

## March 12

**Scriptures:** Read Exodus 27

**Key Verse:** “And you shall command the children of Israel that they bring you pure oil of pressed olives for the light, to cause the lamp to burn continually.” (Exodus 27:20)

### Overview

After the description of everything inside the tabernacle we read of the bronze altar situated in the large open area of the court that surrounded the tabernacle and tent. God intended all the people, not just the priests, to participate in devotion to Him, and this was the area where all were welcome. There the sinner could come to offer a sacrifice of appeasement with the blood of propitiation. Through this shed blood of the sacrifice the people of the covenant could come closer to their God, and in this fashion were able to truly worship and have communion with Him. The joy of their relationship and His blessing upon them came through this altar of repentance. It was made of the same wood as the ark and table of showbread, but whereas they were overlaid with gold, this altar was overlaid with bronze, a symbol of power and strength.

Christ, as the altar for His church, sanctified Himself (John 17:19) and through His shed blood and mediation, His people as well are sanctified (Hebrews 13:12). The blood of the sacrifice was applied to the horns of the altar (Leviticus 4:7), and they were used to tie the slaughtered animal sacrifice so that no pieces of the sanctified flesh would fall to the ground while burning. The grate all around the altar served as a further safeguard so that not a single portion of the sacrifice would be defiled. Even the ashes were collected, removed, and then treated with care. Those who are sanctified unto the Lord are not to become defiled with the sins and dirt of the world. The horns were also a symbol of refuge where one might flee for protection and there be judged (e.g. Adonijah – 1 Kings 1:50-53).

The court area was enclosed by plain linen curtains that were about two and a half meters high, sufficient to provide privacy within. There was only one entrance into the tabernacle court area and only those Israelites who were ceremonially clean could enter, just as there is only one way to the Lord God today – through Jesus Christ who cleanses us. At this entrance-way there was a veil having the colors of blue, purple and scarlet embroidered in a similar, but less elaborate fashion as the other veils within the tabernacle.

The court seems to picture the Church of Jesus Christ being separate from the rest of the world, yet still apart of the world. The enclosure was supported by pillars, representing the stability and strength of the church which is based upon a strong foundation. The curtains which made up the enclosure were made of clean fine line which is said to be “the righteous acts of the saints” (Revelation 19:8).

The Psalmist longed to dwell and sing praises to the Lord in His courts and exclaimed that one day there was better than a thousand elsewhere (Psalm 84:). The physical enclosure, which could only hold a limited number of worshippers, has now been taken away by the atoning work of Jesus Christ. With the gospel, God has opened the way for everyone in every part of the world to come before Him in prayer through Jesus Christ. We may constantly dwell in the Lord’s presence and continually offer unto Him the sacrifice of praise (Hebrews 13:15).

The continuously burning lamp in the tabernacle was to be a statute forever for the children of Israel, expressing the light of the Lord in His presence among them always. The most pure olive oil was used to fuel the light. Pure oil is seen in the Bible as a symbol of the Holy Spirit which should constantly burn within the believer, enabling those that worship the Lord to shine for Him.

### Prayer

Lord, thank You that we can enter into Your presence by the Holy Spirit to sing praise to You so that we will surely shine for You in this darkened world.