EXODUS

Chapter 27

*The Altar of Burnt Offering*

**“Build an altar of acacia wood, three cubits high; it is to be square, five cubits long and five cubits wide. 2 Make a horn at each of the four corners, so that the horns and the altar are of one piece, and overlay the altar with bronze. 3 Make all its utensils of bronze—its pots to remove the ashes, and its shovels, sprinkling bowls, meat forks and firepans. 4 Make a grating for it, a bronze network, and make a bronze ring at each of the four corners of the network. 5 Put it under the ledge of the altar so that it is halfway up the altar. 6 Make poles of acacia wood for the altar and overlay them with bronze. 7 The poles are to be inserted into the rings so they will be on two sides of the altar when it is carried. 8 Make the altar hollow, out of boards. It is to be made just as you were shown on the mountain.**

**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)

*acacia wood.* See note on 25:5. (CSB)

**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 to remove the ashes.* From the grating (see v. 4). (CSB)

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

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

*meat 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)

*firepans.* 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)

*ring.* See note on 25:12. (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 Courtyard*

**9 “Make a courtyard for the tabernacle. The south side shall be a hundred cubits long and is to have curtains of finely twisted linen, 10 with twenty posts and twenty bronze bases and with silver hooks and bands on the posts. 11 The north side shall also be a hundred cubits long and is to have curtains, with twenty posts and twenty bronze bases and with silver hooks and bands on the posts. 12 “The west end of the courtyard shall be fifty cubits wide and have curtains, with ten posts and ten bases. 13 On the east end, toward the sunrise, the courtyard shall also be fifty cubits wide. 14 Curtains fifteen cubits long are to be on one side of the entrance, with three posts and three bases, 15 and curtains fifteen cubits long are to be on the other side, with three posts and three bases. 16 “For the entrance to the courtyard, provide a curtain twenty cubits long, of blue, purple and scarlet yarn and finely twisted linen—the work of an embroiderer—with four posts and four bases. 17 All the posts around the courtyard are to have silver bands and hooks, and bronze bases. 18 The courtyard shall be a hundred cubits long and fifty cubits wide, with curtains of finely twisted linen five cubits high, and with bronze bases. 19 All the other articles used in the service of the tabernacle, whatever their function, including all the tent pegs for it and those for the courtyard, are to 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.* See NIV text note; 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 Lampstand*

**20 “Command the Israelites to bring you clear oil of pressed olives for the light so that the lamps may be kept burning. 21 In the Tent of Meeting, outside the curtain that is in front of the Testimony, Aaron and his sons are to keep the lamps burning before the Lord from evening till morning. This is to be a lasting ordinance among the Israelites for the generations to come.**

**27:20** *clear oil of pressed olives.* 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)

*curtain that is in front of the Testimony.* See note on 26:31. (CSB)

*lamps burning … from evening till 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)