

The Tabernacle, Part 9 – The Bronze Altar

After God had instructed the people to give freely so that there may be a place for them to meet and worship God, the tabernacle was constructed. Each piece of the tabernacle and its furniture was built according to the pattern given Moses on Mount Sinai.

The first piece of furniture that you see in the Tabernacle was the bronze altar.

The bronze altar was a square form, which was 5 cubits long, 5 cubits broad and 3 high (Exodus 27:1). A cubit is 18 inches. (7½ ft. X 7½ ft. X 4½ ft.) It was made of acacia wood and overlaid with brass.

The acacia tree is also known as the shi-ttah` tree.

It is a thorn tree. The wood of the acacia tree is knotted and twisted. At each corner of the altar was a horn (v. 2). Animals were bound to the horns and sacrificed. All of the wood in the tabernacle was made from the acacia tree.



Psalms 118:27 “Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar.”

Leviticus 8:15 tells us the altar was the place for the atonement and reconciliation between God and His sinful people. The priests sprinkled the blood of the atoning sacrifice on the altar. The body of the sacrifice animal was burned on the altar. Animals were sacrificed daily, and fresh blood was poured out. The blood of the atonement was for the sins of the people. This life of the animal was offered in substitution for the sinner.

The altar was a type of the cross of Christ.

When the Lamb of God died on a cross, reconciliation was made upon the altar. Reconciliation means reuniting and restoring. We were reconciled to God by the sacrifice of His Son. Exodus 29:37 says, “Whatever touches the altar must be holy.”

Colossians 1:21-22 NKJV “You, who were alienated and enemies...by wicked works... He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and blameless and above reproach in His sight.

The end of all sacrifices was attained on Christ's cross. The blood that was shed and sprinkled upon the altar restored sinful people to God. Only the blood of Jesus can cleanse from sin.

1 John 1:7 NKJV ...The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

The altar was used as a place of sanctuary.

Transgressors were shielded by divine authority from punishment at the horns of the altar. They held to the horns of the altar seeking mercy and pardon.

Those not protected by the law fled to the altar in vain.

Adonijah fled from the wrath of Solomon and held on to the horns of the altar. He continued to cling to them until he was given clemency, 1 Kings 1:50-53. Later, *Adonijah* was executed, (1 Kings 3:13-25). *Joab* held on to the same horns, but he was killed while clinging to them. (1 Kings 2:28)

We have an altar.

Jesus has never failed sinners who have fled to Him. In Christ's cross, the wrath of God is satisfied and our sins are forgiven. If you are guilty, you may find a shelter and refuge in the cross of Jesus Christ.

The altar stood in the center of the court.

As worshippers entered, the altar was the first thing they saw. They could not fail to see the blood-stained exterior. They could see the fire blazing. They could see the sacrifice.

The crucified Christ must be the center of the New Testament church.

Jesus Christ must be our greatest attraction. The blood and sacrifice of Jesus is the central focus of the redeemed. We must turn our attention from everything else that distracts to Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Our safety and security is found in the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

When God instructed them to build the tabernacle, God was leading them to Christ.

The tabernacle is a place of meeting where divinity and humanity meet. The tabernacle is the place where blood is shed and redemption is found.

God wants us to understand John 3:16.

John 3:16 NKJV For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

It cost the Lord of glory everything.

When the tabernacle was built and put in the center of their lives, every man and woman contributed to this place.

It existed because the people freely gave. God wanted them to understand that nothing would be built if they did not give. This works in the church and our lives. It works with your children. This works. Giving is an integral part of life.

God was breaking them from a lifetime of slavery.

For four-hundred years they lived and thought like slaves in Egypt. God was restoring them to the position for which they had been created. They were being brought back to God and the tabernacle was going to be filled with the glory and presence of God. Everything would be built because they freely gave. The glory and presence of God comes with great personal sacrifice.

Exodus 25-26 shows what it cost Israel to build the tabernacle.

- 9,430.5 pounds of silver
- 6,637.5 pounds of brass
- 2,741 pounds of gold
- Gems
- Fine linen
- Precious items

Around the base of the Tabernacle there were 100 silver sockets that weighed **75** pounds of silver each. Each of the men 20 years old or older were required to give a silver coin that weighed $\frac{1}{2}$ shekel. This silver was the price of the ransom or redemption for every man. Exodus 38:25 says, they gave 603,550 silver coins that weighed $\frac{1}{2}$ shekel each to supply the silver. A beka or one-half shekel equals about .02 ounces, (Exodus 30:13). That equaled 100 talents and one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five shekels or 9,430.5 pounds of silver to build the tabernacle. The total amount of silver was obtained by multiplying the number of men over the age of 20, (Numbers 1) by the half-shekel each had to give for redemption, (Exodus 30:13). This redemption silver was in addition to the free-will offering that the whole congregation gave.

From the 100 talents of silver were cast the 100 sockets of silver, one talent or 75 pounds of silver for each socket, (Exodus 38:26). The 100 silver sockets weighed 7,500 pounds. The remainder of the silver was necessary for utensils, bowls, platters, and basins.

The tabernacle was built upon the cost of ransom or redemption that every man was required to give for himself. This redemption money kept the plague from among them. (Exodus 30:11-14; Exodus 38:25-28).

The Tabernacle is a testimony of what God has done for believers through Christ. The Church is established upon the cost of our redemption and reconciliation. We are brought together and unified by the cost of our cleansing.

The gold required to cover the 48 boards, 4 pillars, and 5 bars was 43,856 ounces or 2,741 pounds of gold.

That is \$75 million worth of gold in 2023 value in the US. Gold bars usually weigh 27.5 pounds. The boards were 15 feet high and 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ foot wide. The

boards were joined together with **five horizontal bars** — two on the top and bottom and one bar going through middle, (Exodus 26:26-29). Two tenons were at the bottom of each board to bind them together in the sockets of silver, (Exodus 26:17). There were two silver sockets under each board. The necessary silver needed to complete the construction equaled 150,887 ½ ounces or 9,430.5 pounds of silver.

They needed 106,200 ounces of brass or 6,637.5 pounds.

They gave precious gems, fine linen, and precious items. The women gave their bronze mirrors to make the laver, (Exodus 38:8).

The tabernacle became the focal point of their lives.

It was in the center of everything that they did. God was dwelling in the midst of His people. Everywhere they went they were mindful of this place where they met with God. God and the work of the Lord must be in the center of our lives. He cannot be designated to some out of the way place on the outskirts of our life. He must dwell in the center of our lives.

God told Moses to ask them for everything that it took to build the Tabernacle.

The people were personally invested in this place to worship God. They could come to this place to find mercy and grace to help. Their giving opened up the possibility for the glory of God to dwell among them. The people had the offering but God had the plan. Many churches have the plan and they ask God to give them what they need to do it.

The construction of the Tabernacle was according to the pattern that God showed Moses on the mountain.

They could not build what they wanted to. To meet with God, they had to follow His plan. The pattern of the Tabernacle was God's design.

When our sacrifice follows God's design, we will encounter the glory of God.

God wanted to be in the midst of His people and show them His glory. Moses had walked into the glory of God and was changed in God's presence. Now, God was providing a way for His glory and presence to be revealed to each of them.

Exodus 25:8 God said: "Let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them."

Everything they were asked to do worked out for their benefit. They were preparing for the presence of God and all of the blessing that resulted from Him dwelling in the midst of His people.

When Moses came down from the presence of God, he represented God to the

people.

Everything they were asked to do was a representation of Christ and the salvation that God planned. Everything was done according to God's plan, (Exodus 25:9). They heard from God and followed His pattern in every small measurement, article, design and etching. Everything was done to represent Christ and meet God's design.

If we are going to be like Jesus Christ, we must live the way God designs.

We must hear from Him and follow His lead. We are building something with our lives. It is not about your giving, sacrifice, desires or preferences.

We are working toward something that God has planned for our lives, bodies and eternal future.

We are workers together with God. What we do must bear the image and likeness of Jesus Christ. It must represent the Lord.

When the tabernacle was erected, all twelve tribes could see God's glory.

It was in the midst of them all and everyone had access to God. This was a place for atonement, cleansing and reconciliation. The same thing is true in the Church, everyone needs access to God.

When they finish, God said: **Exodus 25:22 NKJV** And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are on the ark of the Testimony, about everything which I will give you in commandment to the children of Israel.

There I will meet with you.

God has prepared a place to meet with them. He wants to show His mercy, grace, and power. He wants to pardon them from their sins and reconcile them to God. He wants to redeem and justify. God wants to come down in the midst of His people. He wants to meet with them.

The glory of God descended upon the tabernacle.

Numbers 9:15-16 NKJV Now on the day that the tabernacle was raised up, the cloud covered the tabernacle, the tent of the Testimony; from evening until morning it was above the tabernacle like the appearance of fire. So it was always: the cloud covered it by day, and the appearance of fire by night.

The glory of God was in the house. There was so much of the glory of God that you could see it. This was God's plan to dwell in the midst of His people. Every day and night there was a manifestation of the presence and glory of God on that place.