

## Chapters 25 through 31 – Part 3

### JEHOVAH'S PLANS FOR THE SANCTUARY

#### Chapter 27 – The Bronze Altar & Courtyard

#### Postscript on previous lesson:



I showed you this artist's depiction of the Tabernacle in lesson 17, mentioning that even though it is one of the better images available, there are still errors in it. If you recall, I challenged you to find them. These three will get you started:

1. The number of gold-plated boards on the side should be 20, not 45 (each one 1.5 cubits wide x 10 cubits high)
2. Eight is the correct number of boards for the back, but arranged as pictured would make the tabernacle 3 cubits too wide. Two of the boards must be overlapped on the outside.
3. There should be two "Sockets" under each board, not just one.

Having just studied lesson 17, can you spot three more? While you ponder that, let's move on to lesson 18 where our study of the Tabernacle courtyard will lead us to a discussion of the Bronze Altar and the practice of sacrifice.

# A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF EXODUS

Ron Roberts

Lesson 18

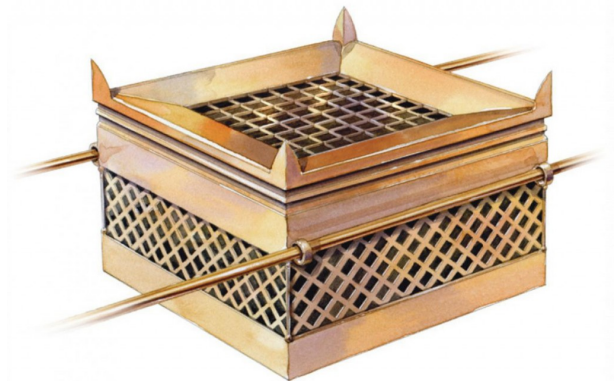
But before we begin, let's remember where we are in the reading of Exodus: Moses is still on Mount Sinai (with Joshua waiting part-way up the mountain) receiving God's instructions for the building of the tabernacle, its furnishings, and the priests' garments. He had already been given "The Law" on a previous trip, the bulk of which isn't even discussed in the book of Exodus, but a study of Leviticus, Number and Deuteronomy (which at this time I have no plan to write) would provide those details. I believe the primary purpose of Exodus, however, is to give us a record of five major events:

1. The origin of the Passover,
2. The liberation of God's people from Egypt,
3. The giving of the "Law of Moses,"
4. The construction of the tabernacle, and
5. Jehovah's care for His people in the wilderness while preparing them for the taking of the Promised Land.

As part of the discussion of #4, the Tabernacle, I also hope to provide some insight into the acts of offering sacrifices in this first section.

## The Bronze Altar – Exodus 27:1 – 8

*"You shall make an altar of acacia wood, five cubits long and five cubits wide—the altar shall be square—and its height shall be three cubits. You shall make its horns on its four corners; its horns shall be of one piece with it. And you shall overlay it with bronze. Also you shall make its pans to receive its ashes, and its shovels and its basins and its forks and its firepans; you shall make all its utensils of bronze. You shall make a grate for it, a network of bronze; and on the network you shall make four bronze rings at its four corners. You shall put it under the rim of the altar beneath, that the network may be midway up the altar. And you shall make poles for the altar, poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with bronze. The poles shall be put in the rings, and the poles shall be on the two sides of the altar to bear it. You shall make it hollow with boards; as it was shown you on the mountain, so shall they make it." (NKJV)*

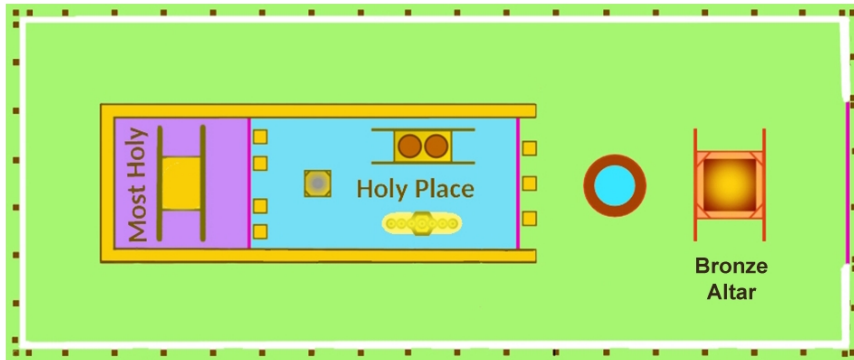


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The Bronze Altar (or “Altar of Sacrifice”) is shown here in the location where it was placed every time the tabernacle was erected. It was situated so as to be the first item encountered when entering the courtyard from the outside. Most commentators agree that it was placed here to serve as a



reminder to the Israelites: Before man could approach the Holy Jehovah, he needed to be cleansed from sin.

In the time period we are discussing, this cleansing could only be achieved by offering the

sacrifice of an innocent animal. Did this need for sacrifice come about as part of the Law of Moses? Contrary to popular belief... No. It was first necessary in the Garden of Eden after Eve, then Adam, committed the first two sins by eating the forbidden fruit. That first sacrifice was made by Jehovah Himself when He killed the first animal to provide their clothing from its skin. I hope you recall that up until that sin – however long after creation it was – death had not entered into the world, and ALL creatures were meant to live eternally! At that point, though, as a direct result of man’s sin, death entered into the world. And, from that point on, it became necessary for man to make a “sin offering,” that is, a substitution of the life of an innocent animal for the life of the sinner.

Based on the fact that both Cain and Abel offered a sacrifice to Jehovah, I believe we can conclude that all of the children of Adam and Eve were taught the need for sacrifice. In fact, I believe that teaching was passed down through the generations, as evidenced by men like Enoch, Noah, Job, and Abraham being found acceptable in God’s eyes through their obedience and their sacrifices. I imagine there were feelings of regret or even pain when they were required to slaughter an innocent animal because of a sin they themselves had committed.

It is also with great regret and pain that we, living under the new dispensation, come to realize that our sinfulness – our guilt – made it necessary for the truly innocent and holy Son of God to become the sacrifice for our sins. But God loved His creation enough to provide our salvation in the only way possible. And Jesus understood and willingly undertook His role in man’s salvation because he said, ***“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”*** (John 14:6)

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In our discussion of sacrifices, I should point out that in the Old Testament the terms “offering” and “sacrifice” are synonyms. In fact, the Hebrew words **Zebach**, “sacrifice” and **Zabach**, “offering” are themselves almost identical and are both defined by Strong in his Hebrew Dictionary as “*slaughter, the flesh of an animal, to sacrifice,*”

There were several different types of offerings. For example, the “new moon offering” was essentially a festive day of rejoicing to celebrate the “new beginning” suggested by a new moon. With the “wave offering” a portion of the goods brought to the priest – grain or sheaves, for example – were sacrificed to God, the rest were released for the use of those involved in the sacrifice. Then, in a “drink offering,” a portion of wine was poured out into the altar fire while the rest was drunk. Leviticus provides us with a sort of “handbook” for the offering of sacrifices. In the first seven chapters we are shown a cycle of five offerings that were part of regular worship. Each was for a specific purpose, and as you see below, not all were mandatory.

Voluntary	Mandatory
The Burnt Offering	The Sin Offering
The Grain Offering	The Guilt (Trespass) Offering
The Peace Offering	

The mandatory offerings were required to be made at least once a year, but there was the option to do so more frequently. From what I read on Jewish websites, a schedule of some sort was arranged in which each family had a “time slot” during which the father or a male family member of age could show up in the Tabernacle compound to offer a sacrifice for his family. This could be done more frequently than once a year if they wished, perhaps based on feelings of guilt or a desire to demonstrate devotion. The voluntary ones were made as often as the family felt the need, their representative presenting himself to the priest at any time during “business hours” as it were, to have it taken care of. Below you will find a brief explanation of the purpose for each of these five offerings and how they were carried out. The full details for each can be found in the book of Leviticus.

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## 1. *The Burnt Offering:*

The first chapter of Leviticus describes the burnt offering. If a person felt the need or desire to approach Jehovah for the purpose of *expressing that he had totally surrendered to God's will*, he had to come bearing this offering. It allowed him to enter into the presence of God for worship, and had two significant aspects:

- A variety of animals could be used for the offering, depending on what the person making the sacrifice could afford. Therefore, any family could participate in this offering regardless of wealth.
- This was the **only** offering which was completely **burned** — **no portion reserved to be eaten**. The whole sacrifice was turned to smoke so that it became a pleasing aroma to God. This “total burning” of the sacrifice suggests the idea of total surrender to God.

## 2. *The Grain Offering:*

Though obviously not an animal, this grain offering was burned on the altar as if it were one. Levitical law deemed it necessary for all who had been accepted by God through sacrificial atonement, (meaning they had done all requisite sacrifices for their sins) to express their dedication to Him. This offering allowed one to acknowledge that everything he has belongs to God. In simpler words, this offering showed the offeror's desire to please God through voluntarily bringing Him gifts, because God deserves tribute. In essence, it was an offering of thankfulness.

## 3. *The Peace Offering:*

The peace offering (or “offering of well-being”) was another animal sacrifice, but the purpose and unique qualities of this sacrifice are a little more challenging to understand. Unlike the burnt offering where the entire animal was placed on the altar and completely burned, with this offering only the fat, kidneys and liver were placed on the altar and burned. The rest of the animal was eaten (which

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required that the rest was cooked. It is unclear whether that “cooking” of the sacrificed animal was done on the altar or elsewhere. Also, the person making the offering was required to bring cakes of leavened bread. One cake was to be a gift to the Lord, believed by most commentators to have been eaten by the priest who was responsible for killing the animal, and the rest was eaten by the group who had gathered together on this predetermined day to participate in this offering. We do know all had to be consumed on the day it is offered, and none could be left until morning. Since both the cakes and meat were consumed, it appears the peace offering was more along the lines of a “community meal” that signified not only peace with God, but peace with each other as well.

## 4. *The Guilt and Sin Offerings:*

The final two sacrifices, the Guilt Offering and Sin Offering, were mandatory because both were meant to atone for sin. They were intended to **repair the impaired relationship** between man and Jehovah since sin (or guilt) severs the worshiper from God.

In order for these sacrifices to “set things right,” they required acknowledgment from the sinner as to whether the sin was intentional or unintentional. Obviously, this would require the sinner to demonstrate his awareness of the sin he had committed and confess it. The confession was to contain a full accounting of the sin(s) and an expression of the desire to repent (or turn away) from it.

*[Note: The difference between these two mandatory offerings has been debated for years, and doesn't yet appear to be settled. Some say the difference is the “Sin Offering” was made for the sin itself, whereas the “Guilt Offering” was made because of the “effect” of the sin – the guilt felt. Others say the Sin Offering was sin against God, whereas the Guilt Offering was for sin against man. And then, there are those who believe there is no difference, the two are speaking of the same thing.]*

Of course you realize that none of the animals offered in these sacrifices could actually, by the shedding of their blood (their death), take away a person's sin, nor could they pay the debt for sin. But it was through the offering of these sacrifices that the people of the Old Testament demonstrated their faith in, and dedication to, Jehovah. The Lord then – since His plan from before creation was that

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ONLY the eventual blood of His Son could take away sins once and for all – would “credit” the sacrifice forward to the Lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world.

There is no doubt the offering of an animal sacrifice was done at substantial cost to the one who made the sacrifice. We can only wonder at the expense of taking the very best animal in the flock or herd to the tabernacle (later the temple in Jerusalem) to be slaughtered and burned on the altar. As the “best of the flock,” this would also have been the animal who produced the best offspring, and/or brought the highest price at the market.

The process was that the one making the offering would first confess his sins to the priest, and then place his hand on the head of the animal WHILE its throat was slit, so as to more personally identify with the sacrifice. Thus, his sin and guilt were symbolically moved from him to the animal. With his hand on the animal’s head, the sinner could feel the life leaving the animal, after which the priest would sprinkle its blood in front of the veil of the Holy Place, burn the sacrifice and pour the rest of the blood at the bottom of the altar. Blood is, of course, the significant agent of atonement and cleansing in the Old Testament.

One wonders what might have been going through the head of the offeror as he watched the animal die. It should have been something like, “He is taking my place.” And what a relief to hear the priest then utter the words, “For this sacrifice, your sins are forgiven!” That animal took the sinner’s place. That is the principle of substitution.

***“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; it is the blood that makes atonement for one’s life.”*** (Leviticus 17:11) The law required nearly everything to be cleansed with blood, because ***“without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.”*** (Hebrews 9:22)

### **The Significance of the Tabernacle Sacrifices:**

“Atoned” means “covered over” and although the blood of the sacrifices did “cover over” the Israelites’ sins, it did not forgive them. “Covered over” is not the same as “taken away!” Some say these sins were merely “rolled forward,” thus explaining why they had to perform the sacrifices year after year, to stay ahead of the “expiration date” on the atonement.

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But I believe we are better off to think of atonement as reparation for an offense – a satisfaction obtained. Under the new dispensation it is considered to be “reconciliation,” a settlement, or a resolution. How beautiful the thought that the ultimate and perfect sacrifice offered by Jesus resulted in forgiveness – once and for all time – with no expiration date. We can rejoice in the following scriptures:

***“This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.”*** (Mark 14:24)

***“For you know that ... you were redeemed ... with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.”*** (1 Peter 1:18-19)

***“The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!”***  
(Hebrews 9:13-14)

***“We have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. ...By one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy. ...And where these have been forgiven, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin.”*** (Hebrews 10:10, 14, 18)

***“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”*** (2 Corinthians 5:21)

The word “atonement” carries with it the idea of the just, holy, righteous side of God's nature being satisfied. God's law required death as the penalty for sin. The death of the innocent animal satisfied the demands of His law. Sacrificing an animal on an altar did not take away the sin – Man was still sinful. The sacrifice only pictured what was necessary for sin to be forgiven – death and shedding of blood. The blood provided an atonement or covering for sin. *(from “The Stranger on the Road to Emmaus” by John R. Cross, published by GoodSeed International)*



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If you glance back at the image of the altar on page 2, you will notice that there is a horn – a symbol of power and strength – at each corner. When the sacrifice was made, blood was dabbed on the horns of the altar, signifying the power of the blood to atone for sins. In the same way, there is mighty power in the blood of Christ. Jesus is the “horn of our salvation” (Psalm 18:2, Luke 1:69).

Remember the “passover” of the death angel, when doorposts painted with lamb’s blood protected the families inside from the death of their first born. These animal sacrifices are a reference to that Passover! (Exodus 12:1-13). And, like the Passover lambs which were eaten after they were slaughtered on that night, parts of the sacrificial lambs were also eaten. It was with very deliberate word choice that, on the night of the Passover meal before Jesus was crucified, He ***“took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, ‘Take and eat; this is my body’”*** (Matthew 26:26).

### Two “Tents of Meeting” –

In the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, we find the phrase **“The Tent of Meeting”** used several times. Each time, it refers to the place where God would meet with His people, but we mustn't assume that always meant the Tabernacle.

#### *The First Tent:*

Before the tabernacle was built – in fact shortly after Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the plans for building the tabernacle – Moses pitched a tent outside of the camp of the Israelites (actually some distance away from the camp) and called it the **“Tent of Meeting.”** In Exodus 33:7 it is recorded: ***“Moses took his tent and pitched it outside the camp, far from the camp, and called it the tabernacle of meeting. And it came to pass that everyone who sought the LORD went out to the tabernacle of meeting which was outside the camp.”*** (NKJV)

This was shortly after Moses and Joshua came down from the mountain and saw the golden calf which we will speak of later. Moses set that tent up ***“outside the camp”*** because the people had broken fellowship with Jehovah when they made the golden calf. Until the Tabernacle was completed, anyone inquiring of the Lord would go to the tent of meeting outside the camp... ***“So it was, whenever Moses***

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*went out to the tabernacle, that all the people rose, and each man stood at his tent door and watched Moses until he had gone into the tabernacle. And it came to pass, when Moses entered the tabernacle, that the pillar of cloud descended and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the LORD talked with Moses.”* And everyone in the camp knew when that happened because, *“All the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the tabernacle door, and all the people rose and worshiped – each man in his tent door.”* (Exo. 33:8-10 NKJV)

This scripture seems to suggest that Moses – all during the time it took for the Tabernacle to be constructed – actually lived in his own tent inside the camp, but frequented a second tent he had erected *“far outside the camp,”* to meet with Jehovah. Exodus 33:8 says *“...whenever Moses went out to the tabernacle...”* indicating he merely “visited” there when the Lord talked with him. Keep in mind that even though the word “tabernacle” is used in these verses in several Bible versions, it is not referring to THE Tabernacle that we have been discussing, because at this time it was still under construction.

And, we can’t fail to mention Joshua’s role in this “tent of meeting.” According to Exodus 33:11 *“Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle.”* Spence, in the Pulpit Commentary, has this to say about Joshua: Moses *“left... his personal attendant ("minister"), Joshua, to watch and guard the sacred structure during his absence. It is remarkable that the trust was committed to Joshua, rather than to Aaron, or any of the Levites. Probably the reason for this was that Joshua alone had had no part in the idolatry of the calf.”*

### *The Second Tent:*

Of course, once the people had repented and promised allegiance to God, the Tabernacle was built, and Moses no longer had a need for the “Tent of Meeting” outside the camp. The large, elaborate tent we have been describing, located in the middle of the Israelite camp during their desert wanderings, was the second “Tent of Meeting.” It was to this “tent” – The Tabernacle – with its outer courtyard, that the Israelites came to offer sacrifices, primarily to cleanse themselves so they could be in God's presence (in the courtyard). We don’t read of any formal worship service at this time, so these offerings were their way of worshiping. We do know Moses would call them together to speak God's will to them, and that when the pillar or cloud of smoke was over the tabernacle, the people recognized

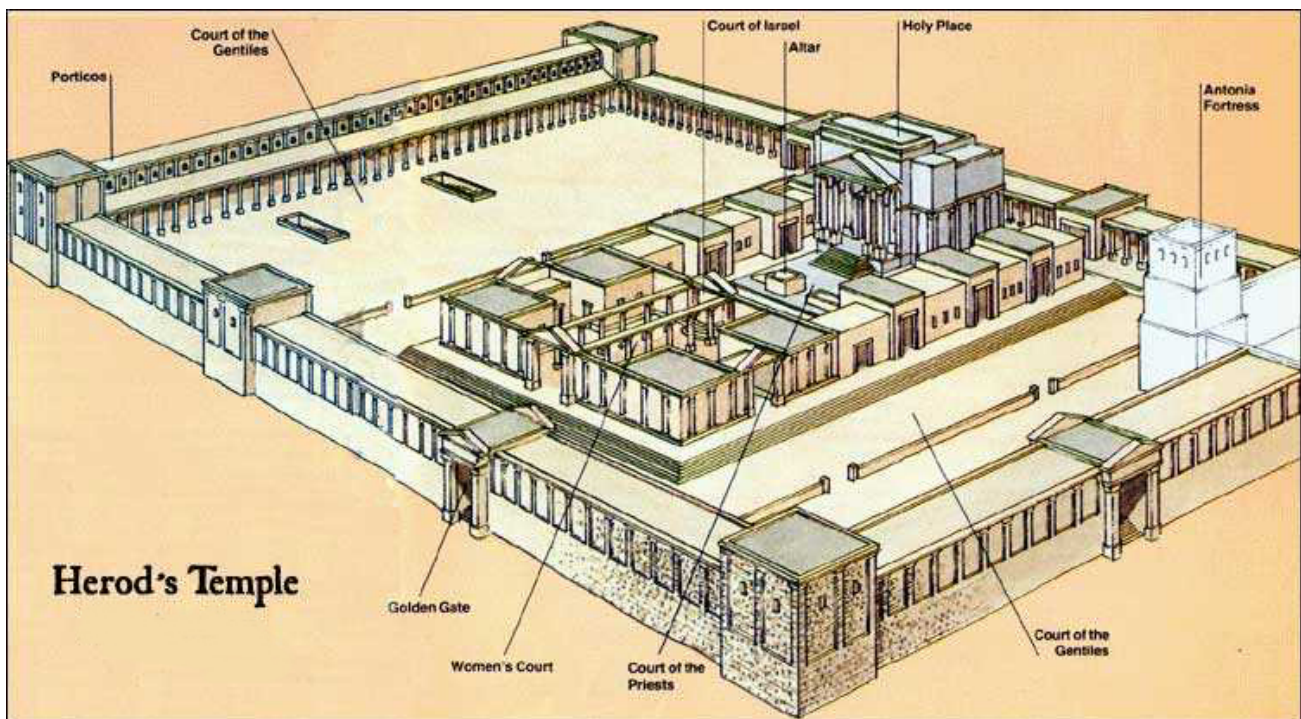
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that as God's presence. This was His “dwelling” with them, and they would stand outside their tents and face the tabernacle.

King Solomon replaced the Tabernacle with a temple in about 950 BC. The image at right is an example of what that temple that may have looked like. It was destroyed when Israel was taken into captivity by Babylon about 350 years later then partially restored almost 70 years later by Nehemiah. In 37 BC Herod enlarged it and added new “courts” which you will see labeled below. The “Court of the Gentiles” actually surrounds the central “temple” which does contain the “Holy Place” (which



actually consists of both the Most Holy and Holy places) with the altar in front of it. Notice inside the temple proper there is a “Court of Israel,” a “Court of the Priests (where the altar is located),” and a “Women’s Court.” In Jesus’ time this was the temple at Jerusalem, and anyone was allowed into the large “Court of the Gentiles” – that is where Jesus ran off the money changers – but only Jews were allowed into the temple proper – including women into the “Women’s Court.”

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During the time of our study, however, neither woman, child, nor “outsider” (non-Israelite) could enter into the tabernacle’s courtyard – only male Israelites bringing offerings for their family – and certainly only priests were allowed into the Holy Place, and only the High Priest into the Most Holy Place.

Having just made this declaration, it is necessary to address a couple of possible exceptions: First, much later than the events recorded in the book of Exodus, we know that at least one male child was permitted into the tabernacle for a specific purpose: Samuel – just after he was weaned (probably age 4 - 5) – was ***“taken to live in the tabernacle”*** so he could help Eli. (1 Sam 1:21 - 2:26) Therefore, there was either some sort of provision allowing for a small child to be tutored by a priest, and given small tasks to help along the way, or Samuel’s story was a special circumstance.

Second, we need to address a statement in Exodus 38:8 which mentions ***“serving women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.”*** Spence has this to say: *“Bronze plates, circular or oval, admitting of a high polish, were used by the Egyptian women as mirrors from a very early date, and may be seen in the Egyptian collection of the British Museum. They have handles like those of our fire-screens, generally also of bronze. It was natural that the Hebrew women should possess similar articles, and should have taken care to bring them with them out of Egypt. It appears this is only mentioned here because these women donated their “mirrors” to the making of the basin where the priests would wash before entering the sanctuary.”* (The Pulpit Commentaries for Exodus 38:8)

Now let’s look at 1 Samuel 2:22, where it says the prophet Eli, being very old, ***“...heard everything his sons did to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.”*** The fact that women who ***“assembled at the door of the tabernacle of meeting”*** are mentioned twice – using the same exact words – causes me to think they were carrying out a service. As a matter of fact, the Hebrew word translated as ***“assemble”*** is ***“tsâbâ”*** which actually means *“to fight, perform, muster, wait upon, or war”* according to Smith’s Hebrew Dictionary. Some early historians suggest that these women served as guards at the Tabernacle’s entrance, warding off evil with their mirrors, however the Rabbinic Narratives put a different slant on the women’s purpose: the women stood at the gate with their mirrors to seduce men to become their husbands.

It should be noted that this quote in Exodus 38 is before the Tabernacle is completed, so the activity described there is most likely taking place outside the door of Moses’ tent on the outside the camp, that we described earlier. So maybe their purpose was to prevent entry to all but those allowed

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by Moses. Of course, this is all conjecture because we are not told why these women congregated there.

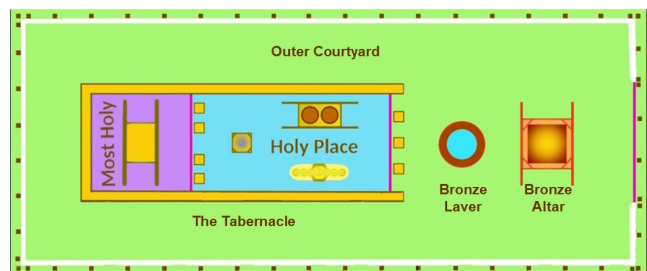
## THE COURT OF THE TABERNACLE – Ex 27:9-18 Ex 38:9-19

*“You shall also make the court of the tabernacle. For the south side there shall be hangings for the court made of fine woven linen, one hundred cubits long for one side. And its twenty pillars and their twenty sockets shall be bronze. The hooks of the pillars and their bands shall be silver. Likewise along the length of the north side there shall be hangings one hundred cubits long, with its twenty pillars and their twenty sockets of bronze, and the hooks of the pillars and their bands of silver. "And along the width of the court on the west side shall be hangings of fifty cubits, with their ten pillars and their ten sockets. The width of the court on the east side shall be fifty cubits. The hangings on one side of the gate shall be fifteen cubits, with their three pillars and their three sockets. And on the other side shall be hangings of fifteen cubits, with their three pillars and their three sockets. "For the gate of the court there shall be a screen twenty cubits long, woven of blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine woven linen, made by a weaver. It shall have four pillars and four sockets. All the pillars around the court shall have bands of silver; their hooks shall be of silver and their sockets of bronze. The length of the court shall be one hundred cubits, the width fifty throughout, and the height five cubits, made of fine woven linen, and its sockets of bronze. All the utensils of the tabernacle for all its service, all its pegs, and all the pegs of the court, shall be of bronze.”*



The white line just inside the rows of brown dots in the familiar image at right is representative of the “hangings” (curtains) that

were five cubits high (about 7.5 feet.) The brown dots represent the “pillars” with their brass sockets. I doubt the pillars looked like the one shown at left, but perhaps similar. At the bottom of each pillar would be a “socket” of brass, and I believe these sockets would be similar to the sockets we discussed earlier





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under the walls of the tabernacle, but a bit smaller. Being made of brass, they would be heavy. The silver cap or “fillet” at the top of the pillar is probably close to correct, and you can see the two rings, or “hooks,” made of silver. Those hooks were for cords to be attached on both the inside and outside and secured to the ground with “pins” similar to tent stakes. Also, a rod would slide through the inside hook to hold the curtains. Since the curtains were over 7 feet high, the height of these pillars in their sockets must have been about 8 feet. The Court was 50 cubits wide and 100 cubits long – about 75 ft. x 150 ft. The “hangings” were of white fine-twined linen.

The “hanging” for the gate of the court was needlework of blue, and purple, and scarlet, made of fine twined linen, 20 cubits x 5 cubits (about 30 feet wide by 7 ½ high) and may have looked like this image.



Four pillars supported it, and on each side of the gate was a 15 cubit wide “hanging” like what was around the courtyard. These two front corner curtains were supported with 3 pillars and sockets of brass. If you look closely you can see the “Pins and Cords” described in the next paragraph.

## THE PINS AND CORDS – Ex 27:19 & Ex 38:20

The directions given to Moses in chapter 27 do not mention the “cords.” But later, when Moses relays God’s instructions to the people in Exodus 35:18, he mentions *“the pins of the tabernacle, the pins of the court, and their cords.”* Then, in Exodus 39:40, when the children of Israel bring what they had made to Moses, among other things mentioned are the hangings of the court with its pillars and sockets; the hanging of the court gate; and the cords, and pins. Looking further, in Numbers 3, we find that the “Sons of Gershon” are the ones assigned to take care of the court “hangings,” the curtain for the gate of the Court, *“and the cords.”* There are other references in Numbers 4, but the conclusion I

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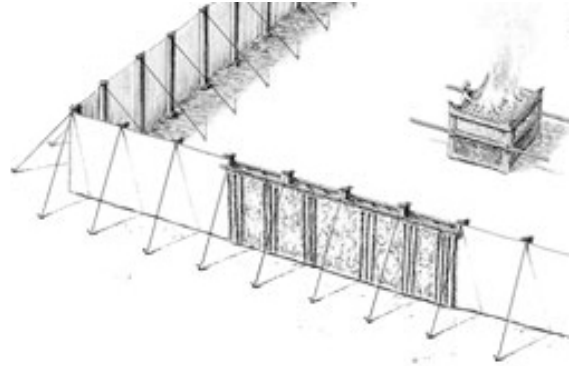
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have reached from all of them is that most likely the “pins” were similar to what we call “tent stakes” but made of brass and driven into the ground on both the inside and outside of each pillar – similar to what is shown in this drawing on the right.

The Gershonites and the Merarites – the oldest and youngest sons of Levi were assigned their duties when the tabernacle was to be moved:

The Gershonites were given the duty of carrying the curtains, skins, screens, hangings and cords which make up the outer structure of the Tabernacle, whereas the Merarite family was given the duty of transporting the boards, bars, pillars, sockets and ropes of the Tabernacle’s frame. Both families were to work under the supervision of Ithamar, the son of Aaron. I suppose these two families may have had the most labor intensive jobs when it came to moving the tabernacle. We have already discussed the weight of some of those items.



### OIL FOR THE LAMP – (Exodus 27:20 & 21)

***“And you shall command the children of Israel that they bring you pure oil of pressed olives for the light, to cause the lamp to burn continually. In the tabernacle of meeting, outside the veil which is before the Testimony, Aaron and his sons shall tend it from evening until morning before the LORD. It shall be a statute forever to their generations on behalf of the children of Israel.”***

This lamp, of course, is the candlestick that stood opposite of the table of Showbread in the Holy Place. The oil was to be pure olive oil without the watery juice often found when ripe olives are mashed, so it was most likely obtained by pounding “not quite ripe” olives to produce clear, pure oil that burned brighter with less smoke.

From what is said in verse 20, ***“to cause the lamp to burn continually,”*** it is easy to assume the lamp was to never be extinguished, day or night. In fact, that is what Josephus says, in his “Antiquities of the Jews,” although he says only three of the seven bowls needed to be lit at all times. However, that doesn’t jibe with several scriptures: For



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example, in Exodus 30:8 and 1Samuel 3:3, it appears one of the duties of the high-priest was to light the lamps every evening, and to give them a sufficient supply of oil to last till daybreak, at which time “the lamp of God went out.”

*1 Samuel 3:3 “...and before the lamp of God went out in the tabernacle of the Lord where the ark of God was, and while Samuel was lying down...”*

*Exodus 30:8 “And when Aaron lights the lamps at twilight, he shall burn incense on it, perpetual incense before the Lord throughout your generations...”*

But, a few other commentators suggest that at least one lamp was always burning, because no daylight could penetrate into the structure through the fourfold coverings and thick curtains. As with so many of these details, we just don't know. Spence says: *“If we regard the lamp as extinguished during the daytime, then we must understand the word ‘continually’ as it is used in verse 20, to mean ‘regularly every night.’”*

And it is with these thoughts, that we extinguish the lamps of lesson 18.