

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!

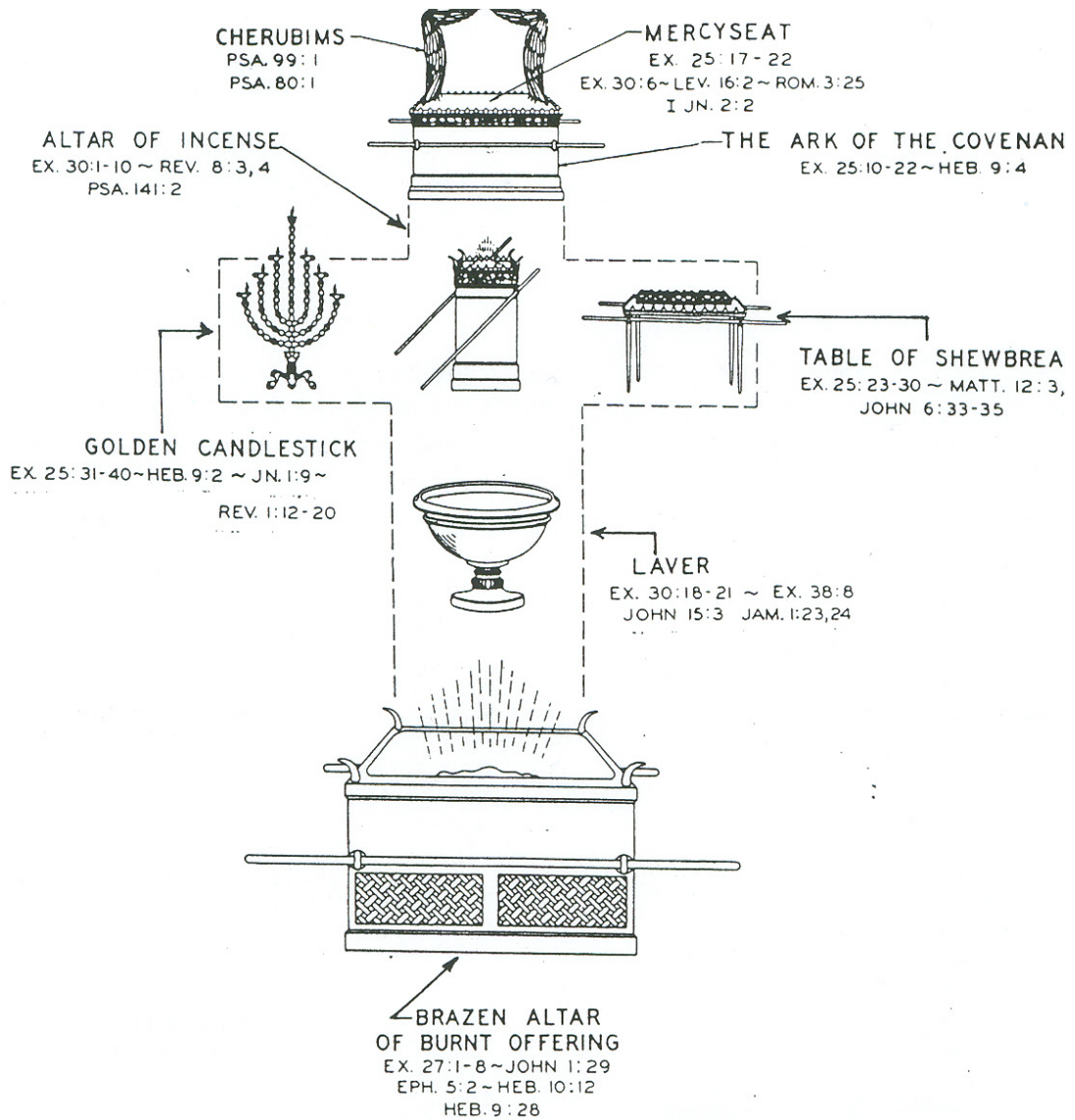
The Tabernacle, and its furnishings, speaks of one thing, namely, the salvation provided by Jesus Christ and the work of Christ performed for us upon the cross of Calvary. Almighty God designed every detail – every part had a prophetic, redemptive, and typical significance. No portion of Scripture is 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).

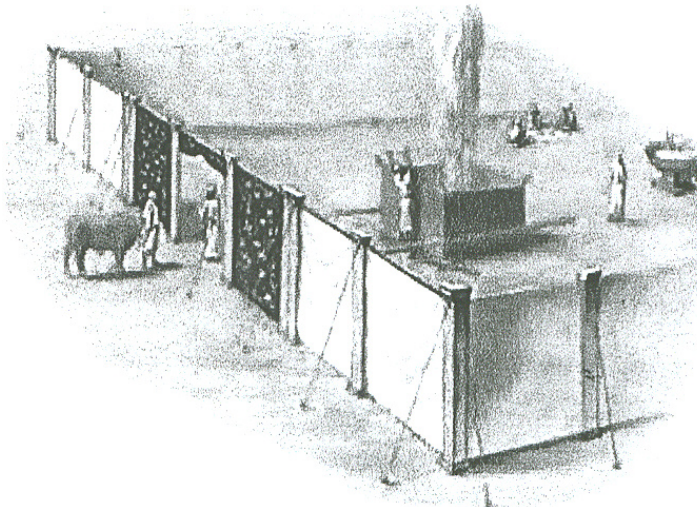
The blueprint, the pattern, the plan, the design and all of its specifications were minutely made in Heaven, and were committed unto Moses on Mount Sinai for the children of Israel shortly after their deliverance from Egypt.

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)

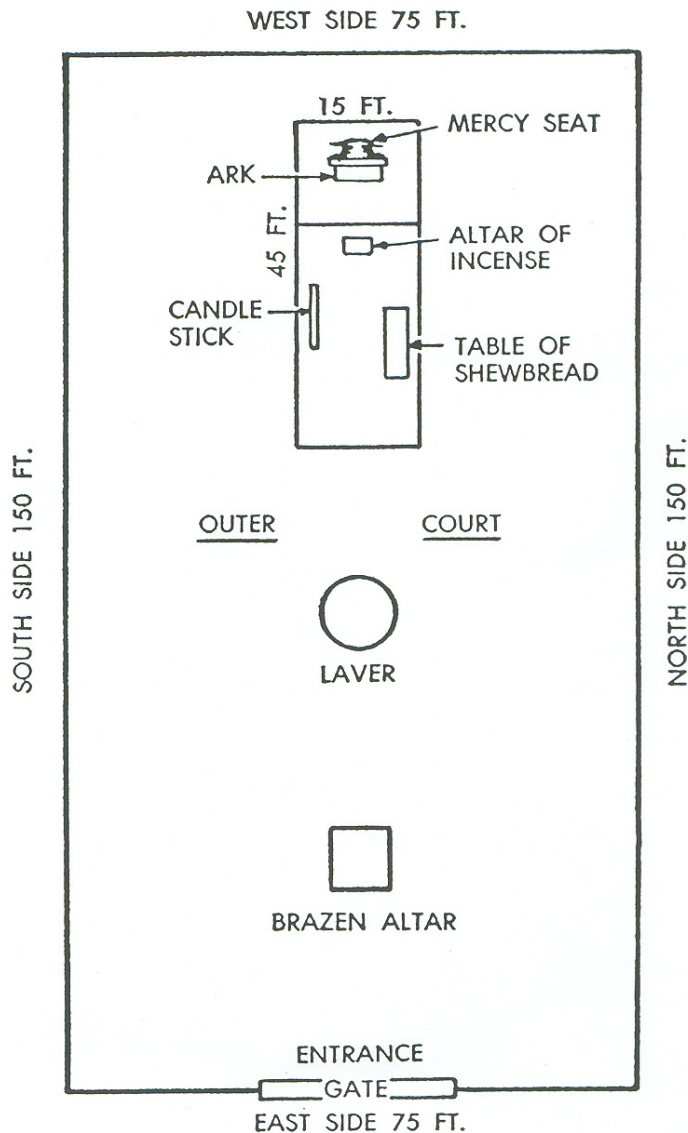
There was only one gate, speaking of the only way of access unto God – and so it is today – only ONE way – and that is through Jesus Christ, God’s Son (John 14:6 and Acts 4:12)

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 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 these 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 HEIGHT 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.

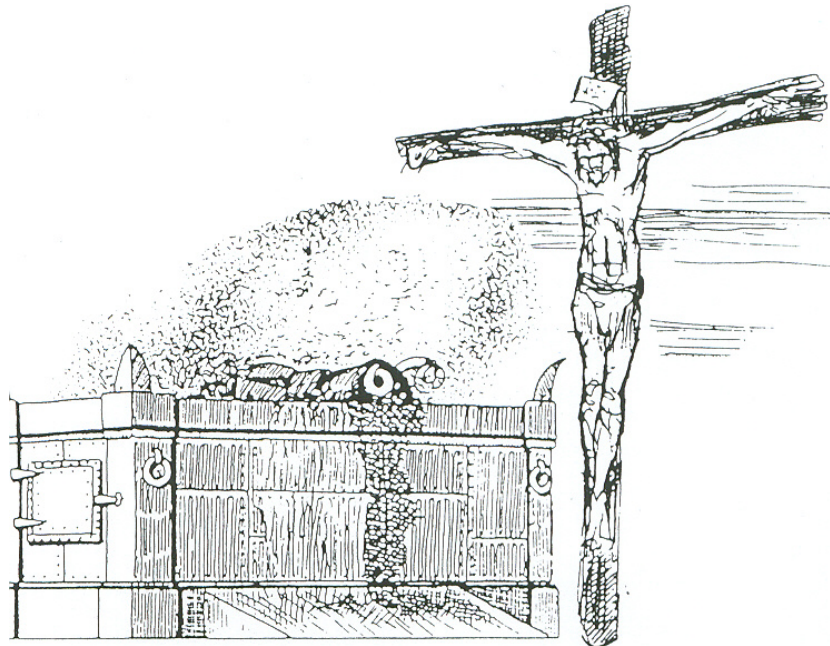
THE HOOKS WERE OF SILVER and were symbolic of Christ's atonement. The pillars were ornamented with silver. Silver was a part of the "redemption" money given by the children of Israel (Exodus 30:11-16 & 38:25-29). Before an Israelite could be a soldier for God, he had to present unto the Lord "a ransom 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-Bear, 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



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.

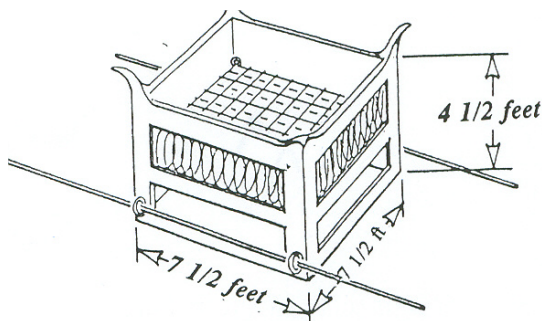
This whole idea of slaughter, blood, and sacrifice seems morbid, even gruesome, to our modern way of thinking, mainly because it seems natural to our culture to want a religion that doesn't demand a sacrifice. But the penalty for sin is awesome – requiring the shedding of blood! However, sacrifice has 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 Alter 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 continues 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).

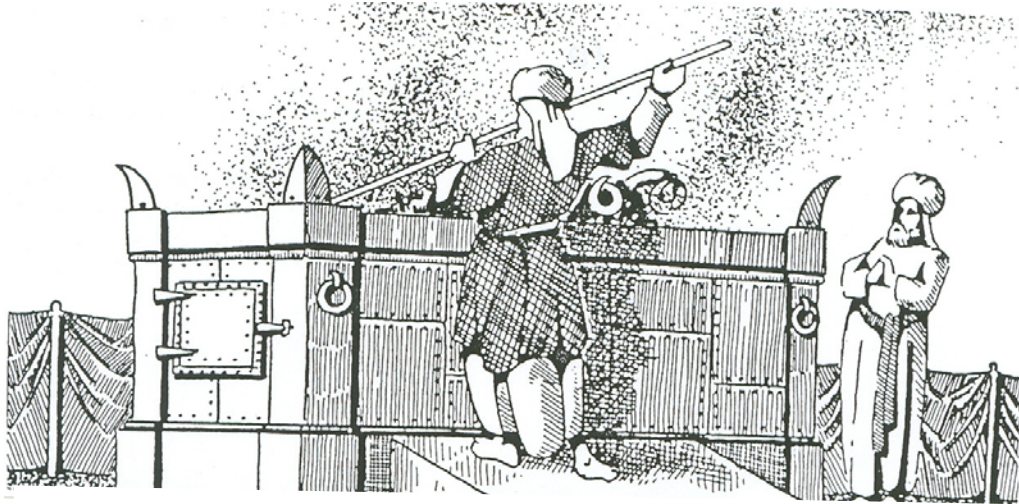
Another interesting fact concerning the Brazen Altar – is the fact the "light" for the Golden Candlestick and the "fire" for the Altar of Incense, was taken from this Brazen Altar, thus showing, in type, that, before one can know Christ as the Light of the world – and the Bread of Life – he must, first, 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 firs 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, let's 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 Altar to the 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.*”