

# The Tabernacle of Moses

Exodus 25:1-10 (NIV)

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The Lord said to Moses, <sup>2</sup>“Tell the Israelites to bring me an offering. You are to receive the offering for me from everyone whose heart prompts them to give. <sup>3</sup>These are the offerings you are to receive from them: gold, silver and bronze; <sup>4</sup>blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen; goat hair; <sup>5</sup>ram skins dyed red and another type of durable leather; acacia wood; <sup>6</sup>olive oil for the light; spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense; <sup>7</sup>and onyx stones and other gems to be mounted on the ephod and breast-piece

<sup>8</sup>“Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them. <sup>9</sup>Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you.

## The Gate (Outer Court Curtain)

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



The Gate (Outer Court Curtain)

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)

He also said:

“Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.” (Matthew 7:13-14)

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

The Gate (curtain) was made of fine linen colored in blue, purple, red and white. Each of the colors has a significance as they represent the Gospels:

**Blue** - Heavenly and Godly: “Behold Your God” points to the Gospel of John where Thomas eventually says to Jesus: “My Lord and my God” (John 20:28)

**Purple** - Kingship: “Behold Your King” points to the Gospel of Matthew where Jesus, the descendant of King David declares after the resurrection: “All authority in heaven and on earth is given to Me” (Matthew 28:18)

**Red** - Blood: “Behold your Servant” points to the Gospel of Mark, where Jesus says He came to serve and give His life as ransom for many (Mark 10:45)

**White** - Purity and Right Humanity: “Behold the Man” pointing to the Gospel of Luke where Pilate says of Jesus “Behold, I have found not one fault in this man” (Luke 23:4,14).

## **The Brazen Altar**

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



Brazen Altar

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

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

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

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

“For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life.” (Leviticus 17:11)

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

Although the blood of the sacrifices covered over the sins of the Israelites, they had to perform the sacrifices year after year, for they were not freed permanently of 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 Bible says much about this:

“This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.”  
(Mark 14:24)

“For you know that ... you were redeemed ... with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.” (1 Peter 1:18-19)

“The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!” (Hebrews 9:13-14)

“We have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. ...By one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy. ...And where these have been forgiven, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin.” (Hebrews 10:10, 14, 18)

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” (2 Corinthians 5:21)

Horns were a symbol power and strength in biblical times. When the sacrifice was made, blood was dabbed on the horns of the altar, signifying the power of the blood to atone for sins. In the same way, there is mighty power in the blood of Christ. Jesus is the “horn of our salvation” (Psalm 18:2, Luke 1:69).

The animal sacrifices bore reference to the Passover lambs, which the Israelites slaughtered in like manner to save their firstborns from the last plague of God's judgment on Egypt (Exodus 12:1-13). Similarly, as the Passover lambs were eaten after they were slaughtered, some of the sacrificial lambs also were eaten. Just as the sacrificial lambs were **sacrificed and eaten**, so Jesus' body was **sacrificed and "eaten."** It was no coincidence that on the night before the Passover when Jesus was crucified, He "took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take and eat; this is my body'" (Matthew 26:26). Earlier Jesus had taught His disciples:

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

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