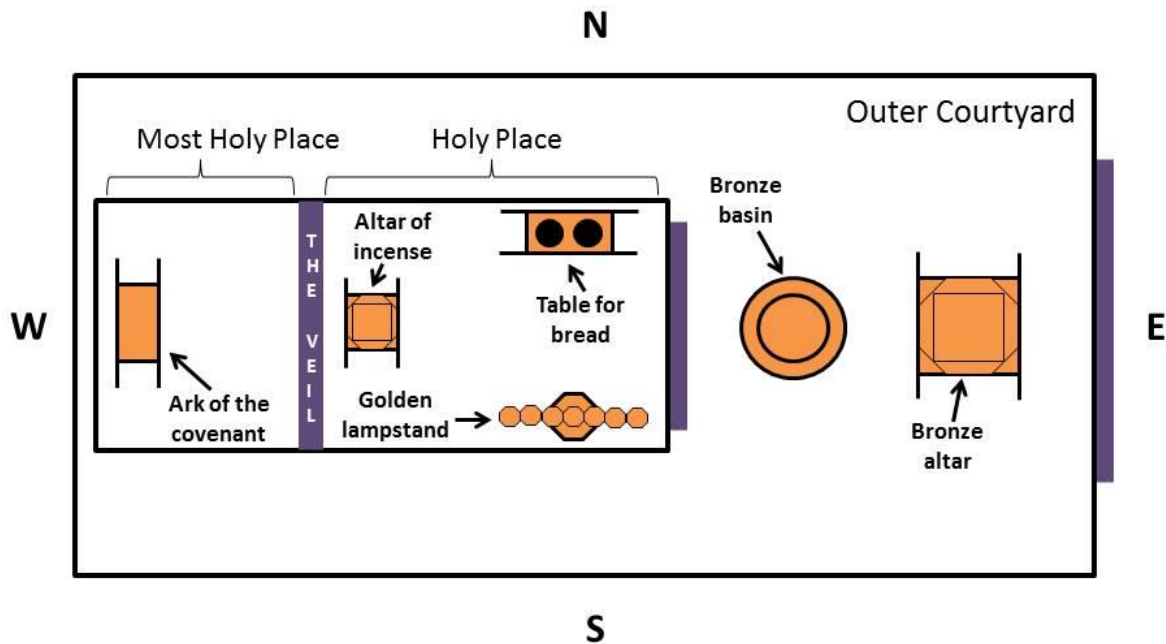


• LESSON 5 (February 1) •

The Exterior of the Tabernacle

“Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst” was the command of the LORD in Exodus 25:8. “Exactly as I show you concerning the pattern of the tabernacle, and of all its furniture, so you shall make it” (Exo 25:9). The last third of Exodus contains the meticulous details of this pattern and how the children of Israel put them into practice. We’ll begin with the exterior of this God-designed structure and work our way inward.



The Outer Courtyard (Exo 27:9-19; 38:9-20; 40:33)

Hangings of fine twined linen formed a type of fence around the outer courtyard. The curtains were suspended with silver hooks from 60 wooden pillars. The pillars were overlaid with bronze. Each had a cap overlaid with silver. In its entirety, the outer courtyard was:

- 100 cubits long (150 feet)
- 50 cubits wide (75 feet)
- 5 cubits tall (7.5 feet)

A 30-foot wide entrance was available on the east side of the outer courtyard (Exo 27:16). It was covered with a screen made of blue, purple, and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen, embroidered with needlework.

The Bronze Altar (Exo 27:1-8; 38:1-7; 40:6, 10, 29)

The altar was made of acacia wood and overlaid with bronze. Its four corners had horns overlaid with bronze. It was a hollow square:

- 5 cubits long (7.5 feet)
- 5 cubits wide (7.5 feet)
- 3 cubits tall (4.5 feet)

Pots, shovels, basins, forks, and fire pans—all of bronze—were used in the service of the altar. A bronze grate with a bronze ring in each corner was set within the altar. Poles of acacia wood overlaid with bronze could be put through the rings for carrying the altar through the wilderness.

The Bronze Basin (Exo 30:17-21; 38:8; 40:7, 30-32)

A basin and its stand—both of bronze—stood between the bronze altar and the tabernacle. Mirrors of the women who ministered in the entrance of the tabernacle were used in its construction. The basin was filled with water for ceremonial washing. Every time the priests ministered they were to wash themselves with water, “so that they may not die.”

POINTS TO PONDER:

- ❖ All of this bronze must have gleamed beautifully as the Sun rose in the east each morning.
- ❖ Between the people and God were an altar and a basin—a place of sacrifice and a place of cleansing.

CLOSING THOUGHT: “...and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water” (Heb 10:21-22).

What is the significance of a 7.5 foot tall curtain separating the camp of the people and the courtyard of the tabernacle?

What would this bronze altar represent to the people of God?

What would this bronze basin represent to the people of God?

Why does sacrifice and cleansing necessarily stand between people and God?