

Into the Promised Land

Joshua's Story

Lesson #9 –The Altar of Incense & the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies

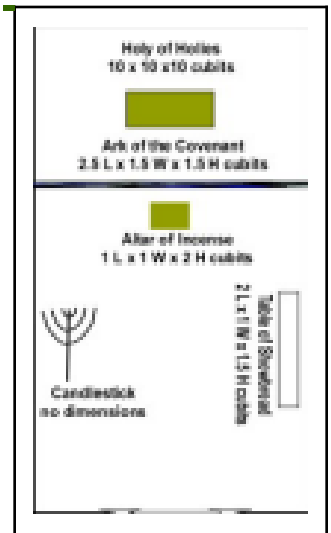
• H A N D O U T •

► In addition to the layout, we should also note the size of the Tent, which we did not do last time ...

► From Exodus 25 we are told that the Tabernacle Tent measured 15 ft. wide by 45 ft. long. That space housed both the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. The Holy Place, which contained the Lampstand, the Table of the Bread of the Presence, and the Altar of Incense was 15 ft. wide by 30 ft. long.

The Holy of Holies where the Ark of the Covenant rested was 15 ft. by 15 ft. which is a perfect cube. [It is interesting to note that we learn from Revelation 21, that the future New Jerusalem will be laid out in the exact same pattern – only much larger.]

The Tabernacle Tent ⇨



► This lesson will focus first on the Altar of Incense and then on the Ark of the Covenant. The Altar of Incense stood in front of the interior curtain separating the Holy Place from the second room, the Holy of Holies. Again, we see the incredible details which God gave Moses concerning the construction of the Tabernacle including everything in it. Here are the actual instructions given to Moses regarding the Altar of Incense:

► Exodus 30:1-6 • "Make an altar of acacia wood for burning incense. It is to be square, a cubit long and a cubit wide, and two cubits high --its horns of one piece with it. Overlay the top and all the sides and the horns with pure gold, and make a gold molding around it. Make two gold rings for the altar below the molding--two on opposite sides--to hold the poles used to carry it. Make the poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold. Put the altar in front of the curtain that is before the Ark of the Testimony--before the atonement cover that is over the Testimony--where I will meet with you.



Altar of Incense

Q: What were the main instruction-details God gave to Moses regarding the Altar of Incense?

▶ Exodus 30:7-10 • "Aaron must burn fragrant incense on the Altar every morning when he tends the lamps. He must burn incense again when he lights the lamps at twilight so incense will burn regularly before the Lord for the generations to come.

Do not offer on this Altar any other incense or any burnt offering or grain offering, and do not pour a drink offering on it.

Once a year Aaron shall make atonement on its horns. This annual atonement must be made with the blood of the atoning sin offering for the generations to come. It is most holy to the Lord."

Q: What were Aaron's duties?

Q: Regarding the Altar of Incense, what did God tell Aaron not to do and/or to guard against?

Q: What were the guidelines God specified regarding the Incense to be used on the Altar?

Q: WHere's the Recipe for the Incense ...

▶ Exodus 30:34-37 • Then the Lord said to Moses, "Take fragrant spices--gum resin, onycha and galbanum--and pure frankincense, all in equal amounts, and make a fragrant blend of incense, the work of a perfumer. It is to be salted and pure and sacred. Grind some of it to powder and place it in front of the Testimony in the Tent of Meeting, where I will meet with you. It shall be most holy to you.

Do not make any incense with this formula for yourselves; consider it holy to the Lord. Whoever makes any like it to enjoy its fragrance must be cut off from his people."

Q: What do we know about the ingredients God instructed to be used for the incense?

Gum Resin	
Onycha	
Galbanum	

Pure Frankincense	
Salt	

Q: What is the spiritual symbolism of the Incense?

Q: Where in scripture is this symbolism found?

God instructs Moses where to place the Altar of Incense:

▶ [Exodus 30:6](#) • Put the Altar in front of the curtain that is before the Ark of the Testimony – before the Atonement Cover that is over the Testimony – where I will meet with you.

Q: What is significant about the placement of the Altar of Incense in the Holy Place?

Now to the curtain – the “veil” as it is also referred: Not only did this curtain separate the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies but it acted as a protective shield for the Ark of the Covenant.

▶ [Exodus 26:31-33](#) • "Make a curtain of blue, purple and scarlet yarn and finely twisted linen, with cherubim worked into it by a skilled craftsman.

Hang it with gold hooks on four posts of acacia wood overlaid with gold and standing on four silver bases.

Hang the curtain from the clasps and place the Ark of the Testimony behind the curtain.

The curtain will separate the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place.



The Curtain “Veil”

Q: What did this Curtain [Veil] spiritually symbolize?

Q: In what way has the concept of the Curtain Veil changed for the N.T. church?



Q: What sign did God give that tells us the separation between God and man had been repaired?

► The writer of Hebrews wrote about this so concisely and with such elegance:

► [Hebrews 9:15; 10:19-23](#) • For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance--now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant. • Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, His body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful.

Now to God's instructions regarding the Ark of the Covenant, or aka: Ark of the Testimony ...

► [Exodus 25:8-16](#) • “Then have them make a sanctuary for Me, and I will dwell among them. Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you. Have them make a chest of acacia wood--two and a half cubits long, a cubit and a half wide, and a cubit and a half high. Overlay it with pure gold, both inside and out, and make a gold molding around it. Cast four gold rings for it and fasten them to its four feet, with two rings on one side and two rings on the other. Then make poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold. Insert the poles into the rings on the sides of the chest to carry it. The poles are to remain in the rings of this ark; they are not to be removed. Then put in the Ark the Testimony, which I will give you.



Ark of the Covenant
without the mercy
seat

Q: Why would God refer to the Ark as “His Sanctuary?”

Q: What is the “Testimony” that God wanted Moses to put into the Ark?

And now ... The Mercy Seat ...

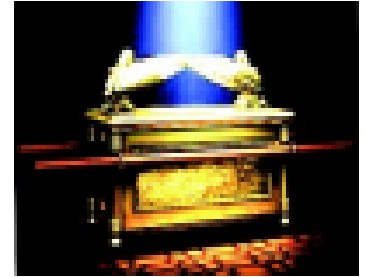
► [Exodus 25:17-22](#) • "Make an atonement cover of pure gold--two and a half cubits long and a cubit and a half wide. And make two cherubim out of hammered gold at the ends of the cover. Make one cherub on one end and the second cherub on the other; make the cherubim of one piece with the cover, at the two ends. The cherubim are to have their wings spread upward, overshadowing the cover with them. The cherubim are to face each other, looking toward the cover.

Place the cover on top of the ark and put in the Ark the Testimony, which I will give you.

There, above the cover between the two cherubim that are over the ark of the Testimony, I will meet with you and give you all my commands for the Israelites.



Mercy Seat



Between the wings of the Cherubim

Q: What was the Atonement Cover and why is it often referred to as the Mercy Seat?

Q: What is significant about the Cherubim wings “overshadowing” the cover?

Q: What is significant about the physical placement of the Cherubim on the Atonement Cover?

Q: What else, in addition to the Decalogue, was placed into the Ark?

•Exodus 16:32 •

•Number 17:10-11 •

Q: What do the two objects placed in the Ark along with the Testimony foreshadow?

**The Construction of the Tabernacle is complete!
This is where we will pick up the story next time ...**

Next Time • Lesson #10
“Into Service as Holy Unto the Lord”

