

• LESSON 6 (February 8) •

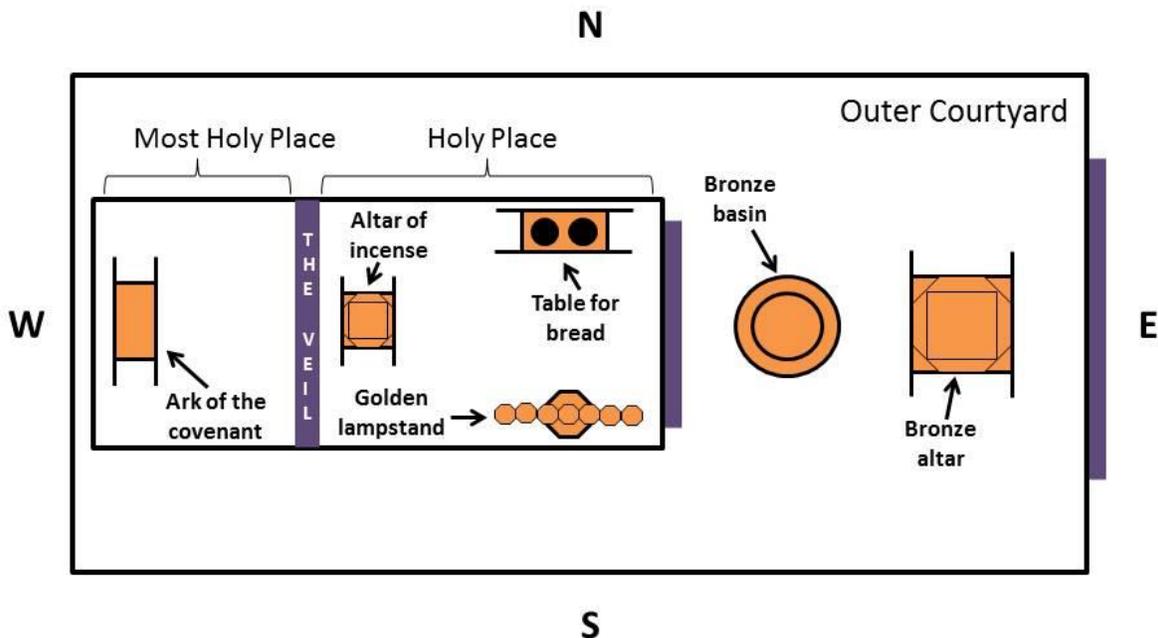
The Interior of the Tabernacle

Beyond the bronze altar and basin in the outer courtyard was the tabernacle itself—45 feet long, 15 feet wide, 15 feet tall. It was a wooden skeletal structure that was divided into two sections—the Holy Place (15 feet wide, 30 feet long) and the Most Holy Place (a 15 foot cube). The “walls” were made of 48 upright frames of acacia wood, 20 each on the north and south sides, six on the west side, and two corner boards (Exo 26:15-25). Five wooden bars overlaid with gold passed through rings attached to each frame (Exo 26:26-30), providing stability to the entire structure.



Ten curtains of fine twined linen, blue, purple, and scarlet yarns with cherubim skillfully worked into them were suspended from the skeletal structure. Fifty clasps of gold coupled the curtains together, “so that the tabernacle may be a single whole” (Exo 26:1-6). A multi-layered “tent over the tabernacle” was made of tanned rams’ skins and goatskins (Exo 26:7-14), forming a weather-resistant shield over the valuable materials within.

On the east end of the tabernacle was “a screen for the entrance of the tent.” It was made of blue, purple, and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen. The screen was supported by five pillars of acacia wood overlaid with gold and suspended from hooks of gold (Exo 26:36-37).



The Table for Bread (Exo 25:23-30; 37:10-16; 40:22-23)

Within the Holy Place, on the north side (Exo 26:35), was a table of acacia wood overlaid with pure gold. It was 3 feet long, 1.5 feet wide, and 2.25 feet high with a 3-inch molding of gold around the rim. Twelve loaves of the “bread of the Presence” were set in two piles on this table every Sabbath day as a food offering to the LORD (Lev 24:5-9). There were plates and dishes for incense, flagons and bowls for drink offerings, all made of pure gold.

Four rings of gold were attached to the table. Poles of acacia wood, overlaid with gold, were inserted through the rings so that the table could be carried.

The Golden Lampstand (Exo 25:31-40; 37:17-24; 40:24-25)

Opposite the table, on the south side (Exo 26:35), stood a seven-branched lampstand hammered out of one solid piece of pure gold. With cups, calyxes, and flowers on each branch, it was made to look like a blossoming almond tree. Its tongs and trays were of pure gold. “It shall be made, with all these utensils, out of a talent (about 75 pounds) of pure gold” (25:39). Its purpose? “The lamps shall be set up so as to give light on the space in front of it” (25:37).

Part of the priests’ ministry was to keep the lamps burning consistently (Exo 27:20-21; Lev 24:1-4). Each lamp was trimmed every evening and morning (Exo 30:7-8).

The Altar of Incense (Exo 30:1-10, 34-38; 37:25-29; 40:26-27)

On the west side of the Holy Place was a 3-foot high, 1.5-foot long, 1.5-foot wide wooden altar overlaid with pure gold. It had horns and a molding of gold around it. Four golden rings on opposite sides served as holders for poles with which to carry the altar. As with the table, the poles were of acacia wood and overlaid with pure gold.

Fragrant incense was burnt on the altar every morning and evening. The high priest would also “make atonement on its horns once a year” with the blood of a sin offering of atonement (30:10).

What would this table with “bread of the Presence” represent to the people of God?

What would the golden lampstand represent to the people of God?

What would the altar of incense represent to the people of God?

Why were the priests warned not to offer “unauthorized incense on it, or a burnt offering, or a grain offering” or a drink offering (30:9)?

The Veil (Exo 26:31-33; 36:35-36)

The veil separating the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place was made of blue, purple, and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen. Cherubim were skillfully worked into its design. It was hung with hooks of gold from four pillars of gold-overlaid acacia wood on four bases of silver.

The Ark of the Covenant (Exo 25:10-22; 37:1-9; 40:20-21)

The Most Holy Place was a 15-foot cube containing only the ark of the covenant—a 3.75-foot long, 2.25-foot wide, 2.25-foot tall chest of acacia wood and overlaid with pure gold. A solid golden slab called the “mercy seat” fit perfectly on top of the chest. Two cherubim, hammered out of the same piece of gold, spread their wings above, overshadowing the mercy seat. Their faces looked down. The two stone tablets of the covenant were kept inside.

Human hands were not to touch the ark of the covenant (2 Sam 6:5-7). Poles of acacia wood overlaid with gold were inserted through four rings of gold on the ark. The poles were not to be taken out of the rings of the ark.

POINTS TO PONDER:

- ❖ Only the high priest could enter the Most Holy Place, and he but once a year, on the Day of Atonement (Heb 9:7; Lev 16).
- ❖ God said of the ark, “There I will meet with you, and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim that are on the ark of the testimony, I will speak with you” (Exo 25:22).

CLOSING THOUGHT: “But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption” (Heb 9:11-12).

What would the veil represent to the people of God?

What would the ark of the covenant represent to the people of God?

Why would God describe the lid of the ark as “the mercy seat”?

Cherubim aren’t mentioned in the Bible between Genesis 3:24 and Exodus 25. What should we make of their reappearance?