

A Reflection of Jesus

Lesson 3 The Courtyard of the Tabernacle

God has always wanted to dwell among His people, and fellowship with them (Exodus 25:22).

The Tabernacle provided a way for the sinner to approach the Holy One. For 400 years—from the time of the Exodus until the time of King Solomon, when the Temple was built—God dwelt with His children.

Christians can see the strong parallels and deeply symbolic meanings of this place of worship to our High Priest, the Lamb of God. God is so magnificent! He truly is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and for that we are so thankful.

Let us look into the descriptions of the Tabernacle:

Fence of White Linen

Exodus 27:9–19

The outer courtyard of the Tabernacle was a fenced rectangle, 150 feet long and 75 feet wide (Exodus 27:9–19), enclosed by seven-foot high *white linen curtains*. The curtains were held in place by 60 pillars made of acacia wood and covered with bronze; They were spaced seven and a half feet apart. Each pillar was secured in a bronze socket with cords fastened at the top and tied to the ground with a bronze stake. The pillars were made more secure by a sil-

ver bar that connected them near the top. Each bronze pillar was capped with a silver capital.

The white linen represented *personal righteousness* (Revelation 19:8), which is required by God for man to approach Him.

Since there is no one who can measure up to the perfection of God, He provided a way for all to enter into His presence.

The way into the Tabernacle for ancient Israel was called the *gate*. It measured 20 cubits. Today that “Gate” is Jesus Christ.

One Gate

Exodus 27:16–17

The *gate* was a curtain made of blue, purple and scarlet. The curtain hung at the east end of the enclosed area. This gate was the only way in to the courtyard.

Correspondingly there is only one way to approach God today and that is through Jesus Christ (John 14:6). In John 10:9, Jesus tells us that HE is the gate.

The colors of the curtains symbolically tell us of Jesus: The color blue represents coming down from the heavens; the color purple is a royal color symbolizing Jesus as King of kings; and the color scarlet is the color of the blood sacrifice. Our Savior gave His blood for us. He was the perfect sacrifice.

The Brazen Altar

Exodus 27:1--8

At the eastern end of the courtyard, the *brazen altar* was placed. It was where burnt offerings were made. The altar was made of wood, taken from the acacia tree.

The acacia tree is a small desert tree. In Isaiah 53:2 the Messiah is described as a desert tree. In Numbers 21:8,9 and John 3:14, the bronze covering the altar is a type of judgment.

Jesus took the judgment for man's sins (John 12:30–33). Picture a perfect lamb upon the altar. Picture yourself placing your hands upon the head of the perfect lamb—transferring your sins upon an innocent creature.

This is what the Lamb of God did for EACH of us. This vivid image is sobering.

The Laver of Brass

Exodus 30:17-21; 38:8

The laver was a huge bronze basin with a bronze base. 38:8). When highly polished, bronze will reflect like a mirror. This special laver was made from the bronze mirrors that the women of Israel brought with them from Egypt (Exodus

Today, the standard of Christ is shown to us through the mirror of God's Word (James 1:22–25). With the help of God's Holy Spirit, we work daily to obey God and overcome sin. We are set apart for His service "with the washing of water by the Word" (Ephesians 5:26) As we do we begin to reflect a Christ-like image (2 Corinthians 3:18).

The priests were to wash their hands and

feet before entering the Tabernacle or to offer a sacrifice. If they did not do this they would die.

Only priests were allowed beyond the bronze altar to the laver. Now all believers are priests (1 Peter 2:9). Jesus is our faithful High Priest.

It will take all of eternity to thank the Father and His Son for this awesome salvation, don't you agree? ☐

Scripture for Today

"But those sacrifices are an annual *reminder* of sins, because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins"
(Hebrews 10:3,4)

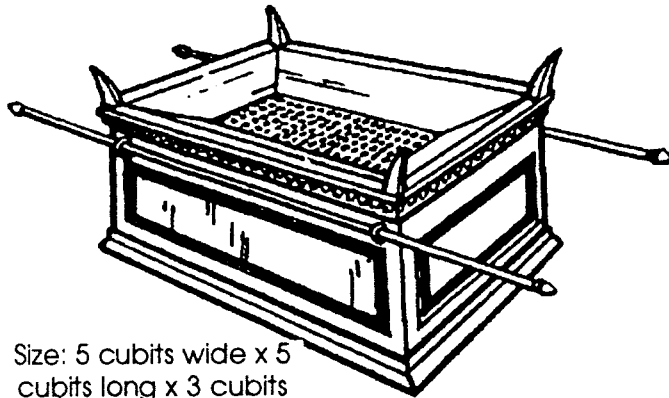
Choose Your Questions

For class discussion ask your students any of the following:

1. What surrounded the courtyard of the Tabernacle? *A fence of white linen.*
2. How many gates allowed the person access into the Tabernacle courtyard? *One.*
3. Who is our "Gate" today? *Jesus.*
4. *True or False:* The colors of the gate were blue, scarlet, and purple. *True.*
5. The Brazen Altar was made of acacia wood and overlaid with what metal? *Bronze.*
6. *True or False:* The sinner placed his hands on the head of the animal being sacrificed. *True.*
6. Who gave Himself to be a sacrifice for you, me, and the whole world? *Jesus.*
7. *True or False:* The high priest had to wash before and after a sacrifice. *True.*

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

The Brazen Altar



Size: 5 cubits wide x 5 cubits long x 3 cubits high (1 cubit=18 inches=46 cm)

The Laver of Brass



Size: no size indicated

The Altar

Only the finest animals—perfect, not sick, not deformed, not injured—were to be used for sacrifice. Sacrifices needed to be offered on a regular basis.

The person bringing the offering would put his hand on the head of the lamb while it was killed. This symbolically put the person's sins onto the animal, and the animal died in his place.

Christians are told to present our bodies as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1). God requires that He is first in our lives. He is to receive the best we can offer in time, energy, and worship.

The Laver

After making the sacrifice the priest washed himself at the brass laver. This washing purified the priest and prepared him to enter the Tabernacle. In Exodus 30:20, God says they must wash so that they do not die when they enter the Tabernacle.

The brazen laver was made from brass mirrors donated by the women of Israel. The Bible does not describe the laver completely, but perhaps it could be shined to have a shiny mirrored surface which would help the priest inspect himself to be sure he had washed thoroughly.