

# EXODUS

## Chapter 27

### *The Bronze Altar*

**“You shall make the altar of acacia wood, five cubits long and five cubits broad. The altar shall be square, and its height shall be three cubits. 2 And you shall make horns for it on its four corners; its horns shall be of one piece with it, and you shall overlay it with bronze. 3 You shall make pots for it to receive its ashes, and shovels and basins and forks and fire pans. You shall make all its utensils of bronze. 4 You shall also make for it a grating, a network of bronze, and on the net you shall make four bronze rings at its four corners. 5 And you shall set it under the ledge of the altar so that the net extends halfway down the altar. 6 And you shall make poles for the altar, poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with bronze. 7 And the poles shall be put through the rings, so that the poles are on the two sides of the altar when it is carried. 8 You shall make it hollow, with boards. As it has been shown you on the mountain, so shall it be made.**

**27:1–8** The first and most visible furniture in the court was the bronze altar. This showed that sacrifice was needed to have fellowship with God, ultimately pointing to the altar of the cross, where Jesus reconciled the world to Himself. (TLSB)

**27:1** *altar*. The altar of burnt offering (see Lev 4:7, 10, 18). (CSB)

The altar’s firebox was overlaid with bronze (v 2), and the box was presumably filled with earth or gravel to prevent the fire from destroying the structure. (TLSB)

**27:2** *horns*. Projections of the four corner posts. They were symbols of help and refuge (see 1Ki 1:50; 2:28; Ps 18:2). They also symbolized the atoning power of the altar: Some of the blood was put on the horns of the altar before the rest was poured out at the base (see 29:12; Lev 4:7, 18, 25, 30, 34; 8:15; 9:9; 16:18). (CSB)

Typical Near Eastern design element. Practically, such horns could help hold the wood and the sacrifice in place. Priests may also have tied sacrificial animals to them during the preparations for sacrifice. (TLSB)

**27:3** *pots for it to receive the ashes*. From the grating (see v. 4). (CSB)

*shovels*. To haul the ashes away. (CSB)

*basins*. To catch the blood of the animals slain beside the altar and to sprinkle it at the base. (CSB)

*forks*. Three-pronged forks for arranging the sacrifice or removing the priests’ portion from the container in which it was being boiled (see 1Sa 2:13–14). (CSB)

*fire pans*. Probably for carrying fire from the altar of burnt offering to the altar of incense inside the Holy Place (see Lev 10:1; 16:12–13). (CSB)

**27:4** *grating*. Placed midway between the top and bottom of the boxlike structure. Since the intense heat of the fire built inside the upper half of the altar would have eventually destroyed it, perhaps the hollow altar (see v. 8) was designed to be filled with earth when it was in use. (CSB)

**27:1–8** The first and most visible item of furniture in the court is the bronze altar. Blood is applied on the horns and sides to atone for sins. The altar points forward to the cross of Calvary, where Jesus, God’s sacrifice, shed His blood to atone for the sins of the world. • Lord Jesus, we thank and praise You. You are the perfect sacrifice who made peace with the Father for us. Amen. (TLSB)

*The Court of the Tabernacle*

**9** “You shall make the court of the tabernacle. On the south side the court shall have hangings of fine twined linen a hundred cubits long for one side. **10** Its twenty pillars and their twenty bases shall be of bronze, but the hooks of the pillars and their fillets shall be of silver. **11** And likewise for its length on the north side there shall be hangings a hundred cubits long, its pillars twenty and their bases twenty, of bronze, but the hooks of the pillars and their fillets shall be of silver. **12** And for the breadth of the court on the west side there shall be hangings for fifty cubits, with ten pillars and ten bases. **13** The breadth of the court on the front to the east shall be fifty cubits. **14** The hangings for the one side of the gate shall be fifteen cubits, with their three pillars and three bases. **15** On the other side the hangings shall be fifteen cubits, with their three pillars and three bases. **16** For the gate of the court there shall be a screen twenty cubits long, of blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen, embroidered with needlework. It shall have four pillars and with them four bases. **17** All the pillars around the court shall be filleted with silver. Their hooks shall be of silver, and their bases of bronze. **18** The length of the court shall be a hundred cubits, the breadth fifty, and the height five cubits, with hangings of fine twined linen and bases of bronze. **19** All the utensils of the tabernacle for every use, and all its pegs and all the pegs of the court, shall be of bronze.

**27:9** *court of the tabernacle.* The court walls separated the ordinary space from the holiness of God’s presence within the tabernacle. Israel’s access to God was restricted to the court (cf 25:8). Devout people longed to enter the court and be in God’s presence (Ps 84:2, 10; 100:4; 116:12–14, 17–19). (TLSB)

**27:12–13** *west end ... east end.* The courtyard is described as having two equal parts. The Most Holy Place probably occupied the central position in the western half, the altar of burnt offering the central position in the eastern half. (CSB)

**27:13–14** *toward the sunrise ... the entrance.* The entrance to the tabernacle courtyard faced east, as did that of Solomon’s temple (see Eze 8:16) and of Herod’s temple. (CSB)

**27:16** *gate ... a screen.* The line of sight toward the interior of the tabernacle was blocked. Priests and Levites could still enter when the gate was set back from the opening to provide a screen. (TLSB)

**27:18** *five cubits.* High enough to block the view of people standing outside the courtyard, thus protecting the sanctity and privacy of the worship taking place inside. (CSB)

*length ... a hundred cubits.* C 150 ft. *height five cubits.* The court walls. The tabernacle was 10 cubits high (26:16), which made it impossible to see the tabernacle when one stood close by the wall of the court. (TLSB)

**27:9–19** Specific limits mark the holiness of the Lord, limiting the approach of humans to Him. Due to our sins, we cannot approach the Holy One of Israel and live. Through Christ’s work on the cross, we have access to the court, the Most Holy Place in heaven (cf Heb 4:14). • Jesus, may Your Spirit lead us to confess Your loving mercy, that many more may enter Your courts in praise and eternal life. Amen. (TLSB)

*Oil for the Lamp*

**20 “You shall command the people of Israel that they bring to you pure beaten olive oil for the light, that a lamp may regularly be set up to burn. 21 In the tent of meeting, outside the veil that is before the testimony, Aaron and his sons shall tend it from evening to morning before the LORD. It shall be a statute forever to be observed throughout their generations by the people of Israel.**

**27:20** *pure beaten olive oil.* Unripe olives were crushed in a mortar. The pulpy mass was then placed in a cloth basket through the bottom of which the oil dripped, producing a clear fuel that burned with little or no smoke. (CSB)

Clear oil that burned brightly with little smoke. Similar to modern virgin oil, pressed from the crushed olives rather than rinsed out by hot water, as happens when the olives are crushed a second time. (TLSB)

**27:21** *Tent of Meeting.* The tabernacle; it was not a place where God’s people met for collective worship but one where God himself met—by appointment, not by accident—with his people (see 29:42–43). (CSB)

Usually describes the Holy Place of the tabernacle. However, it also described a tent Moses set up for meeting with the Lord, which was pitched outside the camp of Israel (33:7). (TLSB)

*outside the veil.* In the Holy Place, where Aaron and his sons tended the lamp.(TLSB)

*shall tend it frn evening to morning.* The lamps were lit in the evening (see 30:8) and apparently extinguished in the morning (1Sa 3:3). (CSB)

**27:20–21** Because the lamp stands in the Holy Place, the priests need to tend it. The light provided by the lamp enables their service. Today, the Lord enables our service and hallows us as His priesthood—believers enlightened with the Holy Spirit. • Jesus, thank You that Your Word and Sacraments bring us the light of salvation. By the power of Your Holy Spirit, may we be light to the world that is lost in darkness. Amen. (TLSB)