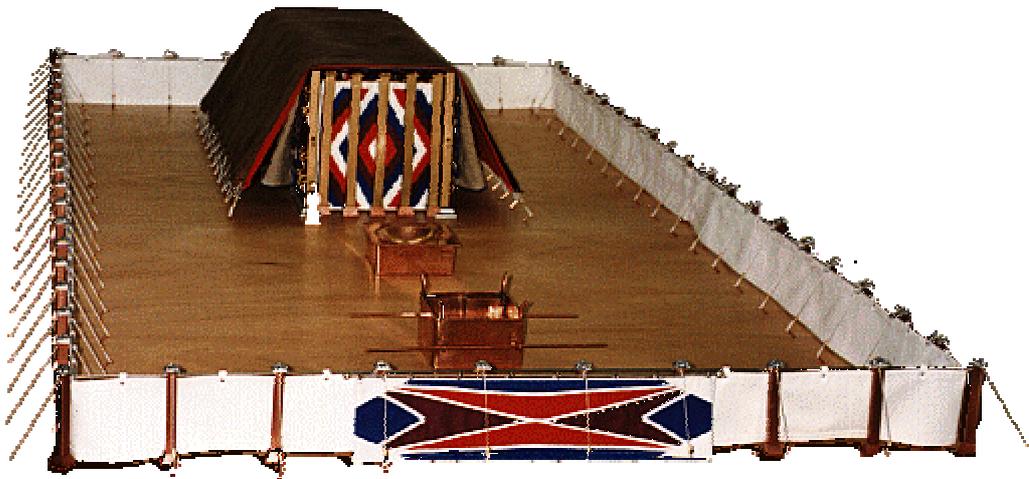


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# Welcome to the Tabernacle Home Page

(For best view of graphics, please maximize your Browser window)



The Tabernacle was a structure built by the [children of Israel](#) under the supervision of Moses, around 1450 B.C. The layout of the Tabernacle and the materials of its construction were specified in great detail to Moses by God at Mount Sinai, a few weeks after the children of Israel had left hundreds of years of slavery in Egypt (the Exodus). The Tabernacle was a portable construction, made by wise, skilful [workmen](#) and transported by one tribe ([the Levites](#)) through the 40 years in the desert wilderness and on into the land of Canaan.

The purpose of the following pages is:

- i. to describe the layout, structure and furnishings of the Tabernacle
- ii. to relate these pictures from the book of Exodus (the second book of the Bible) to the Lord Jesus Christ in the New Testament.

The first five books of the Bible were written down by Moses; they are called the Torah, the Hebrew word for 'law'. Jesus said He had come not to abolish the law, but to fulfil it (Matthew 5:17).

John, one of Jesus' disciples, tells us that "the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). The word 'truth' here is *alethia* in Greek, meaning 'reality'. The 'truth' John speaks of is Jesus Christ as the Word, who was God and who became flesh and **tabernacled** among us (John 1:1,14). (The Greek word sometimes translated as 'dwelt' here is more literally translated 'tabernacled').

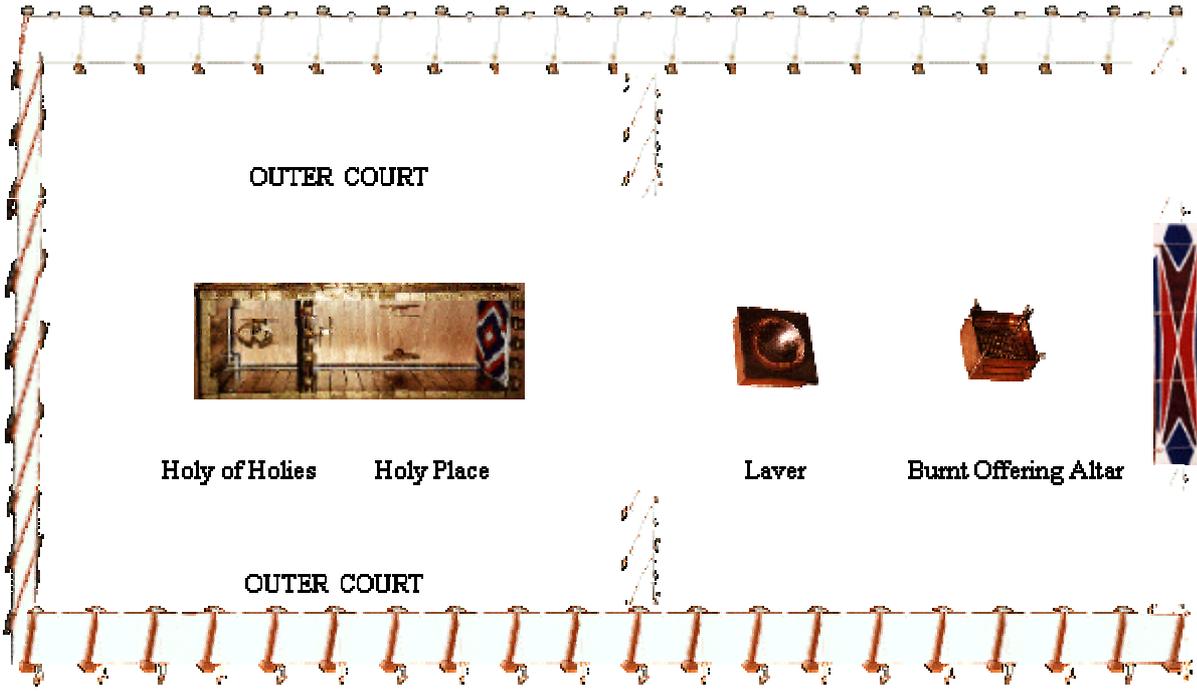
Therefore, the Tabernacle is a picture, a foreshadow of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the book of Exodus, when God dictates to Moses the detailed design of the Tabernacle (some 1450 years before the birth of Jesus), He speaks forth a description of just who and what the coming Messiah (the Christ) would be.

In the [four gospels](#), particularly in [John's](#) account, Jesus shows Himself to be the reality of every item in the Tabernacle. The real Tabernacle of God with men is therefore the Lord Jesus Christ.

Use the mouse to click on items in the Plan of the Tabernacle, then you'll see for yourself. Why not start by looking at the [curtains of the Outer Court](#) that surround the Tabernacle?



# Plan View of the Tabernacle Structure

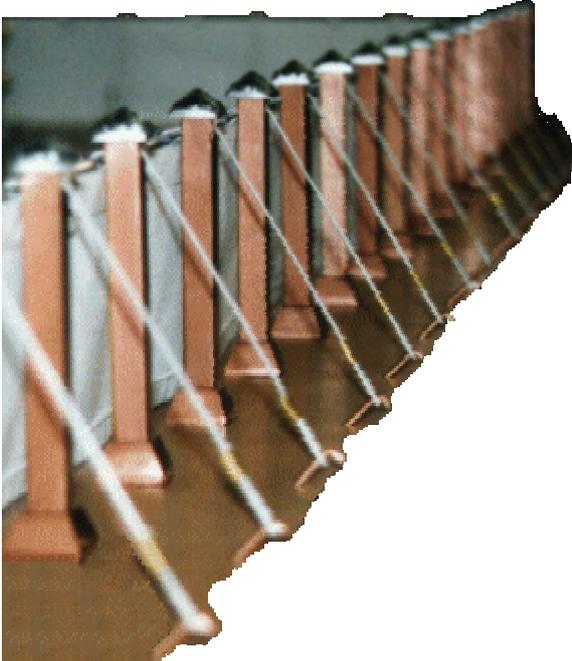


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## Curtains of the Outer Court (Exodus 27:9-19)

If you had suddenly come across the children of Israel in the desert wilderness, you would



have seen a sprawling camp of over two million people, probably not unlike the refugee camps in Rwanda, though perhaps more orderly. The tents were probably black and brown, set in contrast with the sandy and rocky colours of the desert.

In the centre of their camp, you would see the white linen curtains of the Tabernacle's Outer Court, approximately 46 metres long (c. 150 feet), 23 metres wide (c. 75 feet) and 2.3 metres tall (c. 7.5 feet). It was so noticeable against the surrounding rather drab colours of the camp and wilderness. It was impossible to see inside the Tabernacle from the camp outside: the tall, white, fine twined linen curtains made a separation between the outside world and the beauty that was contained in the Tabernacle.

In the Bible, white linen signifies righteousness (Revelation 19:8). God in His nature is right and

just. He therefore expects us, His created people, to act rightly and justly: this is what righteousness means. Psalm 92:15 tells us the Lord is upright and there is no unrighteousness in Him. Psalm 45:7 predicts that the Anointed One (the Messiah, the Christ) will love righteousness and hate wickedness.

Because God is righteous, we find that [the Levites](#), who God called to be priests to serve Him in the Tabernacle, were instructed to wear fine white linen garments (Exodus 28:39-43).

Likewise, in the New Testament, Revelation 19:6-9 speaks of the "wife of the Lamb" (the bride of Christ), who is seen clothed in fine white linen. The "wife of the Lamb" is a corporate bride, composed of all those people who have accepted God's saving invitation to be joined to Him at this marriage feast and have prepared themselves (as seen by their garments): they are all dressed in fine white linen, as were the priests of the Tabernacle; Revelation 19:8 informs us that the fine linen is their righteous acts.

By way of contrast, in Isaiah 64:6 we read that all our "righteousnesses" are like filthy rags and that our sins have blown us right off course from God's righteousness. Therefore, our sins have separated us from God (Isaiah 59:2). Just as Adam's sin caused him to be separated from God and the garden of Eden (Genesis 3:23-24), so we have all sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). Therefore, the white linen curtains of the Outer Court remind us that we are separated from God, due to our sins, because He is righteous.

The fine white linen curtains of the Outer Court were supported by pillars, at least 56 of them. The pillars were set in base sockets of bronze and capped with silver capitals.

The bronze base sockets symbolise God's judgement on those who sin against Him, as seen in Numbers 16:29-39 and 21:4-9. In Numbers 21, the children of Israel murmured against God. In judgement on their sin, God sent serpents into the camp to bite the children of Israel and many of them died. As Moses prayed for the people, God told him to make a bronze serpent and to put it on a pole. Anyone who looked on the bronze serpent would not perish. In his [gospel](#), John shows us that the Lord Jesus Christ is the reality of the bronze serpent lifted up from the earth. As the crucified Son of Man, He bore God's righteous judgement for us, so

that whoever believes in Him will not perish for ever but be saved from God's judgement and receive eternal life (John 3:14-17).

The capitals on top of the pillars were made from silver, symbolising the ransom price God placed on each of the children of Israel (Exodus 30:11-16). God desires to [redeem](#) people, not to condemn them, but to satisfy His righteousness a price must be paid. When Jesus was betrayed by Judas Iscariot, the price paid was thirty pieces of silver (Matthew 26:15 & Zechariah 11:12-13). Exodus 12:1 to 13:16 shows the other side of redemption: the way to redeem the life of the first-born son was by the sacrifice of a lamb at Passover. God sacrificed His only Son, Jesus the Lamb of God (John 1:29) at Calvary, as the final Passover Lamb (I Corinthians 5:7) during the [Feast of Passover](#) in 33 AD, in order to redeem mankind, that is to buy us back from sin and all its effects (Romans 5:6,18).

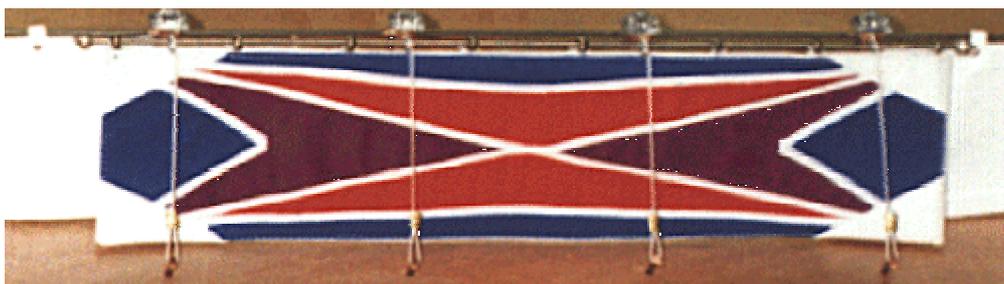
When we see the white curtains of the Outer Court, we are reminded that our sins have separated us from God (Isaiah 59:2 and Romans 3:23). When we read the [gospel accounts](#) of the life of Jesus, we see His compassion and love to people and we also see His condemnation of hypocrisy and sin (John 8:10-11). We see in Jesus Christ a man who loves righteousness and hates lawlessness (Hebrews 1:9), the Son of God in whom God the Father delights (Matthew 17:5), the Son who is the bright shining of God's glory and the express image of God's righteous person (Hebrews 1:3). Just like the curtains of the Outer Court, the righteousness of Christ is supported by His judgement of sin and capped by His desire to redeem us, to bring us (the unrighteous ones) back to God (I Peter 3:18). The good news is that although we start off outside the Tabernacle, separated from God, there is a way into the Outer Court, a [Door](#), colourful and welcoming, beckoning us to come inside.

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## The Door to the Outer Court (Exodus 27:16-17)



The Door of the Outer Court was a large curtain, made of fine linen, coloured in blue, purple, red and white. The curtain was supported by wooden pillars that were based in brass sockets, with silver capitals, just like the other pillars of the [Outer Court curtain](#). The door curtain was fastened to the pillars with gold hooks.

Each of the colours has a significance:

*Blue* indicates heavenly and godly: "Behold your God" (Isaiah 40:9), pointing to [John's gospel](#), where doubting Thomas eventually says to Jesus "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28).

*Purple* signifies kingship: "Behold your King" (Zechariah 9:9), pointing to [Matthew's gospel](#), where Jesus, the descendant of King David (Matthew 1:1), declares after rising from the dead: "All authority in heaven and on earth is given to Me" (Matthew 28:18).

*Red* signifies blood: "Behold My servant" (Isaiah 52:13 & 53:5), pointing to [Mark's gospel](#), where Jesus says He "came to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45).

*White* signifies purity and a right humanity: "Behold the man" (Zechariah 6:12), pointing to [Luke's gospel](#), where Pilate says of Jesus "Behold, I have found not one fault in this man" (Luke 23:4,14).

These four colours are woven together to become the complete Door, just as the [four gospels](#) combine to give a complete picture of Jesus. Jesus Christ is pure and righteous, kingly and godly, and this is *how* He as a man can be our ransom, the Door for us to enter into God's presence in the Tabernacle. Jesus said "I am the Door; if any man enters through Me he shall be saved" (John 10:9) and "I am the way, the truth and the life; no man comes to [God] the Father except through Me" (John 14:6).

This claim by Jesus is unique and exclusive, but just look at Jesus' life and His conduct: He was surrounded by all kinds of people with all sorts of histories and conditions and motives, yet Simon Peter (one of His closest disciples) could later say of Him "He did no sin, neither was there any deceit found in His mouth" (I Peter 2:22). Peter had seen Jesus in all sorts of situations with all manner of people (from religious leaders to the lowest prostitutes, publicans and tax collectors), yet he wrote "we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of that One's majesty" (II Peter 1:16).

Spend time to look at the Door. Read the gospel accounts of Jesus and discover for yourself

**His character, His compassion, His diligence, His teaching, His power. If you are not sure where to begin, you could start with [Mark's gospel](#). I did.**

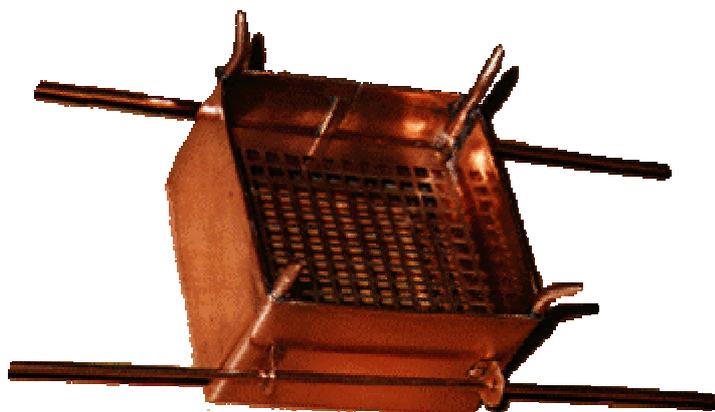
**The Door of the Outer Court is the only way in, inviting and attractive. The Door speaks of both the compassion and the kingliness of Jesus, His nature as both God and a genuine man, Son of God and son of man, woven together as a beautiful tapestry of "the appearing to man of the kindness and love of our Saviour God" (Titus 3:4). Jesus said "I am the Door; if any man enters through Me he shall be saved" (John 10:9). Do take a good look at the Door; then enter in through the Door. Once you are inside the Tabernacle, you will discover so much about what Jesus meant by "be saved" and how this can come about in your experience, beginning at the [Burnt Offering Altar](#) and the [Laver](#).**

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# The Burnt Offering Altar (Exodus 27:1-8)



The Burnt Offering Altar was the first item to be seen after entering through the [Door](#) into the Tabernacle's Outer Court. It was an impressive construction: made from acacia wood overlaid with bronze, it stood 1.4 metres high and 2.3 metres wide and broad (square).

Wood is a biblical figure of man (Psalm 1:1,3 & Jeremiah 5:14). Acacia wood is a strong, high quality wood, signifying the best humanity, that of Jesus. Bronze

in the Bible speaks of God's judgement, particularly His judgement over our rebellious thinking and speaking against Him (as in Numbers chapter 16:29-40 and Jude v11). Since the wood is overlaid with the bronze, the Burnt Offering Altar reminds us of man under God's judgement for our rebellion against Him. Since the wood is acacia wood, this speaks of Jesus bearing the judgement of God for us on the cross.

At the Burnt Offering Altar the priests sacrificed various [Offerings](#) to God; some offerings were for their own sins and for the sins of the people. The point of the burnt offering was that, by it, a person might become accepted before God and forgiven (Leviticus 1:4). For the burnt offering a male animal was sacrificed: a ram, a goat, a bullock or a turtle-dove (or a pigeon) (Leviticus 1:3-17). The offering had to be without blemish, the very healthiest and best available. This foreshadows the Lord Jesus, Who was examined by Pontius Pilate, who declared "I find no fault in Him at all" (John 18:38).

The blood of the offering was poured out round the base of the altar, foreshadowing the Lord Jesus, whose precious blood flowed out when His side was pierced on the cross by a Roman spear (John 19:34 & I Peter 1:19).

The whole concept of blood sacrifices is quite disturbing to the 20th century western mind-set. Some explanation may help to understand God's perspective in the Bible. In Ezekiel 18:4, God says "All souls are Mine... The soul that sins shall die". The penalty of sin is death (Romans 6:23). Sin was defined by the law, the 'Torah', the first five books of the Bible. The righteous requirement of the law was without pity: "a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" (Deuteronomy 19:21).

This then is the legal position: we belong to God, He made us and we are His by right. But we have done our own thing, lived our own life without God: we have sinned. We always try and make out that our sinfulness is not *so* bad. However, in God's eyes everything matters, every last little thing. Since we have robbed our lives back for ourselves from God to Whom we really belong, we have sinned.

According to the righteous requirement of the law, we should die for our sin. However, there is a provision: "the life of the flesh (of a burnt offering or sacrifice) is in the blood, and I have given it you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul" (Leviticus 17:11,8). So, either you must die, or the offering can die in your place, a life for a life. If the offering dies, then (through its life-blood) there is atonement for your soul, at-one-ment, restoration to the God to Whom you belong (Leviticus 1:4).

**This is God's way, His provision. Unjust to the animal? It is because we have been unjust towards God, by not living unto Him, that makes an offering become necessary. And this is faith: believing in God's provision, when we can do nothing for ourselves. As Abraham told Isaac in faith "God Himself will provide a lamb for the burnt offering" (Genesis 22:8), and He did: a male lamb hanging on a tree (Genesis 22:13) within eye-shot of Mount Moriah (Genesis 22:2,14), which is where the Temple Mount still is today, in Jerusalem. In fulfilment of all of these indications, God did not withhold His only Son (Genesis 22:16 John 3:16), the Lord Jesus Christ, who was the lamb provided by God: He was crucified within eye-shot of Mount Moriah at the [Feast of Passover](#) in 33AD, "the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Believe in Him. Seeing Jesus die, even the Roman centurion declared: "Truly, this man was the Son of God" (Mark 15:39).**

**After its blood was poured out, the burnt offering was entirely consumed by burning, the only products being ashes and aroma. The ashes were removed from the camp to a "clean place" (Leviticus 6:8-13). The burning offering was a pleasing, sweet aroma to God (Lev.1:9,13,17) to make the person accepted before God and forgiven (Lev.1:3-4). In Ephesians 5:2, Paul shows us clearly that the burnt offering was an exact picture of the Lord Jesus Christ, who "loved us and gave Himself up for us" on the cross, "an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma".**

**Psalm 22 describes graphically and prophetically the utterances of Jesus from the cross as God lays upon Him the sins of the entire world "My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Psalm 22:1), and the agony of being crucified: "all my bones are out of joint (Psalm 22:14). Then follows the heat of the fire of death: "My heart is like wax; it has melted within Me. My strength is dried up like a potsherd and My tongue clings to My jaws" (Psalm 22:14-15) - the burnt offering. In His final gasp, the offering is complete and Jesus cries "It is finished!" (John 19:30). "He has done it!" (Psalm 22:31).**

**The final part of the fulfilment, the carrying of the ashes to a 'clean place', came as Jesus' dead body was taken down from the cross: "in the place where He was crucified there was a garden and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had yet been laid. They laid Jesus there" (John 19:41-42). John, an eye-witness to all this, wrote "he who has seen bears testimony, true testimony, so that [you](#) also may believe" (John 19:35).**

**When we were at the [Door](#) of the Outer Court we heard the words of Jesus "I am the Door; if any man enters through Me he shall be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture" (John 10:9). Jesus is not only the Door, He also tells us "I am the Good Shepherd" (John 10:11), to help us to enter through the Door. Furthermore: "The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep" (John 10:11), so Jesus is the offering at the Burnt Offering Altar as soon as we get through the Door.**

**Rightfully we belong to God: we are His people and the sheep of His pasture, the flock in His care, hearing His voice (Psalm 95:7). The problem is we have rebelled against God our Maker, we have not listened to His voice. The normal destiny of any sheep entering into the Tabernacle was certain death. However, Jesus has laid down His life in our place, ie for us His sheep. When the wolf of death came, Jesus did not run away, as would a hired shepherd, who did not own the sheep (John 10:12-13). In Jesus' own words "I am the Good Shepherd; and I know My sheep, ... I lay down My life for the sheep" (John 10:14-15). And the sheep He refers to are not just those of the house of Israel "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd" (John 10:16).**

**This is the good news of the Burnt Offering Altar: whether we are Jew or Gentile, we are all under God's judgement because of our evil thinking, speaking and doing. However, the Lord Jesus, "Who did no sin, neither was there any deceit found in His mouth" (I Peter 2:22) became the offering slaughtered in our place. By believing in His death, "carrying up our sins**

in His body onto the tree" (I Peter 2:24), we can be made acceptable to God, restored to the Shepherd and to His flock (I Peter 2:25). Then we can enter into His courts with praise and thanksgiving (Psalm 100:3-4).

A lamb was burnt at the Burnt Offering Altar every morning and every evening (Exodus 29:38-42). Learn to come to this altar every day to confess your sins to God and to remember (by offering thanks and praise, Hebrews 13:15) that the Lord Jesus died in your place to forgive you and to cleanse you from all sin by His blood (I John 1:7-9; Hebrews 8:12; 9:14), so that you might live not for yourself but to Him (II Corinthians 5:15).

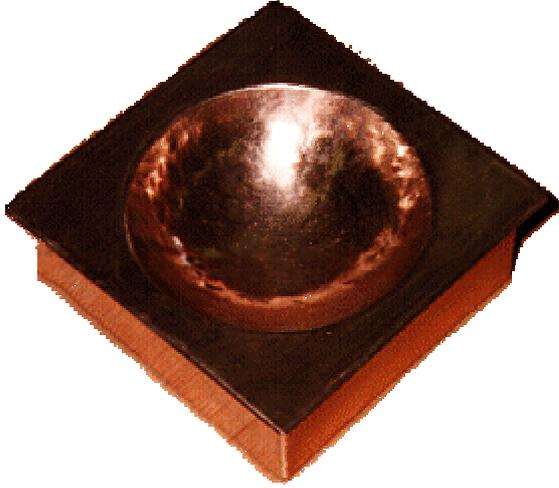
The Burnt Offering Altar and the [Laver](#) form a combined experience of Christ. Further information is also available on the other types of [Offerings](#).

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# The Laver (Exodus 30:17-21)



The Laver was a large bronze basin containing water. The Bible does not record its size or dimensions.

Having entered through the [Door](#) into the Tabernacle's Outer Court, the priests had to wash their hands and feet at the Laver before they could either enter into the [Sanctuary Building](#) or make any offering to the Lord at the [Burnt Offering Altar](#). God warned Moses that if the priests did not wash they would die (Exodus 30:20-21). It is therefore a serious requirement that we "wash" as we come to handle any of the things of the Lord, because those who believe in the Lord Jesus are considered priests in the New Testament sense

- see I Peter 2:9 and Revelation 1:6.

The New Testament speaks of washing in two ways:

- i. baptism (Acts 22:16), once only soon after we believe (Acts 16:31-33)
- ii. the washing of the water in the Word (Ephesians 5:26; John 13:8-10; 15:8), according to the pattern in Exodus 29:39 at least twice daily (in the morning and evening).

After having believed in the Lord Jesus and experienced that He is the [Door](#) through which we enter into God's kingdom, we should come to Him every day in a simple and sincere way. We need to read the Word of God in the Bible so that we can live by Him (Matthew 4:4) and we need to confess our sins to God, because He is faithful and righteous to forgive and cleanse us (I John 1:7-9). When God forgives, He forgets (Hebrews 8:12). This is the combined experience of the Laver and the [Burnt Offering Altar](#).

It is important to read the Bible, because the Word of God washes us, our "hands" and "feet", especially from the dirtiness of the world around us. It gives us God's perspective on our human conduct in the world and on the thoughts of our minds and hearts (Genesis 6:5). When Ephesians 5:26 speaks of the washing of the water in the Word, the word for washing is "laver" in Greek. As we read His Word, the Lord shines into our hearts and speaks to us, mostly in our conscience. According to God's shining and enlightening, we will need to confess and ask His forgiveness and cleansing. Only then are we qualified to approach the [Sanctuary Building](#).

The effect of the washing (laver) in the Word is to cleanse: "How shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word" (Psalm 119:9). This results in us taking God's side more and more in our living. We become set apart to God. 'Holy' or 'sanctified' ('holified') means just that: set apart to God. Such sanctified people are called 'saints' in the New Testament. Paul writes "to the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called (to be) saints, together with all those in every place who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians 1:2).

Saints are believers in Christ who have experienced the washing of God's Word in their living. We may have been greedy persons, swindlers, drunkards, abusers of drugs, thieves, liars, fornicators, homosexuals, involved with pornography, etc. before we came to the [Door](#)

in the curtains of the [Outer Court](#). But, do not be deceived: no one can inherit the kingdom of God like this (I Corinthians 6:9-10). "And these things were some of you." I was some of these. "But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God" (I Corinthians 6:11). We are washed at the Laver and set apart to God (sanctified) as a result; we are justified at the [Burnt Offering Altar](#) by faith in Jesus' death on the cross as "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

The message Jesus preached was "Time's up. Change your mind and believe the good news" (my version of Mark 1:15, "The time is fulfilled. Repent and believe the [gospel](#)"). Peter, Andrew, James, John and the other disciples of Jesus did just that: they changed their minds and began to follow Jesus. They left their old environment because they had found something so real and true, the reality of the Tabernacle, Jesus. They admired the Door (His character, His power, His teaching), He had washed their feet at the last supper (John 13:4-11), and they saw the offering as He died. The disciples became set apart to God amidst a totally hostile environment. But this was not the end: Jesus rose from the dead. He came back to them, not just to tabernacle among them, but dwell in them, as we shall see in God's dwelling place, the [Sanctuary](#).

Just before you proceed to the [Door of the Sanctuary](#), pause to consider all you have seen so far. Now might be a good time to [respond](#) to what you have already seen.

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## The Door to the Sanctuary (Exodus 26:36-37)



The Door to the Sanctuary is the second of three 'doors': there was the [Door to the Outer Court](#) (where we first entered); here we are at the Door to the Sanctuary (where we enter the [Holy Place](#)) and soon we will come to the [Veil](#) at the entrance to the [Holy of Holies](#).

The Door to the Sanctuary is remarkably similar to the [Door to the Outer Court](#): it has the same colouring: blue, purple, scarlet and the white of the fine twined linen. As with that Door, the book of Exodus does not tell us the pattern of the tapestry. Seeing these colours again reminds us of the Lord Jesus in the [four gospels](#) as the Son of God, the King, the lowly servant who

became our ransom, and the lovely, pure humanity of "the Son of Man who came to seek and to save that which is lost" (Luke 19:10).

This Door has different dimensions (4.6 x 4.6 metres), but occupies the same area as the [Door of the Outer Court](#); that Door was half the height and twice the width, inviting us with comforting access to know the salvation in Christ at the [Burnt Offering Altar](#) and the [Laver](#). There everything was just above or just below eye level, as our human sinful condition was addressed by our Saviour God (Titus 3:3-7).

Now that "we who were once far off have been brought near in the blood of Christ" (Ephesians 2:13), the Door to the Sanctuary requires us to take another look at this same Jesus. This time we see a higher view of Him as the exalted Christ, as we enter into the house of God (the Sanctuary), which is a picture of the church in God's design.

The New Testament book of Hebrews gives us this view, speaking of Christ "having made purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high". There, He received the Name that is above all other names from God the Father, Who declares that all (both men and angels) shall worship the Son (Hebrews 1:3-6; Philippians 2:9-11). The same faithful and worthy Christ is further the "Son over His house, whose house are we if we hold fast" (Hebrews 3:2,6). The colours are the same: He is the Son of God, the King, our ransom, our merciful great High Priest; what has changed is the perspective. It is God's design that we should not cross the threshold of the Sanctuary (the house of God, the church) without first gaining a distinct impression of the exalted Christ.

This view is reinforced by the presence in front of the curtain of the five golden pillars that give it support. The pillars were made from acacia wood overlaid with gold; the beauty is gold, the structure is wood. This bespeaks the mystery of Christ's Person: He is both God and man, divine and human, Son of God and son of man. The child born is called the Mighty God, the son given is called the Everlasting Father (Isaiah 9:6). The government of God's kingdom is upon the shoulders of such a Person (Isaiah 9:6-7). He is the Son Who is over God's house (Hebrews 3:6).

At the feet of the pillars were sockets of bronze, again reminding us of God's judgement. The line of thought in the book of Hebrews continues here too. The writer



has shown Christ is God the Son in chapter 1. Then in chapter 2 he quotes from Psalm 8, concerning the exaltation of Jesus Christ, the son of man, "crowned with glory and honour, set over all the works of Your (God's) hands, You (God) have subjected all things under His feet" (Hebrews 2:7-8). The bronze sockets for the pillars speak to us clearly of total judgement, that "in subjecting all things to Him, He left nothing unsubjected to Him" (Hebrews 2:8). Such is the strength and magnitude of Christ's victory on the cross: "He made a public spectacle of the principalities and powers, triumphing over them in the cross" (Colossians 2:15).

God "subjected all things under His (Christ's) feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church" (Ephesians 1:22). This is the view of the Sanctuary Door as we enter into the house of God. The Lord Jesus Christ is King, Son of God, purifier of sins, Son of Man, Lord, Ruler and Head. How wrong it is for anyone other than the Lord Jesus Christ to be called the head of the church. Only He is qualified and worthy and able to head up the church. Because all things are subjected under His feet, the gates of Hades cannot prevail against the genuine church, the house of God that the Son is building (Matthew 16:18; Hebrews 3:6).

With the glorified and exalted Christ in view, we may now proceed into the Sanctuary, to look first at the Boards and Bars of its structure, before contemplating the furnishings of the Holy Place. As we enter the Holy Place, our prayer is "may the God of peace sanctify us wholly" (I Thessalonians 5:23).

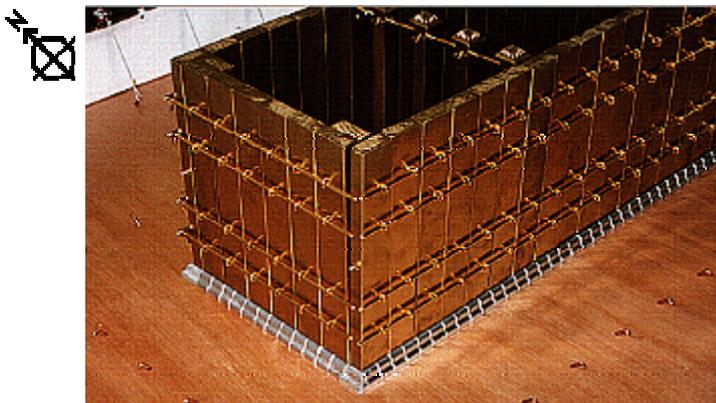
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# The Boards and Bars of the Sanctuary

(Exodus 26:15-30)



The Boards and their Bars were made of acacia wood overlaid with gold, as were the [pillars](#) of the entrance Door to the Sanctuary. There were twenty Boards on each of the North and South sides and six Boards on the West side of the Tabernacle, plus two Boards to strengthen the western wall at its corners. The Boards were held together by five Bars, the middle one

of which passed through the centre of the Boards, as you can see (just!).

Before we consider the Sanctuary's construction details, it is helpful to see the significance of God's dwelling place in the Bible.

The first mention of the house of God is when Jacob has his dream at Beth-El ('house of God'), while fleeing from Esau (Genesis 28:10-22). This is confirmed when Jacob returns to Beth-El (Genesis 35:1-15): God appears to him there, speaks to him there, and the house of God is there, all somewhat in 'embryo', God's dwelling place.

Jacob goes down to Egypt, where Joseph is. A few hundred years pass.

Following the Exodus from Egypt, around 1450 BC, God appears to Moses at Mount Sinai and dictates to him the design of the Tabernacle and gives the Ten 'Words' (Exodus 34:28, the Ten Commandments). The Tabernacle was to be God's dwelling place (Exodus 25:8-9).

Later on in Israel's history, around 1000 BC, the Temple was built in Jerusalem: king David did much of the preparation and his son, king Solomon, oversaw the building. God then dwelt in the Temple on Mount Zion in Jerusalem (Psalm 132:13-14).

However, due to the repeated sinfulness of Israel and her kings, God's glory departed from the Temple and it was no longer His dwelling place.

In the New Testament, we read that:

Jesus Christ is the "Word (who) became flesh and dwelt (tabernacled) among us" (John 1:14). God dwelt in Christ; as the apostle Paul wrote "in Christ all the fullness of the Godhead was pleased to dwell bodily" (Colossians 2:9).

Furthermore, those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ become a dwelling place of God: Paul prays that "Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith" (Ephesians 3:17); "do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you?" (I Corinthians 6:19).

Then, corporately, the believers in Christ are the church, which Paul terms "the holy temple in the Lord" and "the dwelling place of God in the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:21-22), "the house of God, the church of the living God" (I Timothy 3:15).

At the end of the New Testament we read "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men and He shall dwell with them and be His people and God Himself will be with them and be their God" (Revelation 21:3), as New Jerusalem comes down to the new earth out of heaven from God (Revelation 21:2,10).

Throughout the Bible, God desires a dwelling place and reveals the details of that dwelling

place to people who are attuned to Him.

To return to the wooden Boards overlaid with gold in the Tabernacle design, the two-fold composition of the Boards and Bars is explained as follows:

*gold*: the first mention of gold in the Bible is in Genesis 2:11-12. It was 'in the hills' already, as created by God, and is spoken of as 'good', just as God said of everything He had made in Genesis chapter 1. Because it is precious and was created directly by God, gold stands for 'divine';

*wood*: because wood grows out of the earth, and because Adam was made by God from something He had already made (ie the dust of the earth), wood stands for 'human', as in Psalm 1:1-3.

In the wording of Exodus 26:15-30, the Boards are mentioned as being made of acacia wood as early as verses 15-16. God specifies to Moses the size of each Board, the number of Boards, the fact that they are to be standing upright, how they are fixed into silver sockets to stand, the number of Boards on each wall and how to strengthen the corners are all specified. Then the wood of the Bars is mentioned. Only right at the end of the account is it specified "you shall overlay the Boards with gold" (Exodus 26:29), the Bars too. The delay in mentioning the gold overlay gives us an indication that the wood (signifying the 'human' element) has to be worked on and fitted, qualified in order to have the gold, the 'divine' element, as its overlay. Peter gives us the reason: we humans must have "escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" and realise we "have been given precious and exceeding great promises, that through these you may become partakers of the divine nature" (II Peter 1:4).

We must be the wooden Boards that are standing up in the silver sockets, not lounging around in or harping back to the garlic and onions of Egypt (Numbers 11:5-6). The wood is no longer growing in soil or even in the desert sand. Between the Boards and the desert is a significant quantity of silver: two silver sockets, each weighing 57 kilos (125 lbs), form the base for each Board. Silver in the scriptures is used as the purchase/redemption price of a life (20 silver shekels for Joseph in Genesis 37:28, 30 silver shekels for Jesus in Matthew 26:14-15). When the wood is robustly standing in the silver sockets it means that we have a testimony that we belong to God; we concede "we are not our own, we have been bought with a price" (I Corinthians 6:19-20). When many 'Boards' together have the same testimony, we are "those who have obtained a like precious faith in the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Peter 1:1). Then comes the gold overlay "that you might become partakers of the divine nature" (II Peter 1:4) and "glorify God in your body" (I Corinthians 6:20).

There were two 'extra' Boards, strengthening the corners of the western side (to the left on the picture above). This west-facing wall is called the 'thigh' in Hebrew (Exodus 26:23), implying strengthened standing in the body of Christ. These extra Boards strengthened the corners, the weakest part of the structure, in the same way as the [pillars](#) at the [Door of the Sanctuary](#) and the [Veil](#).

The Boards each had an individual standing in the two silver sockets, but they were strongly connected together by the Bars. There were five Bars, four of which passed through rings on the outside of the Boards, plus the middle Bar which passed through the centre of each Board. There are two interpretations of the five Bars:

- i. they refer to the lowliness, meekness, longsuffering (patience) and love plus the uniting bond of peace, in Ephesians 4:1-3, that are required for us all to walk worthily of our calling
- ii. they refer to the five classes of gifted persons the ascended Christ gave to equip the saints for building: apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers, in Ephesians 4:11.

Since the Bars are made of acacia wood overlaid with gold, the most lovely human virtues plus the divine appointment, it seems to me that both may be correct. The tragedy of church history (in our own age as much as in previous ages) is that appointed, gifted ones have not shown sufficiently the worthy virtues, either towards one another or towards the people they shepherd and teach. The virtues come first, in order to keep the oneness of the Spirit (Ephesians 4:3); the gifted ones and their equipping come afterwards, in order that the body of Christ may be built up, until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and the full knowledge of the Son of God and maturity in Him (Ephesians 4:12-13).

God's plan of salvation and His purpose in building are not individualistic in the book of Exodus. The wood may have come from different acacia trees, but all the Boards ended up fashioned and fitly framed together in one structure, that was God's dwelling place (Ephesians 2:21). The children of Israel numbered many hundreds of thousands in their family [Passover meals](#) and exit from Egypt. Yet God brought them out into the wilderness to experience one food source and one water source, with one goal of God's speaking, the one centre for worship, one building - the Tabernacle: "Let them build Me a Sanctuary, that I may dwell among them" (Exodus 25:8). The dwelling place of God is the one purpose for which we have been purchased by God with the redeeming blood of Jesus Christ (the Messiah).

There are two long walls of Boards, one signifying the Jews and the other the Gentiles. Neither could profit under the law, neither could keep the commandments of God. The only hope was the promised Messiah, in whose blood all might be brought near again. All the 'Boards' stand in His redemption only. Now any man in Christ is a new creation: old things have passed away; behold, they have become new (II Corinthians 5:17). The new creation in Messiah of one new man (Ephesians 2:15) is corporate: Jewish believers and Gentile believers are saved by His grace through faith alone (Ephesians 2:8) that nobody may boast. Through Jesus the Messiah/Christ we both have access in one Spirit to the Father (Ephesians 2:18). In Him we are fitted together as the Boards in the Tabernacle so that God may have His dwelling place in the (one) Spirit (Ephesians 2:22). God is operating powerfully in us to accomplish this, "to Him be the glory in the church and Christ Jesus for evermore" (Ephesians 3:20-21).

Entering through the [Door to the Sanctuary](#) into the first room, the Holy Place, the gold of the Boards is shining all around and the [Cherubim covering](#) is overhead. This is why we must be sanctified wholly (our entire spirit, soul and body) to be preserved without blemish as shining Boards in the house of God (I Thessalonians 5:23). Here are the furnishings of the Tabernacle, the [Showbread Table](#), the [Lampstand](#) and the [Golden Incense Altar](#).

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# Cherubim Embroidered Covering (Exodus 26:1-6)



The covering embroidered with Cherubim was the innermost covering over the Sanctuary. It was this covering that formed the actual Tabernacle, in the specific sense of Exodus 26:1. The Cherubim embroidered covering also formed the ceiling of the Tabernacle, looking up from inside the Sanctuary. Since much of the embroidery hung over the external walls of the [Boards](#), what was visible from the inside was only a small part of the whole. There were 10 curtains individual curtains to begin with, each 13 metres x 2 metres approx. Five curtains were then coupled together with one another, and likewise the other five. Then the 2 x 5 curtains were looped together, using 50 golden clasps to make one enormous embroidery 13 metres wide and almost 19 metres long.

The book of Exodus does not give us the precise pattern of the embroidery, but we are told that the colouring was blue, purple, scarlet and white (the colour of the fine twined linen) and that the motifs were Cherubim angels (Exodus 26:1).

These colours are not new to us. We have seen them at the [Door to the Outer Court](#) and again at the [Door to the Sanctuary](#); they also appear in the [Veil](#), the entrance 'door' to the [Holy of Holies](#). They speak of Christ's heavenliness, His royalty, His saviourhood and holiness, as seen in the [four gospels](#). The reappearance of these colours inside the Sanctuary, embroidered as the ceiling, reminds us that it is the Beloved Son in His fourfold character who is Head over all things to the Church (Ephesians 1:22).

The Cherubim are there reminding us, perhaps, of two things:

- i. the Cherubim were placed at the east of Eden "to keep the way of the tree of life" (Genesis 3:24). To 'keep' in Hebrew means to observe, keep watch over, preventing Adam and Eve from returning to partake of the tree of life; here in the Tabernacle, the Cherubim are over-seeing what goes on inside the Sanctuary.
- ii. the Cherubim are among those in heaven who bow the knee to acknowledge the Lordship of Christ (Philippians 2:10; Revelation 5:11-14), so He is truly Head over *all* things to the Church.

John, one of the disciples closest to Jesus, declares "We beheld His glory, glory as of an only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:17). As we progress closer and closer to the presence of God in the Tabernacle, we too need to behold His glory, setting our minds on the things which are above where Christ is, not on the things that are on the earth (Colossians 3:1-2), and realise that what we can see is but a small part of the whole.

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## The Showbread Table (Exodus 25:23-30)



The Showbread Table was placed on the right-hand side of the Holy Place, the North side, a little way from the gold-covered [Boards](#). It was not very big: approximately 1 metre long, half a metre wide, three-quarters of a metre high. It was made from acacia [wood](#) overlaid with [gold](#), similar to the Boards, speaking of the two-fold nature of Jesus Christ: He was born of Mary as a genuine human being, yet conceived by the Holy Spirit and called the Son of God (Luke 1:35), truly man overlaid with God.

The Showbread Table had a crown made of gold, unlike the [Burnt Offering Altar](#). Back there in the Outer Court, all was about washing, judgement and death at the bronze-coated [Laver](#) and Burnt Offering Altar. Here in the Holy Place, all is about life, food, light and fragrant incense. Therefore "we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels, because of the suffering of death" in the Outer Court, but at the Showbread Table (and at the [Golden Incense Altar](#)) in the Holy Place we see Jesus "crowned with glory and honour" (Hebrews 2:9).

On the Showbread Table were placed twelve loaves of unleavened bread, one for each of the twelve tribes of Israel. The loaves were replaced every week freshly on the Sabbath (Leviticus 24:5-9): fresh food in the house of God for the priests, Aaron and his sons. Peter tells us that those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ (I Peter 1:8), who have tasted that the Lord is gracious (I Peter 2:3) are not only a spiritual house, but also a holy priesthood, a royal priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (I Peter 2:5,9). As priests, we are ministering to the Lord through faith in Jesus' blood and the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Our food, in addition to some of the offerings, is the fresh bread on the golden Showbread Table: Jesus as the Bread of God who came down from heaven to give LIFE to the world (John 6:33), crowned with glory and honour.

The twelve loaves represent the whole people of God, in God's house (the church, I Timothy 3:15), in fellowship with one another (I John 1:7).

The loaves of unleavened bread remind us of the Lord Jesus saying "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger" (John 6:35). This unlimited supply of heavenly food, fresh every week, is to be the portion of the priests in the light from the [Lampstand](#) (Colossians 1:12). Every day we need to come to Him (John 6:37), see the Son and believe in Him (John 6:40); He is the living Bread, that came down from heaven to give us His life, life IN us (John 6:51,53). This life is brought to us firstly as the Spirit who gives life (John 6:63) and secondly, as the words of eternal life (John 6:68). Today, Jesus Christ can only give His life to us through His word and by His Spirit. The black-and-white word of the scriptures alone is not enough for life (John 5:39-40). We must come to Him in the word AND in the Spirit.

The Showbread is also called the Bread of the Presence. To eat Christ as the Bread of Life, we (the priests) must be in the presence of God, who is Spirit (John 4:24). The Showbread is for

**all the priests, in fellowship with one another in God's presence.**

**Based on the parable in Luke 11:5-8, we need the Bread of Life not just for ourselves (as in the daily bread in Luke 11:3), but also for our needy friends, who come to us on their journey. Jesus makes it clear: people in the world are hungry, but the flesh profits nothing (John 6:35,62). Jesus came that He might give life to the world, so that those who believe in Him may have eternal life (John 6:33,47). Therefore, we should ask, seek and knock in prayer (Luke 11:9), until He gives us as much Bread of life as we need for ourselves and for our friends (Luke 11:8). Our heavenly Father delights to do this! (Luke 11:13).**

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## The Lampstand (Exodus 25:31-39)



The Lampstand was made of solid, pure gold, beaten out of a single piece. It was placed towards the left side of the Holy Place, the South side. Exodus does not give us either the dimensions or the pattern of the Lampstand, but we do know it had branches and that the bowls were to be formed like almonds in blossom. The lampstand was therefore like a tree of gold. "In Him was life and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4).

The Lampstand was lit permanently, to give light inside the Holy Place. "The true light which enlightens every man was coming into the world" (John 1:9).

The priests in the Tabernacle were responsible, evening and morning, for topping up the seven lamps with oil and trimming their wicks. Jesus said "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12). Therefore, the lampstand points us to Jesus Christ Himself, the light of the whole world.

We need the Lord's light; in His light we see light (Psalm 36:9). It was when God commanded His light to shine in our hearts that we began to see how excellent it is to know Jesus Christ, compared to all other things (II Corinthians 4:6). We also began to see how greatly blinded and deceived we had become by the god of this world and by our own lusts (II Corinthians 4:4 Titus 3:3).

We not only need to see His light, we need to walk in His light (I John 1:5-7; Ephesians 1:18; 5:5-8). This will involve the Lord shining on many things that do not reflect Him. We should confess anything shined on in our conscience to our Advocate in heaven, Jesus Christ the Righteous, who gave Himself for our sins (I John 1:9; 2:1-2). This kind of inner working is the functioning of the light of life: the priests trimmed the wicks of the lamps in the lampstand and re-filled the bowls with oil and the light burned brightly again (compare Revelation 1:12-13).

Once our conscience is clear and we are walking in the light, we are then the light of the world, as Jesus said in Matthew 5:14-16. We can shine for the Lord in the midst of this dark and dirty generation (Philippians 2:15).

This is the experience of the Light in an individual way, but the lampstand has seven lamps (seven is the number of completion). Therefore, the lampstand is composed of multiple lamps (people) having similar experiences: the local church (Revelation 2:1-7, for example)

The lampstand was formed by beating a solid lump of gold. First the central stem was beaten out. Then from the central stem the branches were beaten out. This shows us Christ and His

members in His body (I Corinthians 12:12). When Jesus came He was the unique Light of the World. Then Peter, James and John were 'beaten out', established in Christ (II Corinthians 1:21). We know that the three lamps on either side were lit from the lamp in the central stem, when the lampstand was set up. This indicates that Christ 'lit' Peter, James, John and the other early disciples and they began to follow Him, the Light of the World.

Then after His death and resurrection, the Lord Jesus came to them and breathed the Holy Spirit into them (John 20:22) and poured out the Holy Spirit upon them (Acts 2:33). Peter was on fire. Stephen caught the flame, then Philip; they came together with many others to be the church in Jerusalem (Acts 8:1), the lampstand there, beaten out of one source, the Lord Jesus Christ. The lampstand is all gold: it is God's work. "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who operates in you both the willing and the working for His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12-13).

By the time of the apostle John, in the book of Revelation, there are seven churches in Asia (Revelation chapters 1 to 3) that are still the objects of Christ's care and attention. There is one church in each of seven cities (1:20) and it is still God's work: the Son of Man, Jesus, is walking in the midst of the seven churches, which are seven golden lampstands. They are not plastic, they are gold. They are answerable not to men, but to Jesus, the Son of Man in His priestly role.

Christ speaks to each church in turn. At the start of the letter to each church, one or more of the characteristics of Christ in John's vision (in chapter 1) is/are applied directly to the situation of that church. Whatever the Lord Jesus Christ is, it is for His churches, His lampstands, to experience. At the end of the letter to each church, the Spirit is there, applying what has been said to those who have an ear to hear (Revelation chapters 2 and 3).

The aged apostle John is not there as organisational head; he is in exile because of the word of God and because of the testimony of Jesus (1:9). Christ is the Director, the Boss. He is tending the lampstands (1:13). John is a brother and companion in tribulation with those he writes to (1:9).

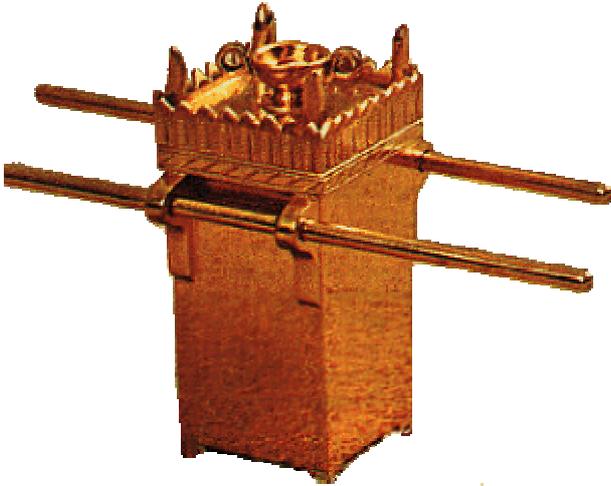
Eventually, at the end of the book of Revelation, the New Jerusalem will be one enormous golden lampstand, not requiring any more trimming. There will be no darkness to combat any more, just the flowing of the river of water of life, with the tree of life, from the throne of God and the Lamb (22:1-2). This will be the consummate Tabernacle of God with men, having the glory of God; He will dwell with us for ever and we will be His people and He will be our God (21:3). How we look forward to that day! "Surely I am coming quickly." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! (22:21)

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# The Golden Incense Altar (Exodus 30:1-10)



The Golden Incense Altar was made of [acacia wood](#) overlaid with [gold](#). It was situated just in front of the [Veil](#), the curtain which separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. It was square: half a metre by half a metre wide, and one metre high.

The priest had to burn incense at this altar in the morning and at twilight (Exodus 30:7-8), as a perpetual fragrance before the Lord.

The burning incense signifies prayer (Psalm 141:2 Revelation 5:8) and points us to the prayer of the Lord Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane (John chapter 17, Mark 14:32-

42).

Similar to the [Showbread Table](#), the Golden Incense Altar had a golden crown round the top of it. This signifies "Jesus, crowned with glory and honour" (Hebrews 2:9). However, because the Golden Incense Altar is the place of prayer, the crown and the prayer together give us a hint of a kingly priesthood. This thought is developed in the book of Hebrews: the Messiah, Jesus Christ has become a priest according to the order of Melchisedek (Psalm 110:1, Hebrews chapter 7). He can sympathize with us as our great High Priest (Hebrews 4:15) and He is able to minister His supply of mercy and grace to us as the King of righteousness and King of peace (Hebrews 7:25,2; 4:16 Genesis 14:18).

Prayer is very important in the daily life of all believers in the Lord (Daniel 6:10 Matthew 6:5-13). We should pray without ceasing (I Thessalonians 5:17), using all kinds of prayers and petitions with thanksgiving, praying at every time in the Spirit, watching and persevering in prayer not just for ourselves but for all our brothers and sisters (Ephesians 6:18). Prayer is becoming increasingly important, especially as the battle intensifies and utterance of the gospel becomes harder (Ephesians 6:19).

However, when our prayer is genuinely at the Golden Incense Altar, the Lord causes much incense to be added to our prayer. That incense rises back to Him as we pray according to His will, and the results are dramatic (Revelation 8:3-4).

The Tabernacle is the house of God, His dwelling place (Exodus 25:8-9) and a foreshadow of both Christ and the Church (Colossians 2:9; I Timothy 3:15; Ephesians 2:21-22). It is God's desire that His house should "be a house of prayer for all nations" (Isaiah 56:7).

For us to pray at the Golden Incense Altar, blood must first be applied (Leviticus 4:7), the blood of the [Sin Offering](#).

Then the incense must be prepared with genuine acknowledgements and experiences of the Son's Name - His purity, holiness, subjection, faith and dependence on God the Father. Then "whatever you ask the Father in My Name, He will give it to you; ask and you shall receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16:23-24).

One of the ingredients of the incense was salt, to make our prayer neither sentimental nor formal. We should pray at every time in the Spirit (Ephesians 6:18) in the Son's Name. This will be a sweet incense to God the Father.

Jesus' ministry was not just healing and teaching people; it was also a service to God the Father in His living and in praying (Mark 1:32-35). The night before He chose His twelve disciples, Jesus spent the whole night in the "prayer of God" (Luke 6:12). His admonition "Pray that you may not enter into temptation" and His observation regarding praying that "the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:41) so obviously come from One who is qualified to comment (Hebrews 2:14,18).

In His prayer in John chapter 17, Jesus utters such meaningful requests, with such adoration of the Father, acknowledging His own position as a man and that of the Father as Giver of all authority (verse 2), as Holy Father (verse 11), as Righteous Father (verse 25). This prayer is no 'last night' performance; it is rather the continuation of a life of previous prayer, as indicated by the phrase "Father, the hour has now come" (verse 1).

Here in the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus is at the Golden Incense Altar, on the night before the [Veil](#) (that is His flesh, Hebrews 10:20) will be torn from top to bottom, by God His Father (Matthew 27:46,51). Jesus' prayer is for eternal life for all those the Father has given to Him. Jesus is like the [high priest](#) in the Tabernacle, bearing the names of the disciples (and those who will believe through their word, verse 20) on His heart (the [Breastplate](#)). His prayer is that the Father will

- i. keep the disciples, guarding them all in the Father's own holy name, in unbroken oneness, as the Father and the Son are one (Verses 6-12)
- ii. sanctify them in His word of truth, setting the disciples apart to the Father as Jesus Himself had been set apart to the Father, for their impact in the world with the gospel, that generations of believers may be one, one in Them, the Father and the Son (Verses 13-21)
- iii. send the glory of the Son (John 1:14; 17:1) to the believers, that they may be perfected in oneness, so that the world may see the love of the Father for His only begotten Son and also the Father's love for His many children (John 1:18,12-13; 3:5-6; 20:17) (Verses 22-26).

This is the prayer for eternal life: "that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (John 17:3). Jesus said "I am come that they may have life and have it abundantly" (John 10:10). Eternal life is simply to know the Father and the Son and their oneness, truly, for eternity. This is Jesus' prayer for eternal life; may it also be ours.

Such a fragrance of incense exudes from this deep prayer by the great High Priest for all those in the House of God! Let us also come to the Golden Incense Altar and thence boldly through the [Veil](#) to the throne of grace (the [Ark of the Covenant](#)), that we may find the mercy and obtain the grace He has prayed for us in this great time of need! (Hebrews 3:6; 4:14-16)

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## The Veil (Exodus 26:31-37)

"The Veil shall be a divider between the holy place and the Holy of Holies" (Exodus 26:33).



The Veil was made using the four colours blue, purple, scarlet and white (of the fine linen) that correspond with the [four gospels](#). We have seen these four colours previously at the [Door of the Outer Court](#), the [Door to the Sanctuary](#), the [Cherubim Embroidered Covering](#) that forms the ceiling of the Tabernacle and on the [Ephod](#) the high priest wore.

The Veil is the final door to pass through, to enter into the presence of God in the Holy of Holies. Entry was forbidden to all except one, the high priest, and his access was not free: he was permitted entry once only per year, on the [Day of Atonement](#), when he brought the blood of the sacrificed goat to sprinkle on the lid (called the Mercy Seat) of the [Ark of the Covenant](#).

The Veil reminds us that we are excluded because "we all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). However, just as the [Passover lamb](#) was slain for the [redemption](#) of the children of Israel in Egypt, and the goat was slain so that its blood could obtain God's forgiveness for the Israelites on the Day of Atonement, so Jesus "bore our sins in His own body on the tree" (I Peter 2:24). As Jesus was hanging there on the cross, God "laid on Him the iniquities (the wrongdoings) of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). The final pangs of death came as Jesus cried out "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46). Seconds later "He cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up His spirit" (Matthew 26:50). He cried "It is finished!" (John 19:30). He died.

The effect of the death of Jesus was dramatic: the earth quaked, rocks were split "and the Veil in the Temple was torn in two, from top to bottom" (Matthew 27:51). "From top to bottom" indicates that God tore it, because the Veil in the Temple was 25 metres high. (Here in the Tabernacle the Veil was just 4.6 metres high.)

Matthew 27:54 and Luke 23:47 both record that the Centurion at the crucifixion site saw the Veil tearing in two. This means that this Gentile sinner could also see straight into the Holy of Holies. This is a picture to show us that it is now possible, on the basis of faith in Jesus' death for our sins, to stand in the presence of God as justified and forgiven people (Romans 5:1-2).

As Hebrews 10:19-22 shows, the way to the Holy of Holies has been opened up for us through the Veil of Jesus' flesh being torn on the cross. There is a 'new' (literally 'freshly slain') and 'living' way for us to enter. The Lord Jesus Christ is not just our freshly slain, dead offering; He is also the Living One (Luke 24:5 Revelation 1:18), risen from the dead and ascended, our great [High Priest](#), with our names on His heart (the [Breastplate](#)) and shoulders (the [shoulder stones](#)), going into the Holy of Holies, where God's presence is over the [Ark of the Covenant](#)! What encouragement! Let us draw near to God in the Holy of Holies, with a purified heart and in full assurance of faith! Let's tell other people about it! (Hebrews 10:23) Let us incite one another to love the Lord much more! (Hebrews 10:24) Let's get together with hearts full of praise and joy (Hebrews 10:25), as He leads us in songs of praise to God the Father (Hebrews 2:12), His Father and our Father! (John 20:17).

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# The Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 25:10-22)

The Ark of the Covenant is the best known item in the [Tabernacle](#), renowned for its mysterious powers against the enemies of Israel (I Samuel chapters 5 & 6).

The Ark of the Covenant resided in the Holy of Holies, the innermost room of the Tabernacle. Access was only permitted once per year, on the [Day of Atonement](#) (Yom Kippur). Access was restricted to one person only, the [high priest](#). He had to come into the Holy of Holies with the blood of a goat, on behalf of his own and the [people of Israel's](#) sins.

The Ark itself was a small box made of [acacia wood](#), overlaid with [gold](#). It measured 1.15 metres long, 0.7 metres wide and 0.7 metres high. It was carried by two long bars, also made of acacia wood overlaid with gold.

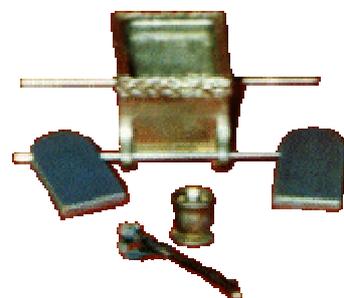
The Ark was God's throne in His dwelling place in the Tabernacle. Most people associate the Ark of the Covenant with judgement and wrath, rightly so. The day is soon coming when God will judge the secrets of people's hearts (Romans 2:16) and "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven upon all ungodliness and unrighteousness of people who suppress the truth" (Romans 1:18). "He who formed the eye, do you think He cannot see? or He who planted the ear, do you think He does not hear?" (Psalm 94:9) If you are still not sure, please read about the great white throne of God's judgement in Revelation 20:11-15. But, there was a cover on the Ark, known as the Mercy Seat, or Propitiation Cover. It was here that the blood of a goat was sprinkled by the [high priest](#) on the [Day of Atonement](#), to appease God's righteous anger (propitiate) for the sins of the people of Israel.

Romans 3:24-25 tells us that there is [redemption](#) in Christ Jesus, because God has set Him forth as a propitiation, through faith in His blood. Christ has died. The price is paid. To those who [believe](#) in Jesus Christ's death for their sins, there is now mercy not wrath. "God demonstrates His own love for us, in that while we are yet sinners, Christ died for us. Having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him" (Romans 5:8-9).

Attached to the Ark's covering lid were two Cherubim. God's presence did not dwell inside the box, but remained over the Ark, in between the two Cherubim. Here God dwelt "in unapproachable light" (I Timothy 6:16 Psalm 104:2). The high priest had to shield his eyes, because "no man shall see Me and live" (Exodus 33:20). This was where God met with Moses (Exodus 25:21-22 Leviticus 16:14-15). The glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle on the day it was reared up and anointed (Exodus 40:9,18,34-35), exactly fourteen days short of one year since the Exodus from Egypt (Exodus 40:2; 12:6,31). The two Cherubim on the Mercy Seat represented God's glory (Hebrews 9:5).

We are not told in great detail exactly what the Ark of the Covenant looked like. Some models, like this one, show the Cherubim kneeling. Other models show the Cherubim standing. What we do know is that the wings of the Cherubim were stretched out, to cover the Mercy Seat; the wings of the two Cherubim possibly touched one another to form a complete covering. The uncertainty should not unduly trouble us "for now we see dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I am known" (I Corinthians 13:12)

The picture below shows a model of the Ark, where the lid has been removed so you can see the contents that fit inside the Ark:



1. **The two stone tablets of the Law**
2. **Aaron's rod that budded**
3. **The golden pot of 'hidden' manna.**

Together these three items form the Testimony (Exodus 25:21), hence the Ark is called the Ark of the Testimony.

## **1. The Stone Tablets of the Law**

The Ten Commandments were written on these two pieces of stone, by the finger of God on Mount Sinai (Exodus 31:18; 32:16,19; 34:1). The tablets of stone are also called the tables of testimony (Exodus 31:18), because they show us what God is like: jealous, caring, faithful and true. He is holy and righteous.

Here are the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17):

**Introduction: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.**

1. **You shall have no other gods before Me.**
2. **You shall not make for yourselves any carved image, you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God.**
3. **You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold guiltless anyone who misuses His name.**
4. **Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day.**
5. **Honour your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.**
6. **You shall not murder.**
7. **You shall not commit adultery.**
8. **You shall not steal.**
9. **You shall not give false testimony against your neighbour.**
10. **You shall not covet your neighbour's house; you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, nor anything that belongs to your neighbour.**

The Ten Commandments on the two stone tablets are the basis for God's covenant with the **children of Israel** (Exodus 19:5-7). They stipulate what the righteous requirements of the law are, but there is no supply to help the children of Israel to obey the commandments.

Because the children of Israel did not continue in their side of the covenant (it was impossible, Romans 8:3), God promised to make a new covenant, "not like the covenant I made with their fathers, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them" says the Lord (Jeremiah 31:32).

"This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law into their minds and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbour saying 'Know the Lord', for they all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest among them, says the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity and their sin I will remember no more" (Jeremiah 31:33-34).

This is the New Covenant which Jesus has ratified by His blood (Luke 22:20).

Psalm 40:8 is a prophecy of the Messiah: "Behold, I come; in the scroll of the Book it is written of me: 'I delight to do Your will, O my God, and Your law is within my heart'". In

**fulfillment:** "When the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under law, so that He might [redeem](#) those who were under the law" (Galatians 4:4). Jesus Christ has kept the law of God, loving the Lord His God with all His heart, and His neighbour as Himself. This is obvious from reading the [four gospels](#). Delighting to do God's will (John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38), Jesus had the law of God (the Ten 'Words' of God) in His heart, just as the Ark of the Covenant kept the stone tablets of the Testimony. The Word of God had become flesh and [tabernacled](#) among us, full of grace and truth (reality, Greek) (John 1:14). Through Jesus' death on the cross, as a perfect [offering](#), we are forgiven our offenses under the law and redeemed from slavery to it.

God undertakes to write His laws into our hearts and inscribe them on our minds, by sending forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts (Galatians 4:6 Hebrews 8:10-12). Thereafter, an inner working of life takes place, "Christ who is our life" (Colossians 3:4), "Christ being formed in you" (Galatians 4:19), that will result in at least the same testimony of God as the Ten Commandments. The children of Israel broke the old covenant, and we still do, because of trying to keep it by self-effort in our flesh. In the New Covenant, God undertakes to write His laws into our minds by His Spirit (Romans 8:4 Ezekiel 36:25-28), providing we walk by the Spirit.

John is very economical in his writing, using one or two words to describe vast realities. But his focus is not on understanding so much as truly knowing, experiencing, for example the Bread of Life (John 6:35). John refers to Jesus as:

the 'Word' in his gospel (John 1:1)

the 'Word of Life' in his first epistle (1 John 1:1)

the 'Word of God' in Revelation 19:6.

In each case, John's underlying thought seems to be the Ark of the Testimony.

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## **2. Aaron's Rod that Budded**

A little history is required to begin with: the account is in Numbers chapter 16. A short while after the Tabernacle had been functioning, one of the priests (Korah) and some others mounted a challenge to the leadership of Moses and Aaron. Couched in language that was very spiritual, Korah reasoned 'aren't all the Lord's people holy? isn't He among all of them? why are Moses and Aaron the only leaders? - it's too much for them to cope with'. Korah's partners were not priests. Their line of reasoning was totally anti- God's word: 'Moses, you've brought us away from a land flowing with milk and honey (Egypt) into this desert. Where is this land flowing with milk and honey that you promised us? D'you think we're all blind?' This was an outright lie; Egypt had meant toil and miserable hardship, bitter tears and hopelessness, but after a few months of building a beautiful Tabernacle, the memory of that slavery was fading, hence the challenge.

Moses instructed everyone to appear before the Lord the next day. They were to fill bronze incense burners and place them before the Lord. God was furious and judged Korah and his cronies. Their censors became used in the covering for the [Burnt Offering Altar](#), as a reminder of God's wrath from heaven against the ones who had spoken so vehemently against Him and those He had chosen (Numbers 16:29).

**But the incident did not finish there. The whole congregation then started to murmur against Moses and Aaron because they had 'killed the Lord's people'. Again God reacted furiously and plague broke out, quenched only when Aaron obeyed Moses and placed his (the authorised) incense burner before the Lord in the Tabernacle. The plague had exacted a devastating toll on the people and God had proved negatively that Moses and Aaron were indeed his choice.**

**However, God wanted to prove positively that Aaron was his choice for the priesthood (Numbers 17:5). A rod from the head of each of the twelve tribes was marked with the name of the tribe and placed before the Lord, at Ark of the Testimony (Numbers 17:4). When Moses returned the next day, Aaron's rod had budded with sprouts, yielding blossoms and ripe almonds. God instructed Moses to place Aaron's rod back before the Testimony, "to be kept as a sign against the rebels" to prevent further murmurings and death (Numbers 17:10).**

**That is the history. The application comes in John chapter 11. Jesus' friend Lazarus is quite seriously ill. Jesus loved the family: Lazarus, Martha and Mary. But Jesus did not go to see them straightaway, He waited two days. This caused a lot of murmuring and reasoning. The first bunch of murmurers and reasoners were the disciples, especially when Jesus (without being told) announces that Lazarus has fallen asleep (John 11:11,14). The next bunch of murmurers and reasoners were Martha and Mary and the mourners. Martha can't wait to tell Jesus what she thinks, meeting Him on the road. Mary was less vociferous, but still made the same observation as Martha: "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died" (John 11:21,32).**

**It looks really bad. Jesus has let everybody down, just what the 'press' wanted to 'publish'. It is in this very environment of death, despair and hopelessness that Jesus announces "I am the Resurrection and the Life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live." (John 11:25) Jesus asks Martha if she believes. She gives a reply that is doctrinally superb: she believes Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of God who is come into the world (John 11:27). She avoids answering Jesus' actual question because her theology is already 'at the back of her mind' due to her grief. Some of the others begin to question even whether He is the Messiah. After all, if Jesus can make the blind to see (a strong proof He is the Messiah, Isaiah 42:1,7), why couldn't he have prevented Lazarus from dying?**

**Jesus had no intention of preventing Lazarus from dying. He appears to have had every intention of waiting until he had died, so that people would see the glory of God appear in the Tabernacle, Jesus Christ, and that many would believe in(to) Him ('into' is the literal Greek)(John 11:40,15,45). Lazarus was not just a piece of wood, lopped from an almond tree somewhere, like Aaron's rod had been. Lazarus was a full scale human being, a dear friend, now (after being dead for four days in Israel) undoubtedly decomposing rapidly, damaged beyond hope.**

**"Take away the stone"**

**"Father I thank You that You have heard Me"**

**(He had already been at the [Golden Incense Altar](#) praying)**

**"Lazarus, come forth"**

**"Loose him! Let him go!"**

**What a sign of the Messiah! Who could doubt now that Jesus is who He says He is - the Resurrection and the Life? Only those who were masterminding the plan to kill Him (John 11:47-54). But even they were under God's sovereign masterful arrangement.**

**So much of the Tabernacle's history and the Temple's history is upsetting and disappointing. But today, thousands of years later, people are still very eager to learn about the Tabernacle and the Temple. This has much to do with the Ark of the Covenant, which (for at least part of its history) contained the budding rod that is fulfilled in Jesus, who is the Resurrection and**

the Life! So much of church history, and even my own history is deeply disappointing, but again and again the Lord Jesus Christ becomes the Resurrection and the Life to the members of His Body, which is the true Church.

I myself am living, walking proof that Jesus Christ is the Resurrection and the Life. Tonight I am writing this article on the Tabernacle for the Internet and a CD-ROM. If Internet/CD-ROM technology had been available seven years ago, when I was a deeply backslidden christian, I am sure that I would have been looking out for totally different (even dirty) kinds of material. How I thank the Lord for His love towards me, for saving me, for bringing me back to take another look at Jesus in the [gospels](#) (the [Door to the Outer Court](#)), for dying for me at the [Burnt Offering Altar](#) (the cross) to forgive all my wrongdoings, for washing and cleansing me at the [Laver](#) of His word, for feeding me with the [Bread of Life](#), for shining on me as the [Light of the world](#), causing a reaction of the light of life inside me. Thank you, Lord, for [praying](#) for me at every stage of my life and for shepherding me back to Yourself. Thank you, Lord Jesus, You are the Resurrection and the Life, and You're real in my life. Praise Your Holy Name!

Aaron's rod that budded was a sign of God's continued choice of Aaron as a priest (Numbers 17:5). But Aaron's priesthood was interrupted by his death. The Lord Jesus Christ, though, has a priesthood that is constituted with an indestructible life (Hebrews 7:16). He is able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him (Hebrews 7:25). Do [you](#) need to come back to God, now, through Him?

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### 3. The Golden Pot of 'Hidden' Manna

Manna was the food that came down from God to feed the children of Isreal daily in the wilderness for the forty years of their journey to Canaan. It was given to the children of Israel in such a way that it required them to develop self-discipline. Manna only came in the early morning with the dew (Exodus 16:13-14). By the time the sun was up, it would have evaporated (Exodus 16:21). It had to be gathered every day, any residue would breed worms and smell (Exodus 16:20), and they had to gather a double portion on the sixth day, because none would fall on the Sabbath (Exodus 16:22-27). It was called 'Manna', because that is Hebrew for 'what is it'. It looked like white coriander seed and tasted like wafer biscuits made with honey (Exodus 16:31). The Lord commanded Moses to fill an omer vessel with Manna and keep it for a memorial to future generations of how God fed them in the wilderness (Exodus 16:32-33). This is the Golden Pot of Hidden Manna in the Tabernacle.

Now, it is obvious that if Manna was kept for longer than a day, or two days (if it was a Sabbath), then the Manna would breed worms and smell. Why then try to keep it for a memorial to future generations?

The key is the Golden Pot. The Golden Pot would last for ever. It is round, indicating eternal; it is gold, indicating ['of God, divine'](#). The Golden Pot indicates eternal life. Our life needs to be "hidden with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:3) and we need to know "Christ our life", the *zoe* (Greek) eternal life (Colossians 3:4). The Hidden Manna was a memorial of how the Lord had sustained His people in an impossible situation. Christ is real and applicable to every person in every age in every circumstance. The question is: how much is He really our life or how much is He just tacked on at the end, when we have some time/energy to give Him? Also when we have experienced His life supply in a tight situation, it is good to have a memorial of that

faithful supply of His life as sustenance for future similar occasions. "This is eternal life that they may [know](#) You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent" Jesus prays in John 17:3.

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# The High Priest and His Garments

## (Exodus chapters 28 and 39)

This picture shows the high priest in his "holy garments for ministering in the [Holy Place](#)" (Exodus 39:1). Aaron was the first high priest; he was Moses' brother. After Aaron died, subsequent high priests were his descendants, the sons of Aaron.



The high priest was responsible for the Tabernacle, its daily [offerings](#) and functions and also its regular Feasts, three times in the year: at Passover, at Pentecost and at Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement (which was followed by a week of joy in the Feast of Tabernacles), as seen from Leviticus chapter 23.

On the [Day of Atonement](#), it was uniquely the high priest's responsibility to take the blood of the sacrificed goat into the [Holy of Holies](#) on behalf of all God's people, for forgiveness of their sins.

This awesome responsibility required a sanctified person (Exodus 29), the high priest, dressed in "holy garments". The uppermost holy garment is apron-like and is called the Ephod. On top of the Ephod there is the square breastplate, with twelve precious stones. On the shoulders are two additional precious stones. The blue garment is called the robe, under which the high priest wore a white fine linen woven tunic. On his head is the white fine linen turban. Round the base of the turban is the crown of gold, saying "HOLY TO THE LORD".

All of these garments and items have a wonderful significance. Once we understand what these tell us about the heavenly High Priest, Jesus, we will find a deep-seated thankfulness rising up from within our spirit, and an encouragement to draw near to God with a purified heart in full assurance of faith (Hebrews 13:15; 10:22).

### The Ephod (Exodus 28:5-14; 39:2-7)

The Ephod is the apron-like garment worn by the high priest. It was made in four colours: blue, purple, scarlet and the white of the fine linen. These are the same colours that can be seen at the [Door to the Outer Court](#), the [Door to the Sanctuary](#) and in the [Veil](#); they refer to Christ as He is revealed in the [four gospels](#). There is an important additional feature of the Ephod, though: gold thread (cut from gold plate) was interwoven with the other colours (Exodus 39:3). Gold is not only precious, it implies '[of God](#), divine and heavenly'.

In the four colours we see Jesus as He was in His earthly ministry. Jesus has lived as a man on earth, a working man, the carpenter of Nazareth (Mark 6:3); He also knows what is involved when having to rely on others to provide for His living (Luke 8:3). He knows what it means to be tired out (John 4:6), hungry (Matthew 4:2; Mark 6:31), thirsty (John 4:7), pressurised (Mark 1:32-34; 2:2; 5:22-24), tempted (Luke 4:2; Hebrews 2:18), bereaved (John 11:35), desperate in prayer (Luke 22:44; Hebrews 5:7), disappointed by friends in a time of need (Luke 22:45-46), in pain (Matthew 27:26), mocked and spat on (Matthew 27:29-31), He knows what it is to die (Luke 23:46). Because He has passed through all these experiences, and many others also, the four colours tell us He is able to sympathize with us (Hebrews 4:15).

Also embroidered into the Ephod is the gold thread, a beautiful 'type' of Christ's heavenly ministry as great High Priest for His own. He is risen from the dead, He has ascended to heaven and is seated at the right hand of God (I Corinthians 15:3-4; Hebrews 1:3). There, as a

merciful and compassionate High Priest, Jesus always lives and prays for His own to help them in their difficulties (Hebrews 2:17). Furthermore, because He is risen from the dead and ascended to heaven, He is also ABLE to do something through His interceding for us (Hebrews 7:25): He aids us (Hebrews 2:16), showing us His mercy and ministering to us the supply of His grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:16), especially when we face temptation (Hebrews 2:18).

### **The Shoulder Stones (Exodus 28:9-12)**

On each shoulder-piece of the Ephod was a precious stone. Six names were written on each of the stones, altogether naming the [twelve tribes of Israel](#). Every time the high priest went before God at the [Golden Incense Altar](#), the names of all the people of God were upon His shoulders.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd (John 10:11). He knows His sheep (John 10:14) and goes after each one that is lost in the wilderness (Luke 15:4). Individually, when He finds each sheep that is lost, the Good Shepherd lays them on His shoulder (Luke 15:5-7). The shoulder stones represent the collective good shepherding by the Lord Jesus in millions of lives. He bears them all before God as today in heaven He is interceding for us (Romans 8:34 Hebrews 7:25). The shoulders speak of His strength. How powerful and prevailing His intercession has been in our lives!

### **The Breastplate (Exodus 28:15-30)**

The breastplate was square in its proportions, and also embroidered with gold. Set into the Breastplate in gold were twelve precious stones, one for each of the [twelve tribes of Israel](#). Each stone had the name of the respective tribe engraved upon it. This shows the Good Shepherd knows His sheep so well He calls them each by their own name (John 10:3). The high priest bears the names on the Breastplate "over His heart" when he goes before the Lord "as a memorial" (Exodus 28:29), foreshadowing the eternal love of the Lord Jesus for His sheep (John 13:1).

All this is not for those who do not believe. Sadly, they are still outside the Tabernacle, not having yet entered through the [Door](#) into the [Outer Court](#). Their names are not yet written on His heart. They are like the rich man in Luke chapter 16:19, whose name is not even known; by contrast, the name of the poor man Lazarus is known even to Abraham (Luke 16:25), despite his sores and beggarly state. Both men had heard the words of Moses and the prophets warning them, but the rich man had not believed, nor would he have believed even if one had risen from the dead (Luke 16:29-31). "I won't believe something I can't even see" is the common protest of the comfortable. The trouble is, by the time they are confronted with the reality it is often too late: they are dead. So, my friend, when you hear the Shepherd's voice, when He calls you by name, allow Him to lead [you](#): follow Him (John 10:3-4,25-27).

The names known to the high priest are engraved on the stones. This is no passing whim, they cannot be erased: "I give My sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand" (John 10:28). As the high priest goes about the service of the Holy Place, wearing the Breastplate with the engraved names,

he passes the [Lampstand](#) and light shines onto the names (the Light of Life, John 8:12),

he approaches the [Showbread Table](#) and the names are corresponded with one another in a fellowship of nourishment (the Bread of Life, John 6:35),

he comes before the [Golden Incense Altar](#) and bears the names individually and collectively before God, praying that we may be given eternal life, which means to know the only true God in Jesus Christ, the Messiah (John 17:3).

Here in the Holy Place, the emphasis is on life. Jesus the great High Priest has come so that they (the names) may have life, even eternal life, and have it abundantly (John 10:10).

**The High Priest must yet bring us into the Holy of Holies for the fullest view and experience of eternal life, though. For us to enter in and have this life abundantly and eternally, the [Veil](#) must be removed. It must be rent from top to bottom, by God (see Matthew 27:51). Then we have access through Him (the Veil) inside One Spirit (typified by both the anointed unique high priest and by the anointed Tabernacle, now made into just one room) unto the Father (Ephesians 2:18). Inside the Holy of Holies we find the [Ark of the Covenant](#), containing:**

- i. the two tablets containing the 'ten words' (Deuteronomy 10:4, Hebrew), which are the words of eternal life (John 6:68), collectively the Word of Life (I John 1:1),**
- ii. Aaron's rod that budded (the Resurrection and the Life, John 11:25)**
- iii. the Golden Pot of 'Hidden' Manna (Manna normally evaporated when the sun came up, but this 'Hidden' Manna was kept before the Lord as a memorial, therefore implying the eternal life given to us by the Bread of God, Jesus John 6:33,58; 17:3).**

**Jesus our great High Priest carries the names of all His redeemed ones on His strong shoulders. Besides that, all the individual names are brought together in groups, separated only by genealogy and by locality of dwelling (like the tribes of Israel). The collective names are permanently (like each engraved stone of the breastplate) carried on His loving heart. The Breastplate is therefore a foreshadow of the one Church expressed as local churches, one in each place, in God's design.**

**The Breastplate was folded double to form a pocket. Inside the pocket the Urim and Thummin were kept. Urim means 'lights' and Thummin means 'perfections'. They were probably two jewels. When someone had to make an important decision, the request was made known to the high priest. He would stand before the Lampstand, holding the Urim in one hand and the Thummin in the other. As the light reflected from the Urim and the Thummin onto the stones of the Breastplate, this flash of light provided up to 24 combinations (2 x 12). Since there are 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet, the flashes of light could produce strings of letters. As God breathed through the Ark, the Veil would move, permitting a breeze to flicker the flames in the Lampstand to momentarily alter the angle of direction of the light onto the Urim and Thummin, and thence to the Breastplate. Thus God was able to communicate directly, but not audibly, to the high priest and answer the enquiry.**

#### **The Robe (Exodus 28:31-35)**

**The Robe was made entirely of blue. It had a hem, attached to which were pomegranate motifs (in blue, purple and scarlet), with golden bells alternating in between the pomegranates. The golden bells were an audible announcement of the high priest's service, a beautiful sound, backed up by beautiful fruits, the pomegranates. This same balance of words and deeds we find in the Lord Jesus (Luke 24:19).**

#### **The Turban and the Crown (Exodus 28:36-39)**

**The Turban was made of white fine linen. Generally, fine white linen signifies righteous deeds (Revelation 19:8). Here the emphasis is on our mind, the covering of our thought processes, "taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ" (II Corinthians 10:5) by taking "the helmet of salvation" (Ephesians 6:17). Our mind is the big problem. When Zechariah saw the vision of Joshua (Zechariah 3:1-5), the Lord began to address the problem of the filthy garments (v3) by putting a clean Turban on his head (v5). Since the Hebrew words for Joshua (Yoshuah) and salvation (yeshuah) are so close, we see here the picture of taking up the helmet of salvation, to deal with our filthy thoughts of unrighteousness.**

**Attached to the Turban and upon the forehead of the high priest was the Crown, a gold plate on which "HOLY TO THE LORD" was engraved. This seal of God is legitimately there on the forehead of our Lord Jesus Christ, our great High Priest. But for us, whom He has also made priests (Revelation 1:5-6), there is a clear indication that we are not just to be outwardly dressed up in Christ; He must transform us, by the renewing of our mind that we may prove**

**the will of God: our sanctification (Romans 12:2 & I Thessalonians 4:3). How we need to be renewed in the spirit of our mind, to put on the new man created in righteousness and true holiness (Ephesians 4:23-24)!**

**Finally ...**

**"Holy brothers, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the High Priest, Jesus" (Hebrews 3:1)**

**"Seeing we have such a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, a High Priest who can sympathize with our weaknesses (being tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin), 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).**

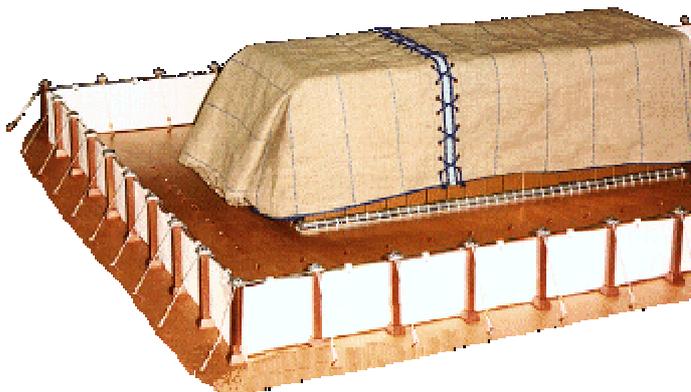
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## Woven Goats' Hair Covering (Exodus 26:7-13)

This picture shows the Woven Goats' Hair covering of the Tabernacle. Altogether there were 11 curtains of woven goats' hair, measuring 20 metres x 14 metres approx., held together by 50 bronze clasps. This covering made a "Tent" over the Tabernacle (Exodus 26:7)



Goats were of particular importance on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), the time when the children of Israel came together to be reconciled to God (Leviticus chapter 16). Two goats were selected by lottery, one for sacrifice and the other to be sent out into the wilderness. The blood of the sacrificed goat would be taken into the [Holy of Holies](#) by the [High Priest](#), as required by God to forgive the sins of the children of Israel, for "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Hebrews 9:22). Then the [High Priest](#) would lay his hands on the head of the other goat and confess all the sins of the children of Israel before it was sent out into the wilderness, signifying that God would forget all the sins thus confessed. Here is the origin of the 'scapegoat'.

The twofold significance of the goats is therefore that God wants to forgive and to forget. He desires to remove from His people not only the guilt of sin, but also His memory of that sin, so that we may be reconciled to Him.

For God's righteousness to be satisfied, though, one goat without blemish must die and the other goat without blemish must have the sins of Israel laid upon it and be removed outside the camp. All this speaks forward to the crucifixion of Jesus: "He who knew no sin was made sin for us" (II Corinthians 5:21), "He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin" (I John 3:5). Since Jesus is the reality of the two goats for our atonement and reconciliation to God, "we implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God" (II Corinthians 5:20).

The goats signify that the Sinless One has been made sin for us so that God can legally forgive us and no longer remember our sins, as it says in the New Covenant: "I will be forgiving of their unrighteousness and their sins I will remember no longer" (Hebrews 8:12).

The covering of Woven Goat's Hair signifies that, if we have entered into the Tabernacle, we are clothed with Christ as our righteousness: "God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us so that we in Him might become the righteousness of God" (II Corinthians 5:21).

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# The Offerings (Leviticus Chapters 1 to 7)

The Offerings that God spoke to Moses about were a means of worship as well as sacrifice for personal forgiveness and restoration with God. Many of the Offerings were associated with the [Burnt Offering Altar](#).

The priests sacrificed various offerings to God, including for their own sins as well as for the sins of the people (both acknowledged and unknown sins). Some of the offerings were regular and frequent; others were on an "as needed" provision. The major offerings are:

## [Burnt Offering](#)

(takes you to part of the Burnt Offering Altar page for these details)

## [Meal Offering](#)

## [Sin Offering](#)

## [Trespass Offering](#)

## [Peace Offering](#)

## [Drink Offering](#)

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## The Meal Offering (Leviticus 2:1-16; 6:14-23)

The Meal Offering was made from fine flour mingled with oil, plus salt and frankincense. The fine flour speaks of the humanity of Jesus; the oil speaks of the Holy Spirit of God; the salt speaks of the purity of the offering; the frankincense speaks of the fragrance of the offering.

The Meal Offering is a type of the Lord Jesus as a genuine man, the son of man, filled with the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:1).

There are two ingredients that are forbidden in the Meal Offering: leaven (to elevate) and honey (to sweeten).

Leaven is a small bacteria that grows readily. It signifies Sin.

However, Peter said of Jesus " He did no sin, neither was any deceit found in His mouth" (I Peter 2:22)

Honey takes away the real taste of something.

However, the words Jesus spoke were not sweetened to please the taste of those who heard Him (John 6:60). Jesus is called the Faithful Witness (Revelation 1:5). Jesus said "He whom God has sent speaks the words of God" (John 3:34) and "as My Father taught Me, I speak these things" (John 8:28).

Therefore the Meal Offering is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ in His humanity.

The Meal Offering could be baked in an oven, or fried in a frying-pan. If baked in a pan, the fine flour was not only mingled with oil, but the offering was then broken into three pieces

and oil poured upon it. Both within and upon the offering there was oil. This points us to the Lord Jesus, who was not only filled with the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:1) but also tempted three times by the Devil in the wilderness (Luke 4:3,7,9); He could then declare "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me" (Luke 4:18) for the carrying out of His earthly ministry of healing people and teaching the word of God and bringing salvation from sin and oppression.

Whether the Meal Offering was baked or fried, a portion of it was burnt upon the [Burnt Offering Altar](#) for God's satisfaction (Lev.2:9), while the rest was food for the priests (Lev.2:10).

The Meal Offering of the first-fruits (Lev.2:14-16) clearly bespeaks Christ in His death, burial and resurrection:

"bruised grain, parched with fire" - His death (Isaiah 53:5 Psalm 22:15)

"lay frankincense on it" - His burial (Luke 23:56-24:1)

"first-fruits" - the Feast of First Fruits was on the third day after the Passover and speaks of Christ's resurrection (Lev.23:11).

Therefore the Meal Offering is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ in His humanity, full of the Holy Spirit, passing through death, burial and resurrection both for God's satisfaction and to be "the bread of God who gives life to the world" (John 6:33).

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## **The Sin Offering (Leviticus 4:1-35; 6:24-30)**

There is a degree of overlap between the Sin Offering and the Trespass Offering. Some christian teachers have distinguished that 'Sin' is the nature and tendency towards sinful deeds (which nature we all possess), whereas 'Trespass' is a specific instance of Sin: a sin, a wrongdoing, a trespass, a transgression. "All have sinned" (Romans 3:23), ie trespassed, because "all are under sin" (Galatians 3:22), the sinful nature (Romans 7:8,17,20).

The Sin Offering is indicated for our general sinful condition before God (Lev.5:13) and also for unintentional sins (Lev.4:1,27), especially by leaders or by the people as a whole (Lev.4:3,13,22), but also for individuals among God's people (Lev.4:27).

The good news of the Sin Offering is that Christ has fulfilled the sin offering, once for all:

"Christ was manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Hebrews 9:26)

"He who knew no sin was made sin for us" (II Corinthians 5:21)

"God sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so He condemned sin in sinful man" (Romans 8:3).

Based on faith in what Christ has done for us by His death on the cross, we can be released from slavery to our sinful nature and its tendencies. Jesus said "Everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin... If the Son shall set you free, you shall be free indeed" (John 8:34,36).

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## **The Trespass Offering (Leviticus 5:1-17; 7:1-10)**

The Trespass Offering was for specific known sins, trespasses where the person knew what they had done, because of their conscience, in relation to their experience versus what they knew God required.

As indicated previously, the Trespass Offering and the Sin Offering have some degree of overlap, where 'Sin' might be considered to be our sinful nature and 'Trespass' as a sinful deed, a wrongdoing, a trespass.

This is illustrated by the following passage from John's first letter. Note first the sinful nature is mentioned, then the specific sinful deeds, sins:

"The blood of Jesus Christ God's Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we do not have sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us.  
... I write these things to you, that you may not sin. But if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins" (I John 1:7-2:2).

'Propitiation' means an 'anger-quenching, penalty-paying offering to God'.

This then is the good news of the Trespass Offering:

"Christ died for our sins" (I Corinthians 15:3)  
"Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people" (Hebrews 9:28)  
"Christ Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live to righteousness" (I Peter 2:24)  
"Christ suffered once for sins, the righteous One on behalf of the unrighteous ones, that He might bring us to God" (I Peter 3:18).

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## **The Peace Offering (Leviticus 3:1-17; 7:11-36)**

The Peace Offering is sometimes translated Fellowship Offering. It came about voluntarily, as a desire was expressed to thank God and to seek for fellowship (communion) with God.

The blood of the Peace Offering was sprinkled at the [Burnt Offering Altar](#), the fat and inward parts were removed and the remainder roasted. The fat and inward parts were burned; this was for God's satisfaction, as a sweet aroma. Because God had stated clearly what pleased Him, then a person who offered such a Peace Offering was truly doing what pleased God: that person was having fellowship (communing) with God.

It was also the case that the flesh of the offering was for the priest and the offerer to consume, to have a meal together, with some unleavened cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, similar to the [Meal Offering](#).

The Peace Offering was an indication of a good, healthy, loving relationship between the offerer and God and between the offerer and the priests. There was peace with God and there was peace with fellow citizens.

Paul writes: "Christ Himself is our peace" (Ephesians 2:14), because "we who were once far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ" (Ephesians 2:13). "Having been justified by faith" (by the sprinkling of the blood at the Burnt Offering Altar) "we have peace with God" (Romans 5:1). Our fellowship with God is restored through faith in the death and shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, and sustained through the shared nourishment His life affords us as our portion to feed on.

The Christ who "is our peace" in Ephesians 2:14 is also the Christ "who has made both one", where 'both' refers to the Jews and the Gentiles. To those who believe in Jesus Christ, His

death is the place for us to be one. It is the only place that oneness will work. Everywhere else there is no peace, because there are conflicts about how to do everything! Only as we begin to know "the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death" (Philippians 3:10) can we "be of the same mind in the Lord" (Philippians 4:2; 2:5-8). Otherwise we will be just like Euodias and Syntyche, fighting and squabbling, with no peace. It is ironic that 'Euodias' means 'sweet aroma', however, that would be just a name without the true experience of Christ as the Peace Offering. "Christ Himself is our peace" (Ephesians 2:14).

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### **The Drink Offering (Genesis 35:14 Exodus 29:40-41 Numbers 28:7-10,14-15,24,31)**

The Drink Offering was poured out upon an existing offering. Often a blood sacrifice was accompanied by both a Meal Offering and a Drink Offering. Because the Drink Offering is 'poured out' upon the existing offering, there is a thought of 'wasting' or 'being wasted' (compare Matthew 26:8). In Genesis 35:14, Jacob pours out a drink offering to signify he is giving his life back to God, consecrating himself for the house of God, 'Beth-El'. Likewise, in Exodus 29:43-45, Aaron and his sons have just been consecrated, giving their lives for the Tabernacle service, so that God may have a dwelling place. For this to be valid, there is need, morning and evening, of daily offerings, including a lamb for a Burnt Offering, a Meal Offering and a Drink Offering. Twice daily, there is renewed consecration in the Tabernacle by the priests. This is a picture for us in our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The apostle Paul spoke of himself being "poured out as a drink offering" on the sacrifice and priestly service of the faith of the saints in Philippi (Philippians 2:17), as he contemplated the possibility of soon having his life ended on account of the gospel.

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