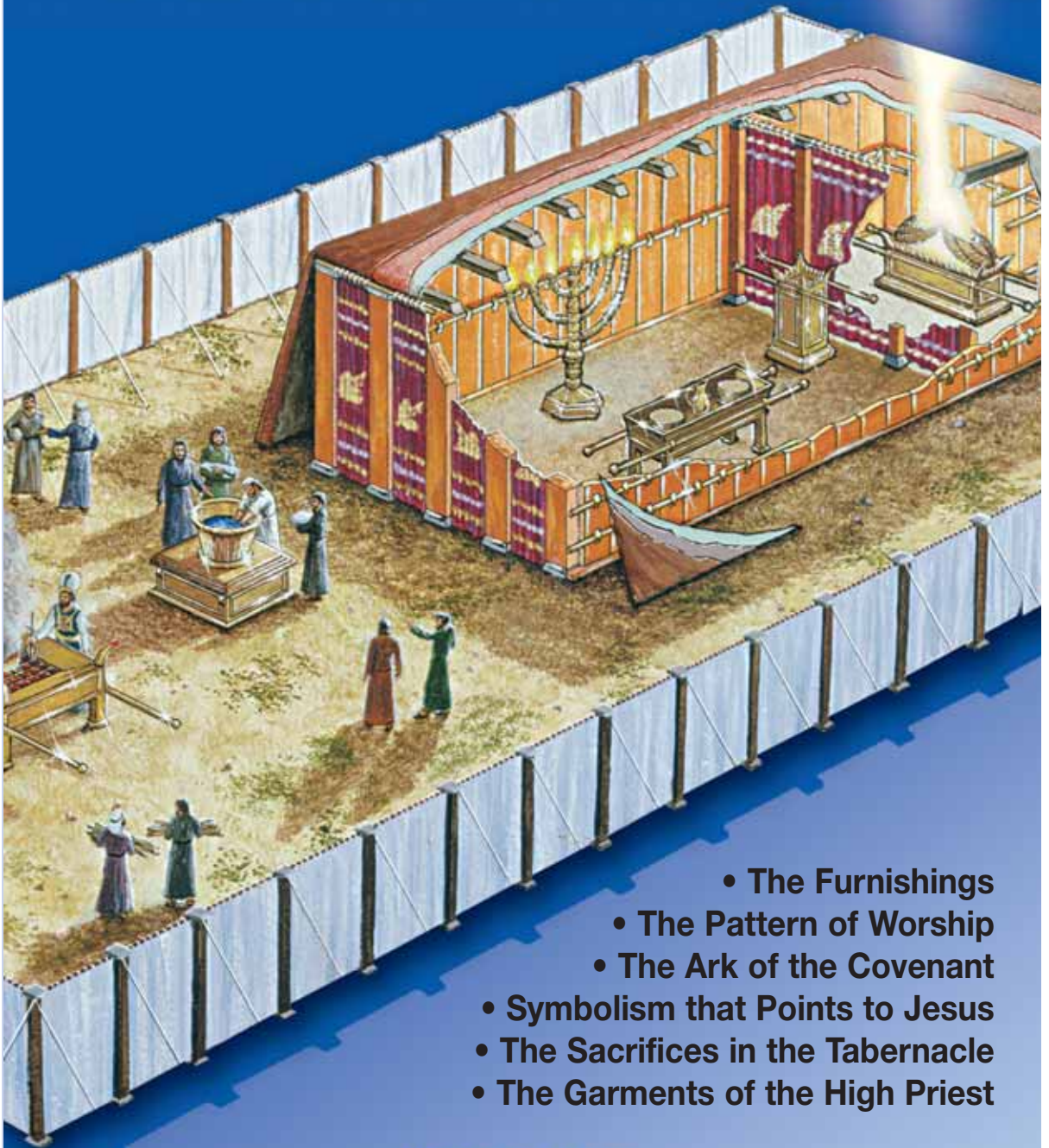


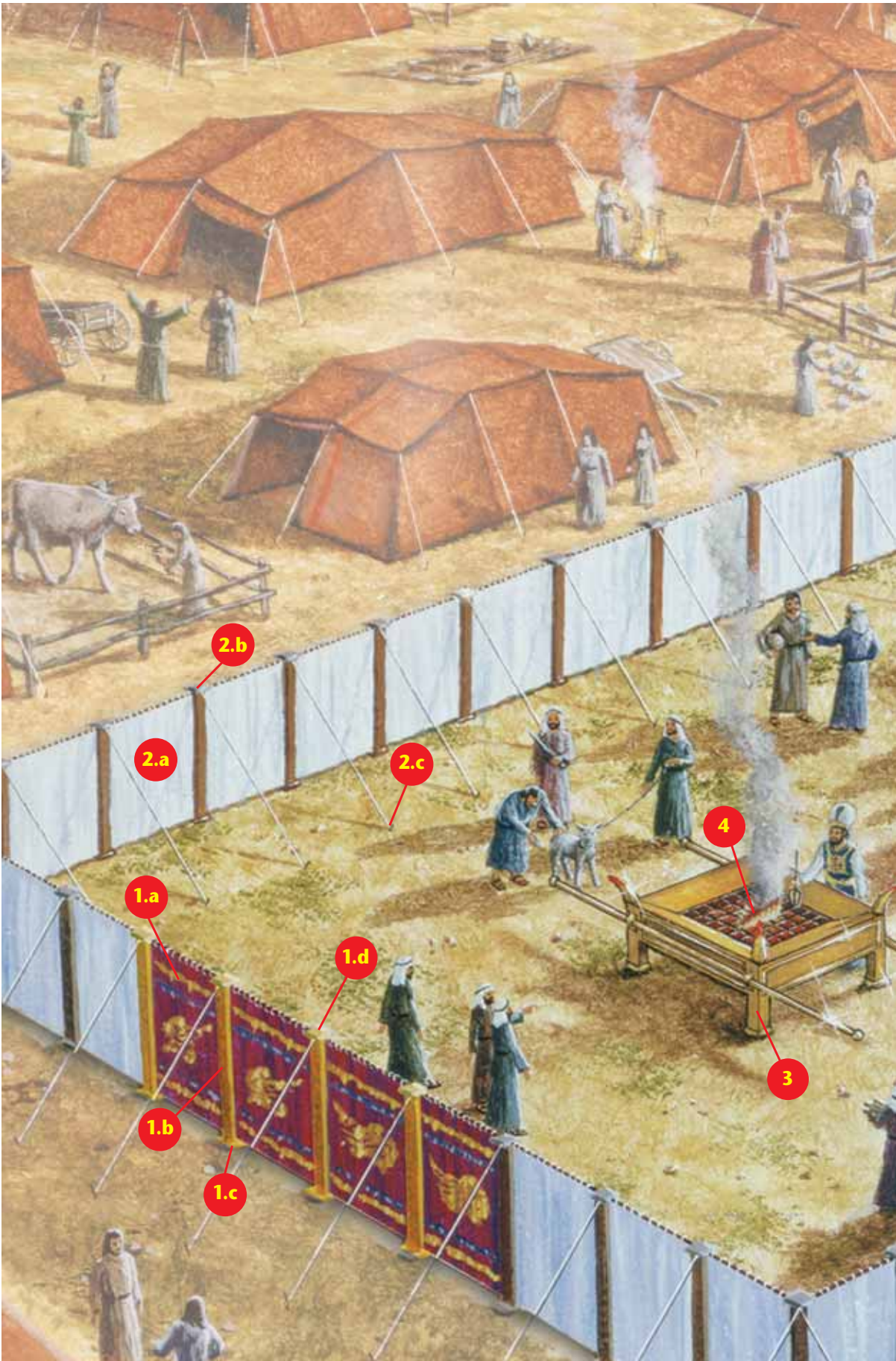
Symbolism in the Tabernacle

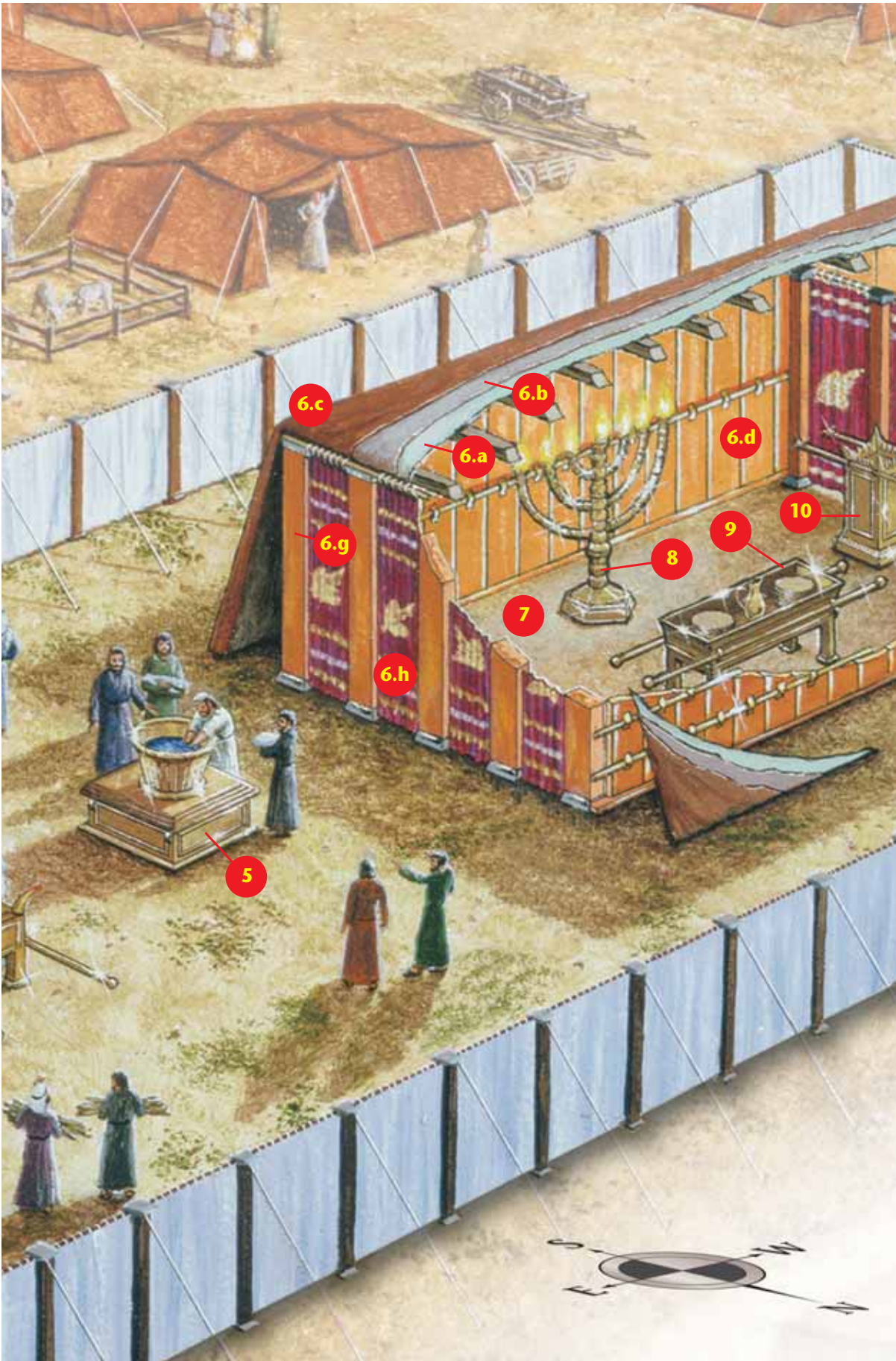
The Tabernacle

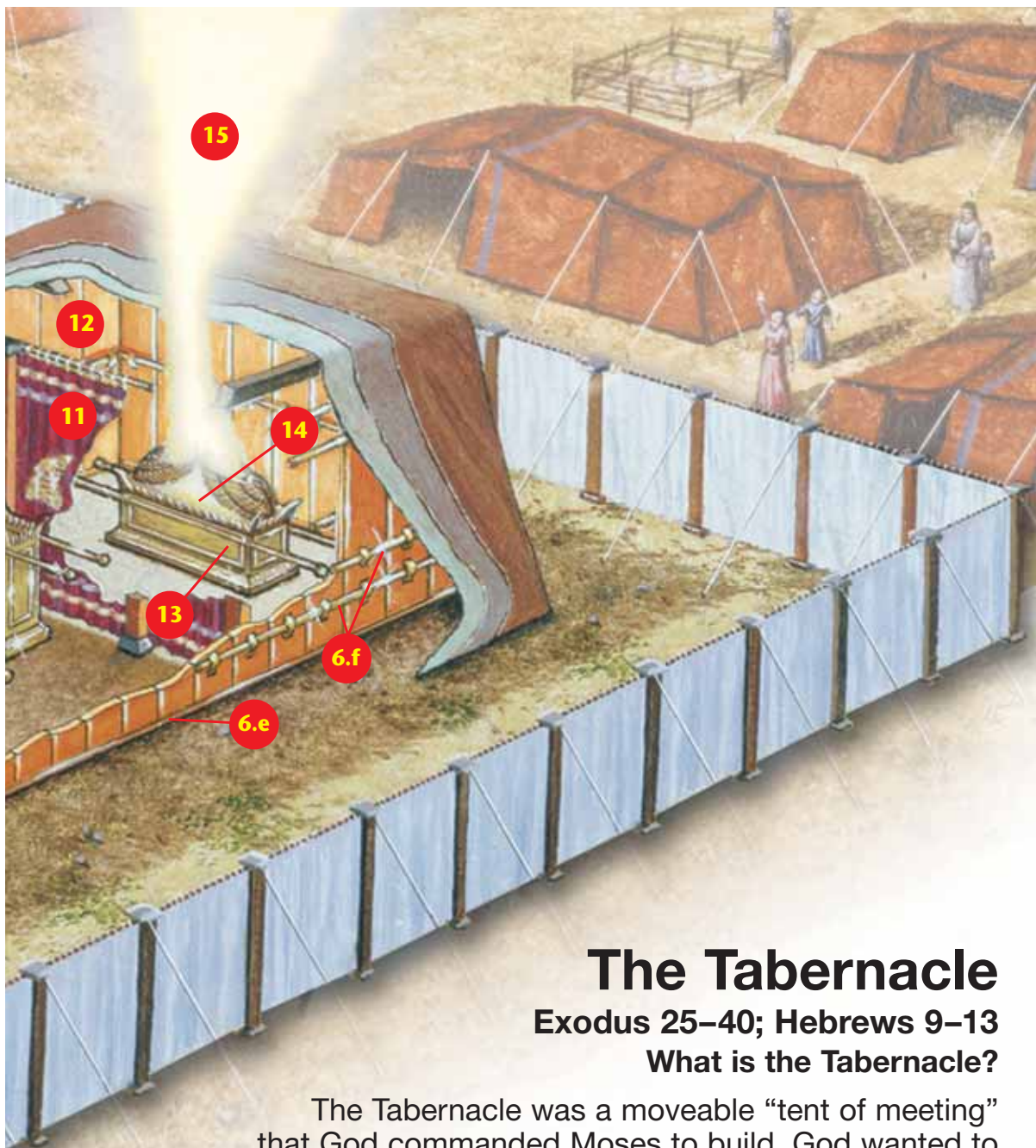


- The Furnishings
- The Pattern of Worship
- The Ark of the Covenant
- Symbolism that Points to Jesus
- The Sacrifices in the Tabernacle
- The Garments of the High Priest

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The Tabernacle

Exodus 25–40; Hebrews 9–13

What is the Tabernacle?

The Tabernacle was a moveable “tent of meeting” that God commanded Moses to build. God wanted to dwell among his people, the Israelites. He wanted to have fellowship with them and be able to communicate with them.

The Tabernacle and its courtyard were constructed according to a pattern set by God, not by Moses. We study the Tabernacle to understand the steps the Lord laid out for a sinful people to approach a holy God. The Tabernacle was built approximately 1440 BC, and was the place where God dwelt with his people for 400 years. It was used from the time of the Exodus until the time of King Solomon, when the Temple was built. The Tabernacle was the center of the Israelite camp. The 12 tribes of Israel camped around the Tabernacle in a special arrangement.

Entering the Tabernacle

1 Gate of the Court

First, a person would enter the Gate of the Court to offer a sacrifice for sin or thanksgiving.

- Hanging curtains (blue, purple, scarlet, white)
- Four pillars of brass
- Sockets of bronze (brass)
- Hooks and fillets (clasps) of silver on the tops of the pillars)

Exodus 27:10, 11, 14-16; Exodus 38:14-18, 19; John 10:9

20 cubits wide x 5 cubits high
(30 ft x 7.5 ft., or 9.2 m x 2.3 m)

2 Court Fence Not shown to scale

After passing through the gate, the person would come into the court. The court fence was made of a long piece of linen held up by posts that surrounded the Tabernacle. Only priests from the tribe (family) of Levi were allowed to touch the Tabernacle, so the fence protected people from coming too close accidentally.

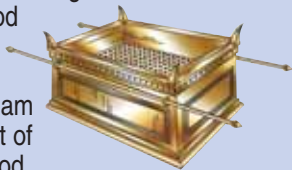
- Linen curtains
- Pillars, sockets, hooks, and fillets (tops and rods)
- Pins of bronze held the linen curtains in place

Exodus 27:9-18; 38:9-20; 40:33

100 cubits long x 50 cubits wide x 5 cubits high
(150 ft. x 75 ft. x 7.5 ft., or 46 m x 23 m x 2.3 m)

3 Brazen Altar

God wanted to dwell among his people. How does a holy God dwell among sinful people? First God required the people to offer a sacrifice for their sins. God told Adam and Eve that the result of their sin was death. God, however, had mercy on humankind and provided them with a way to temporarily cover their sin. Instead of immediately requiring their own blood (death), God allowed the blood of an animal to atone or take away sin, making it possible for the worshippers to enter into God's presence.



Only the finest animal—a perfect one—was good enough. God asked them for a perfect, flawless sacrifice because:

- The animal represented an undeserving recipient of a deserved punishment.
- God wanted people to trust in his provision, so he asked that the sacrifice be valuable.
- The perfect animal foreshadowed Jesus, the perfect sacrifice who atones for sin once for all.

Because these sacrifices only temporarily covered the sins of the people, they needed to be offered on a regular basis.

The people would bring the offering and would put their hand on the head of the lamb while it was killed. This symbolically, yet temporarily, put their sins onto the animal, and the animal died in their place.

The brazen altar was made of acacia (shittim) wood and covered with bronze. The four corners had horns. There were bronze shovels, basins, fleshhooks (forks), and fire pans to collect ashes. A bronze grate with a ring in each corner was put under the brazen altar. Carrying poles made of acacia wood covered with bronze were used to carry the altar.

Genesis 2:17; 3:21; 4:3-7; Exodus 27:1-8, 40:6, 10, 29; Leviticus 1; 16:1, 2, 16; 17:11; Isaiah 59:2; Romans 3:23; Hebrews 9:25; 10:10, 26-31

5 cubits long x 5 cubits wide x 3 cubits high
(7.5 ft. x 7.5 ft. x 4.5 ft., or 2.3 m x 2.3 m x 1.38 m)

4 Offerings at the Altar

Several offerings were offered at the Altar:

- Burnt offering of bulls, sheep, goats, doves, or pigeons
- Grain offering of cakes or wafers of fine flour
- Peace offering of a goat or lamb
- Sin offering of a bull or lamb
- Trespass offering of a female from the flock: a lamb, goat kid, dove, pigeon, or grain

Leviticus 1-6; Leviticus 7:11; Hebrews 8:3; 9:11-14, 18-22; 10:1-4

5 Bronze Laver

The rest of the steps were performed by the priests on behalf of the people. After making the sacrifice, the priest washed himself at the brass laver. This washing purified the priest and prepared him to enter the Tabernacle. The Lord said that the priest must wash so that he would not die.



The brazen laver was made from brass mirrors donated by the women. It may have had a shiny mirrored surface which would help the priest wash thoroughly and to remind him that the Lord sees past the outward appearance, straight into the heart.

Exodus 27:1-8; 40:6, 10, 29; Exodus 30:17-21; 40:7, 30-32; Ephesians 5:26; Hebrews 10:22

Size unknown

The Ark of the Covenant



- The Ark of the Covenant was made of acacia wood and covered with gold. The Ark was the first item of furniture constructed after God told Moses to build the Tabernacle. It was the place where God met with and talked with Moses (Exodus 25:10-22).
- The Tabernacle was built to house the Ark of the Covenant. The Ark of the Covenant was intended to be the central focus of the Most Holy Place in the Tabernacle, and 400 years later in the Temple (Ex. 40:1-21).
- The Ark of the Covenant rested in the Most Holy Place behind a thick curtain. This heavy veil in the Temple was torn from top to bottom at the moment of Jesus' death (Exodus 26:31-33; Matthew 27:50, 51).
- God set apart the tribe of Levi to carry the Ark and stand before him, to serve him, and to bless his name. Only the High Priest was allowed to enter the Most Holy Place. He entered once a year on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, to sacrifice and to sprinkle blood on the Mercy Seat to atone for the sins of the people (Deut. 10:8; Lev. 16; Ex. 37:6-9).
- The Mercy Seat was placed on top of the Ark of the Covenant. It included the winged cherubim that faced each other. God dwelled between the cherubim and spoke to the priest (2 Samuel 6:2 and Psalm 99:1).
- There are two lists in Scripture about the contents of the Ark of the Covenant.
 - Hebrews 9:4 says that the Ark contained the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments (the "tables of the covenant"), a golden jar (pot) of manna, Aaron's rod (stick) that budded.
 - Exodus 25:16 and Deuteronomy 10:5 list the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments. Other verses mention that a jar of manna (Exodus 16:32-34) and Aaron's rod (Numbers 17:10) were laid before the testimony and were to be kept for future generations.

Atonement for Sins

	OLD COVENANT (OLD TESTAMENT)		NEW COVENANT (NEW TESTAMENT)	
Type of Sacrifice	Blood of animals	Exodus 12:5 Leviticus 1-7	Blood of Jesus	Hebrews 9:12; 13:12 1 John 1:7
Quality of Sacrifice	Not enough Offered over and over	Leviticus 1-7 Hebrews 9:7-9; 10:4	Enough Offered just once	Hebrews 9:12, 26
Quantity of Sacrifice	Many	Leviticus 1-7 Hebrews 10:1	One	Hebrews 9:25, 26
Effectiveness	For a day, for a year	Exodus 29-30 Hebrews 10:1-4	Forever	Hebrews 7:26, 27 Hebrews 9:12-15
Action or Result	Temporary	Exodus 30:10 Hebrews 9:25	Final	Romans 6:10 Hebrews 9:25-28

Inscription on Turban
"Holy to the Lord"
(Exodus 28:36)

Turban (Mitre)
(Exodus 28:4, 39;
29:6)

Breastplate with 12 Precious Stones
(Exodus 28:30;
Exodus 28:17-21)

Onyx Stones on Shoulders
(Exodus 28:9-12;
39:6, 7)

The Urim and Thummim (not visible) were placed in the breastpiece
(Exodus 28:30)

Girdle (a Sash)

Ephod
(Exodus 28:4;
Ps. 132:9)

Censer of Burning Coals
(Leviticus 16:12, 13;
Hebrews 9:4)

Robe
(Exodus 28:34)

Bells and Pomegranates

Fine Linen Tunic

