

# The Tabernacle

## The Altar and The Laver

### The Brazen Altar

- The largest piece of furniture in the tabernacle.
- Construction: Exodus 27:1-8 and 38:1-7
  - Brass-plated wood with projections (horns) on each corner – 5 cubits (7.5 feet) sides and 3 cubits (4.5 feet) high
    - The type of wood (*shittim* in Hebrew) is believed to be acacia wood. It is very hard, registering 2,300 psi on the Janka scale (for comparison, a bois d'arc is 2,400-2600 and oaks are 1,200-1,400).
  - A brass grate is hung into the altar
    - Note – there is a lot of debate on the position and purpose of the grate.
  - Brass-plated wooden poles to move the altar.
  - All implements used with the altar are made of brass.
- The fire
  - Jewish tradition says that the fire was kindled by God (Leviticus 9:24), but there appears to be fires on the altar before that event (see Leviticus 8:16 and 9:10)
  - Was never to be put out – Leviticus 6:13

### The Laver

- This provided water for the priests to wash (Exodus 30:19-21) and for use in some sacrifices (e.g., Leviticus 1:9)
- Construction: Exodus 30:17-18 and 38:8
  - No dimensions and few details are given concerning it.
  - There are two parts – an upper reservoir and a lower base or stand.
    - I think the upper reservoir stored water that was poured into the lower basin.
  - Made specifically from polished metal mirrors.

### Truths from the Tabernacle

- The courtyard wall could be seen as *Separation*, the altar as *Satisfaction* (Isaiah 53:11), and the laver as *Sanctification*.
- From the Altar:
  - Every aspect of the brazen altar points to the judgment of sin.
    - It is constructed of brass which represents judgment.
    - It contained fire, another picture of judgment.
    - Its purpose was for offering sacrifices for sin.
  - There was only one altar, representing one way for sin to be dealt with.

- The position of the altar speaks to the fact that for man to have access to God the penalty of sin (i.e., a death penalty – Genesis 2:17, Romans 6:23) must be met.
- The brass-plated wood speaks of Christ, who bore the judgment of our sins.
  - The wood speaks to the humanity of Christ and foreshadows the cross as His method of death.
    - He was the Branch of David (Jeremiah 23:5) and died on a tree (Acts 5:30)
  - It is encased in brass (judgment) and never consumed, this speaks to Christ bearing the judgment but not being consumed in it, foreshadowing the Resurrection.
- While the fire speaks of consuming judgment, the blood of the sacrifices is also sprinkled around it (Leviticus 1:11) and applied to its horns (Leviticus 4:7).
  - The blood speaks of substitutionary atonement (the blood of one is applied to cover the sins of another), once again foreshadowing Christ's death.
- From the Laver
  - I do not see baptism being pictured here as the continual washing of the priests at the laver does produce a picture that resemble it in the least.
  - It is not a place for sacrifice or atonement, but of washing.
    - The priests cleaned themselves here when dirty or in preparation for their duties. It is oriented toward *service* and not *sacrifice*.
    - The altar dealt *judicially* with sin, the laver *practically*. The sacrifice of the altar *saves*, the washing of the laver *sanctifies*.
      - See Hebrews 10:22 which has both pictures.
      - The order is important – altar first, laver second – but they are both important.
  - I think there is something of a double picture here: of the Word of God (Ephesians 5:26-28) and of the Spirit (John 7:37-39).
    - Perhaps the laver represents the Word and its water the Spirit.
  - It was highly reflective, allowing the priests to inspect themselves, so should we judge ourselves – James 1:23-24.