

The Tabernacle

Part 3 – The Courtyard

- As a person entered the tabernacle by the gate the first object encountered was the Altar of Sacrifice.
- The bronze laver was seen next.
- Then one would have seen the tabernacle proper containing the Holy Place and ultimately the Holy of Holies.

The Courtyard



Bronze Altar – Lift Up

- Altar literally means to “lift up”. The altar as a place for lifting up signifies Christ.
- **John 8:28** Jesus says “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am the one I claim to be...”
- **Numbers 21:8-9** The Lord said to Moses, “Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live.” So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, he lived.”

Exodus 27:1-8

- “Build an altar of acacia wood, three cubits high; it is to be square, five cubits long and five cubits wide.”
- “Make a horn at each of the four corners, so that the horns and the altar are of one piece, and overlay the altar with bronze.”
- “Make the altar hollow, out of boards. It is to be made just as you were shown on the mountain.”

The Bronze Altar of Sacrifice



Solomon's Pillars are in the background

The Materials of the Altar

- The framework was made of acacia wood.
 - Disease resistant, durable and incorruptible.
- The entire altar of acacia wood was overlaid with bronze.
 - Bronze symbolizes sacrifice and death.
- In Stephen F. Olford's book "Camping with God" he writes,
 - "How wonderfully this combination (acacia wood & bronze) speaks of the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, who endured the fires of Calvary without being consumed to eternal death but rather resurrected to eternal life."

- At the Altar of Sacrifice the blood and flesh of an animal was offered as a substitute for the sins of Israel.
 - **Hebrews 9:26-28** “But now he (Jesus) has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.”
- The altar stood between the gate and the presence of God.
 - Since the altar is a shadow of Christ we can understand in the imagery of the tabernacle that no one can approach the dwelling place of God except by way of the a blood sacrifice.
 - The ultimate sacrifice is Jesus on the cross.

The Requirement of Blood

- **Leviticus 17:11** “I have given it (blood) to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one’s life.”
- **Hebrews 9:22** “In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.”
- **1 Peter 1:18-20** “For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.”

Shadows of Christ and the Cross

- Man built the altar.
- Man built the cross.
- Man placed the sacrifice on the altar according to God's plan.
- Man nailed Christ to the cross according to God's plan.
- Man followed God's plan for the altar.
- Jesus followed God's plan to the cross.
- The altar was a place of sacrifice for the atonement of sin.
- The cross is the ultimate place of sacrifice for the atonement of sin.

The Altar of Sacrifice & The Lord's Supper



- **1 Corinthians 11:24-27** “And when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.”
- “In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.”
- “For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.”
- “Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord.”

- In scripture a horn is a symbol of a king and of power.
- The altar had four horns. One in each direction symbolizing atonement sufficient for the whole earth.
- **Ephesians 1:7-10**
“ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins ... to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.”

The Four Horns of the Altar



- The horns of the altar were also places of salvation.

- **1 Kings 1:50**

- “But Adonijah, in fear of Solomon, went and took hold of the horns of the altar.”
- “Because he had sought to be king Adonijah was seeking safety and salvation when he took hold of the horns of the altar when David named Solomon king.”
- **Luke 1:69-71** “He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David (as he said through his holy prophets of long ago), salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us.”

The Poles

- **Exodus 27:6-7** “Make poles of acacia wood for the altar and overlay them with bronze. The poles are to be inserted into the rings so they will be on two sides of the altar when it is carried.”
- The poles also remind us that the gospel is portable and is to be shared to the ends of the earth and to all people.
 - **Matthew 28:19** “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations.”

The second furnishing within the courtyard was the bronze laver (basin).

Exodus 38:8

“They made the bronze basin and its bronze stand from the mirrors of the women who served at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting.”

Bronze Laver



God's Instructions



■ Exodus 30:17-21

“Make a bronze basin...for washing. Place it between the Tent of Meeting and the altar, and put water in it.”

“Aaron and his sons are to wash their hands and feet with water from it. Whenever they enter the Tent of Meeting.”

“Also, when they approach the altar ...they shall wash their hands and feet so that they will not die.”

Materials & Purpose

- The priests were to wash both their hands and feet before going into the tabernacle and before going to the Altar of Sacrifice.
- Although the entire penalty for sin was satisfied at the altar (symbolic of the cross) it is at the laver that the defilement caused by sin is removed (made clean).
 - **John 13:6-8** He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, “Lord, are you going to wash my feet?” Jesus replied, “You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand.” “No,” said Peter, “you shall never wash my feet.”
 - Jesus answered, “Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.”

The Shadow of Jesus in the Laver

- **Ephesians 5:25-26** “...just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word.”
- **John 4:10** “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.”
- **John 1:1** “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”
- The ministry of the laver reminds us of baptism – “The Water and the Word.”

The Altar and Laver Compared to Christ

- We have seen that the altar is a shadow for the cross. We have also seen that the laver is a shadow of baptism.
- At the altar the sacrifices were continuously offered. At the laver the washings had to be performed each time the priest goes to the altar or the tabernacle.
- But, the sacrifice of Christ and baptism is once and forever.
 - **Ephesians 4:4-6** “There is one body and one Spirit— just as you were called to one hope when you were called— one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.” (also see Hebrews chapter 10)

- Surrounded by the white linen wall.
 - Righteousness
- Entry only by the single gate.
 - Jesus
- The first stop in the courtyard was the Altar of Sacrifice.
 - Blood, The Cross & Atonement
- The next stop was the Bronze Laver.
 - Water for cleansing the defiled (baptism)
- There must be a blood sacrifice & cleansing by water & word before one can approach the tabernacle (the presence of God).

Summary of the Courtyard

