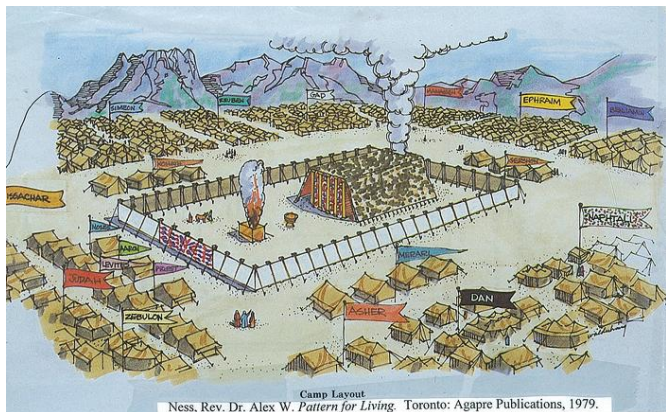


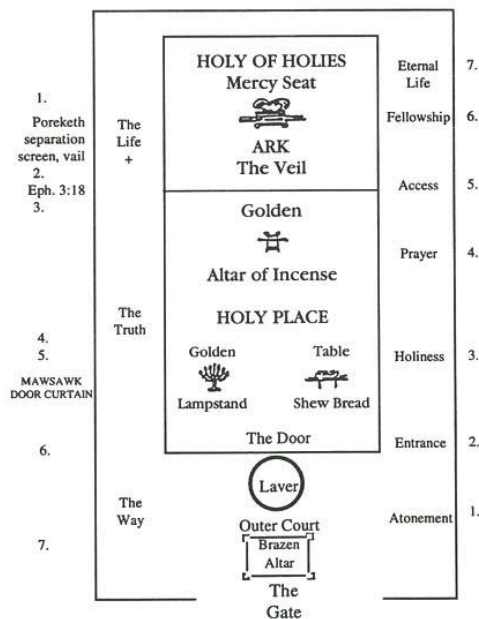
## The Plan of Salvation in the Tabernacle



Camp Layout  
Ness, Rev. Dr. Alex W. Pattern for Living. Toronto: Agapre Publications, 1979.

**Image of the encampment of the Israelites as given by God to Moses. Opposite image is the layout of the tabernacle which was in the center of the encampment. Exodus 25:1-30:10**

*Every single item in the Tabernacle of the Wilderness had great meaning and significance to God's Salvation Plan for man and His covenant with man.*



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

The one and only gate is a representation of Christ as the only way through which one could fellowship with God and worship Him. To do this, one must *enter* in through the gate to the place where God dwelled. Jesus said in his famous **"I am"** statements:

**"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6)** and **"I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved." (John 10:9)**

**The brazen altar**, bronze altar, or altar of sacrifice was situated right inside the courtyard upon entering the gate to the tabernacle. The Hebrew root for altar means **"to slay"** or **"slaughter."** The Latin word **alta** means **"high."** An altar is a **"high place for sacrifice/slaughter."** The altar stood raised on a mound of earth, higher than its surrounding furniture. This is a projection of Christ, our sacrifice, lifted up on the cross, His altar, which stood on a hill called Golgotha.

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

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

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

### The Bronze of the Altar represented SIN

#### **The Significance of the Tabernacle Sacrifices**

Although the blood of the sacrifices covered over the sins of the Israelites, they had to perform the

sacrifices year after year, for they were not freed permanently of a guilty conscience. However, Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, came as the ultimate and last sacrifice for mankind when He offered up His life. As Isaiah prophesied, the Christ would be like a lamb that is led to slaughter and pierced for our transgressions. His blood was sprinkled and poured out at the cross for us

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

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

The application for believers today is that we are forgiven through Christ's work on the cross, but we are washed through His Word. We need to be washed daily in His Word to cleanse ourselves, so that we can serve and minister before Him.

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

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

After washing their hands and feet at the laver, the priests could enter the Holy Place, which was the first room in the tent of the tabernacle. There were three pieces of furniture in the Holy Place: the

menorah, the table of showbread and the golden altar of incense.

**The Menorah**, also called the "*golden lampstand*" or "*candlestick*," stood at the left side of the Holy Place. It was hammered out of one piece of pure gold. Like for the laver, there were no specific instructions about the size of the menorah, but the fact that it was fashioned out of one piece of pure gold would have limited its size.

The lampstand had a central branch from which three branches extended from each side, forming a total of seven branches. Seven lamps holding olive oil and wicks stood on top of the branches. Each branch looked like that of an almond tree, containing buds, blossoms and flowers. The priests were instructed to keep the lamps burning

This Bible Bite is in 2 parts THIS IS PART is # 1. The other part will be in next week's bulletin.

**Shalom**

**Part 2 of The Plan of Salvation in The Plan of Salvation: (4 pages in all; page 1 & 2 handed out previously)**

**The Table of Shewbread** stood on the right side of the Holy Place across from the lampstand and held 12 loaves of bread, representing the 12 tribes of Israel. The priests baked the bread with fine flour and it remained on the table before the Lord for a week; every Sabbath day the priests would remove it and eat it in the Holy Place, then put fresh bread on the table. Only priests could eat the bread, and it could only be eaten in the Holy Place, because it was holy.

*“Showbread”* also was called *“bread of the presence”* because it was to be always in the Lord's presence. The table and the bread were a picture of God's willingness to fellowship and communion (literally speaking, sharing something in common) with man. It was like an invitation to share a meal, an extension of friendship. Eating together often is an act of fellowship. God was willing for man to enter into His presence to fellowship with Him, and this invitation was always open.

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

*“I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty. ... Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die.” (John 6:35, 49-50)*

**The golden altar of incense**, which is not to be confused with the brazen altar, sat in front of the curtain that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. This altar was smaller than the brazen altar. It was a square with each side measuring 1.5 feet and was 3 feet high. It was made of acacia wood and overlaid with pure gold. Four horns protruded from the four corners of the altar.

God commanded the priests to burn incense on the golden altar every morning and evening, the same time that the daily burnt offerings were made. The incense was to be left burning continually throughout the day and night as a pleasing aroma to the Lord. It was made of an equal part of four precious spices (*stacte, onycha, galbanum and frankincense*) and was considered holy. God commanded the Israelites not to use the same formula outside the tabernacle to make perfume for their own consumption; otherwise, they were to be cut off from their people (**Exodus 30:34-38**).

The incense was a symbol of the prayers and intercession of the people going up to God as a sweet fragrance. God wanted His dwelling to be a place where people could approach Him and pray to Him. The golden altar, furthermore, is a representation of Christ, who is our intercessor before God the Father

**The Veil:** Within the Holy Place of the tabernacle, there was an inner room called the Holy of Holies, or the Most Holy Place. Judging from its name, we can see that it was a most sacred room, a place no ordinary person could enter. It was God's special dwelling place in the midst of His people. During the Israelites' wanderings in the wilderness, God appeared as a pillar of cloud or fire in and above the Holy of Holies.

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

The picture of the veil was that of a barrier between man and God, showing man that the holiness of God could not be trifled with. God's eyes are too pure to look on evil and He can tolerate no sin (**Habakkuk 1:13**).

The veil was a barrier to make sure that man could not carelessly and irreverently enter into God's awesome presence. Even as the high priest entered the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement, he had to make some meticulous preparations: He had to wash himself, put on special clothing, bring burning incense to let the smoke cover his eyes from a direct view of God, and bring blood with him to make atonement for sins.

So the presence of God remained shielded from man behind a thick curtain during the history of Israel. However, Jesus' sacrificial death on the cross changed that. When He died, the curtain in the Jerusalem temple was torn in half, from the top to the bottom.

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

### **The Ark of the Covenant and Atonement Cover**

Within the Holy of Holies, shielded from the eye of the common man, was one piece of furniture comprising two parts: the Ark of the Covenant and the atonement cover (or "mercy seat") on top of it. The ark was a chest made of acacia wood, overlaid with pure gold inside and out. It was 3 feet, 9 inches long and 2 feet, 3 inches wide and high. God commanded Moses to put in the ark three items: a golden pot of manna, Aaron's staff that had budded, and the two stone tablets on which the Ten Commandments were written. We will discuss these three objects in further detail below.

The atonement cover was the lid for the ark. On top of it stood two cherubim (angels) at the two ends, facing each other. The cherubim, symbols of God's divine presence and power, were facing downward toward the ark with outstretched wings that covered the atonement cover. The whole structure was beaten out of one piece of pure gold.

The atonement cover was God's dwelling place in the tabernacle. It was His throne, flanked by angels.

Above the ark and the atonement cover, God appeared in His glory in "*unapproachable light*" (**1 Timothy 6:16**). This light is sometimes referred to as the Shekinah glory. The word *Shekinah*, although it does not appear in our English bibles, has the same roots as the word for *tabernacle* in Hebrew and refers to the *presence of the Lord*.

What may seem strange to us today is that, hidden in the special golden box representing God's presence were not treasures and precious gems, but three unlikely items: a jar of bread, a stick and two stones. What were these curious keepsakes and why did God want them in His ark?

The three items in the ark that served as a sore reminder of man's shortcomings have taken on a different meaning since Jesus Christ redeemed us from our sins. First, the pot of manna: When Jesus came and walked on earth, he didn't reject God's provision. Rather, He became God's provision to us. Manna, the bread from heaven, in itself did not impart life. But Jesus told us that He is the true bread from heaven.

Second, Aaron's budding staff: Jesus didn't reject God's authority. Instead, He submitted Himself to the Father's will and died on the cross.

Third, the Ten Commandments: Jesus didn't reject God's right standard of living. He lived a sinless life and obeyed God's law perfectly, becoming our perfect sacrifice and intercessor. His sacrifice instituted a new covenant that was not based on the Law.

*But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe."* (**Romans 3:20-22**)

**Shalom**