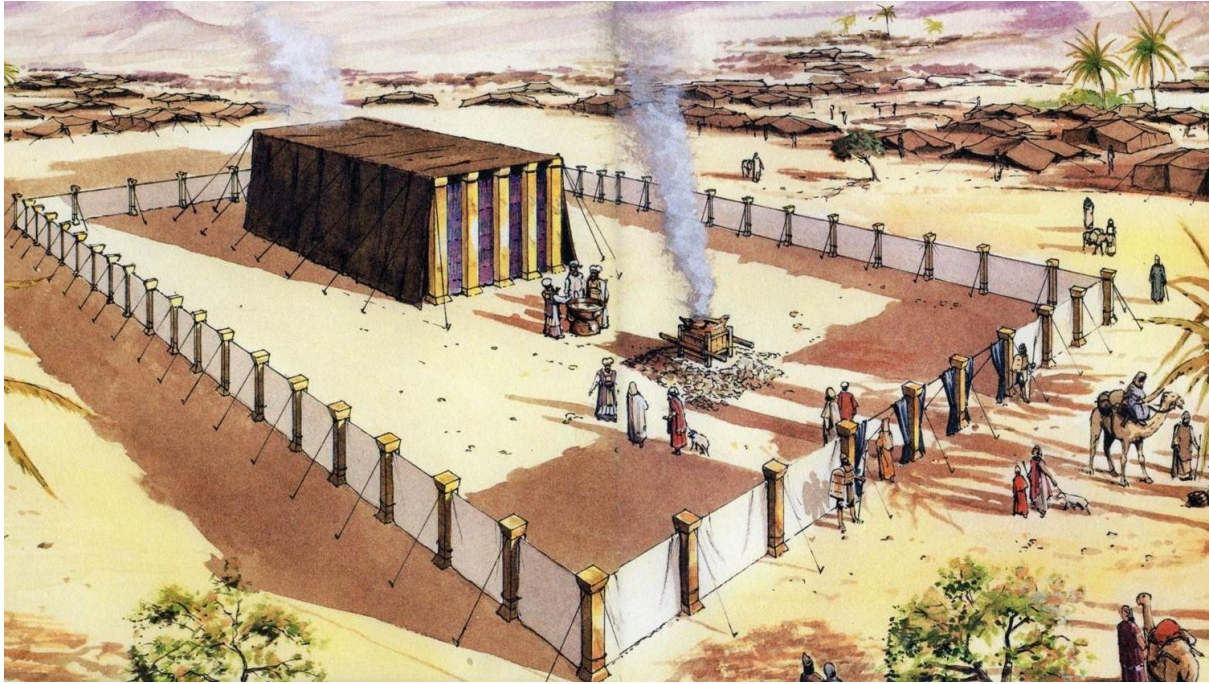


BIBLE STUDY NOTES



THE TEACHING OF THE TABERNACLE IN THE WILDERNESS

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INTRODUCTION

These outline notes on the 'Teaching of the Tabernacle in the Wilderness', were originally compiled by my father, the Rev L G Stapleton, many years ago, and used in week-night Bible Studies together with painted illustrations. They are now presented as Bible Study Notes. Only one photo copy of one of the original pictures remains - it is now used in PART 5 of the notes – showing the Tabernacle Structure. Other illustrations have been taken from Colour Plates from a book - 'Christ In The Tabernacle' (1877) by Frank H White. The front cover picture is taken from the CANDLE BOOKS – 'Essential Bible Reference Series – 'The Tabernacle' by Tim Dowley (permission applied for).

Compiled and Edited by Mark Stapleton

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August 2026

Note –

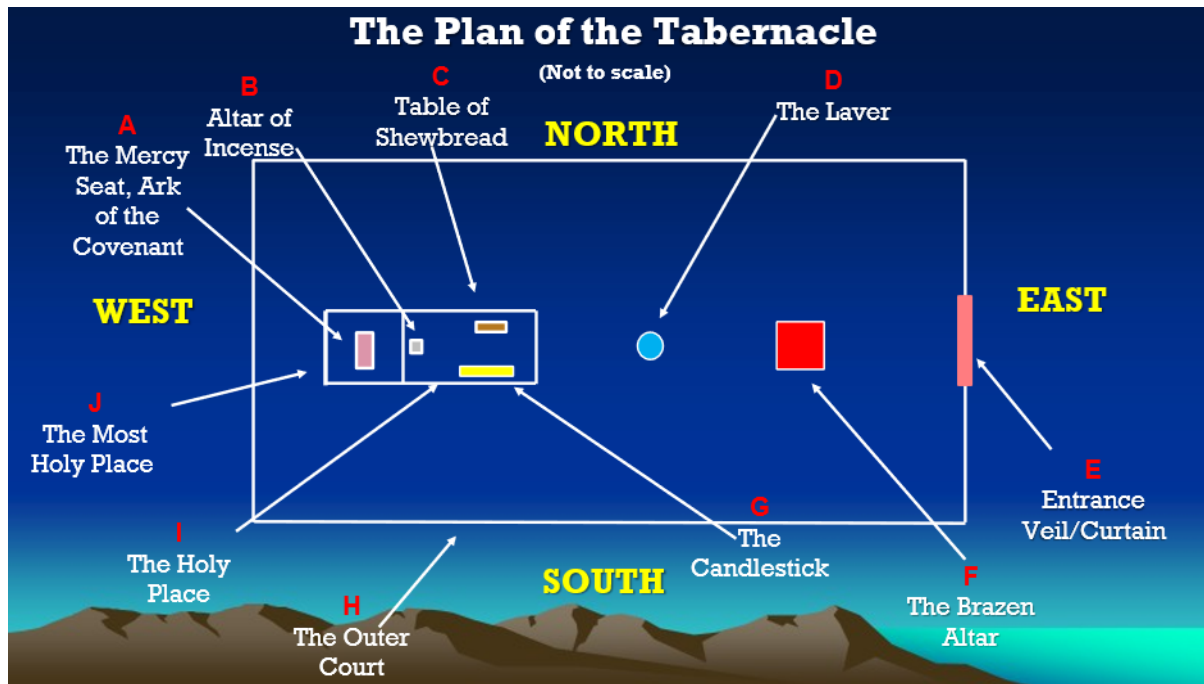
1. The measurements given in these notes are based on a cubit (measured from the elbow to the tip of the index finger) which is approx. equal to ½ metre (50 cm).
2. In these notes, the word BRASS (BRASEN) has been used as in the KJV. The equivalent in the NKJV is BRONZE.
3. The 'CONTENTS' page list is linked to the chapter headings. Use 'CONTROL+ mouse click.

Scripture references and quotes are based on the King James Version (KJV).

A series of PowerPoint presentations on 'The Teaching of the Tabernacle in the Wilderness, is also available. It can be viewed at this WebSite =

<https://www.oneagleswings.me.uk/grandpastabernacle/>

PART 1 - THE PLAN



- A. The Mercy Seat and the Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 25: 10-22).
- B. The Altar of Incense (Exodus 30: 1-10).
- C. The Table of Shewbread (Exodus 25: 23-30).
- D. The Laver (Exodus 30: 17-21).
- E. Entrance veil/curtain (Exodus 27: 16-19).
- F. The Brazen Altar or Altar of burnt Offering (Exodus 27: 1-8).
- G. The Golden Candlestick (Exodus 25: 31-40).
- H. The outer court (Exodus 27: 9-15).
- I. The Holy Place (Exodus 26: 1-36).
- J. The Most Holy Place (Exodus 26: 1-36).

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE COLOURS (As usually accepted)

GOLD -	The Divine Glory
RED -	Sacrifice
BLUE -	The Heavenly
PURPLE -	Royalty & Priesthood

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MATERIALS

SILVER -	Redemption
BRASS -	Sin judged
WHITE LINEN -	Righteousness
ACACIA WOOD -	Holy manhood
OIL -	The Holy Spirit

A. THE PATTERN OF THE TABERNACLE

1. Given in detail - Exodus Chapters 25-31.
2. Carried out in detail - Exodus Chapters 35-40.

(N.B. Exodus 25: 9; 25: 40; 39: 43 and Hebrews 8: 5)

The AUTHORITY for using the Tabernacle for SPIRITUAL lessons: Hebrews 8:5; 9: 8; 11: 23-26; 10:19-22.

B. THE PURPOSE OF THE TABERNACLE

1. It represented God's PRESENCE (Exodus 25: 8).
2. It was GOD'S MEETING PLACE with His people (Exodus 25: 22).

C. THE POSITION OF THE TABERNACLE

1. In the CENTRE of the Camp.
2. Each tribe had its allotted place around it (Numbers chapters 2 & 3).

D. THE PLAN OF THE TABERNACLE

1. The Outer Enclosure - 100 cubits x 50 cubits (50 x 25 metres) Exodus 27: 9-19.
2. The Tabernacle proper - 30 cubits x 10 cubits (15 x 5 metres) divided into: -
 - a. The HOLY PLACE – 20 cubits x 10 cubits (10 x 5 metres) Exodus chapter 26.
 - b. THE HOLY OF HOLIES – 10 cubits square (5 x 5 metres) Exodus chapter 26.

N.B. Approx. measurements

E. THE PRIESTLY SERVICE OF THE TABERNACLE

1. The Courtyard work - dismantling, carting and carrying and re-erecting - THE TRIBE OF LEVI.
2. The HOLY PLACE - the priests (sons of Aaron/Tribe of Levi).
3. The HOLY OF HOLIES - the high priest (Aaron/Tribe of Levi).

F. THE PROGRESSIVE TEACHING OF THE TABERNACLE

1. It all speaks to the believer of the LORD JESUS CHRIST.
2. Details are given in the Bible as from God outwards.
3. We enter in SPIRITUALLY in the opposite direction.

PART 2 - THE OUTER COURT

Exodus 27: 9-15, 38: 9-17

Bounded by A FENCE OF CURTAINS (see key – Part 1 – THE PLAN – H)

A. THE CURTAINS

1. Fine twined linen (Exodus 27: 9 and Revelation 19:8).
2. It formed a barrier (God demands righteousness).
3. Too high to see over (John 3: 3,5).

All are excluded (Luke 10: 25,28 and Romans 3: 19-20).

CHRIST IS OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS (Romans 10: 3,4).

B. THE POSTS (To support the curtains)

1. Made of shittim wood (Acacia - margin) (see key – Part 1 = Earthly – Holy Manhood).
2. Set in Brass Sockets (Exodus 27: 10). (see key – Part 1 = Sin judged).
3. Capped with Silver (see key – Part 1 = Redemption).

Christ condemns all unrighteousness and upholds the righteousness of God.

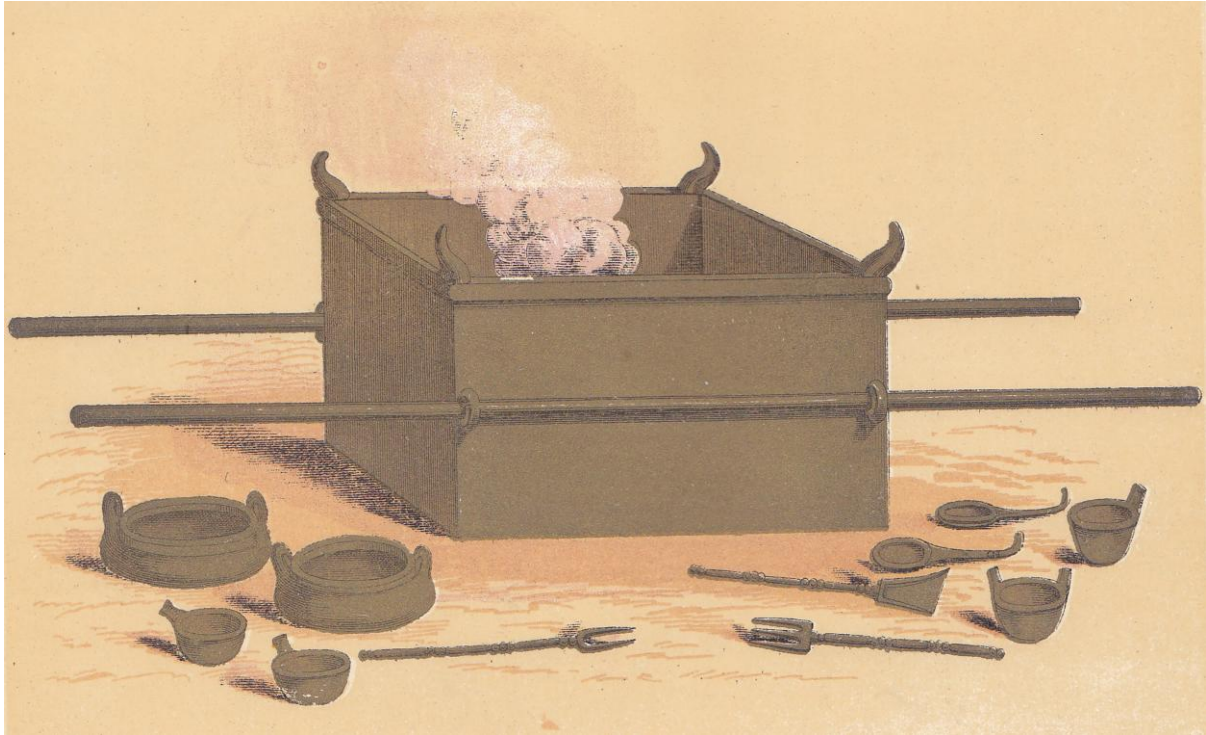
C. THE WAY IN

East end only - Exodus 27: 16. See PART 1 – THE PLAN = **E**.

1. The Door - A veil or curtain, suspended on four posts, made of fine linen, coloured red, purple and blue.
2. **a.** Easily seen. **b.** Open to all. **c.** Only way in.
3. CHRIST SAID – 'I am the door' - John 10: 9.
4. We may enter in – John 14: 6.

PART 3 - THE BRASEN ALTAR

Exodus 27: 1-8, 38: 1-7 (see PART 1 – THE PLAN – F)



A. THE POSITION

- i. In the outer court. -East end.
- ii. The first thing a person met (by the gate -veil).

B. THE PURPOSE

- i. Simply for the offering of sacrifices.
- ii. The only place in the whole tabernacle where sacrifice was made or allowed.

C. THE DETAILS – 5 cubits square x 3 cubits (*approx.* 2½ metres x 1½ metres)

- i. A hollow square of shittim wood boards (acacia - margin) (overlaid with brass – Exodus 27: 8).
- ii. A ledge round (Exodus 27: 5-6 - R.V.).
- iii. Four horns (shittim wood, overlaid with brass – Exodus 27: 2).

D. THE INSTRUMENTS

- i. Pans, shovels, basins, flesh hooks etc. (all of Brass – Exodus 27: 3).
- ii. Two staves for carrying (shittim wood, overlaid with Brass – Exodus 27: 6).
Note: The whole altar and its accessories showed nothing but Brass.

E. THE HORNS

- i. On all four corners (Exodus 27: 2, 38: 2).
- ii. Symbolic of power (Deuteronomy 33: 17; 1 Kings 22: 11; Jeremiah 48: 25).
Note also - 1 Kings 1: 50,51; 1 Kings 2: 28; Amos 3: 14.

F. THE MEANING (Brasen Altar represents the cross of Calvary)

- i. Open to the sinner.
- ii. Sacrifice essential in approaching God (Hebrews 9: 22; 10: 4,12).
- iii. Shows divine judgment on sin (2 Corinthians 5: 21).
- iv. Fire never went out (Leviticus 6: 13).

G. THE SACRIFICE

- i. Various animals for various cases (Leviticus chapters 1-6).
- ii. Five main offerings: -
 - (a) Three sweet savour offerings (Leviticus chapters 1-3).
 - (b) Two non-sweet savour offerings (Leviticus chapters 4-5).

"WITHOUT THE SHEDDING OF BLOOD IS NO REMISSION" HEBREWS 9: 22

PART 4 - THE LAVER

Exodus 30: 18-21, 38: 8 (see PART 1 – THE PLAN – D)



A. THE POSITION

- i. In the outer court.
- ii. Between the Brasen altar and the tabernacle proper (Exodus 30: 18).

B. THE MATERIALS

- i. All brass (From the women's mirrors – Exodus 38: 8; James 1: 23).
- ii. No size or shape given.
- iii. Held water.

C. THE PURPOSE

- i. For washing hands and feet (Exodus 30: 21).
- ii. Only for the priests (Exodus 30: 19). Note - not for all the Levites.
- iii. Preparation for service and worship.
- iv. Penalty for not using it was death (Exodus 30: 20).

D. THE SIGNIFICANCE

- i. Used before coming to the Brasen altar (outward service).
- ii. Used before going into the tabernacle (inward worship).
- iii. Brasen altar showed sin dealt with as by a judge.
- iv. Laver shows offences dealt with as by a father.

E. THE MEANING

- i. All believers are priests (1 Peter 2: 5, 9; Revelation 1: 6; 5: 10).
- ii. Constant need of washing - the Water of the Word (Ephesians 5:26; John 15:3).
- iii. We are cleansed from the guilt of sin at the Brasen altar.

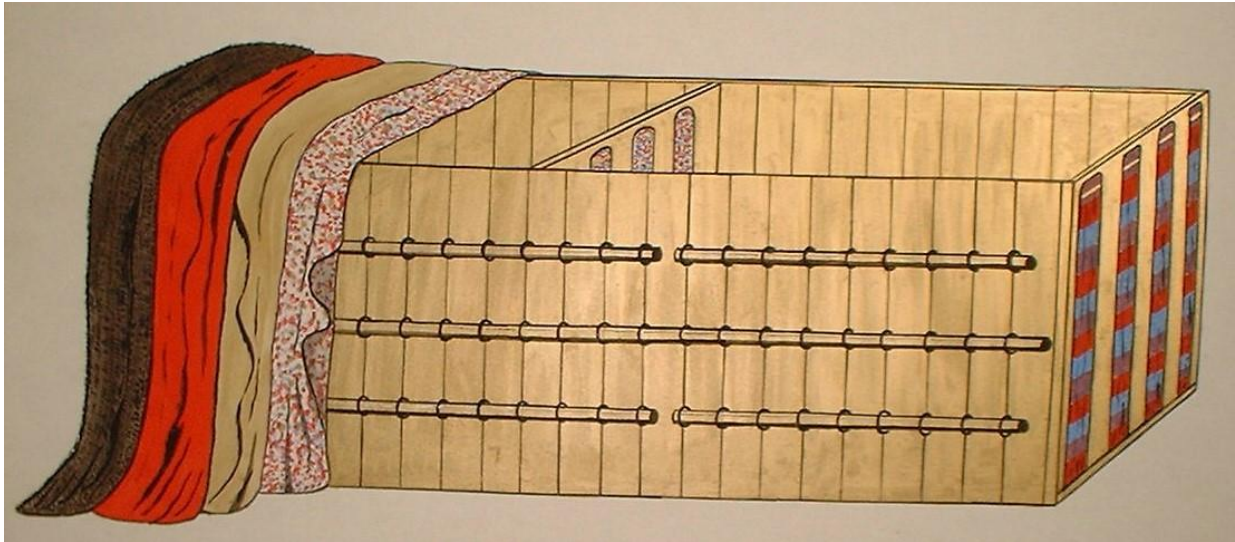
iv. We are cleansed from the defilement of sin daily at the laver (John 13: 10).

Note: Psalm 24: 3-5 (Apply it re worship and service)
Psalm 119:9 (The need for daily Bible reading)

PART 5 - THE TABERNACLE STRUCTURE

Exodus 26: 1-30; 36: 8-38 (see PART 1 – THE PLAN – I, J)

Note: in our Authorised Version there is no consistent translation of the words for 'tent' and 'tabernacle'.



A. GENERAL DESCRIPTION

- a. Overall size: 30 cubits x 10 cubits x 10 cubits (15 x 5 x 5 metres – approx.) (Exodus 36: 21-27).
- b. Of hollow rectangular shape, made of coupled boards.
- c. Covered with four curtains.
- d. Divided into two compartments (see PART 1 – THE PLAN – I, J).

B. THE BOARDS (Exodus 26:15-29; 36: 20-34).

- a. Each 10 cubits x 1½ cubits (5 metres high by ¾ metre wide) - no thickness given.
- b. Shittim wood (acacia - margin) covered with gold (see PART 1 – THE PLAN) (Exodus 26: 15).
- c. Two tenons at the base of each to fit into sockets (Exodus 26: 17,19).
- d. Bars along the sides, slotting into rings of gold (Exodus 26: 29).

C. THE SOCKETS (Exodus 26: 19-25; 38: 26).

- a. Made of silver = redemption money (Exodus 38: 25-27).
- b. 100 in number – each of 1 talent = approx. 45 kilos (Exodus 38: 27).
- c. Note -sockets to the five pillars at the entrance were of brass.

D. THE COVERINGS

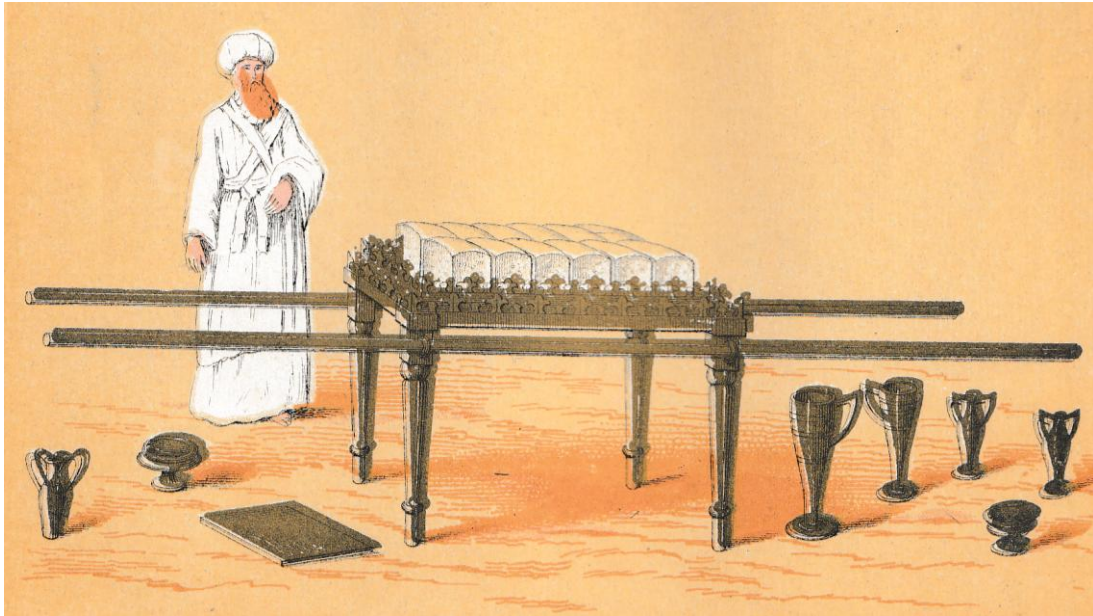
- a. The order in Exodus 26 is from God outwards (See PART 1 – THE PLAN – f. 2. – ‘The Progressive Teaching of the Tabernacle’).
- b. →
 - i. Badger skins (or seal skins?) - only things visible outside (Isaiah 53: 2,3) (Exodus 26: 14).
 - ii. Ram skins dyed red = substitution (Exodus 26: 14; Hebrews 9: 22).
 - iii. Goats’ hair - covers the tabernacle proper (Exodus 26: 7).
 - iv. Linen (Exodus 26: 1-6). This is the tabernacle proper.
Coloured red, blue and purple, with cherubim, formed the ceiling inside.
Loops of blue and hooks of gold (Exodus 26: 4,6).
Visible only within (1 Corinthians 2: 10,14).

E. THE VAILS

- a. **The outer vail** (Exodus 26: 36-37) –
Blue, red and purple; sockets of brass.
5 pillars of shittim wood (acacia - margin) overlaid with gold.
- b. **The inner vail** (Exodus 26: 31-33)
Blue, red and purple, plus the cherubim.
4 pillars of shittim wood, overlaid with gold.
Sockets of silver.

PART 6 - THE TABLE OF SHEWBREAD

Exodus 25:23-30; 37: 10-16 see PART 1 – THE PLAN – C)



A. THE DETAILS

- Made of shittim wood (acacia - margin), overlaid with gold (Exodus 25: 23,24).
- The size was 1 metre x ½ metre x ¾ metre – *approx.* (2 cubits x 1 cubit x 1½ cubit).
- Ornamented with a crowning piece and a border of some kind.
- Four golden rings to take the two carrying staves; the staves were of shittim wood (acacia - margin), overlaid with gold (Exodus 25: 26-27).
- Detailed instructions given for packing (Numbers 4: 7,8). It was to be **carried** by the Kohathites (Numbers 4: 15).

B. THE VESSELS

- Dishes, bowls, spoons, covers, jugs.
- All these were of gold (No more brass - sin judged is not to be reflected upon continually).

C. THE POSITION AND PURPOSE

- In the holy place (Accessible only to the priests).
- On the north side, before reaching the inner veil (Exodus 40: 22).
- The table was merely to hold the shewbread and it is to this bread that we must look for the significance of the table.

D. THE SHEWBREAD (Leviticus 24: 5-9) – Literally - bread of the presence.

- Consisted of twelve loaves or cakes.
- Made of fine flour - no leaven - baked with fire - verse 7.

- c. Arranged in two rows of six (A.V.) but more likely in two piles of six Leviticus 24: 6.
- d. Frankincense was put on each pile – Leviticus 24: 7 (This was not incense although it formed one of the ingredients of incense (Exodus chapter 30 verse 34).
- e. Bread was changed each Sabbath day – Leviticus 24: 8. That which was taken away was eaten by Aaron and his sons – Leviticus 24: 9.

THE TEACHING

- a. John 6: 35 gives us the key. Jesus is the bread of life to the believer priest.
- b. We need to appropriate Him as the sinless one (lack of leaven), and as the positively righteous one (fine flour).
- c. We are to feed upon Him for the maintenance of spiritual life (This can only be done in the holy place).

Note: John 6:33, 35,48

PART 7: THE GOLDEN CANDLESTICK

Exodus 25: 31-40; 37: 17-24 (see PART 1 – THE PLAN – G)



A. THE DETAILS

- a. No size given.
- b. Entirely of beaten gold (Exodus 25:36 - cf. the laver - brass).
- c. Made of one talent of gold (Exodus 25: 39) = approx. 45 kilos (current value not known).
- d. Consisted of the main shaft, with six branches in pairs, making a total of seven lamps (Exodus 25: 37).
- e. Various ornamental work on each branch (Exodus 25: 33-36).

B. THE INSTRUMENTS

- a. Snuffers, tongs and vessels (Exodus 25:38).
- b. All of gold.

C. THE POSITION

In the holy place, on the south side, opposite the table of shewbread (Exodus 40: 24).

D. THE FUEL

- a. The purest olive oil (Beaten olives).

- b. Continual supply required (Exodus 27: 20,21; Leviticus 24: 1-4).
- c. Trimmed and lit by the high priest (Aaron) (Exodus 30: 7,8).

E. THE PURPOSE

To give light in the holy place (Exodus 25: 37).

F. THE MEANING

- a. All gold = wholly divine. Attended to only by the high Priest.
- b. It was beaten into shape (Isaiah 53: 10; Hebrews 2: 10). Note: The last blow made it perfect.
- c. Oil = Holy Spirit. Result of crushing olives.
- d. The Glory of God is revealed in the Holy Place by the Holy Spirit through Christ.
- e. Christ is the Light of the World (John 9: 5).

PART 8: THE GOLDEN ALTAR

Exodus 30: 1-10; 37: 25-28 (see PART 1 – THE PLAN – B)



A. THE DESCRIPTION (Exodus 30: 2,3)

- a. Made of shittim wood (acacia - margin), overlaid with gold.
- b. Dimensions – Approx. 1 cubit square by 2 cubits high (Approx. ½ metre square, by 1 metre high).
- c. Decorated with a golden crown. Fitted with golden rings, into which fitted two staves for carrying (shittim wood, covered with gold).
- d. Also referred to as the altar of incense.
- e. A golden censer was used in conjunction with it.

B. THE POSITION

In the holy place, near the vail that led to the Holy of Holies (Exodus 30: 6).

C. THE PURPOSE

For the burning of incense – NOT for sacrifice (see PART 3).

D. THE INCENSE

- a. To be burned continually (Exodus 30: 7-9).
- b. To be made specially for God (Exodus 30: 34-38).
- c. It was a perfume, only used in worship.
- d. It was only to be burnt by the priests (Numbers 16: 39-40; 2 Chronicle 26:16-18).
- e. No other incense was to be offered to God (Exodus 30: 9).

E. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE INCENSE

- a. It signified prayer in worship, and worship in prayer (Psalm 141: 2).
- b. Used in approaching the mercy seat (Leviticus 16: 12).

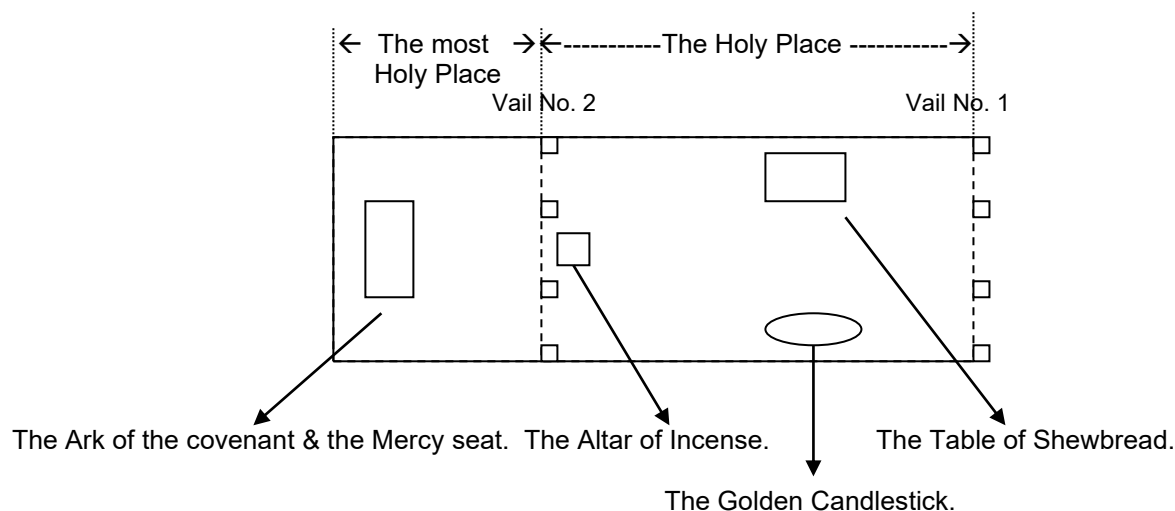
F. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE GOLDEN ALTAR

- a. Linked with the brasen altar (Leviticus 4: 7).
- b. Linked with the daily burnt offerings (Exodus 29: 39,42; 30:7-8).
- c. Linked with the golden candlestick (Exodus 30: 7,8).
- d. Sacrifice ascending without -prayer ascending within.
- e. The only basis of prayer is the atonement. The atonement is made effective by prayer.

He ever lives to make intercession for us – Hebrews 7: 25

PART 9: THE MOST HOLY PLACE

Exodus 26: 31-35; 36: 35-36 (see also PART 1 – THE PLAN – J)



A. THE NAMES

- The most Holy Place (Exodus 26: 33).
- The Holiest of All (Hebrews 9: 8; 10: 19).
- The Holy of Holies (Greek word – Hebrews 9: 3).
- Sometimes referred to as the Holy Place (Leviticus 16: 2).

B. THE CONTENTS (see also PART 10)

- The ark of the covenant.
- The mercy seat.
- The cherubim over the mercy seat.

C. THE ENTRANCE

- Through the vail (No.2. in above plan -see Exodus 26: 33).
- The vail was made of fine linen -blue, scarlet and purple (see also PART 1).
- Embroidered with cherubim (different from veil No.1).
- Suspended on golden hooks (Exodus 26: 32).
- Four pillars of shittim (acacia - margin) wood, overlaid with gold (Exodus 26: 32).
- Pillars stood in silver sockets (Exodus 26: 32. See also PART 1).
- The vail acted as a barrier and as a way of access.

D. THE CONDITIONS OF ENTRY

- On one day only (Leviticus 16 and Hebrews 9: 7).
- By one man only (Hebrews 9: 7).
- With one requirement - the blood of the sin offering (Leviticus 16: 3,14; Hebrews 9: 7).
- For one reason (Hebrews 9: 12).

E. THE APPLICATION TO THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

- The one day (Matthew 27: 51; Hebrews 9: 12).

- b. The one Man (Hebrews 10: 12).
- c. The one condition (Hebrews 9: 12).

F. THE RESULT FOR THE BELIEVER-PRIEST

- a. The vail has been rent (Matthew 27: 51; Hebrews 10: 20; Romans 5: 2).
- b. We may enter into the holiest of all (Hebrews 10: 19).
- c. We do so cleansed (Brasen altar) and washed. (Laver – Hebrews 10: 22).
- d. Christ entered to complete Salvation, by intercession etc.
- e. We enter to worship as well as to intercede (Hebrews 4: 16).

PART 10: THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

Exodus 25: 10-16; 37: 1-8 (see also PART 1 – THE PLAN – **A**)



A. THE STRUCTURE

- a. Shittim wood (acacia – margin), overlaid with gold, inside and out (Exodus 25: 11).
- b. $2\frac{1}{2}$ cubits x $1\frac{1}{2}$ cubits x $1\frac{1}{2}$ cubits ($1\frac{1}{4}$ metres x $\frac{3}{4}$ metre x $\frac{3}{4}$ metre – *approx.*).
- c. A crown of gold. Four golden rings.
- d. Two staves of shittim wood (acacia – margin), overlaid with gold (N.B. Exodus 25: 15).

B. THE POSITION

In the Holy of Holies -surmounted by the Mercy Seat and cherubim.

C. THE PURPOSE

- a. The preservation of the contents (cf. Moses – hidden in an ark of bulrushes, and Noah – 8 persons preserved in the ark).
- b. As a base of the mercy seat. Basis of worship.
- c. Essentially the Ark of the Covenant – between God and His people.

D. THE CONTENTS (Hebrews 9: 4)

- a. The tables of the law/covenant (Exodus 32: 15,19; 34: 28,29).
- b. = A reminder of God's holiness – God's Law in us (Psalm 40: 8 - seen in Christ).
- c. Pot of manna (Exodus 16: 32,34). Now incorruptible – seen in Christ.
- d. = A reminder of God's faithfulness in supplying Israel's need (John 6: 32-36 - seen in Christ).
- e. Aaron's rod that budded (Numbers 16: 5; 17: 2,5).
- f. = A reminder of God's seal on his chosen leaders.
- g. The resurrection seals Christ as God's choice - our great High Priest (Hebrews 7: 28).

E. THE GUARANTEE.

Our acceptance in worship -the basis is Christ and the New Covenant that is ours in him (Luke 22: 20).

PART 11: THE MERCY SEAT

Exodus 25: 17-22; 37: 6-9 (see also PART 1 – THE PLAN – A)



A. THE DESCRIPTION

- a. Made of pure gold (Exodus 25: 17).
- b. $2\frac{1}{2}$ cubits x $1\frac{1}{2}$ cubits x ? ($1\frac{1}{4}$ metres $\frac{3}{4}$ metre - no height given).
- c. Surmounted by two cherubim of pure beaten gold (verse 18). One each end facing inwards, with wings over the mercy seat (verse 20).

B. THE POSITION

- a. The mercy seat stood upon the ark of the covenant, of which it formed the lid (Exodus 25: 21).
- b. It was therefore in the Holy of Holies (see PART 9).

C. ITS USE

- a. Once a year on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16: 14, 30).
- b. Blood of the sin offering sprinkled upon it (Leviticus 16: 14). Link with the Brazen altar – PART 3.
- c. As a lid or covering for the ark of the covenant (Hebrew word = 'kaporet').

D. ITS MEANING

- a. Sin is covered, in the O.T., on the ground of an offering made and the blood presented (Hebrews 9: 12, 28; 10: 4).
- b. This in turn is based on the covenant (agreement) God has made (PART 10).

E. THE NEW TESTAMENT COUNTERPART

- a. The N.T. knows nothing of atonement in the O.T. sense. Sin is now not covered but put away.
- b. The Mercy-Seat (Hebrews 9: 5) is known as the propitiatory in the N.T. i.e. the place of receiving favour, forgiveness.
- c. The right word in the N.T. is reconciliation = man's approach on God's terms (i.e. a dealing with sin first).
- d. This is made possible by the act of propitiation (Christ turned away God's anger from the sinner by taking it Himself - 1 John 2: 2, Hebrews 8: 1, 10: 12-15).
- e. The Mercy seat = the throne of grace (Hebrews 4: 16). There, God communes with us (Exodus 25: 22).

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information, or to get in touch, please use the contact form on

www.oneagleswings.me.uk