

Exodus Chapter Twenty-Seven

Read **Exodus 27:1-8** – The Altar of Burnt Offering

v.1 “YOU SHALL MAKE AN ALTAR OF ACACIA WOOD, FIVE CUBITS LONG AND FIVE CUBITS WIDE—THE ALTAR SHALL BE SQUARE—AND ITS HEIGHT *shall be* THREE CUBITS.”

In keeping with the rest of the tabernacle and due to its availability the altar of burnt offering was also to be made of acacia wood. It was to be five cubits or 7.5 feet square and 4.5 feet tall assuming a cubit of 18 inches where Clarke in his commentary uses a cubit of 21 inches.

v.2 “YOU SHALL MAKE ITS HORNS ON ITS FOUR CORNERS; ITS HORNS SHALL BE OF ONE PIECE WITH IT. AND YOU SHALL OVERLAY IT WITH BRONZE.”

The altar was to have horns, projections at each of the four corners. The scripture doesn't tell us how long or how big they should be but that they should be made of one piece with the altar. I'm not sure how you could do that with wood but a craftsman could definitely do that with bronze or brass as part of the overlay.

Adam Clarke suggests that they served three purposes: 1) for ornamentation, 2) to prevent the sacrifice from sliding off the altar and 3) to tie the sacrifice to the altar. The scripture gives us more:

Exodus 29:12 “YOU SHALL TAKE *some* OF THE BLOOD OF THE BULL AND PUT *it* ON THE HORNS OF THE ALTAR WITH YOUR FINGER, AND POUR ALL THE BLOOD BESIDE THE BASE OF THE ALTAR.”

And it was also the ultimate place of refuge in time of trouble:

I Kings 1:50 “NOW ADONIJAH WAS AFRAID OF SOLOMON; SO HE AROSE, AND WENT AND TOOK HOLD OF THE HORNS OF THE ALTAR.”

v.3 “ALSO YOU SHALL MAKE ITS PANS TO RECEIVE ITS ASHES, AND ITS SHOVELS AND ITS BASINS AND ITS FORKS AND ITS FIREPANS; YOU SHALL MAKE ALL ITS UTENSILS OF BRONZE.”

Here we have all of the utensils necessary to tend the altar fire and for service during the sacrifices. Ash pans to carry away the ashes that had to be removed on a regular basis and shovels or scuttles to handle the ashes; basins or bowls to catch and hold the blood and forks, or fleshhooks in the older version, to handle the meat. In **I Samuel 2:13** these fleshhooks were used to secure a portion of the sacrifice for the use of the priests.

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v.4 “YOU SHALL MAKE A GRATE FOR IT, A NETWORK OF BRONZE; AND ON THE NETWORK YOU SHALL MAKE FOUR BRONZE RINGS AT ITS FOUR CORNERS.”

The grate or network serves as a place to put the flesh being offered on the altar and, like any grate, allow the ashes to fall through below the fire. This grate or network, as depicted in this picture, was to have four rings designed and placed at the four corners in order for it to be carried about. As Clarke notes in his commentary “there is a great variety of opinions” regarding just how this altar was constructed and how it looked. This artist’s rendering that we are using is one of several available and chosen for the availability of the picture, not necessarily for its compliance with scripture.

v.5 YOU SHALL PUT IT UNDER THE RIM OF THE ALTAR BENEATH, THAT THE NETWORK MAY BE MIDWAY UP THE ALTAR.

The grate was to go “UNDER THE RIM” of the altar. Our artist’s rendition shows it as being inside, as we would expect. Cook, in the Baker Commentary, contends that there was a shelf half way down inside of the box that made up the main part of the altar. Then the grate sat upon the shelf rather than on the ground as is shown in this picture or on legs of some sort.

v.6 “AND YOU SHALL MAKE POLES FOR THE ALTAR, POLES OF ACACIA WOOD, AND OVERLAY THEM WITH BRONZE.”

Poles or staves were to be made for the purpose of carrying the altar, just as they were used to carry the ark and the table of showbread. These poles were to be of acacia wood, covered with bronze or brass, depending upon the translation used.

v.7 “THE POLES SHALL BE PUT IN THE RINGS, AND THE POLES SHALL BE ON THE TWO SIDES OF THE ALTAR TO BEAR IT.”

The altar was to have rings to be used to carry it just like the other tabernacle furniture.

v.8 “YOU SHALL MAKE IT HOLLOW WITH BOARDS; AS IT WAS SHOWN YOU ON THE MOUNTAIN, SO SHALL THEY MAKE *it*.”

The altar was to be hollow or open as we see it depicted in this picture. Then the Lord adds the same admonition that he had given Moses before. You make all these things precisely as you have been instructed.

Read **Exodus 27:9-19** – The Court of the Tabernacle

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v.9 “YOU SHALL ALSO MAKE THE COURT OF THE TABERNACLE. FOR THE SOUTH SIDE **there shall be** HANGINGS FOR THE COURT **made of** FINE WOVEN LINEN, ONE HUNDRED CUBITS LONG FOR ONE SIDE.”

Now we turn our attention to the courtyard in which the tabernacle was enclosed. The curtains or hangings were to be of fine linen, 100 cubits long, or about 150 feet. This speaks of the south side of the courtyard so which way did the tabernacle face? East, always east toward the rising sun, so directional terms can be used to describe various aspects of the tabernacle location and the facts of the situation could still be understood.

v.10 “AND ITS TWENTY PILLARS AND THEIR TWENTY SOCKETS **shall be** BRONZE. THE HOOKS OF THE PILLARS AND THEIR BANDS **shall be** SILVER.”

Twenty pillars were to be used to hold the curtain or outer boundary of the tabernacle. These pillars were to be of bronze, the sockets in which they sat of bronze and the hooks and bands by which the curtains were fastened of silver.

v.11 “LIKEWISE ALONG THE LENGTH OF THE NORTH SIDE **there shall be** HANGINGS ONE HUNDRED **cubits** LONG, WITH ITS TWENTY PILLARS AND THEIR TWENTY SOCKETS OF BRONZE, AND THE HOOKS OF THE PILLARS AND THEIR BANDS OF SILVER.”

The north side of the tabernacle courtyard was to be enclosed the same way as the south side; 150 feet of fine linen cloth, bronze pillars set in bronze sockets bit hook and bands of silver.

v.12 “AND ALONG THE WIDTH OF THE COURT ON THE WEST SIDE **shall be** HANGINGS OF FIFTY CUBITS, WITH THEIR TEN PILLARS AND THEIR TEN SOCKETS.”

Along the west end, then, there would be a wall of linen curtains, hung on ten pillars, set in bronze sockets just as in the side walls. This curtain was to be fifty cubits or about 75 feet long so now we have the dimensions of the tabernacle court as 75x100 feet, exactly rectangular in shape.

v.13 “THE WIDTH OF THE COURT ON THE EAST SIDE FIFTY CUBITS.”

The width on the east end was to also be fifty cubits.

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v.14 “THE HANGINGS ON **one** SIDE FIFTEEN CUBITS, **WITH** THEIR THREE PILLARS AND THEIR THREE SOCKETS.”

But on the east end the curtains would have a gateway or entrance way in them with one side fifteen cubits and the other fifteen cubits with an entrance was between them.

v.15 “AND ON THE OTHER SIDE **shall be** HANGINGS OF FIFTEEN **cubits, with** THEIR THREE PILLARS AND THEIR THREE SOCKETS.”

v.16 “FOR THE GATE OF THE COURT **there shall be** A SCREEN TWENTY CUBITS LONG, **woven of** BLUE, PURPLE, AND SCARLET **thread**, AND FINE WOVEN LINEN, MADE BY A WEAVER. IT **shall have** FOUR PILLARS AND FOUR SOCKETS.”

The entrance was to be covered with a fine woven linen curtain of blue, purple and scarlet held by four pillars, sitting in four sockets. At this time I think that the pillars are going to either be plated with bronze or will be bronze metal, thus rather heavy.

v.17 “ALL THE PILLARS AROUND THE COURT SHALL HAVE BANDS OF SILVER; THEIR HOOKS **shall be** OF SILVER AND THEIR SOCKETS OF BRONZE.”

The construction of bands and hooks of silver were to be applied to all the outer court of the tabernacle.

v.18 “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.

Here we have as summary, brief as it is, of the instructions that Moses has been given for the courtyard boundary of the tabernacle. It was to be 100 cubits long, fifty cubit wide, five cubits high, walled with fine linen, hung on bronze pillars with silver bands and hooks. This gives us general dimensions in US measure of 150x75x7.5 feet in height.

v.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.”

So all of the utensils and items of service in the tabernacle were to be of bronze. As we noted earlier all of the utensils used within the tabernacle were of gold; the ark, the table, candlestick and altar. Now those that are to be used in the courtyard are to be of the more common and more durable material; bronze.

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Read **Exodus 27:20-21** – Oil for the Lamp

v.20 “AND YOU SHALL COMMAND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL THAT THEY BRING YOU PURE OIL OF PRESSED OLIVES FOR THE LIGHT, TO CAUSE THE LAMP TO BURN CONTINUALLY.”

The lamp in the tabernacle was to be an “eternal” flame; a flame that was never extinguished. The children of Israel were to make a “freewill” offering of the finest olive oil that they had available. It was also to be pure, purified by the various ways of preserving it and making sure that it was clean and kept clean.

v.21 “IN THE TABERNACLE OF MEETING, OUTSIDE THE VEIL WHICH *is* BEFORE THE TESTIMONY, AARON AND HIS SONS SHALL TEND IT FROM EVENING UNTIL MORNING BEFORE THE LORD. *It shall be* A STATUTE FOREVER TO THEIR GENERATIONS ON BEHALF OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL.”

Aaron and his sons, the priests and Levites of Israel were to be the keepers of the tabernacle, tending it night and day. It shall be a statute, what is meant here by the word statute? This law, this statute was to be carried out by the priests and Levites so long as there was a tabernacle or a temple for them to use as worship. As we well know, the synagogue replaced the temple and tabernacle to a great extent during the Babylon captivity and then on in to the first century.

This tabernacle is the house of God. Today who or what is the house of God. Is it wonder then that we a continually admonished to conduct ourselves, preserve ourselves with as much diligence as these Old Testament priests were to use in their service to God? The furnishings and utensils of the physical house of God that have studied were to be of the finest materials known to man. Their workmanship was also to be of the highest caliber available. It is any wonder then that God would require the same quality for the tabernacle that He dwells in today? That tabernacle is you and I. He requires the same level of quality in us that he required in the building of the tabernacle of old.