WHAT IS THE TABERNACLE?
Essentially it is a large portable tent and enclosure with furnishings intended to be and represent the dwelling place of God in the midst of His people. Its construction was originally dictated by God to Moses on Mt. Sinai, at the same time as the giving of the Law. The Israelites built the Tabernacle, and all the associated items, in the wilderness after their exit from Egypt, exactly as God told them. The materials used were those plundered from Egypt as they left. God’s glory (the Shekinah) filled the Holy of Holies after its construction. While in the wilderness, the entire assembly of Israelites camped around the Tabernacle structure and enclosure exactly as God indicated. The entire structure was disassembled and packed up and moved whenever the people moved. The people moved only when the Cloud or Pillar moved. Later, after David established the capital of Israel in Jerusalem, he wanted to build a permanent structure for God to dwell among His people. Eventually Solomon built the first permanent Temple. The Temple is just the permanent rendition of the Tabernacle.

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE TABERNACLE?
The Tabernacle was a physical representation of God’s Presence with His people. Beyond this, there are countless lessons in the construction, dimensions, materials and furnishings. These serve as types, as indicators or symbols of profound spiritual importance and point to the ultimate sacrifice of God, for His people. The purpose of this sacrifice is so we may have eternal fellowship with God, so He can dwell among us, as He intended. The lessons of the Tabernacle were for the people in the desert, as they became established in the Promised Land, and have no less meaning for us today. We will explore these amazing lessons a bit later.

WHY DO WE STUDY THE TABERNACLE, AND TEMPLE?
The Tabernacle and the Temple are God’s rich visual aids to help us learn about Him, learn about ourselves, and most importantly understand how we can fellowship with Him. Studying the Tabernacle helps us learn about the God we serve. The Tabernacle expresses the very character and nature of God, and reveals His heart desire. He wants to dwell with
man! The people of the Old Testament had the advantage of actually seeing the Tabernacle and the Temple and hopefully understanding its symbolic and spiritual meanings. We are able to see it through the Words of God, and very detailed descriptions. We also see it through spiritual eyes, through the understanding given by the Holy Spirit, in the fulfillment of the Messiah Jesus.

This structure is also a symbol of the history of the Jewish people. The condition of the Tabernacle or Temple was always an indicator of the condition of the Jews. Their history is the Temple's history.

WHAT IS THE HISTORY OF THE TABERNACLE?
To fully understand this amazing object lesson, the history of the tabernacle actually begins in the Garden of Eden.

IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN GOD'S DESIRE TO DWELL WITH HIS CREATION.

God walked with His creatures. He desired their fellowship. We were created for His pleasure, for fellowship with Him.

Genesis 2:8 The LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed.

Genesis 3:8 And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, ....

Revelation 4:11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created. (KJV)

BUT MAN BROKE THIS COMMUNION WITH GOD THROUGH DISOBEDIENCE.

Man was banned from the garden, but God did not abandon them. He could not, however, dwell with them because God is perfection and holiness. He cannot tolerate, or be in the presence of, sin. The cherubim God placed at the garden's entrance to keep man out will be seen again on the mercy seat of the Ark of the Covenant in the Tabernacle. The place where God dwelled in the Holy of Holies.

GOD STILL HAS A PLAN TO DWELL WITH HIS PEOPLE.

God knew in advance about man’s rebellion. He always had a plan, and has always faithfully executed that plan. God would make a provision that would still enable man to dwell with God. That plan is still in motion.

GOD CHOOSES A PEOPLE TO USE AS AN EXAMPLE TO THE WHOLE WORLD ABOUT HIS DESIRE FOR FELLOWSHIP WITH US.

The history of man from the garden to the flood is pretty dismal! I can only imagine how sad God was to see His creation stray so far from Him. After the fall, man got farther and farther away from any reconciliation with God. Reading the first few chapters of Genesis is very sad, because it shows the horribly degenerate nature of man once sin was introduced.

Chapters 1-2 The Creation
Chapter 3 Sin and Disobedience, the Fall
Chapter 4 The first murder
Chapter 5  The generations from Adam to Noah (and a surprising statement of God's Plan hidden in the names!)
Chapter 6  The depravity of man increases to a terrible, Intolerable state
Chapters 6-9  God's Judgment, the Flood
Chapter 10  The Nations scatter after the flood (table of Nations)
Chapter 11  Man's pride and rebellion, The Tower of Babel, more scattering
Chapter 12  God chooses to build a people called His Own, the call of Abraham, the Abrahamic Covenant, the Jewish people are born

The rest of Genesis is God's preparation to reveal His wonderful plan. From Abraham, Isaac and Jacob we see the 12 Tribes of Israel born. There is a move to Egypt during famine, and 430 years of exile out of the land, including slavery under Pharaohs. During this time God is setting His plan in motion. He reveals to us, the people of future generations who will read His Word, the grand scheme of things - His Master Plan.

GOD BRINGS HIS PEOPLE INTO THE WILDERNESS TO LEARN ABOUT HIM
The book of Exodus shows us the deliverance of the Jews from Egypt, and bondage to slavery. This rag tag group of approximately 3 million people is brought miraculously into a deserted region. God made a covenant with them at Mt. Sinai to be their God, and they to be His People. The only problem is they didn't have a clue what this meant. They had forgotten the covenants given to their ancestors (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob). They were as idolatrous and wicked as their slave masters, and proved it with the rebellious golden calf. But God had a plan, as always, and set about teaching them again about Himself. There was nothing out here in the wilderness except God Himself. What better place to learn. Very early in this sojourn in the desert God showed His Presence with them:

Exodus 13:21-22 And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.

GOD STILL WANTED TO DWELL AMONG HIS PEOPLE. HE TELLS THEM TO BUILD HIM A TENT.
After guiding the people to Mt. Sinai, He made a covenant agreement with them, gave them the Law, and plans to build Him a tent-home like theirs. After all of man's rebellion and sin, God still loved them enough to dwell amongst them. Obviously the idea of confining God to a tent is ludicrous, and everybody knew that. But it was symbolic of His Presence with them. No other people could make this claim. It was a visual aid for the people. God cannot be confined by a tent, but the tent reminds them of His Presence.

THIS WAS NOT AN ORDINARY TENT, HOWEVER.
In Exodus 25:8 God says to Moses, "Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them." The Hebrew words for tent, which are used interchangeably to indicate this dwelling place of God are MISKAN - a residence, dwelling, habitation tent. Idea of permanent residence, not temporary, continual abiding. OHEL - a very large and conspicuous tent, covering, dwelling, place, home (able to be seen in the distance) SKENE (Greek, NT) - tent, habitation, dwelling
But this was not an ordinary tent. God gave them specific instructions and they built it in strict accordance to those instructions. The tent was large with an even larger enclosure, made from specified materials (taken from the plunder of Egypt when they left, Exodus 12:36) and with specified furnishings and specified actions to be taken within this tent. There was a good reason for such precision. In Hebrews 8:5 we are told: "The work they do as priests is only a copy and a shadow of what is in heaven. This is why God warned Moses when he was ready to build the Holy Tent: "Be very careful to make everything by the plan I showed you on the mountain." This structure in the desert was only a pattern, a representation, of the true Tabernacle in heaven - the ultimate place of God's dwelling among His people.

"IF YOU BUILD IT, I WILL COME." GOD'S GLORY FILLED THE TABERNACLE.

The people did exactly as God had commanded, and God's glory filled the Holy of Holies. it was a visible sign of His Presence among the people. (Exodus 40:16-38). God had provided the plans, the materials, and the workforce. We will talk more about the specifics later. Right now we're interested in the history of this interesting dwelling place.

So God's dwelling place on earth, among His people, began as a tent in the wilderness. The date of the completion of this tabernacle is not certain, but thought to be somewhere around 1400 BC. Because of their disobedience in the wilderness, however, God caused them to wander there for 40 years before bringing an entirely new generation into the land promised to them. During this time the entire tabernacle structure was taken down, packed up and moved whenever the cloud or pillar signaled the move. When the cloud stopped, the people stopped, and the tabernacle was set up again. This monumental task was given to the Levites. The Levites who were descended from Aaron were the designated priests within the Tabernacle. The Levites camped all around the tabernacle, with the other tribes camped in prescribed locations around them. This encampment, which God commanded, has some wonderful surprises also, as we will see later.

GOD MOVED THE PEOPLE INTO THE LAND, AND THE TABERNACLE WENT ALSO

The tabernacle traveled wherever the people went, as they moved into the conquest phase. In general, the Ark of the Covenant and other items were not taken into battle, but at least once, as God commanded, it went before the people as they conquered Jericho. On other occasions, since the Tabernacle represented the Presence of God with His people, the people themselves opted to take the Ark into battle, with disastrous consequences. It was captured by the Philistines, who later very much regretted that capture.

AS THE PEOPLE BUILT PERMANENT HOUSES IN THE LAND, THEY WANTED GOD'S HOUSE TO BE PERMANENT AS WELL.

As the people conquered most of Canaan, they settled in and began building houses instead of tents. After the period of the judges, Israel began a monarchy with kings, beginning with Saul, then David, then Solomon. David wanted to build this permanent house for God's Presence, called the Temple. But David was told he could not do this, because he had too much blood on his hands. His son Solomon would eventually build the Temple, but God allowed David to begin preparations by collecting the materials needed. Even through this seemingly innocuous turn of events, God was showing His plan - namely to have a Son of
David build His Temple, His dwelling place. There is great spiritual significance here. Solomon was the natural born son of David. He built the physical Temple. Jesus is the spiritual Son of David, who built the Temple of God, the Body of Christ, today's dwelling place of the spirit of God.

David brought the Tabernacle, and all the furnishings, to Jerusalem, the city God had chosen as His own. There it remained until the Temple was built.

**SOLOMON BUILDS THE FIRST TEMPLE**

The Temple is the same as the Tabernacle, only it is a permanent building. The word Tabernacle means portable tent, the word for Temple is HEYKAL, which meant a large public building, like a palace. This was God's palace, His dwelling place among the people. The same dimensions and materials were used, only the horizontal dimensions were doubled. Instead of a linen fence and cloth coverings, they were stone and board. It took approximately 7½ years to build this dwelling place for God. Scripture tells us it was built 480 years after the Israelites left Egypt, around 1000-950 BC. It was a very grand place, and Solomon had a huge dedication ceremony. He acknowledged that this mere house of wood and stone could not contain God, but was merely a symbol of His Presence. (1 Kings 8:27-30, Acts 7:8-9)

**THE GLORY DAYS OF ISRAEL AND THE TEMPLE DON'T LAST LONG.**

The United Kingdom of Israel lasted only through Solomon's reign. His son, Rehoboam, caused a division in the Kingdom shortly after Solomon's death. The kingdom was divided into the 10 tribes of the North (northern Kingdom of Israel), and the 2 tribes in the South (southern Kingdom of Judah). A progression of evil kings in the north led to their destruction by Assyria around 722 BC. They went into captivity and did not return. There were many evil kings, and a few good ones, in the south, but they too were disobedient and strayed from God. This lead to them being conquered by Babylon and led into captivity for 70 years. Even before it’s destruction, the Temple was plundered. (1 Kings 14:25-26) We read how the king of Egypt (Shishak) attacked Jerusalem and plundered the Temple just 5 years into King Rehoboam's reign. The Temple was in very bad shape even then, just as Israel was.

**JOASH TRIES TO REBUILD THE TEMPLE AND RESTORE TREASURE AND WORSHIP**

Joash attempted to rebuild the damage done to the Temple, and restore the treasures there. He also attempted to restore Temple worship. But even he had problems. He didn't remove the "high places" where the people worshipped pagan gods. Eventually the Temple was in trouble again - again just like the people. Hazael the king of Aram attacked Jerusalem. Joash took all the treasures of the Temple and used them to pay off this attacking king. (2 Kings 12:17-18) Joash was later assassinated by his own officials. Even King Hezekiah stripped off the gold that covered the Temple doors and doorposts and gave it to the king of Assyria as a payoff.

**ARK OF THE COVENANT SEEMS TO DISAPPEAR**

We do not hear anything more about the Ark after the building of the Temple. We don't know where it went, or where it is today. There is much speculation of various options...
(Ethiopia, Mt. Nebo, beneath Jerusalem, etc.) but we won't discuss those theories at the moment. Perhaps the exact location of the Ark will be revealed in God's time. But perhaps it is lost forever. Only God knows. We are told of other Temple treasure, but not the Ark.

**TERRIBLE KING MANASSEH HASTENS THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE**

The son of Hezekiah was Manasseh, who was truly evil. God's anger burned against him, and all of Israel and Judah. Manasseh's reign did much to shorten the already threatened existence of the nation of Israel (then southern Kingdom of Judah). (2 Kings 21:13-16).

**JOSIAH TRIES TO REBUILD THE TEMPLE AND RESTORE WORSHIP**

Josiah was one of the few good kings of Judah. He was only 8 years old when he took the throne. He was determined to finish the work of rebuilding and repairing the Temple that Joash had begun. During the repairs, they actually unearthed the Book of the Covenant (probably the Torah, first 5 books of Moses) (2 Kings 22:10-11). This tells us something about the spiritual condition of Israel at this time. The books had been lost for years! They had forgotten about their God. Josiah was grieved because he realized how far the people had gotten away from God, and the Covenant they had made with Him. Josiah acted, he didn't just talk about it. He cleaned up the Temple, and the people. He restored the Temple, restored the covenant, the priests and sacrificial system, tore down the high places, and commanded the people to celebrate Passover. The whole story is told in 2 Kings 22 and 23. Read it! It's a beautiful testimony to a man who followed God like his predecessor, David. Josiah really cleaned things up, but unfortunately the people were too far gone. Manasseh's reign had pretty well clinched that. And God's wrath was already stirred against the people. The people responded initially to Josiah, but they didn't stay with God. (2 Kings 23:26-27, 2 Kings 23:3-4) Josiah was killed in a battle against Egypt, and the nation of Judah, and the Temple, were doomed by God's judgment.

**THE SOUTHERN KINGDOM OF JUDAH FALLS, THE TEMPLE IS DESTROYED**

Assyria (the northern Kingdom of Israel's enemy) was conquered and dominated by a new rising world power - Babylon. As the people of the Southern Kingdom of Judah continued their descent into wickedness, God moved in a king named Nebuchadnezzar. God used Nebuchadnezzar to bring judgment on the Jews. In 606 BC, after defeating Pharaoh Necco of Egypt in battle at Carchimesh, Nebuchadnezzar rolled into Jerusalem. He established it as part of his kingdom of Babylon, but he left a Jewish king there to rule. He took the first wave of captives back to Babylon at that time. The prophet Jeremiah pleaded with the people to obey Nebuchadnezzar, that he was God's arm of judgment. But they would not listen. Again Nebuchadnezzar came back to Jerusalem to settle the rebellion and leave another king in charge. He took more captives this time. Finally, as the people continued in their wickedness, Nebuchadnezzar had finally reached the end of his patience with the Jews. He marched into Jerusalem a third time in 586/587 BC. He destroyed the Temple on the 9th day of the month of Av (or Ab, known as Tisha b'Av, or the 9th of Av) and took the final group of captives back to Babylon. This date came to have great significance and is still observed by Jews today. More on this later. The Temple of Solomon, known as the First Temple, now lay in ruin. We are told this was a result of God's anger, and that he "thrust" the people from his presence. (You can read about this terrible day in 2 Kings 25: 1-21 and 2 Chronicles 36:18-21).
THE TEMPLE IS GONE, THE PEOPLE ARE GONE
What is left of the people of God are removed from their land and taken into 70 years of captivity in Babylon. No Temple meant they could not worship or offer sacrifices to God. This is where the concept of synagogues, local places of worship, teaching and assembly, was born. But the office and duties of the priests were no more, including sacrifices.

THE PEOPLE RETURN AND THE TEMPLE IS REBUILT (THE SECOND TEMPLE)
After the prescribed 70 years was over, God raised up a Persian King, wrote a personal letter to him 150 years before he was born (Isaiah 45!) and convinced him to not only let the people go, but finance their trip as well. Only a remnant of the Jews returned to Israel and Jerusalem. The remainder chose to stay in Persia (they had gotten comfortable there in 70 years) and their story is in the book of Esther. It took them awhile, but they finally managed to rebuild the Temple. This temple was much smaller and quite a bit less ornate than Solomon’s, but at least it was a Temple. They also got back the treasures from the Temple taken by Nebuchadnezzar (Ezra 6:5) This is referred to as Ezra’s Temple, or the Second Temple. It was complete about 515 BC.

HEROD ENHANCES THE SECOND TEMPLE
About 500 years later King Herod, the Jewish ruler appointed by Rome in this region, decided to "leave a legacy" by renovating the Temple. This was a massive enlargement and renovation project that had been in process for 47 years by the time of Jesus. It was the pride of Israel at that time. Even though they were ruled by Rome, they had their Temple. Jesus had plenty to say about this Temple. He used the building project as an object lesson regarding his resurrection. (Mark 13:1-2). But now the Messiah had come, He was the dwelling place of God in their midst. The Shekinah Glory dwelled in the Body of Jesus. And the Jews rejected this Temple of God. Therefore, what came to be known as Herod’s Temple had a very short future after Jesus returned to heaven.

THE SECOND TEMPLE IS DESTROYED
The Jews were not "quiet" under Roman rule. Even though this rule was harsh and absolute, the people chose rebellion. The continued uprising caused the Roman emperors to bring a complete end to Jewish rebellion. In the year 70 AD, Titus and the Roman army rolled into Jerusalem after a long siege during which many Jews died, they resorted to cannibalism, and the rest were eventually dispersed (scattered to the 4 corners of the earth) into slavery. In a so-called "accident" the Temple was completely destroyed and burned to the ground. Just as Jesus predicted, no stone was left upon another (the soldiers removed the stones to get to the gold that had melted down in the fire). Not so coincidentally, the day on the calendar of this destruction is the 9th day of the month of Av. Again, the second temple is destroyed on Tisha b’Av. Coincidence? Hardly. So impressive was this victory that the Arch of Titus was erected in Rome to give honor to Titus’ victory over the Jews. The stonework there shows the Temple treasures being carried off (including the Menorah, but not the Ark). This destruction and subsequent scattering was a fulfillment of prophecy from Deuteronomy 28. God did just as He said He would.

Shortly before the destruction of this Temple, the prophet Ezekiel (who had been taken in the second wave of captives to Babylon) was given a disturbing vision by God. He was
shown the abominations committed in the Temple by the Jews and ultimately the glory of God (the Skekinah) departing from the Temple (Ezekiel 8-11) and returning to heaven. God no longer dwelled in the midst of His people.

**NO PEOPLE, NO TEMPLE**

Later, in 132 AD, after yet another Jewish rebellion, the Romans came in and plowed the entire city of Jerusalem under. They got rid of the remaining Jews, and redrew the land on their maps with a different name - Palestinia (a direct slap in the face, since it is the Greek rendition of Philistia, one of Israel's biggest enemies). To the rest of the world the Jews did not exist anymore. Neither did their Temple. The timing of all of this is very interesting from a spiritual point of view. The Messiah had come - some knew this, some rejected this. He fulfilled all of the intended promises that the Temple signified - the priestly system, the access to God, the sacrifices, everything. Spiritually, in God's plan, there was no more need of the Temple. The ultimate sacrifice was given. There was no more need of the visual reminder of promises. The promises had been fulfilled. God allowed the temple to be destroyed and the people to be scattered, as He said He would, in light of their disobedience and hardened hearts.

**A NEW TEMPLE, NOT MADE OF STONE**

About 40 years before the Second Temple was destroyed, a new Temple was created. This Temple, however, was not built with the hands of men. On the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) after Jesus' resurrection, the Holy Spirit came to not just dwell WITH men, but to dwell IN believers. The apostle Paul tells us that WE are the Temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19). God still dwells in the midst of His people. A physical Temple is not needed. WE are the spiritual Temple of God today.

**THE PEOPLE RETURN....AND ANOTHER TEMPLE?**

Today God is fulfilling prophecies of restoration of the Jewish people. He has gathered those that were scattered. He has restored the nation of Israel (May 14, 1948) and restored Jerusalem to Jewish control (June 6, 1967). Most Bible scholars who take a literal interpretation of scripture and prophecy believe than another physical Temple will be constructed in Jerusalem in order to fulfill many of the end times prophecies regarding such a Temple. In the book of Daniel the final world ruler will abolish sacrifices, set himself up as God in the Temple, and cause the ultimate abomination that causes desolation. In order to do all this a Temple must exist. Today there are intense preparations for the coming "Third Temple" or what may be called the Tribulation Temple. Craftsmen have already made the instruments and furnishings, including all the priest's vestments, etc. The priests are currently in training, and there is a serious hunt going on for the perfect red heifer for Temple dedication ceremonies. The "Temple Institute" is located in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem. A Jewish man named Gershom Saloman is leader of a group called the "Temple Mount Faithful," whose sole purpose is to rebuild the Temple and restore Temple sacrifices and worship. He was part of the Israeli army that went onto the Temple Mount in 1967 when the Jews reclaimed Jerusalem. This was a grand day for the Jews. However, due to political pressure, Minister of Defense Moshe Dayan gave back control of the Temple Mount to the Muslims. This blocked construction of a new Temple at this point.
CURRENT TEMPLE MOUNT

The area where the original temples were constructed is known as the Temple Mount. It has been reduced to rubble and ruins over the years, and was desecrated by Christians in the 4th century. It is the site of Mt. Moriah, where Abraham was to sacrifice Isaac, but was spared when God provided the sacrifice (this is very significant!). Unfortunately it is also the place where Muslims believe the prophet Mohammed ascended to God, and they have built a shrine there. It is called the Al Aksa Mosque, or the Dome of the Rock. It has stood here 1300 years. This is a problem, obviously, for rebuilding the Temple which Jews believe must stand in the exact place it once did under Solomon. However, even the most learned scholars are now disagreeing about where the original Temple once stood. It is quite possible that the current Temple Mount where the Dome of the Rock stands is not the original site. This would provide some options to rebuild the Temple in a slightly altered location without disturbing the Al Aksa Mosque. This would fit with what we read in Revelation 11. We can be sure that when it is time to rebuild this Third Temple, that God will pave the way. It will happen as He has planned, in His time, in His place, in His way. This Temple will also eventually be destroyed.

THE FOURTH TEMPLE

In the book of Ezekiel, chapters 40-48, we are provided some very detailed information about a Temple that to date has never been built. It is a very detailed, very lengthy passage. Most think it will be built during the Millennium, and thus will be called the Millennial Temple, on earth during the reign of Jesus. These passages describe the Temple, but make no mention of the Ark of the Covenant, or the veil separating the Holy of Holies from the outer area known as the Holy Place. Why not? The answer is simple. We don't need either one anymore. The veil has been torn from top to bottom at the death of Jesus, signifying the barrier torn away between us and God. We now have access to God through Jesus. The Ark of the Covenant is where God appeared to the High Priest. It was the strongest symbol of God's Presence. During the Millennium, Jesus Himself will reign from Jerusalem. He will not appear to the people once a year behind a shield of smoky incense and the blood of animals. He will reign in person. Jesus IS the Ark of the Covenant, the holder of God's Presence and the fulfillment of God's Promises.

MILLENNIAL TEMPLE SACRIFICES

Ezekiel's passage details animal sacrifices to be offered in this new temple. Many people do not understand this, as Jesus is the ultimate sacrifice. Although God does not explain to us WHY this is, we can assume here that these sacrifices are for memorial purposes only, or as a way to remember the sacrifice of the Lamb of God.

THE REAL TEMPLE

All of these tabernacles and temples so far are only a pattern, only visual aids, only object lessons built to illustrate the one true Temple. Both the books of Hebrews and Revelation provide many references to the Temple in heaven. The Temple in heaven is the home of our God, His dwelling place. Revelation gives us a glimpse about what this heavenly Temple is like. Once again, it is God's dwelling place among His people, His creation.
After the Millennium there is one more human rebellion which is quickly ended. After this point we enter what we can call the "eternal state" or eternity. The last two chapters of Revelation give us a brief but amazing description of the PLACE where we will be together. This place is amazing, and includes the Tree of Life we first saw in the original Garden of Eden, or Paradise. God will have returned His people to that place, to dwell forever with Him. Now God will truly dwell among His restored, resurrected people. Sin will not exist. No longer must we dwell separate from God, no longer do we need a Temple to approach God. Revelation 21:22 tells us: "But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The new city, the New Jerusalem is the dwelling place of God and Lamb, among His people." We are finally together again, after the long separation from the Garden of His Presence. And we will never be separated from Him again.

The next page begins a more detailed study of the Tabernacle, and God’s messages to us through a tent in the wilderness...
Why Study the Tabernacle?
As modern-day readers of the Bible, we tend to skim over the detailed and often tedious texts of the Old Testament and focus instead on the simpler sections of the New Testament. It is tempting to relegate the 50 chapters in the Books of Moses devoted to the tabernacle as irrelevant or boring. After all, how are all the intricate plans for a 15th century B.C. collapsible structure useful to us as 21st-century Christians?

The Tabernacle as a Visual Aid
The tabernacle is a compelling and indispensable visual aid for explaining Christ’s work on the cross. Its physical structure, “a copy and shadow of heavenly things” (Hebrews 8:5), teaches us spiritual lessons about eternal truths.

“For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God’s presence.” (Hebrews 9:24)

Just like Jesus’ parables served to illustrate and bring His teachings to life, so the Old Testament visuals serve to illuminate many spiritual concepts. It was in the tabernacle that God pictured what was required for man to become right with Him. The detailed commands that God gave the Israelites for the setting up of the tabernacle demonstrate to us God’s holiness — in order for sinful man to approach a holy God, he must come to God in God’s own prescribed way, and no other way. The whole idea of a tabernacle and a temple reveal to us the heart of God, His desire to fellowship with His people. Now that sin has broken that fellowship, God designed another way until we are together again. (See the handout on the Introduction to the Tabernacle).

The blood sacrifices — a symbol of Christ’s sacrifice
At the same time, the tabernacle also is a compelling symbol of God’s forgiveness and grace. Through the sacrifices of sheep and goats, God sees the blood and passes over the sin of the people until the coming of Christ, the ultimate sacrifice. To fully appreciate Christ’s sacrifice for us, we need to be familiar with this tabernacle sacrificial system. Why did John the Baptist declare, “Behold, the Lamb of God!” when he saw Jesus? It is difficult to understand why the Messiah would be associated with a weak and defenseless animal until one considers the sacrificial system. It was no coincidence that Jesus’ death occurred at the very time that sheep were being slaughtered for the evening sacrifice at the Jerusalem temple. Understanding what happened on the brazen altar in the temple is key to understanding what happened on the cross.

THE CURTAIN — a physical image and demonstration of separation
Another amazing symbol surrounding Christ’s death is the tearing of the temple curtain from top to bottom. That event is meaningless unless we understand why the curtain was there in the first place and what exactly it was separating — a holy God from sinful man. To see that, we need to be able to visualize the physical layout of the tabernacle/temple.
THE PRIESTHOOD — a projection of Christ’s role
It is also impossible to talk about the life of Jesus without encountering the Israelite priesthood, which originated in God’s commands to Moses for the tabernacle. And why is Jesus so often referred to as our “high priest” in the New Testament? Invariably, you are forced to go back to the tabernacle to explain the nature and purpose of the priesthood.

What is the Tabernacle? A Powerful Visual Aid
Tabernacle means “tent,” “place of dwelling” or “sanctuary.” It was a sacred place where God chose to meet His people, the Israelites, during the 40 years they wandered in the desert under Moses’ leadership. It was the place where the leaders and people came together to worship and offer sacrifices.

The tabernacle was first erected in the wilderness exactly one year after the Passover when the Israelites were freed from their Egyptian slavery (circa 1450 B.C.). It was a mobile tent with portable furniture that the people traveled with and set up wherever they pitched camp. The tabernacle would be in the center of the camp, and the 12 tribes of Israel would set up their tents around it according to tribe. In addition to powerful lessons regarding God's plan and sacrifice for us, this tent illustrates God's desire to dwell with His people.

“...make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them.” (Exodus 25:8)

“And I will dwell among the Israelites and be their God. They will know that I am the Lord their God, who brought them out of Egypt so that I might dwell among them.” (Exodus 29:45-46)

And so God dwelled among His people in the tabernacle in the wilderness. He appeared as a pillar of cloud over the tabernacle by day and a pillar of fire by night in the sight of...
all Israel. The people would not set out on their journey unless the cloud lifted. It was an unmistakably powerful visual statement indicating God’s presence among them. God knew that the Israelites needed visual evidence of His presence. When Moses went up to Mount Sinai for 40 days and the people did not see or hear from him, they grew impatient and gathered their gold to form a golden calf that they worshipped in place of God. After ten generations of living in Egypt, it was not surprising that the Israelites mimicked the Egyptians in fashioning a visual idol of their own. This act of disobedience demonstrated their need to follow and worship a God who was visually tangible. God’s provision of a tabernacle — itself a splendor to behold — not only allowed the people to sense His presence, but also to see their leader go in to meet with God in a concrete place and not disappear up a mountain. This entire tabernacle and temple concept was a gift from a gracious God who understood His people. He knew we need visual aid and object lessons to understand Him better. The tabernacle stood as a visual reminder that God was with them.

A lesson of unquestionable authority
The tabernacle was more than just a dwelling place or a big desert tent. All the components of the tabernacle were part of an intricate visual aid to illustrate God’s relationship with His people. One aspect of this relationship was God’s requirement for complete obedience. God told Moses to create the tabernacle exactly the way He commanded. It was not to stray from God’s blueprint.

“Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you.” (Exodus 25:9)

To this end, God gave very specific instructions about the size of each component and the materials the Israelites were to use, as we will see later. These seemingly cumbersome rules were not intended to burden the people, but to show God’s unquestionable authority and holiness, and emphasize that people could only come to God on God’s terms, not on their own. They had to obey reverently not only in the construction of the tabernacle, but also in the way they worshipped. Any irreverence or ritual uncleanness could result in an individual being cut off from his people, or in death.

For example, the anointing oil for the tabernacle and the incense for the altar of incense (made from God’s own prescribed formulas of spices) were both declared holy by God and could only be used for the purpose of the tabernacle; anyone else using the same formula for their own consumption would be cut off from Israel (Exodus 30:34-38). The special garments for the priests were holy; if they did not wear the right clothing in serving the Lord, they could die (Exodus 28:2, 43). These rules were not strict or unreasonable, they were designed to point to a holy God and His amazing gift. Any deviation from the design God gave would have weakened or destroyed this illustration and hence the people’s understanding of God’s plan. This was also an exercise in obedience.
A projection of God’s beautiful redemptive plan

In the New Testament, John writes: “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.” (John 1:14) This word “dwelling” is the same word for “tabernacle” in the Old Testament. In other words, God came in living flesh to dwell or to tabernacle among His people. As He walked upon the earth and lived among the Jews, Jesus Christ Himself fulfilled the picture of the Old Testament tabernacle. In that and many other ways, as we will see, the tabernacle really was a prophetic projection of the Lord’s redemptive plan for His people. When Jesus walked this earth in human form, He was indeed the "Shekinah" (Glory in the tent!) All the details of the Tabernacle/Temple, the sacrifices and the rituals were designed and given to point to the redemptive plan of God that would enable us once again to walk with Him as Adam did before the Fall.

“And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.’” (Rev. 21:3)
The Encampment

Before we go into the details regarding the construction of the tabernacle, let’s take a look at how it was set up in the desert, and how the Israelites camped around it. Even in this seemingly unimportant detail are rich lessons. In the book of Numbers, God provides very detailed and precise instructions for how the tribes of Israel were to camp around the tabernacle. Every time they settled in one place, they were told to arrange themselves a certain, very specific way.

In Numbers chapter 1 we encounter the numbering (a census) of the people. We know that God places everything in scripture for a purpose, and not just as historical documentation. There is a reason we should read this, and know it. Why did the Holy Spirit want you to know this list of numbers? What hidden insight lies behind them?

Every detail in the Word is there by design and speaks of Jesus Christ. Some are obvious, and some require a little digging. In Psalm 40:7 and in Hebrews 10:7 Jesus says that “the volume of the Book is written of Me.” Everything in scripture is about Jesus. That should be a big clue as to where this is going! Let’s take a look at what might be behind even these strange instructions regarding the camp of Israel and census provided.

The tribes of Judah, Issachar and Zebullum were to assemble together and camp around the flag (standard), or the symbol of the tribe of Judah. Ephraim (by the way, the tribe of Levi is not included here because this was a census of those who would go to war, and Levites were not included in this group. To fill in here we have the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, the two sons of Joseph taking the place of Joseph and Levi) Manasseh and Benjamin were to camp together under the flag of Ephraim. The tribes of Reuben, Simeon and Gad were to camp together under the flag of Reuben, and the tribes of Dan Asher and Naphtali were to gather together under the flag or symbol of Dan. These figures show the numbers of the census for the tribes and their 4 group totals.

In the center of the camp is the area for the Levites. It contained the tabernacle and opened onto the east.
Levites camped directly around the tabernacle. On the east were Moses and the priests, the sons of Aaron, on the south were the Kohathites, on the north were the Merarites and on the west were the Gershonites. These were other sons of Levi, who also had specific duties in the care of the tabernacle, but were not priests.

The Reuben group was to camp immediately south of the Levites, no wider than the Levite camp. Each of these camps were told that they could not camp in the “corners” or any wider than the Levite camp. This was true for all the camps.

So the four groups of three tribes each could camp as WIDE as the Levites, and then take as much room straight out from there for the number of their people. They could NOT camp to the sides or in the corners of where the Levites were. This was true for all the camps. So only what we call the “cardinal directions” of strictly North, East, West and South are filled in. The camps were not allowed to set up in the SE, NE, NW, or SW corners. Remember, God is the one who directed this entire layout, with very precise instructions.

There was no provision for any camping in the edges, only straight out like arms from the camp of the Levites. The proportion then of the camps was the width of the Levite camp and as long as the population needed. The camp of Judah was the biggest with 186,400. Ephraim
was the smallest with 108,100. Reuben had 151,450 and Dan had 157,600. Reuben and Dan are approximately equivalent.

We must also consider the standards or symbols of the camps. Every tribe had one, and generally flew them as flags. We know the standards from the Jewish writings, the Talmud and all the rabbinical writings, as well as their very detailed and complete history. Although each tribe had their own standard, the four principal standards, under
which the entire Jewish nation camped, were those of Judah, which was the lion, Rueben which was a man, Ephraim an ox, and Dan an eagle.

It is interesting to note that these four primary tribal standards—the lion, the man, the ox, and the eagle—are the same as the four faces of the living creatures around the throne of God. Each time we encounter a view of the throne of God, we notice these strange living creatures, somehow associated with the protection of His throne and His holiness. We find these same faces or symbols mentioned in Isaiah 6 (the seraphim) Ezekiel chapters 1 and 10, and Revelation 4. And here we have the 4 main camps of Israel with the same symbols represented.

It appears that the camp of Israel—with the tabernacle in the middle—seems to be a model of the throne of God: His presence in the center, represented by the tabernacle, encircled by the four faces, all surrounded by His people. This is also a symbol of eternity. God dwelling with His people.

When we lay this out proportionately, based on the census numbers, we see something else, something very interesting, emerge. Those seemingly boring sets of numbers in the Book of Numbers have some purpose after all. Years ago, someone had an idea and sat down to draw out this interesting picture. You have probably already imagined what is seen here.

If you were to fly over the camp of Israel, approaching from the east, you would see a very obvious cross. The throne of God is represented in the center, and is surrounded by the 4 symbolic faces of the living creatures and the likenesses of Jesus on the standards of the camps. The population of each camp determines the length of the arms of this cross. Even 1400 years before Jesus died, God drew a cross in the desert using the tribes of Israel and His tabernacle. God was dropping hints everywhere as to what He had planned. Isn’t this amazing?? Not only does God dwell in
the midst, in the center, of His people, this encampment in the desert illustrated very plainly the cross that God employed to grant us freedom and eternal fellowship with Him. The people then had no idea, but we do. Every time we think something in the Bible is of no use to us, is information we don't need, or just plain boring, we need to think again!

By the way, Christian tradition has also assigned symbols to each of the four gospels (you may have seen these in books and stained glass windows), to distinguish their unique approaches at describing the life of the Messiah. The gospel of Matthew’s standard is the Lion, since Matthew wrote primarily to Jews, to convince them that Jesus was indeed the promised lion of the tribe of Judah, the Jewish Messiah. The gospel of Mark bears the standard of the Ox, since he portrays Jesus as a man of service and power. The gospel of Luke is symbolized by a man, standing for the wisdom and humanity of Jesus. The gospel of John’s symbol is the eagle, representing the deity of Jesus.

This seemingly unimportant detail about the camp of Israel around the tabernacle is another indication of what can be found in the amazing word of God, with just a little curiosity and a little study. In so many places God has buried treasure, priceless gems that are solid clues to His plan, and His ultimate sacrifice for us. The study of the tabernacle is one of the richest object lessons in scripture.

(Information about the census in Numbers provided by Chuck Missler, www.khouse.org)
It is helpful for us to have the scriptures regarding the tabernacle available during our study, so they are included in these handouts, as we discuss them.

THE MATERIALS USED
Many ask where the materials to build this elaborate structure came from out in the wilderness, from a group of former slaves? It is an easy answer. God provided it:

35 Now the children of Israel had done according to the word of Moses, and they had asked from the Egyptians articles of silver, articles of gold, and clothing. 36 And the LORD had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they granted them what they requested. Thus they plundered the Egyptians. (Exodus 12:35-36)

Offerings for the Tabernacle: Building Materials
1 The LORD said to Moses, 2 "Tell the Israelites to bring me an offering. You are to receive the offering for me from each man whose heart prompts him to give. 3 These are the offerings you are to receive from them: gold, silver and bronze; 4 blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen; goat hair; 5 ram skins dyed red and hides of sea cows; acacia wood; 6 olive oil for the light; spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense; 7 and onyx stones and other gems to be mounted on the ephod and breastpiece. (Exodus 25:1-7)

4 Moses said to the whole Israelite community, "This is what the LORD has commanded: 5 From what you have, take an offering for the LORD. Everyone who is willing is to bring to the LORD an offering of gold, silver and bronze; 6 blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen; goat hair; 7 ram skins dyed red and hides of sea cows; acacia wood; 8 olive oil for the light; spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense; 9 and onyx stones and other gems to be mounted on the ephod and breastpiece. (Exodus 35:4-9)

20 Then the whole Israelite community withdrew from Moses' presence, 21 and everyone who was willing and whose heart moved him came and brought an offering to the LORD for the work on the Tent of Meeting, for all its service, and for the sacred garments. 22 All who were willing, men and women alike, came and brought gold jewelry of all kinds: brooches, earrings, rings and ornaments. They all presented their gold as a wave offering to the LORD. 23 Everyone who had blue, purple or scarlet yarn or fine linen, or goat hair, ram skins dyed red or hides of sea cows brought them. 24 Those presenting an offering of silver or bronze brought it as an offering to the LORD, and everyone who had acacia wood for any part of the work brought it. 25 Every skilled woman spun with her hands and brought what she had spun—blue, purple or scarlet yarn or fine linen. 26 And all the women who were willing and had the skill spun the goat hair. 27 The leaders brought onyx stones and other gems to be mounted on the ephod and breastpiece. 28 They also brought spices and olive oil for the light and for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense. 29 All the Israelite men and women who were willing brought to the LORD freewill offerings for all the work the LORD through Moses had commanded them to do. (Exodus 35:20-29)
They received from Moses all the offerings the Israelites had brought to carry out the work of constructing the sanctuary. And the people continued to bring freewill offerings morning after morning. So all the skilled craftsmen who were doing all the work on the sanctuary left their work and said to Moses, "The people are bringing more than enough for doing the work the LORD commanded to be done." Then Moses gave an order and they sent this word throughout the camp: "No man or woman is to make anything else as an offering for the sanctuary." And so the people were restrained from bringing more, because what they already had was more than enough to do all the work. (Exodus 36:3-7)

These are the amounts of the materials used for the tabernacle, the tabernacle of the Testimony, which were recorded at Moses' command by the Levites under the direction of Ithamar son of Aaron, the priest. Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, made everything the LORD commanded Moses; with him was Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan—a craftsman and designer, and an embroiderer in blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen.) The total amount of the gold from the wave offering used for all the work on the sanctuary was 29 talents and 730 shekels, according to the sanctuary shekel. The silver obtained from those of the community who were counted in the census was 100 talents and 1,775 shekels, according to the sanctuary shekel—one beka per person, that is, half a shekel, according to the sanctuary shekel, from everyone who had crossed over to those counted, twenty years old or more, a total of 603,550 men. The 100 talents of silver were used to cast the bases for the sanctuary and for the curtain—100 bases from the 100 talents, one talent for each base. They used the 1,775 shekels to make the hooks for the posts, to overlay the tops of the posts, and to make their bands. The bronze from the wave offering was 70 talents and 2,400 shekels. They used it to make the bases for the entrance to the Tent of Meeting, the bronze altar with its bronze grating and all its utensils, the bases for the surrounding courtyard and those for its entrance and all the tent pegs for the tabernacle and those for the surrounding courtyard. (Exodus 38:21-31)

THE CRAFTSMEN AND THE WORKERS
All who are skilled among you are to come and make everything the LORD has commanded: the tabernacle with its tent and its covering, clasps, frames, crossbars, posts and bases; the ark with its poles and the atonement cover and the curtain that shields it; the table with its poles and all its articles and the bread of the Presence; the lampstand that is for light with its accessories, lamps and oil for the light; the altar of incense with its poles, the anointing oil and the fragrant incense; the curtain for the doorway at the entrance to the tabernacle; the altar of burnt offering with its bronze grating, its poles and all its utensils; the bronze basin with its stand; the curtains of the courtyard with its posts and bases, and the curtain for the entrance to the courtyard; the tent pegs for the tabernacle and for the courtyard, and their ropes; the woven garments worn for ministering in the sanctuary—both the sacred garments for Aaron the priest and the garments for his sons when they serve as priests." (Exodus 35:10-19)
Then Moses said to the Israelites, "See, the LORD has chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and he has filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts—to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood and to engage in all kinds of artistic craftsmanship. And he has given both him and Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, the ability to teach others. He has filled them with skill to do all kinds of work as craftsmen, designers, embroiderers in blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen, and weavers—all of them master craftsmen and designers. (Exodus 35:30-35)

So Bezalel, Oholiab and every skilled person to whom the LORD has given skill and ability to know how to carry out all the work of constructing the sanctuary are to do the work just as the LORD has commanded." Then Moses summoned Bezalel and Oholiab and every skilled person to whom the LORD had given ability and who was willing to come and do the work. (Exodus 36:1-2)

Next we will look at each component of the tabernacle in detail.
What's in a Name?
The proper names of people in scripture are often not translated into English, which is a shame. Often there is much to gain from these insights. These skilled workers in the passage above are identified by name as Bezalel and Oholiab. Whenever we see names mentioned, we should immediately wonder about their meanings, because often those true meanings have significance in understanding certain passages.

**Bezalel** means "in the shadow, or protection of, God." It is from tsel which is the idea of hovering over, as the pillar of cloud "hovered" as a shade or protection over the Tabernacle, and over the people. It also mentions he was the son of Uri (light, or fire), the son of Hur (white, or splendid). This man also came from the tribe of Judah. Bezalel, or Bezaleel, can be seen as a symbol for the Holy Spirit of God, hovering, as the Word says He does (Genesis 1:2). Bezalel is acknowledged as the "builder" 74 times. Not by name, but by the personal pronoun "he." This is a consistent type in scripture. Often someone mentioned only by "he" is a type for the Holy Spirit (this is generally typed as the "unnamed servant"). Without the Holy Spirit's guidance and influence, these people could do nothing, and neither can we. The Holy Spirit hovers over us, and in us, today.

Judah literally means "praise of God." Praise for Him should be continually on our lips and in our hearts. Jesus is from the tribe of Judah. God is Light. Jesus is the Son of Light, white and splendid. The entire triune Godhead, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is involved in this desert tent project.

**Oholiab** means "who was at home in the Father's tent," or "tent of my Father." Jesus is at home in His Father's tent as well! **John 1:1** tells us "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." He is the One who came down from heaven to show us the way to the Father's tent, or place of dwelling. Oholiab was from the tribe of Dan, which can be translated as "judge" or "to rule." All judgment has been handed over to Jesus, and He will reign and rule one day. (See John 5 and 6) Oholiab was the son of Ahisamach, meaning "brother of support." He was an assistant to Bezalel apparently charged with overseeing the textiles and fabrics both woven and embroidered during the building of the Tabernacle. Believers are and will be "at home in the Father's tent," (fellowship with Him!) and we are to build up the Body of Christ using the gifts given to us. Oholiab may also represent the gifts of the Spirit used by the Church to do the work of God. Bezalel and Oholiab worked together, as we do with the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit.

Judah was the "leading" camp and Dan was the last camp of Israel. Together, they represent the entire camp, or the entire Body of Christ, serving our Lord, under the direction and empowering of the Holy Spirit. Names in scripture always have importance, and it is rewarding to seek their original Hebrew meanings.
Beginning Notes
As we begin to look at the Tabernacle components in detail, we need to be reminded continually that this huge object lesson, this visual aid in the desert, has three major teaching goals. It is intended to show us:

1. God's heart to dwell with His people. It is about His dwelling place.

2. The Sacrifice of His Son Jesus for His people. It is about the Savior, and His Work.

3. The Fellowship of God with His people. It is about Christ and the Church.

As we encounter each item, keep these three purposes in mind. Much will be made clear when we understand the ultimate purposes of this teaching tool.

About the Measurements

The Cubit
Biblical length measurements are in "cubits." There is a lot of discussion about what or how long a cubit was, actually. It is from the Hebrew ammah, meaning: "Mother of the arm," or the forearm. This word (cubit) is derived from the Latin cubitus, the lower arm (lit. elbow). It has been left in our English translations from the Latin Vulgate (the Latin translation). It is difficult to determine the exact length of this measure, from the uncertainty whether it included the entire length from the elbow to the tip of the longest finger, or only from the elbow to the root of the hand at the wrist. The longer dimension to the tip of the middle finger was most likely the original cubit. In most people, this dimension doesn't vary much. Obviously, however, it will be slightly different in each person, and in various cultures. It had to be standardized at some point.

Various ancient cubits have been discovered. Their lengths range from 17 to 25 inches. One Egyptian cubit was said to be the longest at 25 inches. Most scholars believe the Hebrew cubit was around 18" long, but some say their common long cubit was more like
20+ inches. For the sake of easy translation of cubits to English equivalents, it is now assumed that the Biblical cubit was about 18", or one and a half feet. Therefore, something measured at 100 cubits (the length of the Tabernacle fence) would have been approximately 150 feet by the Hebrew cubit. However, it is also possible that the Jews were using the Egyptian cubit at this time, since they had just spent the last 430 years there, and that would have been their standard measurement. If that were true, 100 cubits would have been a little more than 208 feet, 58 feet longer! The actual length of these measurements is not the important issue. It is the numbers specified, and their relationship to each other. We'll see that in a moment. For this study, and for most studies on Biblical measurement, the cubit is assumed to be 18". (But it is possible that this standard is somewhat shorter than it might have been in reality.)

The Talent
As with the cubit, determining the exact weight of a "talent" of gold is virtually impossible. The word "talent" comes from the Latin *talentum*, meaning "scale, or balance." The Hebrew word used is *kikar*, a *circle*, a circumjacent *tract* or region, also a (round) *loaf*; also a *talent* (or large (round) coin). The talent is an ancient unit of mass, or weight.

It is also used to indicate a measure of money. A talent of silver (2 Kings 5:22) contained 3,000 shekels (Ex. 38:25,26), and was equal to about 94 1/2 lbs. U.S. The Greek talent, however, as in the Septuagint, was only 82 1/4 lbs. It was in the form of a circular mass, as the Hebrew name *kikkar* denotes.

It is important to note that a talent of gold (Ex. 25:39) was double the weight of a talent of silver (2 Sam. 12:30). If a talent of silver weighed about 95 lbs., a talent of gold could have weighed twice that. We simply don't have a reliable source to tell us. The ancient Romans also gave the name "talent" to their weight of 100 libra (pounds — hence the English-system abbreviation lb.).

When used as a measure of money, it refers to a talent-weight of gold or of silver. The gold talent is reported as weighing roughly the same as a person, perhaps 132 lb. U.S. in the cultures of the day). Some authorities state, more precisely, that the talent typically weighed about 33 kg (75 lb) varying from 20 to 40 kg. In today's standardized Biblical measurements, it is commonly accepted that the talent was equal to 75 lbs. U.S. (and possibly 75-100 lbs.) But that is generally for the sake of standardization. It is possible that the Biblical talent weighed more, closer to the weight of a human, and hence could be anywhere from 100 - 180 U.S. pounds! If that is the case, a "talent" of gold used in the desert, if we average at 150 pounds, could have been twice as heavy as we think. I personally lean more toward this weight than the lighter one. A talent of gold at this size, and at today's market rates ($825 per ounce, 2008) would have been worth almost $2 million!

(For those of you really interested in Biblical weights and measures, a table is included on the next few pages.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Biblical Unit</th>
<th>Equivalent to</th>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Examples of Usage in Bible*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bath</td>
<td>= 1 ephah</td>
<td>A measurement of liquids. Equivalence values based on the OT use of bath as a liquid measurement.</td>
<td>1 Kings 7:26; Isaiah 5:10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>= 22 liters metric</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>= 5.8 U.S. Gallons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cubit</td>
<td>= 43-53 centimeters metric</td>
<td>A measurement of length. Cubits are based on the distance between the tip of the middle finger and the elbow.</td>
<td>Matthew 6:27; Luke 12:25; Revelation 21:17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>= 17 to 21 inches US</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ephah (Epha)</td>
<td>= .62 bushels</td>
<td>Dry measure</td>
<td>Exodus 16:36; 1 Samuel 17:17; Zechariah 5:6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>= 22 liters metric</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>= 20 dry quarts U.S.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farthing</td>
<td>= 2 mites</td>
<td>A measure of money in the NT</td>
<td>Matthew 5:26, 10:29 Mark 12:42 Luke 12:6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>= 1/4th of a cent U.S.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerah</td>
<td>= 1/20th of a Shekel</td>
<td>Used as a measure of weight and sum of money. It is the smallest weight and smallest piece of money used among Hebrews.</td>
<td>Leviticus 27:25; Numbers 3:47; Exodus 30:13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>= .57 grams metric</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>= .02 ounces U.S.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hin</td>
<td>= 1/6th of a Bath</td>
<td>Used as a measurement of liquids.</td>
<td>Exodus 29:40, 30:24 Numbers 15:4</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>= 3.7 liters metric</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>= 1 Gallon U.S.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homer (Cor)</td>
<td>Used as Dry Measure</td>
<td>Can be used as a dry or liquid measurement.</td>
<td>Ezekiel 45:11, 13-14;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>= 10 Ephahs</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>= 211 liters metric</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>= 6 bushels U.S.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Used as Liquid Measure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>= 10 Baths</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>= 220 liters metric</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>= 58 Gallons U.S.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mina</td>
<td>= 50 shekels</td>
<td>A measure of weight and sum of money. The word translated pound in Ezra 2:69 comes from Hebrew Mina. The word translated maneh in Ezekiel 45:12 also comes from Mina.</td>
<td>Ezra 2:69; Ezekiel 45:12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>= 1/60th talent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>= 567 grams metric</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>= 1.26 pounds U.S.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mite</td>
<td>= 1/2 Roman quadrant</td>
<td>A measure of money in NT. The word translated mite in Luke’s account of a poor widow giving two mites to the temple comes from the Greek word lepton. This Greek word means the smallest bronze of copper coin used.</td>
<td>Luke 12:59, 21:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>= 1/2 farthing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>= 1/8th of a cent U.S.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Omer</strong></td>
<td>= 1/10 ephah = 2.2 dry liters metric = 2 dry quarts U.S.</td>
<td>A dry measure. The word omer is sometimes translated as sheaf — specifically, an amount of grain large enough to require bundling. An omer of barley was a traditional offering on the second day of Passover during the period of Temple sacrifice.</td>
<td>Exodus 16:22, 32-33, 36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Penny</strong></td>
<td>= 16 cents U.S.</td>
<td>A measure of money. The word translated pence or pennyworth in the NT comes from the Greek word denarion which can also mean penny.</td>
<td>Matthew 18:28, 20:2, 9 Mark 6:37, 14:5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pound</strong></td>
<td>Used as Weight = 100 shekels Used as Money (New Testament) = 100 Roman denarii = 100 Greek drachmas = $16.00 U.S.</td>
<td>Used as a measure of weight and money. When used in the OT for weight, the word translated pound comes from the Hebrew word maneh or mina. When used in the NT for money, such as in Jesus' parable of the pounds (Luke 19), the word translated pounds comes from the Greek word for mina.</td>
<td>1Kings 10:17; Ezra 2:29; Nehemiah 7:71-72; Luke 19:13, 16, 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sabbath Day's Journey</strong></td>
<td>= 2,000 cubits = .91 Kilometers metric = 1,000 yards U.S.</td>
<td>A Sabbath day's journey, according to Jewish tradition (not scripture), was the maximum allowable distance one could travel on the Sabbath and not violate the law.</td>
<td>Acts 1:12; Joshua 3:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shekel</strong></td>
<td>= 20 gerahs = 11.4 grams metric = .4 ounces U.S.</td>
<td>Used as a measure of weight and money.</td>
<td>Genesis 23:15-16; Exodus 21:32, 30:13;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Span</strong></td>
<td>= .5 cubits = 22.8 centimeters metric = 9 inches U.S.</td>
<td>A measure of length. A span is the width of a spread out human hand from the tip of the thumb to the tip of the pinky finger.</td>
<td>Exodus 28:16; 1 Samuel 17:4; Ezekiel 43:13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Talent</strong></td>
<td>= 3,000 shekels = 60 minas = 34.3 kilograms metric = 75 U.S. pounds</td>
<td>Used as a measure of weight and money. If in today's money an ounce of gold is worth $825 U.S., one talent is worth $990,000! (2008) or more (possibly twice this much!).</td>
<td>Exodus 38:24-29 1 Kings 9:14 Matt. 18:24, 25:15-18 Revelation 16:21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Basic Layout of the Tabernacle

The tabernacle consisted of a tent-like structure (the tabernacle proper) covered by rug-like coverings for a roof, and an external courtyard (150 feet by 75 feet). The whole compound was surrounded by a high fence about 7½ feet high. The fence was made of linen hangings held by pillars.

The tent (tabernacle proper) was divided into the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. The tent was made of acacia wood boards overlaid with gold and fitted together to form the walls, measuring 45 by 15 feet. The Holy of Holies was 15 X 15 X 15, a perfect cube. It was preceded by the Holy Place, which was 30 X 15 X 15. On top, four layers of curtains acted as a roof to shield the tabernacle from sun and rain: The innermost layer was woven with fine linen and embroidered with figures of cherubim (angels), the second layer was made of goat’s hair, the third layer was made of rams’ skins dyed red, and the outermost layer was made of porpoise skins. The curtains were pinned to the ground with loops and clasps.
The specific layout of the tabernacle and its courtyard is significant because it illustrates God’s prescribed way for man to approach Him.

The whole compound was surrounded by a high fence with only one entrance. A person could not simply come from any direction into the tabernacle as he pleased — he had to enter through the one gate, which was always located to the east (so that people were facing west when they entered the tabernacle — a direct opposition to the pagan sun worshippers of the day who always faced east). Upon entering the gate, he encountered the brazen altar, where he was to present his animal offering, and then hand the reigns over to the priests, who make atonement and intercession for him in the tent.

This setup informed the Israelites that they could only come to God in the way He prescribed. There was (and still is!) no other way. As we will see even more clearly in the following sections, God is using the *Old Testament tabernacle* to tell us that we, too, must come to Him only through the way He has provided for us — Jesus Christ.
The Courtyard

9 “Make a courtyard for the tabernacle. The south side shall be a hundred cubits long and is to have curtains of finely twisted linen, 10 with twenty posts and twenty bronze bases and with silver hooks and bands on the posts. 11 The north side shall also be a hundred cubits long and is to have curtains, with twenty posts and twenty bronze bases and with silver hooks and bands on the posts. 12 “The west end of the courtyard shall be fifty cubits wide and have curtains, with ten posts and ten bases. 13 On the east end, toward the sunrise, the courtyard shall also be fifty cubits wide. 14 Curtains fifteen cubits long are to be on one side of the entrance, with three posts and three bases, 15 and curtains fifteen cubits long are to be on the other side, with three posts and three bases. 16 All the pillars around the court shall have bands of silver; their hooks shall be of silver and their sockets of bronze. 17 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. 19 All the utensils of the tabernacle for all its service, all its pegs, and all the pegs of the court, shall be of bronze. (Exodus 27:9-15, 17-19)

9 Next they made the courtyard. The south side was a hundred cubits long and had curtains of finely twisted linen, 10 with twenty posts and twenty bronze bases, and with silver hooks and bands on the posts. 11 The north side was also a hundred cubits long and had twenty posts and twenty bronze bases, with silver hooks and bands on the posts. 12 The west end was fifty cubits wide and had curtains, with ten posts and ten bases, with silver hooks and bands on the posts. 13 The east end, toward the sunrise, was also fifty cubits wide. 14 Curtains fifteen cubits long were on one side of the entrance, with three posts and three bases, 15 and curtains fifteen cubits long were on the other side of the entrance to the courtyard, with three posts and three bases. 16 All the curtains around the courtyard were of finely twisted linen. 17 The bases for the posts were bronze. The hooks and bands on the posts were silver, and their tops were overlaid with silver; so all the posts of the courtyard had silver bands. 20 All the pegs of the tabernacle, and of the court all around, were bronze. (Exodus 38:9-17, 20)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>MATERIALS</strong></th>
<th>silver hooks and bands, bronze bases, pillars (unspecified, probably acacia wood), linen curtains (probably white)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SIZE</strong></td>
<td>100 cubits X 50 cubits (150 feet X 75 feet x 7 ½ feet high)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **PURPOSE**            | To establish the boundary between the encampment and the Tabernacle.  
To separate the Tabernacle from everything else. To keep people from inadvertently bringing unholiness inside. Inside these curtains one approached a holy God who could not dwell in the presence of evil (unholiness) |
| **DETAIL**             | structure held up with ropes, pillars stood on sockets of bronze, capped with silver               |
| **SPIRITUAL CONCEPTS** | Separation from the world, from sin, from death  
Righteousness (white linen)  
Judgment requiring a sacrifice (bronze bases)  
Atonement by blood, the Church united in Christ (silver) (all of the above obtainable only through Jesus) |

The first part of the Tabernacle compound you could see is the outer courtyard. It is an area of 100 cubits (150 feet) by 50 cubits (75 feet). It was constructed of a hanging fabric fence 5 cubits (about 7½ feet) high. The pillars were spaced 7½ feet apart. No one could see over this fence without standing on something. On each side of the courtyard fence were pillars (the Word does not specify the material used for these pillars, but we might speculate that they were constructed of acacia, shittim, wood), with caps of silver to hold the fabric. Rods, bands of silver, were also connected to the wood. The hangings were of fine twined linen secured on pillars of wood. The wood pillars stood on sockets of bronze, and were secured by cords staked to the ground. The hooks used to hang the curtains were silver. A large opening was left on the east side for the door, or entrance into the courtyard.

Only the priests were allowed to touch the Tabernacle proper. The fence kept the Israelites from inadvertently getting too close. The fence also separated the Tabernacle from the rest of the camp. There is only one door, one entrance into the courtyard.

When God called Abraham, He was in the process of establishing a "people to Himself." These people, whom we call Jews, are the "separated ones" - separate from the rest of the world. They were separated off from the other nations of the earth, placed in a land chosen by God, and "fenced in" with the ordinances that He established for them (the Law, etc.) The fence around the courtyard indicated this separation.

In a conversation with God about the people of Israel, Moses stated this:

15 Then he said to Him, “If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here.  
16 For how then will it be known that Your people and I have found grace in Your sight, except You go with us? So we shall be separate, Your people and I, from all the people who are upon the face of the earth.”  
17 So the LORD said to Moses, “I will also do this thing that you have spoken; for you have found grace in My sight, and I know you by
name.” (Exodus 33:15-17) (See also Isaiah 52:11, Ezekiel 20:34, 41 which talks about this happening again, when God draws His scattered people back together, to be separated again to Him)

Throughout the Old Testament scriptures there is a concept of separation. From uncleanness, from the rest of the world, from certain things (such as the Nazarite who abstained from drink, etc.), and from sin. But this separation always implies being separated FROM something and TO God. The linens used were most likely white, which symbolizes purity. The Israelites were to be separated from the darkness and sinfulness of the world TO the purity of God.

Each of the areas of the tabernacle were also separated from the other. The outer fence, the inner tabernacle, and the most holy place (Holy of Holies). Each one can be seen as a barrier to progress to the next stage of fellowship with God. Something is required before passing through that barrier. In the case of the outer fence, an Israelite approaching must bring sacrifice. (More on this concept later!)

**Significance of The Courtyard**

Today, the separation seen in the courtyard fence also applies to the believer. We are separated out from the rest of the world. We are separated TO God. The ultimate fulfillment of this separation is found in our being separated to Jesus Christ from the world, from our sin, from wrath and judgment. Romans chapter 8 is a beautiful statement about our being unable to be separated from God, once we are joined with Him, separate from the world:

31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written: “For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.” 37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. 38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:31-39)

Another wonderful passage is found in 1 Peter 2:9-10 - But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the
praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

We are the "called out" ones, separated from the world into Jesus. We are to abide in Him, inside that pure fence of separation, salvation and sanctuary. And just as the Tabernacle fence indicates that inside is something different from the rest of the world, something that designated holiness inside, we, as the temple of the Holy Spirit, are to also present an indication to the rest of the world that there is something different inside us. Something separates us from the evil and darkness. Something white and clean. Something to be desired. Every time we act in ways that do not indicate this, we are soiling the holy separation we are to show the world.

The white linen stands for righteousness. The only righteousness we have is that of our Lord Jesus. Philippians 3:8-9 illustrates this righteousness, "Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith..."

We see reference to white linen for the saints in Revelation 19:14 "And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses." The linen fence around the Tabernacle symbolizes how we are separated from the rest of the world, separated from sin and therefore from death, by the righteousness of Jesus, which is given to the saints.

We are in the world, in sin, until we choose to become separated to God. This requires entering through the courtyard gate (more on this later). And the only way we can do that is to bring a sacrifice (Israelites could not enter without a sacrifice). The Tabernacle fence served as protection from unlawful intrusion. It was unlawful to approach God without a sacrifice. Our sacrifice was made by Jesus. Entrance into fellowship with God requires payment for sins, an offering that covers us (atonement) and repairs the damage of sin. It is the "cost of admission" to God's Presence, but the only sacrifice acceptable to God was His Son. Sins must be judged and removed if we want to enter into fellowship with God. The bronze bases of the courtyard fence represent this judgment. Bronze was the element that would endure fire, so it became the Levitical symbol for judgment. It is appropriate that the fence STANDS on the bronze, or the judgment of God. All men will be judged, but those who choose to enter into God's fellowship must do so through the fence, through the atonement and judgment already accomplished by Jesus. All those "outside" the fence will be judged by their works, according to the Law. Those inside the fence are judged by grace, as they have accepted the sacrifice made on their behalf. The silver caps to the fence posts represent the blood of the sacrifice. Silver was the Levitical symbol of atonement through blood sacrifice. The ultimate sacrifice was Jesus.
The silver bands and hooks at the tops of the posts served to hold the whole structure together. This can symbolize that each believer is united together with other believers to form the Church, which is united in Christ. We are joined together by the blood of Christ.

In essence, the fence is the "go-between" between mankind and God. Jesus is the fence, the Mediator between God and man. 1 Timothy 2:3b-6 "...God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time..."

So, as we begin to put together the amazing lesson of the Tabernacle, and learn the process of fellowship with God, our first lesson is to know that we are separate from the rest of the world, and that God requires righteousness in His presence. The only acceptable righteousness is His, provided through the sacrifice of His Son. Into the court came the penitent Israelite to offer sacrifice for sin, to obtain the favor of God. Here he came for justification. Here at the altar of burnt offering he came to God. Those who came into the ancient court of the tabernacle were seeking forgiveness through symbolic sacrifices, and are typical of those who are convicted of their sins and are coming to God for salvation through Christ. They have forsaken the outside world, but have not yet come into God's church. We make the choice to enter by believing in God's provision and in His expectations for fellowship with Him.
The Gate (Door) of the Tabernacle Courtyard

16 “For the entrance to the courtyard, provide a curtain twenty cubits long, of blue, purple and scarlet yarn and finely twisted linen—the work of an embroiderer—with four posts and four bases. 17 All the posts around the courtyard are to have silver bands and hooks, and bronze bases. 18 The courtyard shall be a hundred cubits long and fifty cubits wide, with curtains of finely twisted linen five cubits high, and with bronze bases. 19 All the other articles used in the service of the tabernacle, whatever their function, including all the tent pegs for it and those for the courtyard, are to be of bronze. (Exodus 27:16-19)

18 The curtain for the entrance to the courtyard was of blue, purple and scarlet yarn and finely twisted linen—the work of an embroiderer. It was twenty cubits long and, like the curtains of the courtyard, five cubits high, 19 with four posts and four bronze bases. Their hooks and bands were silver, and their tops were overlaid with silver. 20 All the tent pegs of the tabernacle and of the surrounding courtyard were bronze. (Exodus 38:18-20)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MATERIALS</th>
<th>blue, purple and scarlet linen curtains, silver bands, bronze bases, bronze tent pegs and other articles of service (bronze)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SIZE</td>
<td>5 cubits high, 20 cubits long (7 ½ feet X 30 feet)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PURPOSE</td>
<td>To allow entrance into the sanctuary, Tabernacle proper area. Access was ONLY through this gate, no where else. One could not climb over. He had to go THROUGH. Man had to enter God’s Presence in the way HE prescribed, no other way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DETAIL</td>
<td>curtain was an embroidered piece, similar to a tapestry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPIRITUAL CONCEPTS</td>
<td>Jesus is the only way to God the Father, He is the only way to eternal life This way is open to all mankind</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There was only one gate by which people could enter into the tabernacle courtyard. The gate was 30 feet (20 cubits) wide. It was located directly in the center of the outer court on the east end. The gate was covered by a curtain or screen made of finely twisted linen in blue, purple and scarlet.

The act of entering the gate to the tabernacle was significant to the Israelites. By entering, one could find forgiveness of sin and fellowship with God. The first thing that anyone saw upon coming through the gate was the brazen altar, which served as a reminder of man’s sinfulness and his need for a blood sacrifice in order to be in fellowship with God. You needed to repent and offer sacrifices for your sin. Those who did not repent were not entering this “narrow way.”
Significance of The Gate

To enter the enclosure where the Tabernacle stood, you had to enter through the only entrance, which was from the East, from the direction of the rising sun, where the tribe of Judah was camped. You could not enter any other way. There is only ONE way to salvation, ONE way to the Father, through the Lion of the Tribe of Judah.

The disciple Thomas asked Jesus how to get where He was going. These confused disciples did not understand all that was happening on the eve of Jesus’ death. We hear Christ’s profound response to a simple question. "Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14:5-6) This very simple but definitive statement is not well tolerated in this age of "toleration!" Jesus said there is only one way to enter God's fellowship...through Him. I didn't say that, we didn't say that. Jesus said that.

In another famous “I am” statement, Jesus said “I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved.” (John 10:9) He also said: “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.” (Matthew 7:13-14)

We are told that the "gate" or entrance to the enclosure was set on four pillars. Throughout scripture the number four is used consistently to represent the creation, or human government, or the "four corners of the earth." This is to indicate that all mankind may, and must, come to God through Jesus. This entrance was wide (about 30 feet) which could also represent the fact that access to God, through Jesus, is easy. "Whosoever" may come.

The gate itself was made of an embroidered tapestry of beautiful colors blue, scarlet and purple. These colors are repeated at least 24 times in Exodus. This tapestry symbolizes the beauty of our Lord, not seen from the outside, but from the inside of salvation. The colors are specified because they are types for Christ’s character and work. Blue speaks of His heavenly majesty; it is consistently used in scripture as the color of heaven. He is the one who "came down from heaven." Red (or scarlet) is always representative of the blood of Christ, His sacrifice on the cross. Purple is the color of royalty, and speaks of Jesus' Kingship. It is also interesting to note that most often purple was made by mixing red and blue. We could say that the scarlet (red) is a symbol of Jesus' humanity, the blue of His deity. And together they make purple, His royalty. He is both completely divine, and completely human. And completely in authority.

The one and only gate is a representation of Jesus Christ as the only way through which mankind can fellowship with God and worship Him. To do this, we must enter in through the gate (through Jesus) to the place where God dwells. There is no other way.
The Bronze (Brazen) Altar

THE ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERING (Brazen, Bronze, Brass Altar)

1 “Build an altar of acacia wood, three cubits high; it is to be square, five cubits long and five cubits wide.  
2 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.  
3 Make all its utensils of bronze—its pots to remove the ashes, and its shovels, sprinkling bowls, meat forks and firepans.  
4 Make a grating for it, a bronze network, and make a bronze ring at each of the four corners of the network.  
5 Put it under the ledge of the altar so that it is halfway up the altar.  
6 Make poles of acacia wood for the altar and overlay them with bronze.  
7 The poles are to be inserted into the rings so they will be on two sides of the altar when it is carried.  
8 Make the altar hollow, out of boards. It is to be made just as you were shown on the mountain. (Exodus 27:1-8)

1 They built the altar of burnt offering of acacia wood, three cubits high; it was square, five cubits long and five cubits wide.  
2 They made a horn at each of the four corners, so that the horns and the altar were of one piece, and they overlaid the altar with bronze.  
3 They made all its utensils of bronze—its pots, shovels, sprinkling bowls, meat forks and firepans.  
4 They made a grating for the altar, a bronze network, to be under its ledge, halfway up the altar.  
5 They cast bronze rings to hold the poles for the four corners of the bronze grating.  
6 They made the poles of acacia wood and overlaid them with bronze.  
7 They inserted the poles into the rings so they would be on the sides of the altar for carrying it. They made it hollow, out of boards. (Exodus 38:1-7)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MATERIALS</th>
<th>Acacia (shittim) wood overlaid with bronze; utensils and grating all bronze</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SIZE</td>
<td>3 cubits high, 5 cubits square (7 ½ feet square by 4 ½ feet deep)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PURPOSE</td>
<td>To offer up burnt sacrifice to God; this was the first item encountered just inside the courtyard gate, prior to the tabernacle proper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DETAIL</td>
<td>4 horns at corners, carrying poles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPIRITUAL CONCEPTS</td>
<td>Before entering into the presence of God, a sacrifice is needed to atone for sins, a covering of holiness. Jesus is the ultimate sacrifice. We cannot add anything to this perfect covering, and we cannot come to God without it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The brazen altar, bronze altar, or altar of sacrifice was situated right inside the courtyard upon entering the gate to the tabernacle. The Hebrew root for altar means “to slay” or “slaughter.” The Latin word *alta* means “high.” An altar is a “high place for sacrifice/slaughter.”

The altar was made of wood from the acacia tree and overlaid with bronze (usually symbolic of judgment of sin in the Bible), measuring 7.5 feet on all four sides and 4.5 feet deep. Four horns projected from the top four corners and a bronze grating was inside to hold the animal.

The altar was the place for burning animal sacrifices. It showed the Israelites that the first step for sinful man to approach a holy God was to be cleansed by the blood of an innocent creature. For a sin offering, a person had to bring an animal — a male one without blemish or defect from the flock or herd — to the priest at the tabernacle gate.

*“He is to lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him.”* (Leviticus 1:4)

By laying his hand upon the head of the offering, the person was identifying with the sacrifice. His sin and guilt was being moved from himself to the animal. The priest would then slaughter the animal, sprinkle its blood in front of the veil of the Holy Place, burn the sacrifice, and pour the rest of it at the bottom of the altar. Blood is a significant agent of atonement (covering for sin) and cleansing in the Old Testament.

*“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 Significance of The Bronze (Brazen) Altar**

The altar stood raised on a mound of earth, higher than its surrounding furniture. This is a projection of Christ, our sacrifice, lifted up on the cross, His altar, which stood on a hill called Golgotha. The placement of the altar immediately after entering the courtyard indicates that we can progress no further toward God without accepting the sacrifice of His Son, and offering the sacrifice of our wills to Him.

The altar, especially after days, months and years of use for the sacrificing of thousands of innocent animals, was not a very lovely or enticing piece to look at. In fact it was probably downright gruesome and horrible. It was constructed of wood covered with bronze (brass, or
some say copper). But the altar would have little meaning without the sacrifices placed on it. The awful nature of this place was, and should be to us, a reminder of the steep price that was required to pay for sins, to restore man's fellowship with God. When we look with spiritual eyes on the used and charred altar crusted with blood, we should be reminded and humbled by the horrible and gruesome death of our Jesus on the cross. It is important for us to understand the price that was paid to erase our debt. When Jesus died, he uttered the words which we have translated into English "It is finished." In Greek this is "tetelestai" which literally means "paid in full." But what a price it was.

“The law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.” (Hebrews 9:22)

Although the blood of the sacrifices covered over the sins of the Israelites, they had to perform the sacrifices year after year, for they were not freed permanently of their guilt, or judgment. However, Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, came as the ultimate and last sacrifice for mankind when He offered up His life. As Isaiah prophesized, the Christ would be like a lamb that is led to slaughter and pierced for our transgressions. His blood was sprinkled and poured out at the cross for us. The Bible says much about this:

“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)

In another "I AM" statement, Jesus said “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep." (John 10:11). Jesus was indicating that He would indeed lay down His life as the final sacrifice. Once and for all.
Horns were a symbol of power and strength in biblical times. 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).

The animal sacrifices bore reference to the Passover lambs, which the Israelites slaughtered in like manner to save their firstborns from the last plague of God's judgment on Egypt (Exodus 12:1-13). Similarly, as the Passover lambs were eaten after they were slaughtered, some of the sacrificial lambs also were eaten. Just as the sacrificial lambs were sacrificed and eaten, so Jesus' body was sacrificed and "eaten." It was no coincidence that on the night before the Passover when 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). As we learn from John 6, Jesus was not advocating literally eating His flesh. He was showing us that the food that sustains us, allows us to live spiritually, is the sacrifice of His body, and we need to feast on Him to continue in spiritual health.

Earlier Jesus had taught His disciples:

“I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him.” (John 6:53-56)

Jesus Himself is the Lamb of God as well as the Passover Lamb for those who believe in Him.

**What is Atonement?**

It is critical for us to understand what is meant, and what we gain through God's atonement. The root meanings of the Hebrew and Greek words for atonement include:

- **cover** (over sins, erase completely)
- **expiate** (extinguish guilt, make amends)
- **condone** (consider as acceptable, absolve)
- **cancel** (sins or debt)
- **placate** (pacify, or please, God)
- **appease** (bring into a state of peace, with God)
- **propitiate** (regain the favor, goodwill, of God, as if we had not sinned)
- **reconcile** (to restore friendship, harmony, unity with God)
- **cause to be friendly**
- **restore** (our fellowship with God)
- **render holy**
- **erase enmity** (cancel ill will)
- **set apart** (for God)

A whole lot is accomplished through atonement. Not by us, but solely by God. The English word *atonement* is derived from the phrase "at one," (At-One-MENT) and signifies harmony of relationship or unity of life, in this case, with God. The underlying concepts here are that God and Man are to be in fellowship. That was the original plan, but man sinned, causing the fellowship to be broken. God provided the way to reunite
 us with Him, to reconcile us, restore us, set us apart, propitiate, cover us, appease Himself, cancel our debt. That great act is called atonement, and it was provided by God, through the shed blood, the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus. Without this restored "at-one-ment" we cannot be in fellowship with God, we cannot approach Him.

In the Old Testament, in the sprinkling of blood, the life-element, or certainly the life-symbol, over persons and things set apart for God they were, so to say, visibly taken up into the life of God, and His life extending over them made them essentially of His own person. The blood of sacrifices was not burned with the dead sacrifice but poured out beside the holy altar.

All the symbols, doctrine and examples of atonement in the Old Testament find their counterpart, fulfillment and complete explanation in the new covenant in the blood of Jesus Christ (Mt 26:28; Heb 12:24). The Atonement between God and men is accomplished through Jesus Christ. Atonement originates with God who "was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself" (2 Cor 5:19), and whose love gave Jesus to redeem sinful men (Jn 3:16; Rom 5:8, etc.). In both the Old and New Testaments, the atonement originated with God, who devised it and revealed it. We had nothing to do with it, except to accept it.

AN INTERESTING NOTE: The "Horns of the Altar"
The bronze altar has projections called "horns" at the four corners, which were one piece with the altar. In 1 Kings 1:50, we hear of Adonijah clinging to the "horns of the altar" for protection or asylum. Although nothing is said of this practice in the Torah, we know from this and other places in scripture that this was commonly observed. Apparently, when someone had done something wrong and was fleeing or seeking sanctuary and the mercy of God, they went to the Tabernacle and "grabbed hold of the horns of the altar." The blood of sacrifices was applied to the horns of the altar. Horns represent power in scripture. The power we have is in the sacrifice of Jesus. It is to this spiritual altar we come for salvation, sanctuary and mercy.
The Laver

17 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Make a bronze basin, with its bronze stand, for washing. Place it between the Tent of Meeting and the altar, and put water in it. 19 Aaron and his sons are to wash their hands and feet with water from it. 20 Whenever they enter the Tent of Meeting, they shall wash with water so that they will not die. Also, when they approach the altar to minister by presenting an offering made to the LORD by fire, 21 they shall wash their hands and feet so that they will not die. This is to be a lasting ordinance for Aaron and his descendants for the generations to come.” (Exodus 30:17-21)

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. (Exodus 38:8)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MATERIALS</th>
<th>Solid bronze, made from mirrors of women who served there</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SIZE</td>
<td>not specified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PURPOSE</td>
<td>Washing, cleansing for the priests; preparation to be in the Presence of a Holy, Spotless God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DETAIL</td>
<td>Filled with water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPIRITUAL CONCEPTS</td>
<td>We must be cleansed from the blackness of sin before entering into fellowship with a Holy God. After accepting the sacrifice that atones for us, we must confess and receive forgiveness for our sins. We must acknowledge we are &quot;dirty&quot; and be washed before proceeding further. Jesus said He was the Living Water; the Word of God is likened to the water of regeneration, washing clean, serving clean</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The laver, or basin, was a large bowl filled with water located halfway between the brazen altar and the Holy Place. Although God did not give specific measurements for the Laver, it was to be made entirely of bronze. The priests were to wash their hands and their feet in it before entering the Holy Place.

The laver was located in a convenient place for washing and stood as a reminder that people need cleansing before approaching God. The priests atoned for their sins through a sacrifice at the brazen altar, but they cleansed themselves at the laver before serving in the Holy Place, so that they would be pure and not die before a holy God.
The Significance of The Laver

The application for believers today is that we are forgiven through Christ’s work on the cross, but we are washed through His Word. We need to be washed daily in His Word to cleanse ourselves, so that we can serve and minister before Him. We also need to regularly confess our sins, and receive His forgiveness, His covering and cleansing.

“...Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.” (Ephesians 5:25-27)

“Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled [with blood] to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.” (Hebrews 10:22)

The laver was the only piece in the Tabernacle without specified dimensions. The laver stands for the washing in the Word of God, and that is an unlimited resource. We can never plumb the depths of God's Word, even if we studied it day and night every day for a lifetime.

It is very interesting to note that the laver was constructed from the mirrors of the women who served at the gate of the Tabernacle. These were the looking glasses of Egypt, what both men and women used to view their images, to assess their "attractiveness." In this world, we are always attempting to appear attractive, to outwardly impress others and call attention to self. But when we understand the nature of the black heart of mankind, the inwardly unattractive self, all this changes. We realize it is a vain and meaningless pursuit to either attempt to appear attractive to God, or to call attention to self. God is blind to outward worldly attractiveness. He looks only on the heart. We should be looking into the reflective Word of God to see the truth about ourselves. James makes a bold statement to this effect in his letter (1:22-25):

"Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does."
The Word of God is the mirror that reveals what we first look like to God before our washing in the blood, what we look like to Him after that washing, and how we are to continue clean before Him. We are to reflect the beauty of the Lord, not the so-called beauty of this world.

The laver may also represent the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, in conjunction with the washing by the Word. Titus 3:4-7 tells us: "But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life." The Holy Spirit is our Counselor, Teacher and Guide in this life. One of His roles is to point us to Jesus, and He frequently does this through helping us understand the Word of God. If we honestly look into God's Word to know Him better, the Holy Spirit will teach us through the Word. The Holy Spirit was referenced as the Living Water by Jesus in John 7:37-39a, "On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive;..." Jesus Himself is the Living Water that quenches our spiritual thirst. The Holy Spirit is the Living Water that floods the fields of our hearts that seek God.

The Word of God is pure, clear, and clean. It is without error, infallible. It is suitable for cleansing our daily walk with God. The priests were to wash their hands and feet in the water from this laver. Our hands represent the work we do in life for God, and the feet represent our walk for Him on a daily basis. We come to the bronze altar of sacrifice for salvation, and we continue coming to the laver for sanctification and daily cleansing in the Word of God. In His amazing prayer in the garden before His death, Jesus prayed for all believers. He said, "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth." (John 17:17). The laver of God's Word is where we bathe daily.

What is Sanctification?
The Greek and Hebrew words that we have translated into the English "sanctify" or the process of "sanctification" imply making something (someone) holy, which literally means to separate out (from the world) and become consecrated to God. When something is sanctified, it is declared as belonging to God. When we are sanctified, our entire character and life are very literally transformed. We must remember that sanctification is a process, thus the need for daily "setting apart," daily consecration, daily seeking of holiness (refusing sin). The Word of God provides our instruction in this, and also gives us truth about this in a world of lies and deceptions. The "washing of regeneration" (see Titus reference above) is the planting of new life in us, and that is the work of the Holy Spirit. But He cannot do it without our permission and submission.
Washing Before Serving

After the atonement that was granted at the altar of sacrifice, the first item encountered in the courtyard, the priest was move to the laver, which prepared him for service in the Tabernacle proper. Our purpose on earth seems so elusive to so many people, but it is really quite simple. Our purpose is to glorify God. We do that by serving Him in all we do, everyday. Our greatest goal is service to God. All believers are called "priests" and are intended to offer their lives in service to God. So daily we must be washed before that service. Here is a powerful commentary on this matter:

"It is necessary that believer-priests to bathe in the Word every day. "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." (Hebrews 10:22). Aaron's sons died, not only because they offered "strange fire" in the Holy Place, but they also neglected to wash at the Laver before their entrance and service there. God has provided a "beauty bath" for His "royal priests" and it is expected that they "wash" in the Word of God before they perform any service to Him.

We criticize those who never avail themselves of the opportunity to wash their physical bodies, and consider them obnoxious in our sight and smell. But what a stench in the nostrils of God are His children who never given themselves a "spiritual" bath at the Laver! The Word of God is here for us that we might be able to be cleansed thereby. "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)"

Ruth Specter Lascelle,
"A Dwelling Place for God"

(NOTE: The incident referenced in the above quote about Aaron's son and the "strange fire" comes from an event recorded in Leviticus 10:1-3:

"Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. So fire went out from the LORD and devoured them, and they died before the LORD. And Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD spoke, saying: 'By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; And before all the people I must be glorified.'"

The sons of Aaron did not take the instructions of God for approaching Him seriously, and instead did it their own way. God is a holy God and has purpose and reason for all He tells us to do, and expects us to do it precisely. The sons of Aaron were killed not because they innocently broke a few rules, but because they chose to do it their own way. So like us. Their hearts were wrong, and God will not be mocked. We must not underestimate His holiness and the need to approach Him precisely as He instructed. Today, that approach is through the blood of Jesus, and daily sanctification.
Progressing Further: The Tabernacle Coverings

After cleansing himself in the laver outside the tent, the priest would then turn and look at the Tabernacle ("dwelling place") itself before entering the first of two "rooms" that made up this large tent. The first room is referred to as the Holy Place, and the inner room the Holy of Holies. The entire structure measured 10 cubits wide by 20 cubits long, or about 15 feet wide by 45 feet long, and 15 feet high. The Holy Place measured 30 feet long, 15 feet wide, 15 feet tall. The Holy of Holies was a perfect cube measuring 15 X 15 X 15 feet. We'll talk more about this cube later.

The main structure was constructed of acacia wood boards (actually thick and wide planks) that were overlaid with gold. We know from our study of types that gold is the symbol for God, for divinity, and wood is a symbol of humanity (more on this in a little bit). These planks were fitted together to make the walls, and came apart when it was moved from one location to another.

Over this outer structure was a series of four covers. They acted as a roof to protect the Tabernacle from the weather and elements, but they also have great significance. Remember that the Tabernacle is God's dwelling place among man. It is the place where God will allow man to fellowship with Him.

The innermost layer was woven with fine linen and embroidered with figures of cherubim (angels), the second layer was made of goat’s hair, the third layer was made of rams’ skins dyed red, and the outermost layer was made of other skins. The curtains were pinned to the ground with loops and clasps. Here is how God instructed Moses about these coverings. We'll take them one at a time:

The Innermost Covering (Embroidered Linen, seen from inside the Tabernacle)

"Moreover you shall make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine woven linen and blue, purple, and scarlet thread; with artistic designs of cherubim you shall weave them. The length of each curtain shall be twenty-eight cubits, and the width of each curtain four cubits. And every one of the curtains shall have the same measurements. Five curtains shall be coupled to one another, and the other five curtains shall be coupled to one another. And you shall make loops of blue yarn on the edge of the curtain on the
Selvedge of one set, and likewise you shall do on the outer edge of the other curtain of the second set. Fifty loops you shall make in the one curtain, and fifty loops you shall make on the edge of the curtain that is on the end of the second set, that the loops may be clasped to one another. And you shall make fifty clasps of gold, and couple the curtains together with the clasps, so that it may be one tabernacle. (Exodus 26:1-6)

The word for Tabernacle used in these verses is mishkan, meaning literally "dwelling place," or "habitation." This was the first covering over the walls of the place where God would dwell, with man. It is the covering that is seen from inside the Tent. This first covering was fine twisted linen, which denotes richness, beauty, perfection and righteousness. In general, "righteousness" means "in right standing with God." Remember that the walls of the Tabernacle are wood, which stands for humanity, but they are covered in gold, which represents deity. Therefore, we have a clear picture of Jesus Christ, perfectly human and perfectly divine. He is the only way we can fellowship with God, because He is the only One righteous who could pay the price to enter that fellowship. The inner curtain is a picture of His beauty, spotlessness, majesty.

The curtains are embroidered with images of cherubim. We are not given information on what these cherubim looked like, but somehow God conveyed that to Moses, or perhaps Moses even saw them. We don't know. There is mention of the cherubim throughout Exodus and then in Chronicles and Kings as Solomon builds the Temple where he also has curtains embroidered like these in the Tabernacle. Somehow they must have had some idea of their appearance. We have a good picture of these strange creatures given in Ezekiel 10, and we see them again in Revelation 4, as the living creatures around the throne (these descriptions were not available to Moses and those embroidering the cherubim on the curtains at that time). It seems that the cherubim are always in the presence of God. They are sometimes called the "angels of the Presence." They perhaps attend to the throne of God, and are constantly praising Him. In Revelation 4 the living creatures, which are most likely cherubim (we know this because of their described appearance by John), seem to be in unending worship:

Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back. The first living creature was like a lion, the second living creature like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle. The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!” (Revelation 4:6-8)

These creatures sound remarkably like the ones Ezekiel describes in his vision in chapter 10, though there may be some differences:

And I looked, and there in the firmament that was above the head of the cherubim, there appeared something like a sapphire stone, having the appearance of the likeness of a
throne. Then He spoke to the man clothed with linen, and said, “Go in among the wheels, under the cherub, fill your hands with coals of fire from among the cherubim, and scatter them over the city.” And he went in as I watched. Now the cherubim were standing on the south side of the temple when the man went in, and the cloud filled the inner court. Then the glory of the LORD went up from the cherub, and paused over the threshold of the temple; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of the LORD’s glory. And the sound of the wings of the cherubim was heard even in the outer court, like the voice of Almighty God when He speaks. Then it happened, when He commanded the man clothed in linen, saying, “Take fire from among the wheels, from among the cherubim,” that he went in and stood beside the wheels. And the cherub stretched out his hand from among the cherubim to the fire that was among the cherubim, and took some of it and put it into the hands of the man clothed with linen, who took it and went out. The cherubim appeared to have the form of a man’s hand under their wings. And when I looked, there were four wheels by the cherubim, one wheel by one cherub and another wheel by each other cherub; the wheels appeared to have the color of a beryl stone. As for their appearance, all four looked alike—as it were, a wheel in the middle of a wheel. When they went, they went toward any of their four directions; they did not turn aside when they went, but followed in the direction the head was facing. They did not turn aside when they went. And their whole body, with their back, their hands, their wings, and the wheels that the four had, were full of eyes all around. As for the wheels, they were called in my hearing, “Wheel.” Each one had four faces: the first face was the face of a cherub, the second face the face of a man, the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle. And the cherubim were lifted up. This was the living creature I saw by the River Chebar. When the cherubim went, the wheels went beside them; and when the cherubim lifted their wings to mount up from the earth, the same wheels also did not turn from beside them. When the cherubim stood still, the wheels stood still, and when one was lifted up, the other lifted itself up, for the spirit of the living creature was in them. Then the glory of the LORD departed from the threshold of the temple and stood over the cherubim. And the cherubim lifted their wings and mounted up from the earth in my sight. When they went out, the wheels were beside them; and they stood at the door of the east gate of the LORD’s house, and the glory of the God of Israel was above them. This is the living creature I saw under the God of Israel by the River Chebar, and I knew they were cherubim. Each one had four faces and each one four wings, and the likeness of the hands of a man was under their wings. And the likeness of their faces was the same as the faces which I had seen by the River Chebar, their appearance and their persons. They each went straight forward. (Ezekiel 10)

Easton's Bible Dictionary (1897) describes cherubim this way:

**CHERUBIM** (plural, cherub singular) the name of certain figures frequently mentioned in Scripture. They are first mentioned in connection with the expulsion of our first parents from Eden (Gen. 3:24). There is no intimation given of their shape or form. They are next mentioned when Moses was commanded to provide furniture for the tabernacle (Ex. 25:17-20; 26:1, 31). God promised to commune with Moses "from between the
cherubim" (25:22). This expression was afterwards used to denote the Divine abode and presence (Num. 7:89; 1 Sam. 4:4; Isa. 37:16; Ps. 80:1; 99:1). In Ezekiel's vision (10:1-20) they appear as living creatures supporting the throne of God. From Ezekiel's description of them (1:10; 41:18, 19), they appear to have been compound figures, unlike any real object in nature; ...images possessing the features and properties of several animals. Two cherubim were placed on the mercy-seat of the ark; two of colossal size overshadowed it in Solomon's temple. Ezekiel (1:4-14) speaks of four; and this number of "living creatures" is mentioned in Rev. 4:6. Those on the ark are called the "cherubim of glory" (Heb. 9:5), i.e., of the Shechinah, or cloud of glory, for on them the visible glory of God rested. They were placed one at each end of the mercy-seat, with wings stretched upward, and their faces "toward each other and toward the mercy-seat." They were anointed with holy oil, like the ark itself and the other sacred furniture. ...The cherubim... represent spiritual [beings] in immediate contact with Jehovah.

There is a lot of discussion about whether cherubim are symbolic or real. We have no reason to believe they are not real creatures in God's presence. Just because we cannot imagine them does not mean they are not "real" at least in the spiritual realm.

In Isaiah 6 we see another angelic type creature, but these are called "seraphim." They seem to be similar, but have a different name or classification, most likely because of their fiery color referenced by the Hebrew word saraph. It is obvious we cannot really imagine or comprehend these beings. They are like nothing we are familiar with. We just know whether cherubim or seraphim, these are created beings in the presence of God who play an instrumental role in God's dealings with mankind, and in worship of God.

The four faces portrayed on the cherubim are the same as we saw earlier on the flags or standards of the camp of Israel, as it camped around the Tabernacle: the lion, the ox, the man, and the eagle. The cherubim's four faces are, in essence, "Four are the highest in the world: the lion among wild beasts, the ox among tame cattle, the eagle among birds, man among all (creatures); but God is supreme over all." (Jewish proverb)

The Lion: Symbolic of Matthew's Gospel, Jesus as the King, the Lion from the Tribe of Judah

The Ox: Symbolic of Mark's Gospel, Jesus as Servant

The Man: Symbolic of Luke's Gospel, Jesus as the Son of Man (His humanity)

The Eagle: Symbolic of John's Gospel, Jesus as the Son of God (His Deity)

In the cherubim, then, we see representations of the nature of Jesus in His Kingship, His Servanthood, His Humanity, and His Deity.
The colors of this inner covering are also important. **Blue is the color of heaven**, God's dwelling place. **Scarlet is the color of atonement (blood).** Purple is a blend of these two colors. An interesting note, red, or scarlet signifies humanity, since the Hebrew word "Adam" literally means "red earth" or "ruddy." Purple could be considered the "in between" color, the combination of red and blue, and symbolically, of the divine and the human, Jesus. He is the God-Man. **Purple stands for royalty.** Jesus is the King of Kings, the Royal One. Humanity and Divinity are blended in Jesus. All of these colors represent the Messiah, the "covering" for our sins.

The dimensions of these curtains is also meaningful. There were ten of them (two sets of five), each 28 cubits X 4 cubits. Twenty-eight is 4X7. Four is the number of creation, the earth and its creatures. Seven means perfectly complete. Five is the number for God's grace. We have a perfectly complete picture of all of God's creation entering into His righteousness, His Presence, if we choose, by His grace. These curtain panels were equipped with 50 (50 is number of Jubilee, when the slaves were set free, in Leviticus 25) blue (heavenly) loops, and used gold (God) hooks to fasten them together. In this, we have a picture of God holding together the dwelling place of man and God together. It was to act as "one tabernacle" when it was set up. There are not many dwelling places for man and God, but one alone.

This first, or inner, covering, therefore, is a beautiful and striking picture of the beauty of our Savior, seen only after we enter His presence. It cannot be seen from the outside. It is a physical structure to represent the spiritual structure of God's dwelling with mankind, provided by God through His grace, held together by Him, and entered by all who will. Those who enter are "set free" from the slavery of sin. That is the real Jubilee!

**The Second Covering (Goat's Hair, on top of embroidered linen)**

"You shall also make curtains of goats' hair, to be a tent over the tabernacle. You shall make eleven curtains. The length of each curtain shall be thirty cubits, and the width of each curtain four cubits; and the eleven curtains shall all have the same measurements. And you shall couple five curtains by themselves and six curtains by themselves, and you shall double over the sixth curtain at the forefront of the tent. You shall make fifty loops on the edge of the curtain that is outermost in one set, and fifty loops on the edge of the curtain of the second set. And you shall make fifty bronze clasps, put the clasps into the loops, and couple the tent together, that it may be one. The remnant that remains of the curtains of the tent, the half curtain that remains, shall hang over the back of the tabernacle. And a cubit on one side and a cubit on the other side, of what remains of the length of the curtains of the tent, shall hang over the sides of the tabernacle, on this side and on that side, to cover it. (Exodus 26:7-13)

This second layer of covering is very interesting. Very specific instructions are given for this one, as well as the first, but not for the last two. There are reasons for this. The
word used in the scripture above for "tent" ("...tent over the Tabernacle...") is the Hebrew word *Ohel*. It literally means a large tent, which could be seen from a distance. It was understood to be similar to a Bedouin tent. Even today Bedouin tents are made from black goat's hair. In the book of Song of Solomon, there is a verse (1:5) that states: "I am dark, ... Like the tents of Kedar." These "tents" in this verse are the Bedouin tents made of black goat hair. Those in the region of Kedar were the ancestors of today’s Bedouins. So this passage refers to a black goat hair covering, over the beautiful embroidered linen. Black is the color of sin. Jesus was "made sin" and nailed to a cross for us. Black is the human condition without Jesus. An interesting understanding about this curtain is that it could not be seen from the inside, and only a small portion of it from the outside (the portion doubled over at the front). But the people knew it was there. It was a constant reminder of mankind's darkness, our blackness, before a Holy God, and His provision for that sin. It also reminds us that God does not see our blackness when He looks upon those who have accepted His sacrificial Lamb. He sees only the beauty and righteousness of His Son.

As always, the dimensions specified are important. There are 11 curtain panels on this one, which seems odd at first. However, they are in groups of 5 and 6. Six is the number for man, and five is the number for God’s grace. The sixth panel was the one doubled over in the front, which enabled the people to see this covering, which would otherwise be hidden. It also indicated that a MAN would become the offering for their sins! And God will no more see man’s sins. They are COVERED.

Notice that the 50 (*Jubilee, freedom from slavery*) hooks used to tie down this covering are made of brass (bronze), which stands for judgment. Man deserves - sin deserves - God's judgment.

This "hidden" covering is a picture of our sins, deserving of judgment, hidden from God's sight by the beauty of His presence from the inside, and by the blood of Jesus on the outside.

**AN INTERESTING NOTE:** Did you notice the reference to a "selvage" edge in the first inner covering of fine linen? We know what a selvage edge is. It's the edge of fabric that won't unravel. God's covering, the beauty of His Presence and His grace, will not unravel. It is permanent, lasting forever. Notice there is no selvage edge mentioned for this black covering representing sin and man's blackness. Once an edge of fabric begins to unravel, virtually nothing can stop it. Jesus' work on the cross has unraveled sin, and nothing can stop that, or reverse it!
The Third Covering (Ram's Skins Dyed Red, on top of black goat hair covering)
"You shall also make a covering of ram skins dyed red for the tent,..."  (Exodus 26:14a)

The only specific instruction regarding this covering is the type and the color. We know red is symbolic for the blood of Jesus, which blots out sin (the black goat hair covering). The ram represents the substitutionary sacrifice that God provided to Abraham on Mt. Moriah, after He told him to sacrifice his son Isaac there (Genesis 22). Isaac lived because a ram was provided in his place. Abraham named that place "Yahveh-Yireh" which means The Lord Will See and Provide. God would provide the ultimate sacrifice, which meant that anyone who accepted it, would live.

Rams were also used in the consecration of priests. When the priests were "set apart" for service, a ram was offered for them. The ram's skin covering, therefore, is also a symbol for the priesthood of our Lord Jesus. He is our High Priest, offering Himself as the acceptable sacrifice. Jesus is both Priest and Sacrifice.

These skins were not visible from the outside or inside of the Tabernacle, but again, the people knew they were there. There were no specified dimensions, which could represent the fact that only God fully understand the depth and width of the nature of this sacrifice. We cannot completely understand it. It may also indicate that the blood of Jesus is unlimited. It covers everyone.

The Fourth Covering ("Badger" Skins, on top of the Ram's Skins Dyed Red)
"...and a covering of badger skins above that."  (Exodus 26:14b)

Just as in the third covering, we find no specifics in this fourth and final Tabernacle covering. There is a great deal of controversy surround exactly what kind of skin this was made of. We are not absolutely sure what kind of animal this was. Some translations say badger, but others argue the badger was not native to this region. Some say porpoise, and then others argue that the porpoise (dolphin) also was not native to this region. However, that is not entirely true. They would have had access to the porpoise along the Red Sea. This word (tachash) has been translated in many ways, including badger, seal, porpoise, antelope, and just "fine leather" or "durable leather." For our purposes, it doesn't really matter, but we can be sure it would not be what the
Law considered an "unclean" animal, which included the badger and the antelope. The final outer covering of the Tabernacle consisted of some sort of animal skins sewn together as a durable protective covering. This was the only part of the Tabernacle that the Israelites could see on the outside from a distance. The beautiful curtains were hidden inside. On the outside were just plain animal skins.

This last plain skin covering not only is a great protective layer, but it also speaks to the "comeliness" of our Lord. As a human, there wasn't anything particularly attractive about Him. Isaiah 53:2-3 makes reference to this: "...He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, There is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him."

The Tabernacle was not a very nice looking structure on the outside. It was covered with plain brown animal skins. But when you entered into the place where God dwells with man, you can experience God from inside His presence, not out. His beauty is seen and understood from the inside, both inside the Tabernacle, and inside our hearts and spirits. "But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Corinthians 2:14)

"For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." (1 Corinthians 1:18) You must enter inside God's dwelling place, into His Presence, in order to see His beauty and to know Him fully. That means we must shed the "stuff" of the world, our preconceptions, misconceptions, worldly wisdom which is not wisdom at all, and come to God with an honest desire to know Him. He will reveal Himself to the ones who honestly desire to know Him and seek Him.

Believers are not content to stand on the outside and look at our God and His Son through worldly eyes, seeing only the outside covering. We step beyond the outer plain "wrapper" that the world gives, to see the red rams' skins that represent the gift of atonement, covering the blackness of the human sin seen in the goats' hair covering, and finally into the presence of God to behold His beauty, righteousness and grace.
### Summary of Coverings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MATERIALS</th>
<th>Fine linen (1st covering)</th>
<th>Goat's hair (2nd covering)</th>
<th>Ram's skins dyed red (3rd covering)</th>
<th>Plain animal skins (leather) (4th covering)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SIZE</td>
<td>10 curtains, 28 X 4 cubits each (approx, 42 X 6 feet), 50 loops, 50 gold clasps (100 for both sets)</td>
<td>11 curtains, 30X4 cubits (45X6 feet); 50 loops, 50 bronze clasps (100 for both sets)</td>
<td>not specified, just to cover the structure and other coverings</td>
<td>not specified, just to cover the structure and other coverings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PURPOSE</td>
<td>to cover the Tabernacle, reveal God's beauty to those inside (this layer visible only inside)</td>
<td>Additional covering over Tabernacle</td>
<td>Additional covering over Tabernacle</td>
<td>Additional, final and visible from outside, covering over Tabernacle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DETAIL</td>
<td>finely embroidered with blue, scarlet and purple, with figures of cherubim woven in; loops of blue yarn on selvedge edge, gold clasps, two sets of 5 curtains clasped together &quot;as one&quot; extra to hang over sides and back</td>
<td>Made of goat's hair, black in color, 5 curtains in one set, 6 in another, 6th curtain in one set doubled over in front of Tabernacle (visible); extra to hang over sides and back</td>
<td>Ram's skins, dyed red (no other detail specified)</td>
<td>Animal skins (no other detail specified)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPIRITUAL CONCEPTS</td>
<td>God's beauty is seen from within, after entering into His Presence. Blue is the color of heaven, God's abode, scarlet the color of the blood of the atonement (Jesus' sacrifice), and purple is the color of royalty, Jesus is King of Kings, Lord of Lords. The selvedge edge means God's plan and purpose will not unravel, but is firm forever, the gold is deity. The cherubim are those heavenly angels in the Presence of God at all times. Even they reflect the nature of the Son of God.</td>
<td>Black represents the sins of mankind, evil, man's need for atonement, but this layer is not seen from inside, in God's dwelling place. Only His righteousness is seen in the beauty of the first covering. A little of the black is seen from the outside in the doubled over portion, as a reminder that man needs atonement. Bronze represents judgment. Man's sins deserve judgment.</td>
<td>Ram is the substitutionary sacrifice in the desert for Abraham and Isaac (Genesis 22). God would provide His own sacrifice (His Son). The red is the blood of Jesus shed for our sins as atonement, a covering for our blackness.</td>
<td>The Tabernacle had a &quot;plain brown wrapper.&quot; It wasn't pretty on the outside, just as Jesus was not attractive in appearance. His attraction and beauty is seen only after entering His Presence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Structure Itself
The curtains of the Tabernacle, or tent, would have nothing to hang upon without the boards that made up its outer walls. Again, God gave very specific instructions for these walls:

“And for the tabernacle you shall make the boards of acacia wood, standing upright. Ten cubits shall be the length of a board, and a cubit and a half shall be the width of each board. Two tenons shall be in each board for binding one to another. Thus you shall make for all the boards of the tabernacle. And you shall make the boards for the tabernacle, twenty boards for the south side. You shall make forty sockets of silver under the twenty boards: two sockets under each of the boards for its two tenons. And for the second side of the tabernacle, the north side, there shall be twenty boards and their forty sockets of silver: two sockets under each of the boards. For the far side of the tabernacle, westward, you shall make six boards. And you shall also make two boards for the two back corners of the tabernacle. They shall be coupled together at the bottom and they shall be coupled together at the top by one ring. Thus it shall be for both of them. They shall be for the two corners. So there shall be eight boards with their sockets of silver—sixteen sockets—two sockets under each of the boards. “And you shall make bars of acacia wood: five for the boards on one side of the tabernacle, five bars for the boards on the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the side of the tabernacle, for the far side westward. The middle bar shall pass through the midst of the boards from end to end. You shall overlay the boards with gold, make their rings of gold as holders for the bars, and overlay the bars with gold. And you shall raise up the tabernacle according to its pattern which you were shown on the mountain.” (Exodus 26:15-30)
The boards that made up the Tabernacle walls were to be constructed of acacia wood, which was the same as the Hebrew "shittah" or plural shittim. The name shittim comes from another Hebrew word meaning "to pierce, to scourge" because of its very sharp and prominent thorns. Some have said that our Lord's crown of thorns was made from the shittah tree. Whenever wood is used throughout the Tabernacle, it is always the acacia tree, or shittah. We know that wood is a symbol for humanity, and gold is a symbol for deity, thus these boards are also representative of Jesus (as is everything in the Tabernacle!), who is perfectly human, and perfectly divine. There are many other interesting similarities with this particular wood.

No Corruption
The wood from these trees will not rot, and worms won't eat it. We know from Scripture (Psalm 16:10) that Jesus' flesh also saw "no corruption" or decay. The acacia tree flourishes in dry ground, where no other tree can survive or find moisture. This tree lives in spite of its circumstances. About 700 years before Jesus was born the prophet Isaiah said that Jesus would be a "root out of dry ground" (Isaiah 53:2). Circumstances were truly against Jesus from the time of His birth until His death, yet He not only survived (even death!), but flourishes today and forever. The shittah tree is incorruptible, as is our Lord.

The Upright, Bound Together Church
There is another application in these Tabernacle boards. The boards were to be "many members" yet bound together. These wooden walls overlaid with gold are also representative of the many members of the Body of Christ. We are One in Him, yet many. We are bound together in Him. The boards were to be "standing upright." The Hebrew word used here is "omdim" the plural of ahmahd, which means "to continue firm," or "abide," "endure" and "withstand." Not only does this speak of Jesus who endures and abides, but also the Church, the Body of Christ in the "desert" of the world. We are not to reclining, or resting, but firmly standing together, enduring to the end, in Jesus Christ. And the Church will eventually also be incorruptible. 1 Peter 1:22-23 tells us "Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever..." Also, Paul speaks of this in 1 Corinthians 15:50-55 "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” “ O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?”
It Bleeds!
Here's another little interesting fact about the acacia tree. It produces gum arabic, also called gum acacia, a fascinating substance used widely throughout the world. It is a hardened sap and is completely edible. It is used as a food stabilizer (soft drinks, gumdrops, marshmallows M & M's chewing gum, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, shoe polish, and adhesives, to name a few!), as well as in printing, paints, glue and other industrial applications. It is so widely used because it is edible and non-toxic. It has even been used as a food, and is also known to quench thirst! This gum arabic is harvested by making incisions in the bark. What a beautiful picture of Jesus, who becomes the Bread for our souls, and the Living Water of our spirits, because He was pierced for our sins and nailed to a tree. The Creator of the tree was cursed and nailed to the tree, standing upright outside the city on His "altar" of sacrifice. Isn't God amazing?

Planks or Frames?
Due to the density and weight of this wood, it would have been extraordinarily heavy to make these solid planks. We know their size and can easily calculate how much they would weigh. We know how they were transported from place to place (wagons drawn by oxen). These boards would have been too heavy to transport easily. The size and shape of the desert acacia also does not lend itself to solid single planks. For these and other reasons, most speculate that these were frames, not solid boards. This would also make sense from the aspect of the curtains, the first layer of finely embroidered linens with figures of cherubim. These would be completely unseen (except in the ceiling) if the planks were solid. A framework would allow easy transport, be easily constructed from the available acacia, and allow the beauty of the curtains to be seen from the inside.

The Silver Sockets
These wooden frames were to be set in silver sockets. We know silver is representative of atonement, redemption. The silver comes from the atonement money (the ransom price) required of the firstborn of both humans and animals. This was a reminder that we are ransomed, redeemed, by the blood of a lamb. From Exodus 13:11-16 "And it
shall be, when the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites, as He swore to you and your fathers, and gives it to you, that you shall set apart to the LORD all that open the womb, that is, every firstborn that comes from an animal which you have; the males shall be the LORD's. But every firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb; and if you will not redeem it, then you shall break its neck. And all the firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem. So it shall be, when your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'What is this?' that you shall say to him, 'By strength of hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. And it came to pass, when Pharaoh was stubborn about letting us go, that the LORD killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of beast. Therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all males that open the womb, but all the firstborn of my sons I redeem.' It shall be as a sign on your hand and as frontlets between your eyes, for by strength of hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt.”

Our salvation stands on the atonement of the Lamb of God. He is our sure foundation. Scriptures tell us that there were exactly 100 of these silver sockets in the Tabernacle walls, serving as foundation. "And from the hundred talents of silver were cast the sockets of the sanctuary and the bases of the veil: one hundred sockets from the hundred talents, one talent for each socket. Each socket was made from a talent of silver." (Exodus 38:27) A talent is thought to weigh between 75-100 pounds! With that kind of heavy and solid foundation, these walls were very stable and could not be pushed over or subject to winds or other outside elements.

The Dimensions
The boards were to be 10 cubits high (approximately 15'). Ten is a number signifying perfection of divine order. A decade is 10 years, an era is 10 X 10 = 100 years. A millennium is 1000 years (10 X 10 X 10). The height of God's sanctuary was of divine perfection. The north and south walls were each 20 frames, the west (back) wall was six frames, plus one doubled frame for each corner (for a total of 8 frames on this wall), which together is 48 boards. The only other times (twice) this number appears in scripture, it relates to the number of cities given to the Levites (Numbers 35:7, Joshua 21:41). It is no coincidence that the 48 boards which surround the Tabernacle, which is where the priests (Levites) will serve. Forty-eight is 2X 24. Later there were 24 courses of priests. Twenty-four is also representative of the combined Church of 12 Tribes of Israel and 12 Disciples, as seen in Revelation 4 and 5. And each of these boards had a pair of sockets (48 X 2 = 96). The last four sockets of silver were for the pillars that hung the veil inside, separating the holy place from the holy of holies. The number 100 is significant for the whole (100%). God's redemption is whole and complete, nothing else is required, and it is also offered to the whole of humanity.

The west wall, the rear wall of the sanctuary, had eight boards (six, plus two doubled, acting as "cornerstones"). Eight is the number of resurrection, the number for "new beginnings." And Jesus is referenced as "a precious cornerstone," and a "Chief cornerstone," "a sure foundation." Our dwelling with God has a sure foundation in Jesus Christ, through whom we will be resurrected into a glorious new beginning.
The overall dimensions of the Tabernacle, based on the cubit ratios (regardless of actual lengths) was 30 cubits (20 frames each 1½ cubits wide) long by 10 cubits wide, by 10 cubits tall. We can convert that for our purposes to 45 feet long by 15 feet wide, by 15 feet tall. The Tabernacle actually consisted of two rooms. The first room was called the **Holy Place**, and measured 30 feet by 15 feet. The veil separated the second room, called the **Holy of Holies**. This was the place that housed the Ark of the Covenant, and God's Presence - the Shekinah. God dwelled between the Cherubim on the Mercy Seat (Atonement Cover, the lid of the ark). This room measured 15 feet by 15 feet by 15 feet, or a **perfect cube** (10 X 10 X 10 cubits). The 10 X 10 X 10 is significant as the use of a thousand is throughout scripture for the "Kingdom" or the Millennial reign of Jesus. The cube is also significant, as we see a perfect cube in Revelation 21, the New Jerusalem, which is described as the dwelling place of God and His people, together. The Tabernacle's "inner room" or the Holy of Holies, the dwelling place of God with man before the Holy Spirit, is the ancient representation of the coming dwelling of God and man together in eternity. This is a beautiful picture and prophetic indicator of the perfection of our union and fellowship.

**The East Wall, The Entrance**

The final "wall" of the sanctuary is the entrance, or door. The instructions given for this "door" include finely woven linen in the symbolic colors of blue, purple and scarlet, suspended by gold hooks, from five pillars of acacia wood overlaid with gold. **“You shall make a screen for the door of the tabernacle, woven of blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine woven linen, made by a weaver. And you shall make for the screen five pillars of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold; their hooks shall be gold, and you shall cast five sockets of bronze for them.”** (Exodus 38:36-37) So we have the same wood pillars covered in gold, and gold hooks for this beautiful linen curtain that served as an entrance or door. But notice what the sockets are made of - bronze! Not the silver of the Tabernacle proper. It doesn't take much puzzling to understand this one. Bronze is symbolic of sin. Sinful man crosses the threshold of God's Sanctuary, but cannot be in His Presence without judgment (bronze) and a covering over of those sins. We are bought and paid for by the atonement "money" (silver), the blood of the Lamb, ransomed from the penalty of sin, and redeemed. Bronze is changed to silver once we are inside! It all rests on the work of Jesus on the cross. When we step over that threshold, we are in sin, deserving of judgment. But once inside His presence, we rest in the atonement of Jesus. It is no coincident that the number of pillars in this entry way was five, symbolic of God's grace. We can only be saved by His grace.
| **MATERIALS** | Acacia wood overlaid with gold, silver sockets, woven tapestry with gold hooks and bronze sockets (entrance curtain) |
| **SIZE** | 30 X 10 X 10 cubits (two chambers, 20 X 10 X 10, 10 X 10 X 10) |
| **PURPOSE** | Entering the presence of God, serving Him here. |
| **DETAIL** | The "structure" of God's sanctuary contains materials speaking of the divinity of Jesus, the required judgment of man, and the atone of God's gift of His Son. The number of boards indicates divine perfection, and our ultimate resurrection into Him. |
| **SPIRITUAL CONCEPTS** | We enter into God's sanctuary only after judgment of sins, and that entrance is through His Son, Jesus Christ, who served as our covering, atonement for sin. Inside His presence is indescribable beauty, purity and eternal safekeeping. |

**A VERY INTERESTING NOTE:**

"The Bible is scientific...In 1964 space scientists discovered four corners on a round earth and the 1969 pictures taken by astronauts show an earth hanging on nothing as we read in Job 26:7. Science is confirming what Scripture teaches. In Job 38:4 we read of foundations of the earth and the Hebrew word used ... refers to sockets used in construction of the tabernacle. Since the Alaskan earthquake on Good Friday of 1964, seismographic studies have revealed literal foundation sockets, or mantlerock under each of the seven continents. Science has just recently learned that what Job wrote 4000 years ago is scientifically accurate."

Bible-Science Newsletter, May, 1980

And it appears that God is modeled this in His Tabernacle!
Finally, the View Inside the Holy Place

He put the table in the tabernacle of meeting, on the north side of the tabernacle, outside the veil; and he set the bread in order upon it before the LORD, as the LORD had commanded Moses. He put the lampstand in the tabernacle of meeting, across from the table, on the south side of the tabernacle; and he lit the lamps before the LORD, as the LORD had commanded Moses. He put the gold altar in the tabernacle of meeting in front of the veil; and he burned sweet incense on it, as the LORD had commanded Moses. He hung up the screen at the door of the tabernacle. (Exodus 40:22-28)

After the priests had separated themselves from the "world" (the camp of Israel), entering through the one and only gate to the courtyard of the Tabernacle, they encountered the great bronze altar where blood was shed and sacrifices were offered on their behalf for their sins, and the sins of the entire camp. The priests would then bathe and cleanse themselves in the Laver, in preparation of entering into service for the God of Israel, and entering into His Holy Place. They pondered the coverings of the structure in front of them, remembering the four layers and their symbolic meanings. They knew of the construction of the walls of this holy place, and understood (but only in part at that time) that God Himself was represented, and indeed dwelled, within, and that they could only be in service or fellowship with Him at the price of innocent sacrifice. With great humility they accepted their sinfulness, and more importantly, their need for atonement. As they stepped into the doorway, they passed over bronze sockets which symbolized their sins and a need for judgment, but as they entered through this "gate" they were entering a place of purity and holiness, and they entered into service to their God, surrounded by His beauty, covered by His atonement.

The ONLY Light

Upon entering the Tabernacle's first room, called the Holy Place, the first thing the priests would notice is the fact that the only light within this enclosure comes from the great lampstand, the Menorah. We will talk more about this later. It was to remain fueled with olive oil and burning constantly, every moment of every hour of every day. It provided the only light in the Holy Place. Per God's instructions, Moses carefully set it on the north wall of the Tabernacle, across from the Table of Showbread, which was on
the opposite wall (south). The Altar of Incense was placed in front of the Veil that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. The lampstand, the table, and the altar were the only pieces of furniture inside this Holy Place.

**Nowhere to Sit!**

Probably the next thing noticeable here is that nowhere is there a place to sit down. At no time during their service inside the Holy Place was the priest allowed to sit and rest. Service here was constant, unceasing, and accomplished by courses of priests on scheduled rounds of duty. In scripture, sitting implies being finished with work. It means that something is complete. The priest's service in God's sanctuary was never finished. The courses of priests would continue in their ministry, but would never complete it. There is only one Priest who would sit down because His ministry was finished. In Hebrews 10:11-12 we read: "And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God..." When Jesus' work on earth was finished (His own completion of the service involving the Day of Atonement) He entered the heavenly Tabernacle and sat down at the right hand of God. Once again, it is important to realize that no priest ever sat in service to God, except One. And His sitting down at God's right hand indicated His work on earth was complete, and sitting on the right side of God meant He received the authority and equal power of the King of the Universe.

We can also apply this non-sitting stature to ourselves. We are called priests a number of times in the book of Revelation. We are on this earth in service to the same God who dwelled in the Tabernacle, the very One whom the Levitical priests were serving. Like them, we do not sit down and rest, nor is our service here ever complete. And we have evidence that this service and worship is never complete, even when we are reunited in fellowship with Him in eternity. In Revelation chapters 4 and 5 we see the 24 elders (representative of Israel and the Gentile church, all believers = 12 tribes + 12 disciples) and the 4 living creatures. Here is chapter 4 of Revelation in its entirety: "After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, “Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this.” Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald. Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of
And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back. The first living creature was like a lion, the second living creature like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle. The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!” Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: “You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created.”

Initially we see the 24 elders sitting on thrones. This may indicate that they may sit, and that their work on earth is complete as well. However, we see the living creatures never rest, their work, the "work" of worship, is never completed. Now notice that "Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne....the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him...." If we really think about this, if the living creatures are always worshipping, and the elders always worship when the living creatures worship, then the elders are also always worshipping! So while our work on earth in service to God may be complete one day, even after we are united with Him in heaven, the worship of Him continues and is never complete. That will continue for all eternity!

**Awesome Beauty**

The other impressive feature of this room was the beauty of the interior. Whether the walls of the Tabernacle were frames or solid planks, the radiance and beauty of this chamber was striking. If the walls were frames, the first layer of finely woven blue, scarlet and purple tapestry would be seen in the walls, with figures of cherubim (those angels in the presence of God). If the walls were solid, they would have been covered with gold, and the tapestry would have been seen on the ceiling. Can you imagine the breath taking splendor of this space? The light making the golden walls gleam with amazing warmth and light? This is where God lived with man. It was a hallowed place meant to remind us that God is beautiful, too awesome to comprehend. We cannot see Him or experience Him from the outside. We must come into His house, enter into His Presence, to experience His magnificence.

Jesus is the only Light in a dark world. He is the only source of Truth, wisdom, and righteousness. He IS Light. We serve Him with no rest, non-stop, until He provides us a throne on which to sit (in between worship choruses!) And He is also our source of beauty in an increasingly ugly and dark world.
There is speculation among some that the Holy Place, this first chamber of the Tabernacle, may represent God's dwelling place with mankind while still on earth. We can indeed enter into His presence while living here, and we can find great beauty and sanctuary here, while still on earth. We have fellowship with Him here and now, as He dwells within us by the power of the Holy Spirit. That speculation continues then, that the next chamber, the Holy of Holies and place of the Ark of the Covenant where God's presence was manifest, represents our fellowship with Him in heaven. And because of Jesus' death and resurrection, payment for our sins, the veil that formerly separated us is now torn down, allowing us complete access to God, and the opportunity to live for all eternity with Him. Immanuel! God WITH us. We'll look more at this a little later.

Many believe that even the placement of the furniture by God is important. Just as we saw the cross in the desert, depicted in the precise encampment of the tribes of Israel around the Tabernacle, we can also see the cross in the seven pieces of prescribed furnishings for the Tabernacle.

(illustration from "A Dwelling Place for God" by Ruth Specter Laselle)
The Lampstand (Menorah)

31 "Make a lampstand of pure gold and hammer it out, base and shaft; its flowerlike cups, buds and blossoms shall be of one piece with it. 32 Six branches are to extend from the sides of the lampstand—three on one side and three on the other. 33 Three cups shaped like almond flowers with buds and blossoms are to be on one branch, three on the next branch, and the same for all six branches extending from the lampstand. 34 And on the lampstand there are to be four cups shaped like almond flowers with buds and blossoms. 35 One bud shall be under the first pair of branches extending from the lampstand, a second bud under the second pair, and a third bud under the third pair—six branches in all. 36 The buds and branches shall all be of one piece with the lampstand, hammered out of pure gold. 37 "Then make its seven lamps and set them up on it so that they light the space in front of it. 38 Its wick trimmers and trays are to be of pure gold. 39 A talent of pure gold is to be used for the lampstand and all these accessories. 40 See that you make them according to the pattern shown you on the mountain. (Exodus 25:31-40)

17 They made the lampstand of pure gold and hammered it out, base and shaft; its flowerlike cups, buds and blossoms were of one piece with it. 18 Six branches extended from the sides of the lampstand—three on one side and three on the other. 19 Three cups shaped like almond flowers with buds and blossoms were on one branch, three on the next branch and the same for all six branches extending from the lampstand. 20 And on the lampstand were four cups shaped like almond flowers with buds and blossoms. 21 One bud was under the first pair of branches extending from the lampstand, a second bud under the second pair, and a third bud under the third pair—six branches in all. 22 The buds and the branches were all of one piece with the lampstand, hammered out of pure gold. 23 They made its seven lamps, as well as its wick trimmers and trays, of pure gold. 24 They made the lampstand and all its accessories from one talent of pure gold. (Exodus 37:17-24)

Oil in Lampstand

20 "Command the Israelites to bring you clear oil of pressed olives for the light so that the lamps may be kept burning. 21 In the Tent of Meeting, outside the curtain that is in front of the Testimony, Aaron and his sons are to keep the lamps burning before the LORD from evening till morning. This is to be a lasting ordinance among the Israelites for the generations to come. (Exodus 27:20-21)
MATERIALS | Solid gold, all one piece; olive oil used to make the light
SIZE | not specified
PURPOSE | To light the Holy Place where the priests ministered
DETAIL | One central light, with six branches; all one piece, one talent of gold (talent = approx. 75-100 pounds); burned olive oil continuously
SPIRITUAL CONCEPTS | God's light is the only source of true light in a dark world. His light shines constantly, and lights the world through the power of the Holy Spirit. Olive oil in scripture is a symbol for the Holy spirit. The solid gold indicates that only God is the source of light.

After washing their hands and feet at the laver, the priests could enter the Holy Place, which was the first room in the tent of the tabernacle. There were three pieces of furniture in the Holy Place: the menorah, the table of showbread and the golden altar of incense. The menorah, or lampstand, is the first piece that would be clearly noticed upon entering.

The menorah, also called the “golden lampstand” or “candlestick,” stood at the left (south) side of the Holy Place (the first room in the Tabernacle). It was hammered out of one piece of pure gold. Like the laver, there were no specific instructions about the size of the menorah, but we know it was fashioned out of one piece of pure gold and that it was made from a talent of gold probably weighing about 100 pounds. Artists have depicted this lampstand from a table top version to a freestanding, height of a man, fixture. There are no dimensions specified for the lampstand. There is no measure or end to God's light. It is matchless and limitless.

The lampstand had a central branch from which three branches extended from each side, forming a total of seven branches. Seven lamps holding olive oil and wicks stood on top of the branches. Each branch looked like that of an almond tree, containing buds, blossoms and flowers. The priests were instructed to keep the lamps burning continuously. “The Lord said to Moses, ‘Command the Israelites to bring you clear oil of pressed olives for the light so that the lamps may be kept burning continually. Outside the curtain of the Testimony in the Tent of Meeting, Aaron is to tend the lamps before the Lord from evening till morning, continually.’” (Leviticus 24:1-3)

The lampstand was the only source of light in the Holy Place, so without it, the priests would have been moving around in the dark. The light shone upon the table of showbread and the altar of incense, enabling the priests to fellowship with God and intercede on behalf of God’s people.
The Lampstand Fulfilled

Just as the lampstand was placed in God’s dwelling place so that the priests could approach God, Jesus, the “true light that gives light to every man” (John 1:9) came into the world so that man could see God and not live in spiritual darkness anymore. He is the Author of Light. Nature’s light was not present inside the Tabernacle. The “light” of nature cannot light mankind’s path.

Jesus said, in another of His "I AM" statements:

“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” (John 8:12)

“|I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness.” (John 9:46)

The menorah also represents our oneness and completeness with Jesus. Jesus is the main branch of the lampstand, and we as believers are represented by the six branches that extend from the original branch. The number six signifies man, and it means "incomplete." The six branches joined together with the central branch (or vine) make seven, the number which signifies "perfectly complete." We are only complete in Jesus. The branches serve as a picture of Jesus’ description of our relationship with him: “I am the vine, you are the branches ... apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5). This source of light in the Tabernacle was used as an object lesson for the disciples about our completeness in Jesus.

As believers, we are now living as “children of light” (Ephesians 5:8) who draw our source of light from Jesus, the true light. In all of Jesus’ I AM statements, this is the only one that He gives to us as well. Jesus also calls us the “light of the world” and commands us to “let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5: 14, 16).

The lampstand was made of pure gold (not gold plated). Pure gold is a representation of the deity and perfection of Jesus Christ, and seven is the number of completeness in the Bible. The believer is made complete by the perfection of Christ.

It is also interesting to note that light has seven colors. A prism will break light into these colors: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet. The number seven is predominant throughout scripture. This is called a "heptadic" structure indicating the perfection and completeness of God's plan. It is also a physical fact that darkness cannot overwhelm light. Light can overcome darkness, but not the other way around. This is another truth that the gospel writer John used to describe Jesus in his first chapter: "The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overwhelmed it." (John 1:5 NCV)
The design on the bowls and branches of the lampstand in the likeness of an almond blossom is also significant. The almond tree is the first to bud and bring forth fruit after the deadness of winter. The almond seed must die before it can bloom. Jesus spoke of a seed dying in John 12:23-24: "But Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain." Jesus spoke of the need for His death before the resurrection. His death and life again will indeed produce much fruit. He is called the "firstfruits" in scripture: "But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming." (1 Corinthians 15:20-23)

The word for almond implies "expectation." The expectation of resurrection and eternal life with Jesus is the great hope of all believers. The almond blossom has five petals. In fact, every part of the almond flower bloom (petals, sepals, calyx and stamens) shows the number five. Five is the number that represents God's grace.

We should notice also that the lampstand was hammer out of one piece of gold. It was not poured into a mold. This "hammering" can represent the suffering of Jesus on the cross, and it may also represent the suffering believers endure in this life. We are one with Him, as the lampstand represents, and hence we also will suffer. We will suffer the typical trials of life on a corrupted sinful earth, but we will also suffer simply because we are His, and identify with Him.

The olive oil that fueled the lampstand is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. As Jesus' ambassadors on earth, we are to be the light of the world, just as He was and is. His light shines through us. But we are unable to fulfill this ministry of light bearing without the work of the Holy Spirit in us and through us to sanctify us and cleanse us for His service. Our light is our witness in this world. That witness is what the world sees. The Holy Spirit equips us to light up the world around us through His "fruit of the Spirit." These could be called "evidences" of the Holy Spirit's work through us: "Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." These "fruit" are what we use to light the world around us.
The Table of Showbread

"Make a table of acacia wood—two cubits long, a cubit wide and a cubit and a half high. Overlay it with pure gold and make a gold molding around it. Also make around it a rim a handbreadth wide and put a gold molding on the rim. Make four gold rings for the table and fasten them to the four corners, where the four legs are. The rings are to be close to the rim to hold the poles used in carrying the table. Make the poles of acacia wood, overlay them with gold and carry the table with them. And make its plates and dishes of pure gold, as well as its pitchers and bowls for the pouring out of offerings. Put the bread of the Presence on this table to be before me at all times."

(Exodus 25:23-30)

"They made the table of acacia wood—two cubits long, a cubit wide, and a cubit and a half high. Then they overlaid it with pure gold and made a gold molding around it. They also made around it a rim a handbreadth wide and put a gold molding on the rim. They cast four gold rings for the table and fastened them to the four corners, where the four legs were. The rings were put close to the rim to hold the poles used in carrying the table. The poles for carrying the table were made of acacia wood and were overlaid with gold. And they made from pure gold the articles for the table—its plates and dishes and bowls and its pitchers for the pouring out of drink offerings."

(Exodus 37:10-16)

The Bread on the Table

"And you shall take fine flour and bake twelve cakes with it. Two-tenths of an ephah shall be in each cake. You shall set them in two rows, six in a row, on the pure gold table before the LORD. And you shall put pure frankincense on each row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, an offering made by fire to the LORD. Every Sabbath he shall set it in order before the LORD continually, being taken from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant. And it shall be for Aaron and his sons, and they shall eat it in a holy place; for it is most holy to him from the offerings of the LORD made by fire, by a perpetual statute."

(Leviticus 24:5-9)

The Bread and The Wine

"The LORD told Moses to say to the people of Israel: ‘Offer sacrifices to me at the appointed times of worship, so that I will smell the smoke and be pleased. Each day offer two rams a year old as sacrifices to please me. The animals must have nothing wrong with them; one will be sacrificed in the morning, and the other in the evening. Along with each of them, two pounds of your finest flour mixed with a quart of olive oil must be offered as a grain sacrifice. This sacrifice to please me was first offered on Mount Sinai. Finally, along with each of these two sacrifices, a quart of wine must be poured on the altar as a drink offering. The second ram will be sacrificed that evening, along with the other offerings, just like the one sacrificed that morning. The smell of the smoke from these sacrifices will please me.’"

(Numbers 28:3-8, CEV)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MATERIALS</th>
<th>Acacia (shittim) wood overlaid with gold, crown of gold, utensils pure gold</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SIZE</td>
<td>2 cubits long, 1 cubit wide, 1 ½ cubits high (36&quot; l X 18&quot; w x 27&quot; h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PURPOSE</td>
<td>To symbolize fellowship with God. Breaking bread, or eating is a Biblical symbol for fellowship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DETAIL</td>
<td>12 loaves of unleavened bread (made with fine flour, the best), covered with frankincense, always present on the table. Pitchers used for drink offerings (wine)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPIRITUAL CONCEPTS</td>
<td>God desires fellowship with His people, but the only way that is possible is through His Son Jesus (Perfect God and Perfect Man). This fellowship, which includes worship, is to be constant, beginning here on earth, and lasting through all eternity. This is the true &quot;Holy communion.&quot; The crown of gold around symbolizes the kingship and finished work of our Savior.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 12 loaves on the table represented the 12 tribes of Israel - all of the people. The table and the bread were a picture of God’s willingness to fellowship and communion (literally speaking, sharing something in common) with man. It was like an invitation to share a meal, an extension of friendship. Eating together often is an act of fellowship. God was willing for man to enter into His presence to fellowship with Him, and this invitation was always open.

The first time this fellowship was celebrated was at the foot of Mt. Sinai, when God entered into the solemn covenant with the people to be their God. We call this the Mosaic Covenant, where God agreed to bless them if they were obedient to Him. This covenant is different from others in that it is conditional. The Abrahamic Covenant is UNconditional and eternal. But the Mosaic Covenant was dependent upon the people's obedience to the Laws given them. The celebration of the new fellowship of God with His people was initiated at Mt. Sinai, and continued in the Tabernacle rituals. This was celebrated with daily offerings of perfect and spotless lambs, combined with fine grain mixed with oil, and the wine (poured out from the pitchers mentioned above.) **This first communion is symbolic of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit's presence in fellowship with man. This is what our practice of Holy Communion also celebrates. It is not a new ritual, it continues one which began at the foot of a rumbling mountain thousands of years ago.**

At the same time, this table also revealed that God would provide His people with all they needed if they only stayed in His Presence. For 40 years He provided manna in the wilderness, another type for the ultimate Bread of the Presence. Jesus called Himself the Bread of Life, the Bread that came down from Heaven.
The Table of Showbread Fulfilled

The gold overlaying the acacia wood speaks again of the dual nature of Jesus, His humanity and His deity. This is a clear type for our Lord. Even while on earth in human form, He was clothed (overlaid) with His deity. He is fully God and fully man. The crown of gold around the table of showbread signifies the authority of Jesus as King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. The fact that this crown is placed around the rim of the table indicates that Jesus’ authority keeps our "bread" from slipping. Nothing can cause our fellowship with Him to be broken.

Jesus physically revealed His desire to fellowship with man when He ate with tax collectors, prostitutes and the sinners of Jewish society. But this was more than just a gesture of friendship on earth. Jesus came to call sinners to Him, make them right with God, so that they could enjoy everlasting fellowship with God.

Here again is yet another of the 7 "I AM" statements Jesus makes in the book of John. EVERYTHING, absolutely EVERYTHING, in the Tabernacle points to the atoning work of Jesus which enables us to enter the Presence of God and fellowship with Him. “I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty. … Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die.” (John 6:35, 49-50) In Jesus, we have fellowship with God. This is a remarkable concept.

God so desires our fellowship that He was willing to come to earth from heaven as our “bread of life” to give eternal life to all those who would partake in it. At Jesus’ last Passover meal with His disciples, Jesus described Himself as bread again: “While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, ‘Take and eat; this is my body.’” (Matthew 26:26) The Passover Seder meal required the breaking of bread and the drinking of wine. This is not something new, but a continuation of the Holy Communion ritual that God established during the days of the Tabernacle in the desert, continuing in the Temple, and now captured in a Passover meal, and even today. When Jesus performed this Passover ritual however, He introduced something new. No longer were they celebrating the Mosaic Covenant, which had long been broken, they were initiating and celebrating a New Covenant, made possible only by the broken body of Jesus. "And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.’” Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you." (Luke 22:19-20) Here in the upper room, we have the same elements found in the first Holy Communion: The spotless Lamb of God, the oil and fine flour (unleavened bread), and the wine. Jesus became the meat, grain and drink offerings of the early Tabernacle rituals. The New Covenant replaces the old broken Mosaic Covenant.
Jesus’ broken body is our only access to fellowship with God. Today, we celebrate the Lord’s Supper, or communion, to remember this important truth. And today, as in the day of Moses’ tabernacle, God still desires to have fellowship and sit down for a feast with His people. He will continue calling people to "sup" with Him: "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.” (Revelation 3:20)
The Golden Altar of Incense

1 "Make an altar of acacia wood for burning incense. 2 It is to be square, a cubit long and a cubit wide, and two cubits high—its horns of one piece with it. 3 Overlay the top and all the sides and the horns with pure gold, and make a gold molding around it. 4 Make two gold rings for the altar below the molding—two on opposite sides—to hold the poles used to carry it. 5 Make the poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold. 6 Put the altar in front of the curtain that is before the ark of the Testimony—before the atonement cover that is over the Testimony—where I will meet with you. 7 "Aaron must burn fragrant incense on the altar every morning when he tends the lamps. 8 He must burn incense again when he lights the lamps at twilight so incense will burn regularly before the LORD for the generations to come. 9 Do not offer on this altar any other incense or any burnt offering or grain offering, and do not pour a drink offering on it. 10 Once a year Aaron shall make atonement on its horns. This annual atonement must be made with the blood of the atoning sin offering for the generations to come. It is most holy to the LORD." (Exodus 30:1-10)

25 They made the altar of incense out of acacia wood. It was square, a cubit long and a cubit wide, and two cubits high—its horns of one piece with it. 26 They overlaid the top and all the sides and the horns with pure gold, and made a gold molding around it. 27 They made two gold rings below the molding—two on opposite sides—to hold the poles used to carry it. 28 They made the poles of acacia wood and overlaid them with gold. 29 They also made the sacred anointing oil and the pure, fragrant incense—the work of a perfumer. (Exodus 37:35-29)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MATERIALS</th>
<th>Acacia (shittim) wood overlaid with gold</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SIZE</td>
<td>1 cubit square, 2 cubits high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PURPOSE</td>
<td>To burn fragrant incense (signifying communication with Him) before God regularly, once a year blood atonement on the horns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DETAIL</td>
<td>4 horns at the corners, one piece with the rest of the altar, carrying poles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPIRITUAL CONCEPTS</td>
<td>Communion with God through prayer; our Intercessor Jesus Christ (as represented in the wood (humanity) and gold (deity), pleads on our behalf. Our only access to God is through Him.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The incense was a symbol of the prayers and intercession of the people going up to God as a sweet fragrance. God wanted His dwelling to be a place where people could approach Him and pray to Him. David wrote in Psalm 141: “LORD, I cry out to You; Make haste to me! Give ear to my voice when I cry out to You. Let my prayer be set before You as incense, The lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.” Throughout scriptures incense is used as a symbol of the prayers of the saints, the communion of believers with God. The horns on the altar indicate the four ordinal directions of north, east, south and west, to include all nations and peoples everywhere.

Before we can approach a holy God, however, atonement must be present. Once a year on the Day of Atonement, the High Priest would offer the blood of the sacrifice on the horns of this altar. Once again, we have a crown of gold around this altar, which keeps the burning incense from falling.

The Altar of Incense Fulfilled

“...for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.” (Isaiah 56:7)

The picture of prayers wafting up to heaven like incense is captured in David’s psalm and also in John’s vision in Revelation: “Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar before the throne. The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God from the angel’s hand.” (Revelation 8:3-4)

The golden altar is a representation of Christ, who is our intercessor before God the Father. During His days on earth, Jesus prayed for the believers. He was like the high priest of the tabernacle, who bore the names of each of the Israelite tribes on his breastplate before God. Just before He was betrayed and sentenced to death, Jesus interceded for His disciples and all believers, asking God to guard them from evil and sanctify them by His Word, and that they may see God’s glory and be a witness to the world (John 17:1-26). Today, Jesus still is our high priest at the Father’s side, interceding for God’s people: “Christ Jesus, who died — more than that, who was raised to life — is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.” (Romans 8:34)
Since we have been forgiven of our sins through the blood of Christ, we can also come boldly in prayer in Jesus’ name. When we pray in Jesus’ name, we are praying based on the work He has done and not on our own merit. It is in His powerful name that we are saved, and in His name we live, speak and act. “And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.” (John 14:13-14) When we pray, and intercede ourselves for others, we can be sure that our prayers are heard. "And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.” (James 5:15-16)

The horns of the golden altar were sprinkled with blood from the animal sacrifice to cleanse and purify it from the sins of the Israelites (Leviticus 4:7, 16:18). Just as the horns on the brazen altar represent the power of Christ's blood to forgive sins, the horns on the golden altar (altar of incense) signify the power of His blood in prayer as we confess our sins and ask for His forgiveness.

One commentator remarked that we must first come to brazen altar in the courtyard before coming to the altar of incense. We must first accept the gift of atonement for our sins, and belief in the power of Jesus. It is there also that we offer ourselves as that "living sacrifice" to God. This commentator makes a complete picture of our relationship with God in prayer through the altar of incense:

"First we come to the Court Altar [brazen altar] presenting ourselves there as a "living sacrifice" (Romans 12:1) ["I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service."] After the fire of God [the Holy Spirit, Acts 2] falls upon us we proceed to the Golden Altar placing this "coal of fire" upon it where it is surrounded by the Crown. Here the Crown holds the "coal of fire" from falling. We are kept from falling to the ground as we remain "fired" with the Spirit of Prayer!"

Ruth Specter Laselle in "A Dwelling Place for God"

The altar of incense is also placed directly in front of the veil which separates the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies and the Ark of the Covenant, the dwelling place of God. This altar is where we commune with God, in order to be ushered into His presence.
The Holy of Holies and the Veil

The Curtain
31 "Make a curtain of blue, purple and scarlet yarn and finely twisted linen, with cherubim worked into it by a skilled craftsman. 32 Hang it with gold hooks on four posts of acacia wood overlaid with gold and standing on four silver bases. 33 Hang the curtain from the clasps and place the ark of the Testimony behind the curtain. The curtain will separate the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. 34 Put the atonement cover on the ark of the Testimony in the Most Holy Place. 35 Place the table outside the curtain on the north side of the tabernacle and put the lampstand opposite it on the south side. (Exodus 26:31-35)

35 They made the curtain of blue, purple and scarlet yarn and finely twisted linen, with cherubim worked into it by a skilled craftsman. 36 They made four posts of acacia wood for it and overlaid them with gold. They made gold hooks for them and cast their four silver bases. 37 For the entrance to the tent they made a curtain of blue, purple and scarlet yarn and finely twisted linen—the work of an embroiderer; 38 and they made five posts with hooks for them. They overlaid the tops of the posts and their bands with gold and made their five bases of bronze. (Exodus 36:35-38)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MATERIALS</th>
<th>blue, purple and scarlet linen, gold hooks, acacia wood overlaid with gold posts, standing on silver bases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SIZE</td>
<td>15 feet X 15 feet, width and height of tabernacle proper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PURPOSE</td>
<td>To separate the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place (Holy of Holies)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DETAIL</td>
<td>embroidered, like tapestry, with figures of cherubim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPIRITUAL CONCEPTS</td>
<td>Symbolizes man's separation from a holy God. Can enter into His Presence only through acceptable sacrifice. Veil now permanently removed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Within the tabernacle there was an inner room called the Holy of Holies, or the Most Holy Place. It was a most sacred room, a place no ordinary person could enter. It was God’s special dwelling place in the midst of His people. During the Israelites’ wanderings in the wilderness, God appeared as a pillar of cloud or fire in and above the Holy of Holies. The Holy of Holies was a perfect cube — its length, width and height were all equal to 15 feet.
A thick curtain separated the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place. This curtain, known as the “veil,” was made of fine linen and blue, purple and scarlet yarn. There were figures of cherubim (angels) embroidered onto it. Cherubim, spirits who serve God, were in the presence of God to demonstrate His almighty power and majesty. These angels are sometimes known as "Angels of the Presence." They also guarded the throne of God. These cherubim were also on the innermost layer of covering of the tent. If one looked upward, they would see the cherubim figures.

The word “veil” in Hebrew means a **screen, divider or separator that hides**. What was this curtain hiding? Essentially, it was shielding a holy God from sinful man (in a symbolic way). And likewise, it was shielding sinful man from the deserved wrath of a holy God. Whoever entered into the Holy of Holies was entering the very presence of God. In fact, anyone except the high priest who entered the Holy of Holies would die. Even the high priest, God’s chosen mediator with His people, could only pass through the veil and enter this sacred dwelling once a year, on a prescribed day called the Day of Atonement, and in a prescribed way.

The picture of the veil was that of a barrier between man and God, showing man that the holiness of God could not be trifled with. God’s eyes are too pure to look on evil and He can tolerate no sin (Habakkuk 1:13: "You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, And cannot look on wickedness."). The veil was a barrier to make sure that man could not carelessly and irreverently enter into God’s awesome presence. Even as the high priest entered the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement, he had to make some meticulous preparations: He had to wash himself, put on special clothing, bring burning incense to let the smoke cover his eyes from a direct view of God, and bring blood with him to make atonement for sins. It is interesting to note that God did not make this separation impossible to open or penetrate. It was not constructed solidly as a permanent roadblock or barrier to God. He made a way for man to enter - His Son. The fact that the curtain was hanging also causes us to remember the One who was hanged on a tree for our sins.

**The Veil Fulfilled, and Removed**

"But only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance.” *(Hebrews 9:7)*

The presence of God remained shielded from man behind a thick curtain during the history of Israel. However, Jesus’ sacrificial death on the cross changed that. When He died, the curtain in the Jerusalem temple was torn in half, from the top to the bottom. "Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom..." *(Matthew 27:51a)*
Only God could have carried out such an incredible feat because the veil was too high for human hands to have reached it, and too thick to have torn it. Scholars believe the veil in the Temple was about 60 feet high, by 30 feet wide, and about 4 to 6 inches thick. No man could have torn this veil. The historian Josephus comments that it would have taken teams of oxen to tear it apart. Furthermore, it was torn from top down, meaning this act must have come from above. God Himself tore this separation down. Only One who had an acceptable sacrifice could enter into God’s Presence. Jesus, by His shed blood, was that sacrifice. He entered the Holy of Holies for us, and made clear the path to God.

As the veil was torn, the Holy of Holies was exposed. God’s presence was now accessible to all. Shocking as this may have been to the priests ministering in the temple that day, it is indeed good news to us as believers, because we know that Jesus’ death has atoned for our sins and made us right before God. The torn veil illustrated Jesus’ body broken for us, opening the way for us to come to God. As Jesus cried out “It is finished!” on the cross, He was indeed proclaiming that God’s redemptive plan was now complete. The age of animal offerings was over. The ultimate offering had been sacrificed.

We can now boldly enter into God’s presence, “the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf.” (Hebrews 6:19-20)

“Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body ...let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith.” (Hebrews 10:19-22)

The Holy of Holies is a representation of heaven itself, God’s dwelling place, to which we have access now through Christ. In Revelation, John’s vision of heaven — the New Jerusalem — also was a perfect cube, just as the Holy of Holies was (Revelation 21:16).

“For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God’s presence. Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. ...But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.” (Hebrews 9:24-26)
The Ark of the Covenant and Atonement Cover

Facts and Fulfillment

Within the Holy of Holies, shielded from the eye of the common man, was one piece of furniture comprising two parts: the Ark of the Covenant and the atonement cover (or “mercy seat”) on top of it. Its supreme importance among all the furnishings of the Tabernacle is seen in the fact that it is listed FIRST. We have left it to last mention, since it is the last article encountered as the Priest travels inward in the Tabernacle toward the Presence of God in the Holy of Holies. But the Ark and the Mercy Seat are listed first in scripture.

The Ark The Chest (Box)

10 “And they shall make an ark of acacia wood; two and a half cubits shall be its length, a cubit and a half its width, and a cubit and a half its height. 11 And you shall overlay it with pure gold, inside and out you shall overlay it, and shall make on it a molding of gold all around. 12 You shall cast four rings of gold for it, and put them in its four corners; two rings shall be on one side, and two rings on the other side. 13 And you shall make poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold. 14 You shall put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark, that the ark may be carried by them. 15 The poles shall be in the rings of the ark; they shall not be taken from it. 16 And you shall put into the ark the Testimony which I will give you.

The Mercy Seat The Chest Cover (Lid)

17 “You shall make a mercy seat of pure gold; two and a half cubits shall be its length and a cubit and a half its width. 18 And you shall make two cherubim of gold; of hammered work you shall make them at the two ends of the mercy seat. 19 Make one cherub at one end, and the other cherub at the other end; you shall make the cherubim at the two ends of it of one piece with the mercy seat. 20 And the cherubim shall stretch out their wings above, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and they shall face one another; the faces of the cherubim shall be toward the mercy seat. 21 You shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the Testimony that I will give you. 22 And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are on the ark of the Testimony, about everything which I will give you in commandment to the children of Israel. (Exodus 25:10-22)

1 Then Bezalel made the ark of acacia wood; two and a half cubits was its length, a cubit and a half its width, and a cubit and a half its height. 2 He overlaid it with pure gold inside and outside, and made a molding of gold all around it. 3 And he cast for it four
rings of gold to be set in its four corners: two rings on one side, and two rings on the other side of it.  

4 He made poles of acacia wood, and overlaid them with gold.  

5 And he put the poles into the rings at the sides of the ark, to bear the ark.  

6 He also made the mercy seat of pure gold; two and a half cubits was its length and a cubit and a half its width.  

7 He made two cherubim of beaten gold; he made them of one piece at the two ends of the mercy seat: one cherub at one end on this side, and the other cherub at the other end on that side. He made the cherubim at the two ends of one piece with the mercy seat.  

8 The cherubim spread out their wings above, and covered the mercy seat with their wings. They faced one another; the faces of the cherubim were toward the mercy seat.  

(Exodus 37:1-9)
Other Scriptures also speak of God’s throne:
“...the ark of God, which is called by the Name, the name of the Lord Almighty, who is enthroned between the cherubim that are on the ark.” (2 Samuel 6:2)

“O Lord Almighty, God of Israel, enthroned between the cherubim, you alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth.” (Isaiah 37:16)

The Shekinah Glory
Above the ark and the atonement cover, God appeared in His glory in “unapproachable light.” A New Testament verse addresses this light: "...the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen." (1 Timothy 6:15b-16). This light is sometimes referred to as the Shekinah glory. The word Shekinah, although it does not appear in our English bibles, has the same roots as the word for tabernacle in Hebrew and refers to the presence of the Lord. It can literally mean "glory in the tent." When the glory of God filled the space between the cherubim in the Holy of Holies, it was called the Shekinah. Truly, when Jesus walked this earth, He could also have been called the Shekinah. Both Peter and Paul refer to our mortal bodies as tents (2 Corinthians 5:1, 4 and 2 Peter 1:13, 14). We are told by John that Jesus was filled with the glory of God in a human body of divine origin. "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14) So, when Jesus was walking this earth during His First Coming, He could be literally called the "Shekinah" - the glory in the tent!

A Symbol of Power
Because the ark was God’s throne among His people, it was a symbol of His presence and power with them wherever it went. There are quite a number of miracles recorded in the Old Testament surrounding the ark. With the presence of the ark, the waters of the River Jordan divided so the Israelites could cross on dry land, and the walls of Jericho fell so that the Israelites could capture it (Joshua 3:14-17, 6:6-21). Yet the ark could not be treated with irreverence because it was also a symbol of God’s judgment and wrath. When the Israelites fought the Philistines during the time of Samuel, they disregarded the commands of the Lord and took the ark out to the battlefield with them, “summoning” God’s presence. God caused the Philistines to win the battle and “the glory departed from Israel, for the ark of the Lord was taken” (1 Samuel 4:22). However, God showed His power to the Philistines when He caused their idol, Dagon, to
fall to the ground when the ark was placed next to it, and several Philistine cities were
plagued heavily when the ark was in their midst (1 Samuel 5). Ultimately, the ark was
returned to Israel (this story is actually quite humorous, as the Philistines did not fare
well while the Ark was in their possession!).

The Contents of the Ark
God commanded Moses to put in the ark three items: a golden pot of manna, Aaron’s
staff that had budded, and the two stone tablets on which the Ten Commandments
were written. These three articles represented some of the most embarrassing and
disgraceful events in the history of the Israelites, but also meet their ultimate fulfillment
in the One who "made it right" between us and God - Messiah Jesus.

The Pot of Manna
"This is what the Lord has commanded: ‘Take an omer [portion for one
man] of manna and keep it for the generations to come, so they can see
the bread I gave you to eat in the desert when I brought you out of
Egypt.’” (Exodus 16:32) God had provided this bread-like food for the
Israelites when they grumbled during the wanderings in the desert. It was
"bread from heaven." He provided the food daily and faithfully, but the people were
not very thankful. They complained, whined and wanted something else. The pot of
manna was an uncomfortable reminder that despite what God had provided for them,
the Israelites had rejected God’s provision. It was to be a constant reminder of both
God’s provision, and the people’s rejection.

When Jesus came and walked on earth, he didn’t reject God’s provision. Instead, He
became God’s provision to us. He told us that He is the true bread from heaven.
"Jesus said to them, ‘I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread
from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from
heaven. I am the bread of life. Your forefathers ate the manna in
the desert, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down
from heaven, which a man may eat and not die.’” (John 6:32, 48-50)

Aaron’s Staff that Budded
The people, out of jealousy, rebelled against Aaron as their high
priest. To resolve the dispute, God commanded the people to take
12 sticks written with the names of the leader of each tribe and
place them before the ark overnight. The next day, Aaron’s rod
from the house of Levi had budded with blossoms and almonds. In
this way, God confirmed his choice of Aaron’s household as the priestly line. “And the
Lord said to Moses, ‘Put back the staff of Aaron before the testimony, to be kept as a
sign for the rebels, that you may make an end of their grumblings against me, lest they
die.’” (Numbers 17:10)
The staff reminded the Israelites that they had rejected God’s authority numerous times. The staff was a constant reminder that God was in control, God was the ultimate authority, but yet man still rebelled.

Jesus, however did not reject God’s authority. Instead, He submitted Himself to the Father’s will and died on the cross. Once again, where man failed, Jesus prevailed...for us. “For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.” (John 6:38) And, although he died on the tree for us, He also came back to life, just like Aaron’s budding rod. In resurrection, He is “the firstfruits from the dead.” “But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.” (1 Corinthians 15:20). Remember how we discussed that almonds are one of the first trees to blossom in the spring. “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.” (John 11:15-26)

The Two Stone Tablets

God had chosen the Israelites as His special people. For the Israelites to qualify for that distinction, God had demanded one thing. They must obey His Law, the Ten Commandments. This was a conditional agreement: “Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” (Exodus 19:5-6)

The Israelites agreed wholeheartedly, “All that the Lord has spoken we will do,” in response to God’s covenant (Exodus 19:8). They failed miserably in this. It was impossible for them to keep the Law perfectly. Over and over again, they violated God’s holy Law, and God made it clear to them the consequences of their sin by sending plagues, natural hazards and foreign armies upon them. The stone tablets in the ark were a reminder that the Israelites had rejected God’s right standard of living. They were a constant reminder of God's expectations, and man's failure to meet them.

Once again, Jesus becomes the ultimate fulfillment...FOR us. Jesus did not reject God’s Law. In fact, He said He came to fulfill the Law. “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” (Matthew 5:17-18) He lived a sinless life and obeyed God’s law perfectly, becoming our perfect sacrifice and intercessor. "Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you." (Luke 22:20) His sacrifice began a new covenant that was not based on the Law. "But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.” (Romans 3:20-22)
These three articles, which can also represent the trinity (3-in-1 nature of God), were preserved in the ark throughout Israel’s history as symbols of man’s sins and shortcomings, and ultimately a reminder of how God made provision through His Son to cover over those shortcomings. They pointed to God as the ultimate provider, authority and the One to whom we are all accountable, AND man as a helpless sinner. The Ark contents also beautifully illustrate the verse Jesus spoke: “I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” (John 14:6) The Law (Word) of God points the way, and is literally fulfilled in Jesus who perfectly fulfilled the Law, 2) The manna in the pot was the literal bread of life in the wilderness, but Jesus said He was the ultimate bread that came down from heaven, granting eternal life, and 3) the budded rod of Aaron reveals new life through resurrection. Jesus is truly the eternal life through resurrection for all believers.

The Atonement Cover
Every year, the high priest would enter the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement. Bringing burning incense to shield his eyes from a direct view of God’s glory, he sprinkled blood from a bull onto the atonement cover for his and his household’s sins, then sprinkled blood from a goat for all the sins of Israel. God promised that when He saw the blood, it would cover over man’s sin. (To atone for means to cover over — hence the name atonement cover.) God did not see the sin anymore but the provision instead (the shed blood), and it appeased His wrath. The word in Hebrew for this cover is "kapporeth." It literally means a "covering over."

Without this mercy seat, the place God dwelled, the Ark would have been open, displaying the three items discussed above (the tablets of the Law, the pot of manna, the budded rod). In the sight of the people, and in the sight of God, all of these things were dismal reminders of man’s continued failure, his sin, before a holy God. It would have been an ever-present reminder that man could not be in the Presence of God. However, the atonement seat "covered over" these reminders. It covered up, or hid, man’s sin from God. The mercy seat is therefore not only God’s "throne" on earth among the people, it is representative of a merciful covering over of man’s sins. And we should note that this cover was not wood covered with gold, it is pure gold. Solidly divine. Mercy does not come from man, it comes from God. God fashioned man’s atonement. The blood placed on the mercy seat represents the price the slain lamb paid to provide this covering.

The Israelites found acceptance with God by believing His word to be true — that when their sins were covered by blood, God temporarily overlooked them. But now Jesus has become our permanent atonement cover. Through Jesus’ blood, our sins have been covered over. When God looks at us, He doesn’t see our sin, but the provision for sin: His own Son. That is a mind-blowing thought! Jesus lay down His life for us as an innocent sacrifice so that God would look on us and see His perfection.
The atonement cover was God’s throne in the midst of the Israelites. The High Priest would approach this throne once a year, on the Day of Atonement, in order to offer intercession for the people. (Moses could approach anytime that God called him, but no one else could) God is on His throne today in heaven and Jesus, our high priest, is at His right side. The veil of separation has been torn, and we can approach God ourselves. When we come to God now, we approach a throne of grace. “Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.” (Hebrews 4:16)

The Cherubim
On top of the ark’s cover were two cherubim (angels) at the two ends, facing each other. The cherubim, symbols of God’s divine presence and power, were facing downward toward the ark with outstretched wings that covered the atonement cover. The whole structure was beaten out of one piece of pure gold. The atonement cover was God’s dwelling place in the tabernacle. It was His throne, flanked by angels of the Presence, and it was the place where God’s glory dwelled. God said to Moses: “There, above the cover between the two cherubim that are over the ark of the Testimony, I will meet with you and give you all my commands for the Israelites.” (Exodus 25:22) “Tell your brother Aaron not to come whenever he chooses into the Most Holy Place behind the curtain in front of the atonement cover on the ark, or else he will die, because I appear in the cloud over the atonement cover.” (Leviticus 16:2) The only time anyone could enter into God’s Presence, as He dwelled between the cherubim, was either through a direct invitation (as with Moses), or once a year to make atonement, and only after he was chosen, called, cleansed, clothed, consecrated and commissioned.

Cherubim are the most exalted beings of the heavenly hosts. They occupy the nearest position to the throne of God. In a sense these beings may represent Believers, all of redeemed humanity, because we also have now been brought into the closest position with God. We are, in fact, “seated with Christ in the heavens.” “And he raised us up with Christ and gave us a seat with him in the heavens. He did this for those in Christ Jesus...” (Ephesians 2:6) God dwells in our midst now through His Holy Spirit. He will dwell in our midst throughout eternity. The cherubim represent a closeness to God, which has been granted to us through the blood of his Son. Like the high Priests, Believers are also chosen, called, cleansed, clothed, consecrated and commissioned, and now allowed access to a holy God.
The Beautiful Picture of the Ark Inside the Holy of Holies: IMMANUEL!
The Holy of Holies was a perfect cube, which is also symbolic for the ultimate fellowship of God and His people together for eternity. "And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. It was prepared like a bride dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Now God's presence is with people, and he will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them and will be their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death, sadness, crying, or pain, because all the old ways are gone.... The city was built in a square, and its length was equal to its width. The angel measured the city with the rod. The city was 1,500 miles long, 1,500 miles wide, and 1,500 miles high." (Revelation 21:2-4, 16). The Ark reveals both the failures and sins of man before a Holy God, and that holy God's provision and covering for that sin. The ark's cover represents God's Presence now with mankind, because man's sins are covered over. The cherubim represent all Believers who will be seated with Christ in heaven, and will be close to Him always.

We also see this beautiful picture in the book of Revelation: "After the vision of these things I looked, and there before me was an open door in heaven. And the same voice that spoke to me before, that sounded like a trumpet, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must happen after this." Immediately I was in the Spirit, and before me was a throne in heaven, and someone was sitting on it. The One who sat on the throne looked like precious stones, like jasper and carnelian. All around the throne was a rainbow the color of an emerald. Around the throne there were twenty-four other thrones with twenty-four elders sitting on them. They were dressed in white and had golden crowns on their heads. (Revelation 4:1-4)

In the Ark of the Covenant, the Mercy Seat, and the Holy of Holies, God is certainly underscoring His ultimate plan and desire: to fellowship with His creation, all of us who believe and love Him. This is what the Ark of the Covenant is all about. It is literally "the box of the promise" containing all the signs and symbols to tell us God's heart, and reveal His plan, for our ultimate reunion.
The High Priest

Facts and Fulfillment

The Books of Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy contain detailed instructions regarding the priests, including the High Priest, who served in the Tabernacle. The priests were to be from the Tribe of Levi. The first High Priest was Aaron, Moses' brother. This was an "inherited office", and was passed on through the descendants of Aaron. Priest not only had to be Levites, they also had to be from the family of Aaron. Priests were to remain holy to God, and not go near anything that would "defile" them because they were intermediaries between God and His people.

The Levites were set apart by God for religious service. The name for priests in Hebrew is "Kohanim," all descendants of Aaron. These priests performed the rituals required by God in the Tabernacle. Many Old Testament books record the activities of the priests and High Priests throughout Israel's history.

Clothing

1 "Now take Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister to Me as priest, Aaron and Aaron’s sons: Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.  
2 And you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty.  
3 So you shall speak to all who are gifted artisans, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments, to consecrate him, that he may minister to Me as priest.  
4 And these are the garments which they shall make: a breastplate, an ephod, a robe, a skillfully woven tunic, a turban, and a sash. So they shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother and his sons, that he may minister to Me as priest.

5 "They shall take the gold, blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and the fine linen, and they shall make the ephod of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine woven linen, artistically worked.  
7 It shall have two shoulder straps joined at its two edges, and so it shall be joined together.  
8 And the intricately woven band of the ephod, which is on it, shall be of the same workmanship, made of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine woven linen.

9 "Then you shall take two onyx stones and engrave on them the names of the sons of Israel: six of their names on one stone and six names on the other stone, in order of their birth.  
11 With the work of an engraver in stone, like the engravings of a signet, you shall engrave the two stones with the names of the sons of Israel. You shall set them in settings of gold.  
12 And you shall put the two stones on the shoulders of the ephod as memorial stones for the sons of Israel. So Aaron shall bear their names before the LORD on his two shoulders as a memorial.  
14 And you shall also make settings of gold, and you shall make two chains of pure gold like braided cords, and fasten the braided chains to the settings.
15 “You shall make the breastplate of judgment. Artistically woven according to the workmanship of the ephod you shall make it: of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine woven linen, you shall make it. 16 It shall be doubled into a square: a span shall be its length, and a span shall be its width. 17 And you shall put settings of stones in it, four rows of stones: The first row shall be a sardius, a topaz, and an emerald; this shall be the first row; 18 the second row shall be a turquoise, a sapphire, and a diamond; 19 the third row, a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; 20 and the fourth row, a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper. They shall be set in gold settings. 21 And the stones shall have the names of the sons of Israel, twelve according to their names, like the engravings of a signet, each one with its own name; they shall be according to the twelve tribes.

22 “You shall make chains for the breastplate at the end, like braided cords of pure gold. 23 And you shall make two rings of gold for the breastplate, and put the two rings on the two ends of the breastplate. 24 Then you shall put the two braided chains of gold in the two rings which are on the ends of the breastplate; 25 and the other two ends of the two braided chains you shall fasten to the two settings, and put them on the shoulder straps of the ephod in the front.

26 “You shall make two rings of gold, and put them on the two ends of the breastplate, on the edge of it, which is on the inner side of the ephod. 27 And two other rings of gold you shall make, and put them on the two shoulder straps, underneath the ephod toward its front, right at the seam above the intricately woven band of the ephod. 28 They shall bind the breastplate by means of its rings to the rings of the ephod, using a blue cord, so that it is above the intricately woven band of the ephod, and so that the breastplate does not come loose from the ephod.

29 “So Aaron shall bear the names of the sons of Israel on the breastplate of judgment over his heart, when he goes into the holy place, as a memorial before the LORD continually. 30 And you shall put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim, and they shall be over Aaron’s heart when he goes in before the LORD. So Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel over his heart before the LORD continually.

31 “You shall make the robe of the ephod all of blue. 32 There shall be an opening for his head in the middle of it; it shall have a woven binding all around its opening, like the opening in a coat of mail, so that it does not tear. 33 And upon its hem you shall make pomegranates of blue, purple, and scarlet, all around its hem, and bells of gold between them all around; 34 a golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, upon the hem of the robe all around. 35 And it shall be upon Aaron when he ministers, and its sound will be heard when he goes into the holy place before the LORD and when he comes out, that he may not die. 36 “You shall also make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it, like the engraving of a signet: HOLINESS TO THE LORD. 37 And you shall put it on a blue cord, that it may be on the turban; it shall be on the front of the turban. 38 So it shall be on Aaron’s forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things which the children of Israel hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall always be on his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD. 39 “You shall skillfully weave the tunic of fine linen thread, you shall make the turban of fine linen, and you shall make the sash of woven work.

40 “For Aaron’s sons you shall make tunics, and you shall make sashes for them. And you shall make hats for them, for glory and beauty. 41 So you shall put them on Aaron your brother and on his sons with him. You shall anoint them, consecrate them, and sanctify them, that they may minister to Me as priests. 42 And you shall make for them linen trousers to cover their nakedness; they shall reach from the waist to the thighs. 43 They shall be on Aaron and on his sons when they
come into the tabernacle of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister in the holy place, that they do not incur iniquity and die. It shall be a statute forever to him and his descendants after him. (Exodus 28)

The High Priest was to wear special clothes, and perform special cleansing rites before their service. The clothing of the High Priest was to reflect God's glory and beauty. They wore special tunics, undergarments, caps and turbans of fine linen. The priest wore a blue robe with the ephod with onyx stones on each shoulder imprinted with the names of the tribes of Israel. He wore a breastplate inset with 12 stones, each engraved with the names of the 12 tribes. This was worn over the priest's heart and was a "memorial" before the Lord. The special stones called the "Urim and Thummim" were used to determine God's will for His people, and were placed inside the breastpiece. Scripture does not give us a complete picture of these "deciding stones" or how they were used.

The Breastplate
The stones on the breastplate were engraved on precious stones. It is likely the names of these stones, and their associated colors, have changed since first mentioned in scripture, and some may not even exist in our understanding today. These stones are significant, as they also appear in the book of Revelation, as the twelve foundations of the New City of Jerusalem. These precious foundation materials, however, had the names of the APOSTLES on them, not the tribes of Israel. This can mean that the foundations of the city and the foundations of our faith, are combined in the 12 tribes and 12 apostles. "Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb... The construction of its wall was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all kinds of precious stones: the first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. The twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass. (Revelation 21:14,18-21) The stones in the city foundation walls that match those in the High Priest's breastplate may indicate that the breastplate, which represented the rights and duties of the High Priest, will belong to all Believers in the Kingdom. God's Word tells us that we will serve as High Priests before Him.

Duties
The High Priest made sacrifices of bulls and goats to cover his own sins, as well as the sins of the people. He placed the blood of the sacrifices on the altar to atone (pay) for those sins, and to receive God's forgiveness. The priest would also come before God to ask for His direction, and His will. This is where the Urim and the Thummin came in. He
took care of the Tabernacle (maintained it, and took it down and moved it whenever God directed). He would keep the wicks trimmed on the Menorah, place new bread on the table of showbread, and would burn incense daily. He would pronounce people either "clean" or "unclean" depending on their conditions, as it related to the Word (Law) of God.

**Jesus, Our High Priest and Ultimate Fulfillment**

Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of the role of the High Priest. He is the intercessor before God, for His people. 14 "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:14-16) He intercedes continually for each of us.

Jesus was not from the tribe of Levi, or from the family of Aaron. He is from a higher order, from the order of Melchizedek, which made Him a higher priest. Jesus lives forever, unlike Aaron, who eventually died and passed on the priesthood to his sons. Jesus is both priest AND king. Aaron was a priest only. The kings of Israel come from the tribe of Judah, and from the family of David. Jesus is holy, having never sinned. He does not need to offer sacrifices for Himself, only for us. He was tempted in every way we are, but He still did not sin.

Jesus did not sacrifice animals. The blood of animals does not take away sin, but merely was God's provision for ceremonial cleanness. Jesus offered Himself, the spotless, perfect Lamb of God. He was the perfect sacrifice, the sacrifice which all the other sacrifices pointed to. His sacrifice took away the sins of all people, for all time. His willing death was the last sacrifice ever needed. 23 "Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing. 24 But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. 25 Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. 26 For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; 27 who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. 28 For the law appoints as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints the Son who has been perfected forever." (Hebrews 7:23-28)

To fully understand how Jesus fulfills the perfect role of the ultimate High Priest, we would have to engage in a complete study of the book of Hebrews. For purposes of this study, we won't do that here. We have merely provided the basics, but the completion of this High Priest type of Jesus in the Old Testament is explored in Hebrews, and makes a wonderful study. We would highly recommend you read it and study it *(the entire book, but especially chapters 4-10)* on your own.
So What Does All This Mean?
Let's summarize the items we have covered in the Tabernacle study. Once again, we will move from the outside in, toward the Holy of Holies.

The Courtyard

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MATERIALS and DETAIL</th>
<th>silver hooks and bands, bronze bases, pillars (unspecified, probably acacia wood), linen curtains (probably white); structure held up with ropes, pillars stood on sockets of bronze, capped with silver</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SIZE</td>
<td>100 cubits X 50 cubits (150 feet X 75 feet x 7 ½ feet high)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PURPOSE</td>
<td>To establish the boundary between the encampment and the Tabernacle. To separate the Tabernacle from everything else. To keep people from inadvertently bringing evil (unholiness) inside. Inside these curtains one approached a holy God who could not dwell in the presence of evil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPIRITUAL CONCEPTS</td>
<td>Separation from the world, from sin, from death; Righteousness (white linen); Judgment requiring a sacrifice (bronze bases); Atonement by blood, the Church united in Christ (silver) (all of the above obtainable only through Jesus)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Gate (Door) of the Tabernacle Courtyard

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MATERIALS and DETAIL</th>
<th>blue, purple and scarlet linen curtains, silver bands, bronze bases, bronze tent pegs and other articles of service (bronze); curtain was an embroidered piece, similar to a tapestry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SIZE</td>
<td>5 cubits high, 20 cubits long (7 ½ feet X 30 feet)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PURPOSE</td>
<td>To allow entrance into the sanctuary, Tabernacle proper area. Access was ONLY through this gate, no where else. One could not climb over. He had to go THROUGH. Man had to enter God's Presence in the way HE prescribed, no other way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPIRITUAL CONCEPTS</td>
<td>Jesus is the only way to God the Father, He is the only way to eternal life This way is open to all mankind</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### The Bronze (Brazen) Altar (The Altar of Burnt Offering)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>MATERIALS and DETAIL</strong></th>
<th>Acacia (shittim) wood overlaid with bronze; utensils and grating all bronze</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SIZE</strong></td>
<td>3 cubits high, 5 cubits square (7 ½ feet square by 4 ½ feet deep); 4 horns at corners, carrying poles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PURPOSE</strong></td>
<td>To offer up burnt sacrifice to God; this was the first item encountered just inside the courtyard gate, prior to the tabernacle proper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SPIRITUAL CONCEPTS</strong></td>
<td>Before entering into the presence of God, a sacrifice is needed to atone for sins, a covering of holiness. Jesus is the ultimate sacrifice. We cannot add anything to this perfect covering, and we cannot come to God without it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### The Laver (The Wash Basin)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>MATERIALS and DETAIL</strong></th>
<th>Solid bronze, made from mirrors of women who served there; filled with water for priests to wash</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SIZE</strong></td>
<td>not specified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PURPOSE</strong></td>
<td>Washing, cleansing for the priests; preparation to be in the Presence of a Holy, Spotless God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SPIRITUAL CONCEPTS</strong></td>
<td>We must be cleansed from the blackness of sin before entering into fellowship with a Holy God. After accepting the sacrifice that atones for us, we must confess and receive forgiveness for our sins. We must acknowledge we are &quot;dirty&quot; and be washed before proceeding further. Jesus said He was the Living Water; the Word of God is likened to the water of regeneration, washing clean, serving clean</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### The Tabernacle Coverings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>MATERIALS</strong></th>
<th>Main structure was acacia wood planks covered in gold (fitted together to form walls); 1) Innermost Covering (Embroidered Linen, seen from inside the Tabernacle) 2) Second layer, Goat's hair (most likely black) 3) 3rd Layer, Ram's skins dyed red. 4) Fourth, final layer, animals hides sewn together.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PURPOSE</strong></td>
<td>To house and cover the place where God fellowships with man, to serve as a reminder of man's need for covering and atonement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**SPIRITUAL CONCEPTS**

Man can fellowship with God, but requires a covering, an atonement in place before we can enter into His Presence. We must be constantly reminded of this, so we have the right attitude before God.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fine linen (1st covering)</th>
<th>Goat's hair (2nd covering)</th>
<th>Ram's skins dyed red (3rd covering)</th>
<th>Plain animal skins (leather) (4th covering)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>God's beauty is seen from within, after entering into His Presence. Blue is the color of heaven, God's abode, scarlet the color of the blood of the atonement (Jesus' sacrifice), and purple is the color of royalty, Jesus is King of Kings, Lord of Lords. The selvedge edge means God's plan and purpose will not unravel, but is firm forever, the gold is deity. The cherubim are those heavenly angels in the Presence of God at all times. Even they reflect the nature of the Son of God.</td>
<td>Black represents the sins of mankind, evil, man's need for atonement, but this layer is not seen from inside, in God's dwelling place. Only His righteousness is seen in the beauty of the first covering. A little of the black is seen from the outside in the doubled over portion, as a reminder that man needs atonement. Bronze represents judgment. Man's sins deserve judgment.</td>
<td>Ram is the substitutionary sacrifice in the desert for Abraham and Isaac (Genesis 22). God would provide His own sacrifice (His Son). The red is the blood of Jesus shed for our sins as atonement, a covering for our blackness.</td>
<td>The Tabernacle had a &quot;plain brown wrapper.&quot; It wasn't pretty on the outside, just as Jesus was not attractive in appearance. His attraction and beauty is seen only after entering His Presence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Structure Itself**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MATERIALS and DETAIL</th>
<th>Acacia wood overlaid with gold, silver sockets, woven tapestry with gold hooks and bronze sockets (entrance curtain)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SIZE</td>
<td>30 X 10 X 10 cubits (two chambers, 20 X 10 X 10, 10 X 10 X 10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PURPOSE</td>
<td>A place to fellowship with God, and serve Him. To be reminded of his beauty and his justice, and provision for our sins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPIRITUAL CONCEPTS</td>
<td>The &quot;structure&quot; of God's sanctuary contains materials speaking of the divinity and humanity of Jesus, the required judgment of man, and God's gift of His Son for our atonement. The number of boards indicates divine perfection, and our ultimate resurrection into Him. We enter into God's sanctuary only after judgment of sins, and that entrance is through His Son, Jesus Christ, who served as our covering, atonement for sin. Inside His presence is indescribable beauty, purity and eternal safekeeping. Some believe the Holy Place (first larger room) represents our fellowship with God while we are still on earth. The smaller room, the Holy of Holies, then represents our fellowship with God in eternity (the perfect cube of Revelation, the New Jerusalem)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### The Lampstand (Menorah)

| MATERIALS | Solid gold, all one piece; olive oil used to make the light; One central light, with six branches; all one piece, one talent of gold (talent = approx. 75-100 pounds); burned olive oil continuously |
| SIZE      | not specified |
| PURPOSE   | To light the Holy Place where the priests ministered |
| SPIRITUAL CONCEPTS | God's light is the only source of truth in a dark world. Jesus is the "Light of the World." His light shines constantly, and lights the world through the power of the Holy Spirit. Olive oil is a symbol for the Holy Spirit. The solid gold indicates Truth comes only from God. Jesus said we are now the light of the world also. His Presence shines to the world through us, but only if the Holy Spirit is present in us. The branches of the Menorah symbolize our perfection and completion in Him. |

### The Table of Showbread

| MATERIALS | Acacia (shittim) wood overlaid with gold, crown of gold, utensils pure gold; 12 loaves of unleavened bread (made with fine flour, the best), covered with frankincense, always present on the table. Pitchers used for drink offerings (wine) |
| SIZE      | 2 cubits long, 1 cubit wide, 1 ½ cubits high (36" l X 18" w x 27" h) |
| PURPOSE   | To symbolize fellowship with God. Breaking bread, or eating is a Biblical symbol for fellowship |
| SPIRITUAL CONCEPTS | God desires fellowship with His people, but the only way that is possible is through His Son Jesus (Perfect God and Perfect Man). This fellowship, which includes worship, is to be constant, beginning here on earth, and lasting through all eternity. This is the true "Holy communion." The crown of gold around symbolizes the kingship and finished work of our Savior. The conditional Mosaic Covenant was broken. The unconditional New Covenant is met through the atoning work of Jesus. We can now "commune" (fellowship) with God. |
## The Golden Altar of Incense

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MATERIALS and DETAIL</th>
<th>Acacia (shittim) wood overlaid with gold; 4 horns at the corners, one piece with the rest of the altar, carrying poles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SIZE</td>
<td>1 cubit square, 2 cubits high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PURPOSE</td>
<td>To burn fragrant incense (signifying communication with Him) before God regularly, once a year blood atonement on the horns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPIRITUAL CONCEPTS</td>
<td>Communion with God through prayer; our Intercessor Jesus Christ (as represented in the wood (humanity) and gold (deity), pleads on our behalf. We now have access to God through prayer, in Jesus.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## The Veil Separating the Two Rooms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MATERIALS and DETAIL</th>
<th>blue, purple and scarlet linen, gold hooks, acacia wood overlaid with gold posts, standing on silver bases; embroidered, like tapestry, with figures of cherubim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SIZE</td>
<td>15 feet X 15 feet, width and height of tabernacle proper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PURPOSE</td>
<td>To separate the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place (Holy of Holies)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPIRITUAL CONCEPTS</td>
<td>Symbolizes man's separation from a holy God. Can enter into His Presence only through acceptable sacrifice. Veil now permanently removed and we have access to God through Jesus.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## The Ark and The Mercy Seat The Chest (Box) and the Cover

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MATERIALS and DETAIL</th>
<th>Acacia wood overlaid with gold (box and poles), gold rings, gold molding. Wood chest covered with gold, with a cover called the &quot;mercy seat&quot; (which was solid gold, not wood and gold) and had 2 large figures of cherubim looking down at the cover; box contained 2 stone tablets of the Ten Commandments, Aaron's staff that budded, golden pot of manna. Ark housed in Holy of Holies. Only thing in this room.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SIZE</td>
<td>2 ½ cubits long, 1½ cubits wide, and 1½ cubits high (45&quot; l X 27&quot; w X 27&quot; h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PURPOSE</td>
<td>To house the special items God commanded be put there, to serve as His &quot;throne&quot; of Presence among the people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPIRITUAL CONCEPTS</td>
<td>The Ark represents the place where God meets His people, but only after a covering (atonement) is present. The articles in the Ark remind us that we have repeatedly failed in our attempts at holiness and obedience, but God has made provision for that failure. These 3 items are also symbolic of the One who provided that provision, Jesus Christ. The Ark is the symbol of God's presence, and His power. The Mercy Seat is a symbol of the covering over that Jesus' blood provides for us. A holy God requires justice, but instead we receive grace and mercy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The High Priest

**PURPOSE**
An individual to fellowship with and serve God, but only "clothed" properly, cleansed and called by God, and always with a sacrifice. He acted as intercessor for the people before God. High Priest was an inherited office. The first high priest was Aaron, Moses' brother. Priests were from the tribe of Levi.

**SPIRITUAL CONCEPTS**
Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of the role of the High Priest. He is the intercessor before God, for His people. He intercedes continually for each of us. He was cleansed (perfect), clothed in righteousness, and called by God to not only be the Great High Priest, but also to be the Ultimate Sacrifice. He is from a greater line of priests than Aaron. He is the fulfillment of Melchizedek, both Priest and King.

The Tabernacle and the Temple

The Tabernacle is the tent built in the desert after the Jews left Egypt, according to God's instruction (around 1446 BC), as a place where the people would fellowship with and sacrifice to a holy God. The Tabernacle was in use, maintained by the Levites wherever the people went, until they entered the Promised Land (around 1400 BC). At this time the Tabernacle and all the furnishings went into storage and moved around a lot. It was never permanently set up again. Eventually it was replaced by the Temple built by Solomon (about 960 BC). All of the furnishings were brought into this new "permanent" structure. This Temple (known as Solomon's Temple) was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar when the Jews were taken into captivity to Babylon (586 BC). At this time, all the Temple treasures, including the furnishings, were taken to Babylon.

When the remnant of Jews returned to the land, they rebuilt the Temple, but on a much smaller scale. This is known as the 2nd Temple, or Zerubbabel's Temple (completed about 520 BC). Much later King Herod undertook a massive rebuilding and renovation of the Temple, again making it an architectural marvel, full of very expensive decor. At the time of Jesus, this building project had been going on for 50 years! This was called "Herod's Temple" and was totally destroyed by the Roman armies in 70 AD. There has been no Temple since this time, but there are current plans to rebuild in Jerusalem. We won't go into all the details of the Temple now, but it is helpful to have a little history. The Temple incorporated all of the plans God had given for the Tabernacle, but the dimensions were multiplied and wherever "artistic license" could be taken, it was. The resulting Temples were grand edifices, unlike the humble Tabernacle. The simple lessons and profound truths of the Tabernacle were lost amidst the splendor and glory of the human houses called Temples.
We do not know what happened to the Temple furnishings or treasures after the Babylonian captivity. Nebuchadnezzar placed them in his storerooms, and we know they were still there when Daniel read the handwriting on the wall in Daniel 5 (at the end of the Babylonian empire, beginning of Persia's rise to power). We do not know, however, if they were ALL there (including the Ark of the Covenant) or just some, and we don't know if they were returned. There is much speculation today about the Temple treasures, especially the Ark of the Covenant, which has been "lost to history" since the time of the Babylonian invasion. No one really knows where it is. There is speculation about Aksum (or Axum), a small town in Ethiopia that is said to protect the real Ark of the Covenant. This was apparently the result of the union between the Queen of Sheba and Solomon which supposedly produced a male heir to throne of both nations, and whom many think stole the Ark and returned it to Ethiopia, where even today a special hereditary group of priests make life time commitments to guard whatever is inside this place.

There is also speculation that the Ark was hidden on Mt. Nebo by Jeremiah before the Temple was destroyed (reference in the Apocrypha about this), or it could be somewhere else, such as hidden in the tunnels beneath Jerusalem, as many believe. We just don't know. God is silent, and so is history, on the Ark. However, God knows exactly where it is, and it will most likely be revealed when the last Temple is built again in Jerusalem. We believe this Temple will be rebuilt, what is referred to as the 4th Temple, in fulfillment of prophecy regarding end times. The Antichrist is said to defile the Temple, so there must be one there to defile. There will also be one last Temple, built during the Millennium. Very detailed reference to this Temple is found in Ezekiel chapters 40-48.

Wait, There's More...
Besides all the rich symbolism of pointing the way to God through Jesus, throughout the materials and furnishings of the Tabernacle (and the Temple), there is a another picture that emerges. It has always been God's desire to fellowship with us. He has always maintained a way to do that, until we are reunited with Him for all eternity. We can have fellowship with God....now. And the Tabernacle helps us know the way to Him, and God's heart and ultimate plan for us. But even more than that, it helps us know how to enter His Presence today.

Seven (seven is not a coincidence! Seven is the number for "perfectly complete!") times in scripture we are called the "Temple of God."
"Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are." (see whole passage in 1 Corinthians 3:9-17. This is verses 16-17)

"Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?" (1 Corinthians 6:19)

"And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people.” (2 Corinthians 6:16)

"Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit."
(Ephesians 2:19-22)

"Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus, who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all His house. For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honor than the house. For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God. And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward, but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end."
(Hebrews 3:1-6)

"...you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 2:5)

"For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?"
(1 Peter 4:17)

The Tabernacle, and later the Temple, was established to be the place where God's people fellowshipped with Him. God dwelled in the midst of His people in this place. He was the Shekinah, the glory in the tent. We can also experience the Shekinah today. The Tabernacle and the Temple are templates for fellowship with God, as we are the Temple of the Holy Spirit today.
But just as it was with the Tabernacle, one cannot just lightly step into the Presence of God. It requires preparation, a process and an attitude, which is revealed through the layout and furnishings of the Tabernacle (Temple). This is an amazing, and important study in itself.

I could write about how the Tabernacle/Temple layout speaks of our fellowship and worship of God, but no one does it better than Chuck and Nancy Missler of Koinonia House (www.khouse.org). If you really want to understand all about the Tabernacle, and why it is applicable for us even today, you will take the time to read, and study, the articles about the Tabernacle/Temple and personal worship located at their website.

Closing Note:
This study has really only scratched the surface of the rich imagery, types and symbolism that are found in a study of the Tabernacle and The Temple. We have looked at the physical size, materials, appointments and furnishings of the tabernacle. However, we know that EVERYTHING in the Torah points to Jesus Christ. This would include the elaborate sacrificial system, including every kind of offering detailed in the book of Leviticus, as well as the priestly duties. That study is too long to present here. We suggest that you find a good study about the sacrifices and how they point to Jesus as well, to complement this introduction to the Tabernacle and how it points to Jesus, and God’s desire to fellowship with us. There is no end to the study we can undertake in these first books of Scripture, all which will lead us closer to our Deliverer.