

## The Tabernacle of God

A hundred years ago when I was in college, I studied art (much to my father's chagrin). Besides my own narrow field of specialization, the curriculum required classes in a broad range of quasi-related subjects, designed (I presume) to teach us to think conceptually—to look at the broad picture, not just individual pieces of the human puzzle. So I not only studied painting, drawing, illustration, and sculpture. There was also industrial design, materials technology, biology and chemistry. Ceramics, metal-smithing, printmaking, and fabric design courses taught valuable lessons in craftsmanship. Architectural design (without the math), graphics, advertising, interior design, and theater/set design were buttressed by studies in psychology, anthropology, and art history.

I didn't realize until years later that my higher education had done far more than prepare me to hold down a job (which was, truth be told, where it had essentially failed). It had taught me to see the world as something more than the sum of its parts, as a living organism, all of which was connected in some fundamental way. My college professors would have been horrified, of course, to learn that I had further observed that this organism, the cosmos, was so complex and so well balanced that its very existence required a Creator. The craftsmanship, the planning, the aesthetic nuance, the *rightness* of it all demanded that Somebody Really Smart had invented it. The painting required its Artist. The building revealed its Architect. The machine demanded its Engineer. The book presupposed its Author. The thought necessitated its Living Mind. But it was even better than that (or worse, depending on one's viewpoint). The very existence of the cosmos (of which I was a part) told me something stunning and unforeseen about its Creator: it told me He must have had a *reason* for creating it.

I'm a trained designer, yet I've never "designed" anything without having a purpose in mind, a goal to meet, a need to fill. It needn't be weighty and earth-shattering, like "designing" a cure for cancer or a rocket to fly to the moon. It might be as insignificant as wadding up a piece of paper to amuse my cat. But there's *always* a purpose in design—and the grander the design, the more important the purpose (at least in the mind of the designer). The universe we perceive around us is the grandest design of all—immense beyond imagination, infinitely beautiful, perfectly balanced, and deeply mysterious. Though we don't yet know precisely *how* it was designed, we do know roughly *when*: science has pinned down the date of the creation of time, space, matter, and energy to about

13.7 billion years ago—not even *remotely* long enough for life to have been spontaneously generated through mere chance. The more secrets we discover about our universe, the more we ought to be in awe of the One who created it—and the more we should be asking ourselves, *why did He make all this?* How can we look at the stars and refuse to see that there is purpose in their design, in their very existence? How can we look at ourselves and fail to see that we too have been created for a purpose?

Here’s the rub. The Designer who created the universe is the same One who made us. He told us so, and I for one am inclined to take His word for it. (Who’d make up a story like that?) Indeed, from all the evidence He’s provided so far, it appears that His *primary* purpose for creating the universe is so that the elements comprising our physical environment, including our bodies, would be available. He, personally, doesn’t need them; He existed very nicely *forever* without them. It’s no accident that the Designer’s self-revealed name is Yahweh: “I Am,” the self-existent One. Because Yahweh’s purpose for creation (at least as far as He’s told us—there may be more to it) is to share a loving relationship with mankind, we should not be terribly surprised to find that He didn’t restrict His creative impulses to designing “big” things like space/time, matter/energy, or organic life. He also designed things on our scale (mental as well as physical)—His idea of nanotechnology, I imagine.

This chapter and the next describe one such architectural design project, the temple, first revealed as the Tabernacle or the Sanctuary. As with all of Yahweh’s designs, this one is purpose-driven, but unlike some of His “projects,” (such as making a nice galaxy for us to live in), the Tabernacle and its appurtenances are described in excruciating detail in Scripture. The reason, of course, is that a human construction crew (Israel) was tasked to build and operate the place, following the Architect’s blueprints to the letter. We have already seen some of these instructions in *The Owner’s Manual*, notably in Chapters 10 and 11.

The Tabernacle/Temple in its earliest form is just a fancy tent with some portable furnishings, not particularly big or awe-inspiring. It’s a fair question to ask, then: *why?* What did the Creator of the universe wish to accomplish by designing such a structure? What was its intended purpose? It was obviously not calculated to impress us: the thing just wasn’t all that impressive, as manmade structures go. From the outside, the thing just looked like a large gray box with a fence around it sitting out in the middle of the desert. Its purpose is latent in the wealth of detail we were given concerning its construction and function. The tabernacle and its service entail by far God’s most detailed set of instructions about any material entity in the entire Bible. If the sheer volume of instruction is any indication, it was intended to be a meticulous and comprehensive object lesson representing something extremely important to the Architect. The

Sanctuary symbolized some reality He wanted us to discover, ponder, and remember. In short, the purpose of the Tabernacle was to reveal the Plan of God.

And so, like my educational odyssey so many years ago, the plethora of disparate elements comprising the body of instruction concerning the Tabernacle/Temple form a reality far greater than the sum of its parts. It was designed to teach us to think conceptually about the means Yahweh planned to employ to reconcile a fallen human race to Himself, undo the damage we did to ourselves in the Garden of Eden, and restore the Designer's primeval purpose for creating the universe in the first place—fellowship between God and man.

#### SITE PLANNING AND INITIAL CONCEPT

(706) *Embrace Yahweh's tests.* **"Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, 'Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.' Then He said, 'Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."** (Genesis 22:1-2) After failing several of Yahweh's tests and getting varying marks on others, Abraham was suddenly faced with his "final exam," the one test that, beyond all others, would either define him as a man of faith or relegate him to the ranks of normal clueless humanity. His faith had been crafted by a series of events over the years, each one proving a little more convincingly than the last that Yahweh was a God who could be trusted to keep His word. The most compelling of these, of course, had been the miraculous birth of the very promised son whom Abraham was now being told to sacrifice as a burnt offering.

There was only one thing that could have compelled Abraham to obey Yahweh in this most difficult of tests: he *believed*, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that God would bring the son of promise back to life—that the promise would be kept somehow even if Isaac died. Yes, the command was counter-intuitive. It didn't matter. Abraham had walked with the God who was delivering these bizarre instructions for a lifetime, and He had never let him down, never led him astray, never lied to him. That's why Abe, when he began the final ascent to the place of sacrifice, could tell the two servants who accompanied them, **"The lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you."** (Genesis 22:5) Abraham truly believed they would both return. And his unshakable belief was demonstrated by his obedience.

Though it's relatively easy for us to see this side of Calvary, I doubt if Abraham could have known he was being asked to perform an elaborate dress rehearsal of the pivotal event in Yahweh's plan for the redemption of

mankind, the sacrifice of *His own Son*, Yahshua. The son of promise was to be sacrificed by a loving father, and he went willingly. A donkey was recruited for transportation. It was a three-day journey. The son would carry the wood needed for the offering on his own back as he approached the place of execution. Even the place was prophetic. Abe was told to go to the “mountains of Moriah.” Moriah is one of several mountains upon which the future city of Jerusalem would eventually be built, though there was nothing there at the time. Significantly, the two servants were asked to stay behind while Abraham and Isaac journeyed on toward the specific spot to which Yahweh directed them. If I may be allowed a bit of plausible speculation, I believe that the servants remained at the place where the Temple would eventually be built—on Mount Moriah, but not at the actual summit. Abraham and Isaac continued on, stopping a few hundred yards further up the hillside at a place that would someday be known to the world as Golgotha.

- (707) *Be alert to God's leading.* **“But the Angel of Yahweh called to him from heaven and said, ‘Abraham, Abraham!’ So he said, ‘Here I am.’ And He said, ‘Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.’ Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. And Abraham called the name of the place, Yahweh-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, ‘In the Mount of Yahweh it shall be provided.’”** (Genesis 22:11-14) The parallels between type and antitype continue: a substitute offering was provided by Yahweh. This substitute was a ram (that is, a fully mature male sheep—a grown-up lamb, a clean animal). The “thicket” is prophetic of the crown of thorns fashioned by the Roman soldiers at Yahshua’s mock trial, and the “horns” are symbolic of the authority, the power of Yahshua. Something stunningly significant is being revealed here: it was not through His human vulnerability that Yahshua was bound and delivered into the hands of His executioners, but rather through the very power and authority of the Son of God. He realized that no one other than Himself could serve as the “burnt offering” that would atone for the sins of mankind. If *He* didn’t do it, it wouldn’t get done at all. We would still be dead in our sins.

We can be reasonably certain that Abraham had convinced himself that God would raise his son back to life after he had been slain. He certainly wasn’t counting on being provided a substitute sacrifice. So there is a lesson for us latent in Abraham’s unexpected discovery of the ram. As far as Abe could tell, Yahweh had changed his plan at the last minute—first He’d told him to sacrifice his son, and later He’d told him not to, to

use the ram instead. If Abraham had been like a lot of Christians, he would have said, *“No, my doctrine is sound according to everything I’ve been taught. My religious traditions are inviolable. God (defined by my opinions) doesn’t change. Sparing Isaac now would be too easy, so this must be a trick. I’m just being tempted to ignore my original instructions. After all, it’s only logical: if we’re supposed to be “Christ-like,” then God surely requires sacrifices from us.”* At which point he would have gone ahead and slit Isaac’s throat, ram or no ram.

The lesson is this: Yahweh doesn’t give us all the answers up front. He wants us to learn by experience, study, observation, and interaction with Him. There are surprises in God’s word that aren’t immediately apparent to the casual reader. I’ve been studying it for over half a century, and I still learn new things ’most every day. Maybe I’m just slow, but the Holy Spirit seems to reveal things to me when I’m ready to receive them, and not before. We therefore need to be habitually alert to the leading of Yahweh in our lives. The caveat, of course, is that although Yahweh never contradicts Himself, He often reveals His truth piecemeal. Even in Abraham’s case, the *real* instruction was not, “Go and kill your son Isaac,” but “Be willing to sacrifice him.” That being said, comprehending God’s Word is not remotely the same thing as formulating new doctrine diametrically opposed to the plain reading of scripture based upon one’s dreams, visions, or insights. One can receive some very unscriptural “insights” by eating anchovy-jalapeño pizza at two o’clock in the morning.

#### FUNDING AND MATERIALS REQUISITION

- (708) *Rely upon Yahweh to fund His own projects. “And Yahweh said to Moses, ‘I will bring one more plague on Pharaoh and on Egypt. Afterward he will let you go from here. When he lets you go, he will surely drive you out of here altogether. Speak now in the hearing of the people, and let every man ask from his neighbor and every woman from her neighbor, articles of silver and articles of gold.’”* (Exodus 11:1-2) I’ve never been able to read this passage without blushing. God told His people to go to their Egyptian neighbors and ask them for gold and silver articles. Maybe it’s just that as an American, one too many scams have been foisted upon me and my neighbors—to the point that I never even let my daughters go door-to-door to sell Girl Scout cookies (I always just bought their quotas myself, much to the detriment of my waistline). The tenor of the times was very different back then, of course, as explained in verse 3: **“And Yahweh gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in**

**the sight of Pharaoh's servants and in the sight of the people."** This was after nine of the ten plagues had been visited upon Egypt. By this time it had been effectively demonstrated that Moses' God (and by extension, the God of the Israelites) had vanquished the gods of the Egyptians, the most recent of which was the top dog in their pantheon, Ra, the sun god, who had been put in his place during the latest plague—darkness. So the request for gold and silver trinkets was couched in these terms: "Yahweh, the God of Israel who has proven His power over your local deities, requires that you honor him by providing us with gold and silver, for in a short time, He intends to free us from our bondage."

The "why" of it isn't too hard to figure out, of course. The Israelites, having been slaves for four centuries, had very little of this world's wealth. Yahweh wanted to give them the means and opportunity to show Him their gratitude for freeing them from their chains. But what does the man who has nothing have to give to God? *Nothing*, unless God Himself provides it first. Some things never change.

What the gold and silver was intended to be used for will become evident in the next precept. For now, I merely wish to point out the truth of the old saying, "Where God guides, God provides." I just cringe at pastors who incessantly hound their congregations for increased contributions, or television evangelists who spend half their air time begging for money. *If we don't receive a generous donation from you, dear listener, we won't be able to continue this ministry.* Oh really? If that's the case, maybe your "ministry" *needs* to be discontinued. In my experience, Yahweh provides whatever resources your ministry is going to need before you even know you need them—in my own personal case, a big house (*before* He asked my wife and I to adopt nine kids), a moderately successful small business (*before* the expense of raising those kids got out of hand), and—counter-intuitively—a bloody and premature end to my professional career as a designer, coupled with an unexpected stock windfall and my wife's modest inheritance (*before* being given the privilege of researching His Word full-time). There's a very good reason for the notice on the home page of TheOwnersManual.net that says, "I have nothing to sell you. Everything on this website is absolutely free...just like God's love."

- (709) *Use whatever Yahweh has provided as He directs.* **"Then Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying: 'Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring Me an offering. From everyone who gives it willingly with his heart you shall take My offering. And this is the offering which you shall take from them: gold, silver, and bronze; blue, purple, and scarlet thread, fine linen, and goats' hair; ram skins dyed red, badger**

skins, and acacia wood; oil for the light, and spices for the anointing oil and for the sweet incense; onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod and in the breastplate.” (Exodus 25:1-7) The very next words out of Yahweh’s mouth explained why He wanted the Israelites to contribute all this stuff: **“And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it.”** (Exodus 27:8-9. See Mitzvah #428.) The “pattern” of the tabernacle, its furnishings, and its service, would be a multi-level metaphor for the Plan of God.

Scripture also records Moses’ relaying of Yahweh’s words to the people: **“And Moses spoke to all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying, ‘This is the thing which Yahweh commanded, saying: Take from among you an offering to Yahweh. Whoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it as an offering to Yahweh: gold, silver, and bronze; blue, purple, and scarlet thread, fine linen, and goats’ hair; ram skins dyed red, badger skins, and acacia wood; oil for the light, and spices for the anointing oil and for the sweet incense; onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod and in the breastplate.’”** (Exodus 35:4-9) How refreshing it is to see that Moses didn’t alter Yahweh’s instructions one whit when passing them on to the Israelites. We’ll look at each of these items in turn as they’re discussed in the Tabernacle’s plan. At this point, they were just raw materials, like so much lumber and drywall and concrete. But as we shall see, Yahweh’s plan called for a very specific list of materials because He had a very precise story to tell.

This wasn’t a tax on the people. They weren’t required to bring anything. Nor were the Israelites told to hand over everything they had collected from the Egyptians on their way out of town (see Precept #708), though that’s obviously the source from which much of the funding for the Tabernacle was expected to be derived. God left it up to the individual Israelites to decide what (if anything) to contribute: **“Whoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it.”** He would have been perfectly justified in wording it a bit differently, of course: *“Whoever is the least bit grateful that I delivered them out of bondage with My mighty hand, signs, and wonders—whoever remembers or cares what I did for them at the Red Sea—let him bring an offering.”* Yahweh never twists our arms or makes our choices for us. But that doesn’t mean He doesn’t have the right to. It occurred to me as well that the Israelites who decided to keep the gold for themselves were doomed to lugging it around the wilderness with them for the next forty years. There was nothing to spend it on and no practical way to protect it from thieves. If not used for God’s glory, the gift-gold became both a pointless burden and a stress-inducing temptation.

- (710) *Don't use a double standard. "All your valuations shall be according to the shekel of the sanctuary: twenty gerahs to the shekel."* (Leviticus 27:25) In Mitzvot #526-528, we saw that the priests were to assign a value to certain things that might be offered to Yahweh to aid the priesthood, specifically, unclean but utilitarian animals like donkeys or horses, and houses or land. These things could later be redeemed, bought back by their former owners, but one fifth of their assigned value was to be added—the point being that redemption (that which Yahweh was doing for mankind) was expensive: God was prepared to pay more than we were worth to secure our release, even though we were “unclean beasts.”

Here we see that the value the priests assigned to the offered donkey (or whatever) was to be measured in the same currency as the redemption price. There was to be no double standard. Taken to its logical conclusion, this tells me that the priests (who, if you'll recall, represent all believers) and the people (the general population) are held to the same standard and are responsible to keep the same Law, whether Torah or Conscience. In other words, we believers cannot insist that the lost “work their way to heaven” by becoming “good people” while excusing ourselves from living holy lives on the basis of having been “saved by grace.” No, the reality is that we have *all* fallen into sin; we have *all* become unclean beasts, offered up in service (or servitude) in this world. There is no “privileged” priesthood who is above the Law. No matter who we are, our Master wishes to redeem us, and He is prepared to pay an inordinately high price for our release from bondage. The only difference between “saved” and “lost” people is which side of the redemption equation we're on.

#### DETAIL DRAWINGS

- (711) *Follow Yahweh's plan when constructing the Sanctuary. "According to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it."* (Exodus 25:9) Not only were the Israelites commanded to build a sanctuary for Yahweh (verse 8; see Mitzvah #428), they were told to make it in a very specific manner, according to a plan Yahweh had shown to Moses up on Mount Sinai. Its plan, dimensions, materials, and furnishings weren't specified for their practicality, style, or function. On the contrary, every detail called for in Yahweh's plan *meant* something. Each piece, one way or another, explained His provision for our redemption, purification, and reconciliation with Him.

We'll examine these details in turn as we reach them in the scriptural narrative. But let us first survey the Tabernacle's overall plot design, the

“site plan.” As you approached the Tabernacle courtyard (Precept #728) from the outside, all you’d see was a white fence made of linen fabric, too tall to see over. You could, however, see the top of the Tabernacle proper. It wasn’t very impressive: just a dull, shapeless gray shroud poking up from the desert floor toward the western end of this modest rectangular enclosure, about the size of a suburban lot. The courtyard had only one entrance, a broad opening in the cloth fence on the eastern side, with an elaborate curtain (Precept #739) for a gate.

Upon entering through the courtyard’s portal, you’d see two prominent items standing between you and the Tabernacle. The first was an altar (Precept #726), a big barbecue—the largest single item in the Tabernacle environs. Considering the buzz of activity centering on the altar, you may reflect that they could use an even larger one, until you remember that everything had to be portable, carried about by groups of Levites whenever Yahweh directed Israel to pick up stakes and move (Precept #747). Beyond the altar, between it and the door of the Tabernacle, was a bronze wash basin or laver (Mitzvah #435) sitting on a bronze pedestal. This was to be used for washing the hands and feet of the priests before they entered the Tabernacle.

We’ll defer our explanation of the layout of the furnishings within the Sanctuary itself. But even before we’ve entered the Tabernacle, we’ve learned some important truths. (1) Yahweh has provided only one way to reach Him. (Though functionally omnipresent, He can symbolically be characterized as dwelling “within” the Most Holy Place, the inner room of the Tabernacle, defining it as the final objective of man seeking God.) As Yahshua explained, **“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”** (John 14:6) Therefore, the single entrance symbolizes Yahshua the Messiah. (2) One must get past the altar in order to reach God. That is, innocent blood must be shed as atonement for sin. There’s no way around it. The blood of a “clean” animal would suffice as a temporary symbol, but the permanent reality that’s represented by this symbol is Yahshua the Messiah—the only truly Innocent One. (3) Once beyond the altar, the seeker-priest must wash his hands and feet before approaching God. The blood of the innocent sacrifice shed at the altar had atoned for his sin, its true, but his works and walk must be subsequently cleansed—every time he approached his God. As Paul puts it, **“Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word.”** (Ephesians 5:25-26) So once again, we see Yahshua our Messiah as the object of the metaphor: the sole agent of reconciliation between man and God. The bronze laver was the only thing within the Tabernacle for which no specific dimensions were given. We

can only conclude that Yahweh meant to imply that there is no limit to the depth of cleansing the laver made possible or to the number of washings it affords.

- (712) *Make the linen covering curtains as directed. “Moreover you shall make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine woven linen and blue, purple, and scarlet thread; with artistic designs of cherubim you shall weave them.”* (Exodus 26:1) The Tabernacle was basically an elaborate tent with rigid walls. Here we see the innermost of four layers comprising the ceiling and roof. This embroidered linen layer is what one would see when he entered the Tabernacle and looked upward. Ten strips of linen cloth were to be laid side by side across the width of the Tabernacle.

The white linen, as we have seen, speaks of righteousness, and specifically, that imputed to us by a holy God. Thus the pure white linen was to be embroidered with “artistic designs of cherubim.” This is a bit puzzling, for the Second Commandment forbids the making of “**any likeness of anything that is in heaven above,**” etc. (Exodus 20:4) Cherubim were winged angelic beings such as those whom Yahweh had stationed at the entrance to Eden after the fall, blocking access to the tree of life. The instruction to weave images of them into the Tabernacle’s linen curtains (not to mention fashioning them into golden statues atop the mercy seat) leaves me no choice but to conclude that the prohibition of the Second Commandment implied making images *for the purpose of worshipping them*. (This is a great comfort to an old ex-graphic-designer like me, whose whole career revolved around “making images” of things, mostly with an eye toward helping consumers make informed purchasing decisions.) Here, the images of cherubim were reminders of Yahweh’s constant watchfulness over Israel. These cherub-angels were His ever-present agents of provision, protection, and—if need be—correction.

Being agents of the Almighty, it was only fitting that the embroidery of the cherubim was to be wrought in the rarest, most costly of materials—thread dyed “blue, purple, and scarlet.” Blue (Hebrew: *tekelet*) and purple (*argaman*) were derived from the same source—the secretions of various Mediterranean mollusks such as *Murex brandaris* and *Murex trunculus*. *Tekelet* ranged from blue, to deep purple or violet, to brilliant red. *Argaman* varied from a deep red-black to violet. If you’ll recall, a single strand of the ubiquitous Hebrew tsitzit (Mitzvah #18) was to be dyed blue (*tekelet*)—a constant reminder of the royalty of the coming Messiah. Scarlet (Hebrew: *sani*) was a costly dye obtained from the eggs of cochineal scale insects which attached themselves to kermes oaks. It was a

deep blood-red in color, making it a ready metaphor for the blood shed by the atonement sacrifice—ultimately, Yahshua.

The passage goes on to explain, **“The length of each curtain shall be twenty-eight cubits, and the width of each curtain four cubits. And every one of the curtains shall have the same measurements....”** We shall soon learn that the width and height of the Tabernacle were each ten cubits; therefore as the linen curtains draped over the frame (Precept #715) they would have reached to within a cubit (probably about eighteen inches) of the ground, but would not have touched it. The lesson: our imputed righteousness, interwoven with God’s provision and protection, cannot be soiled by contact with the world in which we live. We are separated from it, made holy, called out—kept, quite literally, at arm’s length from it.

**“Five curtains shall be coupled to one another, and the other five curtains shall be coupled to one another. And you shall make loops of blue yarn on the edge of the curtain on the selvedge of one set, and likewise you shall do on the outer edge of the other curtain of the second set. Fifty loops you shall make in the one curtain, and fifty loops you shall make on the edge of the curtain that is on the end of the second set, that the loops may be clasped to one another.”** The loops of blue yarn once again, like the tsitzit, remind us that Yahshua the Messiah, the coming King, is the One who holds our righteousness together. These loops are used to tie the linen strips into two great “sub-assemblies” of five curtains each. Why? I believe each set of five curtains represents a distinct but equally important piece of Yahweh’s Kingdom: to wit, Israel and the ekklesia—the “Church.” (They can’t signify the divided kingdom of Israel—the ten tribes of Ephraim and the two of Judah—for the simple reason that Yahweh’s Plan sees them as one nation, composed of twelve tribes, who would eventually be restored under Yahweh’s rule. Prophets like Ezekiel described them that way long after the Northern kingdom had been scattered to the four winds. Compare Ezekiel 37 to Chapter 48.)

Although these “sub-assemblies” are distinct entities, they work together side by side. *Both of them* are necessary for the integrity of the Tabernacle. These in turn are to be joined together as one, but not with the usual blue cords (and it’s this crucial difference that tips us off to the metaphor): **“And you shall make fifty clasps of gold, and couple the curtains together with the clasps, so that it may be one tabernacle.”** (Exodus 26:2-6) The gold of these clasps that hold Israel and the ekklesia together speaks of a purity achieved through the crucible of judgment, a purity that is indestructible, enduringly beautiful, and exceedingly precious. Again, that can signify only One thing in the final analysis: our Messiah, Yahshua. It

is He alone who can join Israel and the ekklesia into one cohesive unit, sharing a common purpose, woven of the same imputed righteousness, and able to stand together as sinless children before Yahweh, distinct yet united. Of course, this prophecy requires that *both* sides are held by the golden clasps—that *both* sides of the curtain assembly accept Yahshua as their Messiah. Israel isn't quite there yet, so God's Plan, the Tabernacle, isn't completely finished: it "leaks." But the day is not far off when Israel and the Church can and will join hands and rejoice together in the Tabernacle—the Plan—of Yahweh.

- (713) *Make the goats' hair curtains as directed. "You shall also make curtains of goats' hair, to be a tent over the tabernacle. You shall make eleven curtains. The length of each curtain shall be thirty cubits, and the width of each curtain four cubits; and the eleven curtains shall all have the same measurements."* (Exodus 26:7-8) Same song, but a radically different verse. Taking our cues from the two goats who play their respective parts on the Day of Atonement (see Mitzvot #133-#136), we can surmise that the black goats' hair curtains that rest on top of the linen ones symbolize the atonement for sin. Each individual curtain is the same width as before, but their length is now thirty cubits, that is, long enough to touch the ground when draped over the Tabernacle's framework. Sin is like that: contact with the world defiles us, but *our* shortcomings impact the earth as well. Note that because the goats' hair curtains are longer than the linen curtains they cover, the imputed righteousness that the linen represents cannot be seen by anybody standing outside the Tabernacle. In fact, the *only* way one can see a believer's righteousness is to go into the Tabernacle and look up. There's a lesson there somewhere, one that I think will become apparent as we continue our study.

**"And you shall couple five curtains by themselves and six curtains by themselves, and you shall double over the sixth curtain at the forefront of the tent."** In this layer, there are eleven curtain sections, one more than the linen layer had. As before, they are grouped in two sub-assemblies (again, indicative of the ekklesia and Israel—both of whom have seen the atonement of their sins). Apparently, the six-curtain unit is positioned in the front, indicating Israel's position. **"You shall make fifty loops on the edge of the curtain that is outermost in one set, and fifty loops on the edge of the curtain of the second set. And you shall make fifty bronze clasps, put the clasps into the loops, and couple the tent together, that it may be one...."** No golden clasps here. This time they're bronze, indicating judgment. Remember, the clasps (symbolic of Yahshua) are what joins Israel to the Church. In the context of dealing with our sin, the judgment endured by the Messiah on Calvary is our sole point of contact. Yahweh is subtly declaring that the sins of

both Jews and gentiles are atoned in the same manner—the judgment borne by God’s Anointed—or not at all. Rule-keeping or traditional observance by devout Jews cannot provide atonement for sin any more than wishful thinking or philosophical maneuvering can for gentiles.

**“The remnant that remains of the curtains of the tent, the half curtain that remains, shall hang over the back of the tabernacle. And a cubit on one side and a cubit on the other side, of what remains of the length of the curtains of the tent, shall hang over the sides of the tabernacle, on this side and on that side, to cover it.”** (Exodus 26:9-13) Here we see that the goats’ hair curtains were to be positioned symmetrically side-to-side atop the linen set, verifying what I hypothesized concerning the fact that these touched the earth on either side of the tabernacle. We’ve already seen how the front half-curtain would have been folded back upon itself. In the back of the Tabernacle, however, the two-cubit half-curtain would extend beyond the final linen panel for the same reason as the goats’ hair curtains were made longer: so that the righteousness of the believer can be seen only from within the Tabernacle. Those outside should never be given the impression that we are saved because we are good. Those on the inside know that the converse is true: we are good because we are saved.

One detail pertaining to the assembly of the curtain sections should not be overlooked. Every time one curtain is attached to another, there are *fifty* attachment points, whether loops of blue yarn or clasps of gold or bronze. Why fifty? The number is immediately reminiscent of the period of Jubilee—fifty years, seven sabbatical phases plus one. Jubilee (see Leviticus 25; Mitzvot #170, #171, #190-193, #199, #216, and #221-226 in Chapter 6 of *The Owner’s Manual*) represents our salvation, a once in a lifetime chance to be released from our bondage, to reclaim our inheritance, and to have our debts removed. In short, it’s a picture of God’s grace. So the lesson of the Tabernacle coverings is that whether we are being linked to other believers within Israel or within the ekklesia, the One who joins us together is Yahshua the Messiah, and *the way* He connects us to each other is through grace. No wonder Yahweh rails against the twin abominations of anti-Semitism among “Christians” and Jews who pervert, distort, and wage war against the good news of Yahshua the Messiah.

- (714) *Make two additional coverings from ram skins and “badger” skins. “You shall also make a covering of ram skins dyed red for the tent, and a covering of badger skins above that.”* (Exodus 26:14) Moses didn’t repeat the details that remained the same from one Tabernacle covering layer to the next. So it appears that the specs for the last two layers remained the same as those

for the goats' hair level: eleven curtains, thirty cubits long, with two sub-assembly sets arranged six in the front and five toward the back, attached with bronze clasps, etc. Thus the last two layers, like the first two, indicate that Israel and the ekklesia are side-by-side beneficiaries of whatever symbols are latent in their respective descriptions.

The third layer consisted of “ram skins dyed red.” It would be hard to miss the reference to the ram caught by its horns in the thicket that had served as the substitute sacrifice in place of Isaac on Mount Moriah (see Precept #707). The ram represents the Messiah in His sacrificial role. In the prototype, the ram's skin had been dyed red by its own blood as Abraham had cut its throat. Unlike the “scarlet” thread used in the linen layer, no particular dye source is implied in the word chosen for “red” in this passage. What we see, rather, is a play on words with a lesson attached. The word is *'adem*, simply meaning red, ruddy, or dyed red. It has the same consonant root as *'adam*, a man (male as opposed to female), or a human being—the same word pressed into service as a given name for our proto-ancestor Adam. Thus in retrospect, the substitutionary sacrifice (ultimately Yahshua) is seen as being dyed red with His own blood, and at the same time is identified as a man—a male human. Further, the symbol this One represents is part of the covering of the Tabernacle, which tells us it's part of the Plan of Yahweh for mankind—but one that won't be obviously apparent to the world, being covered by yet another curtain assembly.

The fourth and last layer was to be made not of “badger” skins, as in the unfortunate King James translation, but of *tahas*, an unspecified aquatic mammal—a porpoise, dolphin, dugong, or seal—indigenous to the waters of the Mediterranean Sea, Red Sea and Gulf of Aqaba. Yahweh didn't ask the people to contribute anything that wasn't available. Among the 600,000 men who left Egypt, there would have been a fair number of cobblers—shoemakers—who would have brought their stock of materials with them when they departed. Bedouin craftsmen in that part of the world still make sandals from dugong and porpoise hides. It was these hides—enough to make shoes for half a million Israelites for several years—that Yahweh was asking for in Exodus 35:4-9 (see Precept #709). The cobblers of Israel responded with a faithful and willing spirit, though it left them nothing with which to make shoes in the wilderness. So it is with great admiration for Yahweh's grace that we read Moses' observant reminder of God's provision *after* the forty years of wilderness wanderings were behind them: **“Your clothes have not worn out on you, and your sandals have not worn out on your feet.”** (Deuteronomy 29:5) Aside from the practical aspect of providing a tough, weather-resistant protective outer layer for the

Tabernacle, what, then, might the outer layer of porpoise skins represent? I believe it speaks of Yahweh's miraculous provision, protection, and preservation through the trials of life. It is this layer that the world would see, if only it cared to look.

We've been looking at the Tabernacle roof from the inside out, since that's the order in which the instructions were given—the order from God's point of view. But we should really stop and consider what this all means to one on the outside, looking in. What he *sees* is nothing but a dull, gray box with but one way into it. But someone who knows how the Tabernacle (read: the Plan of God) is built can explain its structure: Yahweh is offering to protect us from the storms of this life by providing something that is not readily apparent. His substitutionary sacrificial Ram, dyed red through the shedding of His own blood, will atone for—will *cover*—the sins of all mankind, if only we will choose to avail ourselves of this gift by entering the Tabernacle through its one door: Yahshua. For those who do, He has provided what we need in order to stand in the presence of a Holy God—imputed righteousness.

- (715) *Construct "walls" for the tabernacle. "And for the tabernacle you shall make the boards of acacia wood, standing upright. Ten cubits shall be the length of a board, and a cubit and a half shall be the width of each board."* (Exodus 26:15-16) Though covered with layers of cloth and leather, the Tabernacle wasn't, strictly speaking, a tent—at least not as most of us would understand the term. It was to have walls made of multiple wooden boards standing upright on three sides of the structure. (The fourth side, the portal facing the east, was to consist of a woven screen, or curtain—see Precept #725.) The species of tree to be used was the acacia, also known as Umbrella Thorn or Israeli Babool, the familiar canopy-shaped tree indigenous from the savannahs of Eastern Africa to Egypt and throughout the Middle East. The Hebrew designation is *shittah*, the plural of which is *shittim*, as it's called in the KJV. The acacia can grow as high as sixty feet, though it reaches only a third of that height in extremely arid regions. This was the only wood type specified for the Tabernacle and its furnishings; it was used in the construction of the altar, the table of showbread, the altar of incense, and the ark of the covenant.

The acacia tree yielded a beautiful, dense, close grained wood with an orange color that darkened with age. It was prized for its insect resistance, making it a popular choice for mummy cases in Egypt. Although relatively abundant, the acacia didn't grow remotely big enough to mill single planks of the size required for the Tabernacle walls—ten cubits by one and a half, or about fifteen feet long by twenty-seven inches wide. The boards would

have had to be assembled from many smaller pieces, planed smooth and glued together. A great deal of labor and skill went into making these boards. Each finished board was to be covered in pure gold (see Precept #716, #717). There were a total of forty-eight of them, not including the five gold plated acacia pillars at the front of the Tabernacle. I can't help but reflect that these carefully crafted boards are metaphorical of us believers—all of us together, the whole household of faith which Yahweh has gathered, shaped, and assembled from living wood, and then overlaid with pure gold refined in the crucible of judgment that His Messiah endured for our sakes. **“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”** (Ephesians 2:8-10) After all, **“Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?”** (I Corinthians 3:16)

How were these wall sections to be held together, upright? **“Two tenons shall be in each board for binding one to another. Thus you shall make for all the boards of the tabernacle. And you shall make the boards for the tabernacle, twenty boards for the south side. You shall make forty sockets of silver under the twenty boards: two sockets under each of the boards for its two tenons....”** The foot of each board had two tenons (for you non-carpenter types, these are posts sticking out that would fit into holes known as mortises). Each of the tenons was made to fit a corresponding silver “socket,” or foundation pedestal. The silver for these sockets had come from the half-shekel “ransom” described in Exodus 30:11-16 (cf. Exodus 38:25; see Mitzvah #404), leading many commentators to observe that silver is a symbol for the blood of Christ, paid as a ransom for our sins. Each socket pedestal weighed in at a hefty one talent (Exodus 38:27), somewhere between 75 and 90 pounds.

Now here's where it gets really interesting. The Hebrew word translated “socket” (*'eden*) has the same consonant root (*'dn*) as the word we render “lord” or “master” (*'adon*). Remember too that vowel pointing wasn't added to the Hebrew text until well into the Christian era, by Masorete scribes who had a vested interest in obfuscating anything that might diminish the influence of the rabbis. Thus while *'eden* (a base, pedestal, or socket—something used to hold something else upright) was no doubt the primary meaning of the word in the immediate context, the linguistics of the thing further suggested that the “Master” (*'adon*) was holding the Tabernacle's boards upright. In other words, the gold-covered boards (which, as we have seen, represent us, the assembly of the faithful) were being upheld by the ransom-blood of *our* Master, the Messiah,

setting us apart from the earth, anchoring us, lifting us up, and enabling us to stand upright.

The instructional narrative continues: **“And for the second side of the tabernacle, the north side, there shall be twenty boards and their forty sockets of silver: two sockets under each of the boards. For the far side of the tabernacle, westward, you shall make six boards. And you shall also make two boards for the two back corners of the tabernacle. They shall be coupled together at the bottom and they shall be coupled together at the top by one ring. Thus it shall be for both of them. They shall be for the two corners. So there shall be eight boards with their sockets of silver—sixteen sockets—two sockets under each of the boards.”**

(Exodus 26:17-25) The numbers, if I’m not hallucinating, are indicative of something significant. We aren’t given totals (i.e., 48 boards) because the *way* they’re specified is what’s important: twenty boards per side, plus six for the back, plus two “corner” planks. Forty, you’ll recall, is the number of trial, or testing. And each side of the Tabernacle is supported by forty solid silver *‘eden* pedestals—representing the blood shed for our ransom by God’s Messiah. This was His trial, one He passed perfectly. But (and I realize I’m going out on a limb here) the two sides of the Tabernacle *together* totaled forty boards. I believe, as with the joined sub-assemblies of the roof, that one side represents Israel, and the other represents the ekklesia. (We haven’t seen the last of this recurring “same-but-separate, side-by-side” illustration, either.) Together, then, these forty boards indicate the trials we believers endure in this world. **“In the world you will have tribulation. Be of good cheer; I [Yahshua] have overcome the world.”** (John 16:33) Notice, however, that *His* trials are double ours. He is doing all the supporting work, keeping us set-apart from the earth.

And the six boards in the back? They represent humanity—the segment of unregenerated humanity that *will* come to faith, but hasn’t yet. (This group would include the saints that will be born during the Millennium.) Why do I say this? Because a portion of the inner linen curtain—the one representing the imputed righteousness that clothes the saints—covers the boards at the back of the Tabernacle. (Do the math: the structure is thirty cubits long, and there are ten linen roof panels, each of which is four cubits wide, for a total of forty cubits. The foremost linen panel is doubled over at the entrance, meaning that the last panel, like the sides, stops short of reaching the ground. Thus, the six boards at the far western end of the Tabernacle are “covered” just like the rest of them.) Who, then, do the two “corner” pieces represent? If my take on this metaphor is at all valid, these may symbolize those within Israel or the ekklesia who reach out to the world with the good news of Yahweh’s plan of redemption. They’re “Moses” and “Paul” if you will, along with those

of us who follow in their footsteps. If we don't reach out to them, the lost will remain lost. Remember: the Tabernacle as a whole represents the Plan of God for *all* humanity. That Plan includes those who have yet to obtain their citizenship in the Kingdom of Heaven. **"The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."** (Luke 19:10)

As long as we're scratching this far beneath the surface, allow me to digress a bit. If we add up all the measurements, we find that the Tabernacle was to be thirty cubits long (divided between twenty for the Holy Place and ten for the Most Holy), ten cubits wide, and ten tall. The dimensions of the Most Holy Place (ten by ten by ten cubits, or one thousand cubic cubits) have led not a few commentators to see a reference to the one-thousand-year Millennial reign of Yahshua the Messiah. I agree, but if it's true, they haven't gone far enough. If the dimensions of the Most Holy Place are a chronological metaphor, then the whole Tabernacle complex should present a timeline of what the Tabernacle represents: the Plan of Yahweh. And I believe it does.

Backing up one step, we find that the Holy Place, the room through which the Priest must pass in order to reach the Most Holy, is to be twenty cubits long, ten cubits wide, and ten cubits high, or 2,000 cubic cubits. This room is the home of *God's provision* (the table of showbread), *light* (the seven-branched golden lamp), and *prayer* (the altar of incense). Chronologically, it represents the age of Yahshua's called-out assembly, the ekklesia, comprised of every believer since His resurrection, both Jew and gentile. We are those whose sins have been atoned at the altar and whose works and walk have been cleansed at the bronze laver standing just outside the Tabernacle. (I realize that according to another metaphor, the Holy Place represents the Law through which we must pass to reach the Most Holy Place, signifying grace. But here, we're talking about *chronology*—a very different thing. God's symbols don't necessarily have to mean one thing to the exclusion of all others.) Using the same formula as before, we're led to the conclusion that the Holy Place in this context represents a time duration of precisely 2,000 years, beginning at 33 A.D., the date of the passion. That means that the Millennial Kingdom (indicated by the dimensions of the Most Holy Place) will commence in 2033, only a quarter century away as I write these words. If you've read my previous books, you probably won't find this surprising. I've arrived at the same stunning conclusion from several different lines of inquiry—although I'd never stumbled across this particular one before. There's *so much* evidence, in fact, that I've gotten to the point where I ask myself, "Am I just seeing what I want to see? Am I subliminally manipulating the data to achieve a predetermined result?" Then, as if in answer to these troubling

self doubts, Yahweh provided yet another confirmation of this chronological theory elsewhere in the Tabernacle specifications. If you can't stand the suspense, scan down to Precept #728.

- (716) *Construct bracing bars for the walls.* **“And you shall make bars of acacia wood: five for the boards on one side of the tabernacle, five bars for the boards on the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the side of the tabernacle, for the far side westward. The middle bar shall pass through the midst of the boards from end to end. You shall overlay the boards with gold, make their rings of gold as holders for the bars, and overlay the bars with gold. And you shall raise up the tabernacle according to its pattern which you were shown on the mountain.”** (Exodus 26:26-30) A “bar” (Hebrew: *beriach*) is the heavy timber that would have been used as a “lock” on a city or castle gate, crossing the grain of the other wooden components at right angles to add strength—far more strength than its added mass would suggest. (It’s the same principle that makes plywood strong.) Each of the three assembled walls of the Tabernacle were to be braced with five such bars—at least one of which (the middle one) was to extend the entire length of the wall. That meant it would have been thirty cubits (about forty-five feet) long in the case of the north and south walls—again, suggesting some sort of “glue-lam” construction, since acacia logs don’t grow that large.

Five seems to be the Biblical number of grace. If this is true, the lesson is that the comprehensive human experience—that of Israel, the ekklesia, and lost humanity as well—is held together through God’s grace, His unmerited favor toward us. **“Surely God will never do wickedly, nor will the Almighty pervert justice. Who gave Him charge over the earth? Or who appointed Him over the whole world? If He should set His heart on it, if He should gather to Himself His Spirit and His breath, all flesh would perish together, and man would return to dust.”** (Job 34:12-15) Without grace, we would simply fall apart. Without grace, we would be unable to stand upright and function in this world, no matter how good we looked, no matter how firm our foundation.

#### INTERIOR DESIGN

- (717) *Construct the ark of the covenant.* **“And they shall make an ark of acacia wood; two and a half cubits shall be its length, a cubit and a half its width, and a cubit and a half its height. And you shall overlay it with pure gold, inside and out you shall overlay it, and shall make on it a molding of gold all around. You shall cast four rings of gold for it, and put them in its four corners; two rings shall be on one side, and two rings on the other side.”** (Exodus 25:10-12) The ark would prove to be the very centerpiece of Israel’s ritual worship as directed in the Torah, the only piece of furniture to be placed within the Most Holy Place.

Whereas a man-made religion would no doubt have insisted on something grandiose, like the big statue of Zeus at Olympia or that of Diana/Artemis at Ephesus, Yahweh's focal point is downright modest—only about forty-five inches long and twenty-seven inches tall. It wasn't supposed to awe anybody; for that matter, only one person in the whole nation would even see it under normal circumstances (that is, when the Israelites were not on the move), and then only once a year. This was no idol. Like everything else in the Tabernacle, it was a symbol. The ark of the covenant represents Yahshua the Messiah—the personification of God's covenant with mankind. Thus, as we discovered in Mitzvah #429, the carrying poles (*baddim*: “extensions of the One who stands alone,” i.e., us believers—the limbs or branches of Yahshua) must never be removed from the ark.

The “rings” through which the ark (Yahshua) are carried by the poles (the believers) are described as being arranged in two sets, one on each side of the ark. Once again, we see a subtle indication that Israel and the ekklesia/Church are to function side by side in carrying the good news of Yahshua's salvation through the world. The difference? Israel is positioned “before” the mercy seat (upon which the blood of atonement was sprinkled), and the ekklesia is positioned “after.”

Note too the materials Yahweh specified. The chest is made of acacia wood—living tissue (metaphorical of Yahshua's mortal humanity) cut down in service to man upon God's instructions. But it is then covered inside and out with pure gold, symbolic of the deity—the immutability—of our Savior. This precious, beautiful, and indestructible metal has achieved purity by enduring the fires of judgment. But it is not Christ who is purged of impurities—it is us. *We* are purified through the judgment Yahshua suffered on our behalf. Subsequently, it is the “pure gold” of *our* lives—the evidence of God's Spirit dwelling within us—that the world sees when it seeks salvation. We must not alloy or adulterate the gold of Yahshua's sacrifice with the impurities of this world.

- (718) *Place the tablets of the Law into the ark.* “**And you shall put into the ark the Testimony which I will give you.**” (Exodus 25:16) “**And in the ark you shall put the Testimony that I will give you. And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are on the ark of the Testimony, about everything which I will give you in commandment to the children of Israel.**” (Exodus 25:21-22) The word “ark” (Hebrew: *'aron*) denotes a chest, box, container, or even a coffin; it's a different word than that used for Noah's “ark” (*teba*). It was to contain (1) the stone tablets upon which Yahweh had inscribed the Ten Commandments (Exodus 10:1-5), (2) a pot of manna (see Precept #626), and (3) Aaron's rod, the one that

had been used to demonstrate Yahweh's power in the sight of Pharaoh, and had later come to life and budded with flowers and ripe almonds (Numbers 17:8; see Precepts #627 and #722), confirming Aaron's divine anointing (and by extension, predicting *our* High Priest's impending resurrection from the dead, which in turn confirmed *His* divine anointing). Analysis of these contents reveals the ark's symbolic antitype: it is the One who embodies the fulfillment of Yahweh's instructions, represents His ultimate provision of life and sustenance, and functions as His anointed implement—Yahshua the Messiah.

But there was a second stated function for the ark. Its "lid," called the "mercy seat" (see Precept #719) would feature images of two cherubim, facing each other. One may rhetorically ask, "What did these two angels find so fascinating—what determined the direction of their unwavering gaze?" They weren't "looking" at each other. They were attending to the Shekinah, the cloud-like manifestation of the glory of Yahweh (see Precept #723, Exodus 40:34) whom He said would "meet with you" from within the Most Holy Place, specifically, *between* these two cherubim atop the mercy seat. If angels (even fake gold ones) pay that much attention to Yahweh, we should do no less, I'm thinking.

- (719) *Construct the mercy seat.* **"You shall make a mercy seat of pure gold; two and a half cubits shall be its length and a cubit and a half its width."** (Exodus 25:17)

The translation of the Hebrew noun *kapporet* as "mercy seat" is quite a stretch. Its root is the verb *kaphar*, meaning to cover, to purge, to make an atonement or make reconciliation. *Kaphar* is the root of the name of the sixth miqra, *Yom Kippur* (rendered more correctly as the plural, *Yom Kippurim*), the Day of Atonement. Although the *kapporet*, sitting atop the ark of the covenant, was about chair-height, the word "seat" is not remotely implied. A better rendering would be "the place of atonement," or "the site of reconciliation." This, it would transpire, was where the blood of the sacrificial goat was to be sprinkled by the High Priest once a year on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16; see Mitzvah #505), ceremonially covering or purging the sins of Israel temporarily, in anticipation of Yahweh's definitive and permanent sacrifice.

We have already spoken briefly of the two cherubim that graced the "place of atonement." **"And you shall make two cherubim of gold; of hammered work you shall make them at the two ends of the mercy seat. Make one cherub at one end, and the other cherub at the other end; you shall make the cherubim at the two ends of it of one piece with the mercy seat. And the cherubim shall stretch out their wings above, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and they shall face one another; the faces of the cherubim shall be toward the mercy seat...."** If

you're willing to accept his eyewitness testimony on face value (as I am), a devout amateur archaeologist actually discovered the resting place of the ark of the covenant in the early 1980s. I told his story in detail in *Future History*, Chapter 13: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem." Ron Wyatt described the mercy seat's configuration somewhat differently (and more in line with the scriptural instructions) than it's usually pictured. He reported that the two cherubim figures stood, one at either end of the ark of the covenant, facing inward toward each other. Their wings on the "back side" of the ark reached out above the ark, touching in the middle, while the wings facing forward rested at their sides. Thus for all practical purposes, it *did* look like a seat or throne (though the King James translators couldn't have known this).

And although Yahweh didn't physically "sit" upon it, the ark and its solid gold covering *functioned* as God's throne: **"You shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark. And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are on the ark of the Testimony, about everything which I will give you [Moses] in commandment to the children of Israel."** (Exodus 25:17-22) What kind of God condescends to have intimate chats with His people so that they might not go astray—so that they might be able to comprehend the depth of His love? You'd never catch Ba'al or Molech or Allah behaving like this.

(720) *Construct the table of showbread.* **"You shall also make a table of acacia wood; two cubits shall be its length, a cubit its width, and a cubit and a half its height. And you shall overlay it with pure gold, and make a molding of gold all around. You shall make for it a frame of a handbreadth all around, and you shall make a gold molding for the frame all around. And you shall make for it four rings of gold, and put the rings on the four corners that are at its four legs. The rings shall be close to the frame, as holders for the poles to bear the table. And you shall make the poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold, that the table may be carried with them."** (Exodus 25:23-28) We saw in Mitzvah #430 what the twelve loaves of the "showbread" symbolized. If you'll recall, it's something we seen several times recently: Israel and the ekklesia side by side. They're both sprinkled with frankincense (indicative of the purity we attain through the sacrifice of the Messiah). Here we see the instructions for building the table upon which they were to be placed every Sabbath day (indicating that Christians are probably ill-advised to choose Sunday instead of the Sabbath as their primary day of corporate worship). As with the ark of the covenant, it was to be made of acacia wood covered completely with pure gold (that is, "mortal" matter overlaid with the immutable glory of God). Also like the ark, it was equipped with gold

rings and carrying poles (see Mitzvah #429), though here we are given no instruction about leaving the poles in place).

The frame of the table was to be a “handbreadth” tall—one sixth of a cubit, three or four inches. Dimensions such as cubits (the distance between the elbow and the fingertips), spans (from the thumb to the outstretched little finger), and handbreadths were, of course, based upon human anatomy. It is noteworthy that King Yahshua’s Millennial Temple, described in Ezekiel 40, used a larger “royal” cubit, defined as “a cubit and a handbreadth.” This is a subtle application of Yahweh’s ubiquitous “six-plus-one” theme: the “six” component is the normal human-based cubit, but with the added handbreadth in the Millennium, we’re given a whole new way to measure things: God’s way.

Both the table of showbread and the ark of the covenant were to have a “gold molding” all around them. When Ron Wyatt discovered the cave in which the ark had been hidden, the first object he found was the table of showbread. He reported that this molding was decorated with a repeating pattern: bells interspersed with pomegranates. Though not called for here, this *was* a specified design feature of the High Priest’s robe (see Exodus 28:33), leading us to the conclusion that Yahweh allowed Bezaleel and his artisans some latitude in executing His instructions. As long as they followed the basic pattern He had shown Moses on Mount Sinai, Yahweh didn’t micromanage the details. Rather, He let us freely exercise the creative nature He’d built into our nature. If this doesn’t amaze you, you need to get out more: there are 1.4 billion Muslims on this planet whose god Allah won’t let them blow their noses or relieve themselves without following precise (and pointless) guidelines. But Yahweh isn’t particularly interested in our submission (which is what “Islam” means); He’s more concerned with respectful fellowship, communication, and sharing a loving relationship with us. We dare not take that for granted.

- (721) *Construct the utensils to be used with the table of showbread. “You shall make its dishes, its pans, its pitchers, and its bowls for pouring. You shall make them of pure gold.”* (Exodus 25:29) Nothing in the Tabernacle was to be “good enough.” Rather, everything, even the most mundane utilitarian items, were considered special, holy, set apart for God’s service—which in this case was the revelation, in symbolic terms, of what Yahweh’s plan entailed. So all of the utensils needed for making and presenting the ritual loaves—things that would have been cheap pottery, wood, or base metal in the average Israelite household—were made of solid gold within the Tabernacle (and bronze if used outside—see Precept #727).

(722) *Construct the golden lampstand.* **“You shall also make a lampstand of pure gold; the lampstand shall be of hammered work. Its shaft, its branches, its bowls, its ornamental knobs, and flowers shall be of one piece.”** (Exodus 25:31) The function of the golden lampstand (Hebrew: *menorah*) was discussed in Mitzvah #431. We see here God’s instructions concerning its construction. No dimensions are given (tradition says it was about five feet tall and three feet wide) but otherwise its design is quite specific. The first thing Yahweh emphasizes is its unity: it is to be made of a single piece of beaten gold—the decorative parts as well as those that were functional.

**“And six branches shall come out of its sides: three branches of the lampstand out of one side, and three branches of the lampstand out of the other side....”** The menorah had a center stalk or trunk, from which “grew” six branches, three on either side—the familiar six-plus-one theme again, which we’ve seen prominently in the creation account, the six-day work week plus Sabbath, and the seven annual “feasts” or convocations (*miqrym*) of Yahweh. Besides the prophetic chronological ramifications—fallen man’s tenure of six thousand years to be capped by a final Millennium of perfect Messianic government—the *arrangement* of the lampstand leads us to another, now familiar, observation: three branches on one side represent Israel, and the other three represent the ekklesia or Church—all of which grow from, and are dependent upon, the center trunk: Yahshua the Messiah. Indeed, these three entities together in balanced unity—Christ plus Israel and the ekklesia side by side, grafted and anchored into Him—form a perfect picture of His Millennial Kingdom.

**“Three bowls shall be made like almond blossoms on one branch, with an ornamental knob and a flower, and three bowls made like almond blossoms on the other branch, with an ornamental knob and a flower—and so for the six branches that come out of the lampstand. On the lampstand itself four bowls shall be made like almond blossoms, each with its ornamental knob and flower. And there shall be a knob under the first two branches of the same, a knob under the second two branches of the same, and a knob under the third two branches of the same, according to the six branches that extend from the lampstand....”**

Almonds. Sound familiar? It should. Aaron’s rod budded with flowers and *ripe almonds*, confirming Yahweh’s power to bestow High Priestly authority—and life itself—on whomever He chose: ultimately, Yahshua, and through Him, us. The word for the almond tree (Hebrew: *saqed*) is derived from the verb *saqad*, meaning to watch, awaken, or be alert. The *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* explains: “The idea of watchfulness which is basic to the root affords the key to the explanation of the Hebrew name for the almond tree. This tree, which in Israel blooms as early as January and February and is affectionately looked upon as the

harbinger of spring, is appropriately enough called *saged*, ‘the waker.’” All of this makes the almond tree, its blossoms and fruit, a natural metaphor for resurrection.

On the living tree, five-petaled blossoms (five being the number of grace) develop into knob-like bowls where the fruit, the almond, grows and matures. Each of the six branches on the menorah were to have three knob-and-flower decorative devices. In addition, the center stalk was to display four such knob-and flower units, plus three more—one directly beneath the junction of each pair of branches—for a total of seven. The lesson seems to be that among the watchful, alert believers of both Israel and the ekklesia, grace will develop, mature, and bear fruit—a process that’s made perfect and complete in our Messiah, our Center and Support. Six is the number of man, but our understanding of this fact has been fine-tuned somewhat here: three branches represent the redeemed of Israel and the other three the ekklesia. In the end, as far as Yahweh is concerned, we’re *all there is* of mankind. Just as our Messiah was raised from the dead, both the church (in the rapture) and Israel (See Ezekiel 37:1-14) will follow suit: all seven branches of the menorah are defined by the almond tree: the “waker.”

**“Their knobs and their branches shall be of one piece; all of it shall be one hammered piece of pure gold.”** We are reminded again of our intended unity, having been forged in the image of the pure and immutable God. And lest we forget, there is a function to all of this: **“You shall make seven lamps for it, and they shall arrange its lamps so that they give light in front of it.”** (Exodus 25:32-37) The lampstand (indicative of Yahshua and we who are grafted into Him) is to give its light within the Tabernacle (i.e., the Plan of God). Those outside the Plan cannot see the light. Moreover, it is the *only* light source in the Holy Place (which as we have seen, chronologically represents the Church age). Each of the six branches and the center trunk were to be equipped with an oil lamp, and the light was never to be extinguished or allowed to go dark. The priests (read: believers) were to make sure that olive oil (symbolic of the Holy Spirit) was always available to feed the flame of enlightenment. *What?* It’s up to *us* to ensure the Spirit’s availability to the world? Yep. Remember, the Ruach Qodesh dwells within us. Yahshua told us what we are to be doing: **“You [believers] are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”** (Matthew 6:14-16) But how does Yahshua, the center of all this, fit in? John explains: **“In Him [Yahshua] was life, and the life was the light of men.”** (John 1:4) He was “the true light

which gives light to every man who comes into the world.” (John 1:9) If men don’t see the light of God in *our* lives, they won’t see it at all. No pressure or anything.

As with the table of showbread, even the mundane utensils were to be made of pure gold. “**And its wick-trimmers and their trays shall be of pure gold. It shall be made of a talent of pure gold, with all these utensils. And see to it that you make them according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain.**”

(Exodus 25:38-40) Every detail recorded here was given for our edification. Every facet of this diamond reflects light on Yahweh’s Grand Plan for the salvation of mankind.

(723) *Make a veil to separate the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. “You shall make a veil woven of blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine woven linen. It shall be woven with an artistic design of cherubim. You shall hang it upon the four pillars of acacia wood overlaid with gold. Their hooks shall be gold, upon four sockets of silver. And you shall hang the veil from the clasps.... The veil shall be a divider for you between the holy place and the Most Holy.”* (Exodus 26:31-34) Here we see how the Tabernacle was to be divided into two “rooms.” Four pillars or columns (Hebrew: *ammud*, from the root verb *amad*, meaning to stand, remain, or endure) were to support a curtain, or veil, that ran the entire ten cubit width and ten cubit height of the Tabernacle interior. Each pillar was supported by an individual solid silver “socket” (*eden*), a foundation, base, or pedestal (See Precept #715). The pillars, like most large items in the Tabernacle, were to be constructed of acacia wood and overlaid with gold. We are not told how they were to be spaced across the room, how thick the columns were to be, or whether the curtain was to be hung in front or behind them, so apparently these details bore no symbolic significance.

The fact that there are to be four of them, however, *is* significant. Since it’s the number of sides in a square and the number of directions on the compass (as in “the four winds”), many commentators have concluded that four denotes totality, or completion. I agree, but with a twist. You see, the number seven *also* implies completion—in terms of the divine plan for mankind. Four connotes completion with a view toward restitution, payment, or giving—the completed transmission of something. If someone stole something, he was to pay back four of them in kind (Exodus 22:2, II Samuel 12:6, Luke 19:8). My take on the four pillars holding the veil, then, is that they represent the complete sufficiency of the Messiah’s atoning sacrifice, his restitution for our sin. Nothing must be (or *can* be) added to it in order to make us worthy to stand before a holy God.

The veil itself may have looked much like the inner layer of the ceiling, for it too was made of fine linen, embroidered or woven with

images of cherubim wrought in blue, purple, and scarlet (see Precept #712). Why was a divider needed between the Holy Place and the Most Holy? It's because of what we learned in Precept #718—the “Glory of Yahweh,” the Shekinah, was to “inhabit” the Most Holy Place, meeting mankind from between the two golden cherubim on the mercy seat atop the ark of the covenant. But Yahweh, even in this diminished form, was not to be approached by sinful men, for He is a holy God. As one prophet put it, **“You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on wickedness”** (Habakkuk 1:13)—not without toasting us evildoers extra crispy, is the connotation. Even the High Priest who made atonement for the sins of the people once a year first had to make atonement for his own sins. No one could enter God's presence in the Most Holy Place without the sacrifice of innocent blood. The veil kept us set apart from Yahweh's awesome presence until the ultimate innocent-blood sacrifice could be offered up. Thus the veil is a good news-bad news story, in a way. Though it isolated us from Infinite Good, that was only because *we* were fundamentally incompatible with it. In our sinful state, such contact would have destroyed us. That's why the veil was described as being **“for you.”**

We aren't told how heavy a fabric the Tabernacle's veil was, but we do have some historical insight into the corresponding curtain in the Temple that stood on Mount Moriah in Yahshua's day. Like Solomon's Temple, the floor plan of Herod's remodel of the Second Temple was scaled up double from the original Tabernacle, and its height was doubled again. The veil there was about thirty feet wide, sixty feet tall, and as thick as a man's hand—think not of “curtains” or “tapestry,” but of a huge hanging oriental carpet, thick, heavy, tightly woven and virtually indestructible. And so it is with awe that we read about what happened on the day Yahshua was crucified: **“Yahshua, when He had cried out again with a loud voice, yielded up His spirit. And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.”** (Matthew 27:50-51) What kind of force would it take to do that? There was an earthquake at the time, but the Temple survived it unscathed—the quake didn't rend the veil: it was torn by the hand of God.

And why would He do this? Because when Yahshua's sacrifice was complete, the impediment to our access to the throne of Yahweh—our sin—had been atoned, paid for, satisfied. We now had free access into the presence of the Almighty. As the writer to the Hebrews put it, **“Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Yahshua, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh...let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.”** (Hebrews 10:19-22) That's right: the veil represents the torn flesh of Yahshua. Until

His body was “bruised for our iniquity,” we were restricted from standing in the presence of Yahweh. Remember the sequence: to get to the Most Holy Place, you must first faithfully encounter the altar, where the blood of atonement—that which was to be “**sprinkled**” on the mercy seat for our “**evil conscience**”—was shed, and the laver, where “**our bodies [are] washed with pure water,**” that is, the Word of Yahweh. There is only one path to God—and that is through Yahshua the Messiah. You can’t sneak in the side door. There *is* no side door.

- (724) *Arrange the furnishings within the Tabernacle.* “**Then you shall bring the ark of the Testimony in there, behind the veil.... You shall put the mercy seat upon the ark of the Testimony in the Most Holy. You shall set the table outside the veil, and the lampstand across from the table on the side of the tabernacle toward the south; and you shall put the table on the north side.**” (Exodus 26:33-35) In Precept #711, we got a bird’s eye view of the outer courtyard and what it contained. We now continue our virtual tour of the Tabernacle. If you recall, we’ve entered the gate, passed the altar, and have been washed at the laver. We walk among the five pillars of grace (see Precept #725) on the east side of the structure, pull aside the outer curtain of the Tabernacle, and step inside. We are now within the Holy Place. Only priests (believers) are allowed inside this room. The walls to our right and left are overlaid with gold, making the room magnificent despite its modest dimensions, about thirty feet long, fifteen feet wide, and fifteen high. The far “wall” of the room is another curtain, this one supported by *four* ceiling-height columns (indicating the sufficiency of the sacrifice). This one is a stunningly beautiful tapestry of fine linen, intricately woven to picture winged angelic beings in costly blue, purple, and scarlet thread. As we look up, we see the same theme repeated on each of the six-foot wide ceiling panels.

There are no windows in the Tabernacle. The only light is provided by a menorah standing against the south wall to our left. It has seven olive oil lamps, one each atop the six branches and the center shaft. Being priests, it is our responsibility to replenish the lamps’ reservoirs with pure olive oil, so the lights never go out. We note that the gold covered walls reflect the light back and forth, bathing the entire room in a warm, golden glow. And we smile as we remember that our familiar shout of joy and praise, “Hallelujah,” literally means “radiate the light of Yahweh!”

Against the northern wall, the one to our right, is a small golden table, about three feet wide, with golden rings at its four corners. A solid gold platter rests upon it, and upon it two rows of six loaves of bread each sit side by side. Each row of loaves has been sprinkled with white

frankincense. These twelve loaves are replaced with fresh ones every Sabbath day, and are eaten by the priests.

Our gaze shifts to the back of the room. Another golden table, this one even smaller, stands directly in front of the veil. It too has rings at the corners, for like the table of showbread and the ark of the covenant, it is not to be touched directly, but is carried from place to place by the use of two poles (also acacia wood covered with gold). This little table is used for burning incense—an exclusive recipe used only in the Tabernacle. The sweet smell of the incense fills the room. It represents the prayers of the saints, and Yahweh therefore finds the odor delightful.

Since this is only a *virtual* tour of the Tabernacle, we may go beyond the veil into the Most Holy Place. In practice, however, this privilege was reserved for only one man, and then only one time per year—the High Priest, on the Day of Atonement. There is only one piece of furniture within this room, the ark of the covenant, with its covering, the “mercy seat” or place of atonement. We notice that the wooden staves used to transport the ark are left in place threaded through the golden rings at its four corners, a reminder that as we believers “carry” the good news of our redemption to the world, we are never to be disconnected from our Messiah, whose blood—sprinkled on the mercy seat—purchased that redemption.

The interior walls of the Most Holy Place are gold—left, right, and center. If my interpretation is correct concerning the meaning of the gold-plated boards comprising the outer walls of the Tabernacle (see Precept #715), then a stunning fact becomes self-evident as we stand within the Most Holy Place. If you’ll recall, I concluded that the back “wall,” comprised of six of these boards, represented the portion of humanity that has not yet come to faith (being neither part of believing Israel nor the ekklesia), though Yahweh in His perfect foreknowledge knows that they someday will. From God’s point of view (from here within the Most Holy Place) they’re *already* seen as pure gold: their mortality is already covered with the immutable glory of Yahweh, and their names are already written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.

- (725) *Construct the portal of the tabernacle.* **“You shall make a screen for the door of the tabernacle, woven of blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine woven linen, made by a weaver. And you shall make for the screen five pillars of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold; their hooks shall be gold, and you shall cast five sockets of bronze for them.”** (Exodus 26:36-37) The instructions here are quite similar to those given for the veil separating the Holy Place from the Most Holy (see Precept #723), and also reminiscent of what we’ll soon see

concerning the entrance to the Tabernacle courtyard (Precept #729). It's the little differences that are telling. Here we aren't told of any specific imagery that was to be woven into the design. Apparently the cherubim theme was only to be visible upon entering the Tabernacle—on the ceiling and upon the veil at the far end of the Holy Place. The lesson: God's watchful protection is extended only to those who have formed a relationship with Him, those who have entered His household.

Note next that there are five columns at the outer entrance of the Tabernacle, whereas the interior veil restricting access to the Most Holy Place was held by four. Four, if you'll recall, implied the completed act of restitution, symbolized by what happened within the Most Holy Place—the sprinkling of the blood of atonement upon the mercy seat. But *five* columns supported the curtain at the entrance to the Holy Place. Five is the number of grace; thus we are reminded that we may enter the household of faith only through grace. Standing at the Tabernacle entrance, we have encountered the altar and been washed at the laver—we are atoned and cleansed. The five pillars of grace tell us that nothing else is needed: our works, wealth, or penance have no place here.

As if to reinforce this fact, the sockets or bases for these five columns are made of bronze, reminding us that the grace we enjoy rests upon a foundation of judgment. In this court, we haven't been found "not guilty." Quite the contrary: we're as guilty as sin. Our crimes haven't been *pardoned*, exactly, either. Rather, they've been *paid for*. Yahshua the Messiah endured the judgment that was rightfully ours to bear: that's grace. By contrast, the four pillars holding the veil rested upon sockets of silver, emphasizing that a blood-ransom was the price of our restitution and redemption.

- (726) *Construct the altar.* "You shall make an altar of acacia wood, five cubits long and five cubits wide—the altar shall be square—and its height shall be three cubits. You shall make its horns on its four corners; its horns shall be of one piece with it. And you shall overlay it with bronze.... You shall make it hollow with boards; as it was shown you on the mountain, so shall they make it." (Exodus 27:1-2, 8)
- We've been listing these precepts in the order they're presented in Exodus—from God's point of view, from the inside out. Man's point of view, of course, is just the opposite. *We* start from the outside, the wilderness of the world, and move toward the center, the Most Holy Place, where the glory of Yahweh abides. As this point then (since we've already discussed the laver or washbasin—Mitzvah #435, Precept #711), we come to the first thing a worshipper would encounter upon entering the courtyard: the altar.

The altar was a big square barbecue-like affair, its four equal sides denoting the completion of our atonement, and their dimension, five cubits, indicating the grace of God in providing the ultimate and permanent Sacrifice. Its height, three cubits, reminds us of the three primary ways Yahweh manifests Himself to us—as the Father, the Holy Spirit, and the Son of God—the Messiah. The “horns” protruding from the corners, which speak of the Messiah’s authority, are to be sprinkled with the blood of the sacrifices roasted upon this altar, for just as Yahshua’s acceptability as a Sacrifice is dependent upon His innocence, His right to rule is derived from His obedience to the Father, even unto death.

As usual, the underlying structure of the altar is acacia wood, indicative of mortality, living flesh as it were, that has given its life in order for the Plan of God to come to fruition. It speaks here of the humanity of Yahshua—God’s chosen representative for all mankind. The bronze with which the altar was completely covered is symbolic of the judgment the Messiah would endure in our stead. Because we, as mortal believers in Christ, are protected by this bronze barrier, we will not be consumed in the fires of wrath that burn within the altar.

(727) *Make the accessories for the altar.* **“Also you shall make its pans to receive its ashes, and its shovels and its basins and its forks and its firepans; you shall make all its utensils of bronze. You shall make a grate for it, a network of bronze; and on the network you shall make four bronze rings at its four corners. You shall put it under the rim of the altar beneath, that the network may be midway up the altar. And you shall make poles for the altar, poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with bronze. The poles shall be put in the rings, and the poles shall be on the two sides of the altar to bear it.”** (Exodus 27:3-7) Whereas the lampstand and the accessories that accompanied the table of showbread and the altar of incense were to be made of pure gold, everything associated with the altar of offering was to be cast in bronze. The difference is a question of order, of timing: the bronze altar of judgment and sacrifice (as well as the bronze laver that follows) must be employed—outside the Tabernacle—*before* the pure gold of God’s illumination, provision, and fellowship may be enjoyed within His house. Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin, for Yahweh won’t allow sin in His presence—He is a holy God.

We are told in Leviticus 6:13, **“A perpetual fire shall burn on the altar; it shall never go out.”** The bronze **pans... shovels... basins... forks and firepans”** were designed to accommodate this instruction, making it possible to remove the ashes (See Mitzvot #441-#443) without letting the fire go out. A heavy bronze grate suspended within the altar provided a platform that allowed the ashes and drippings to fall through to the pans below—not

unlike a modern charcoal barbecue. When it had to be moved, the altar, like the ark of the covenant, ark of incense, and table of showbread, was not to be touched by the Levites who carried it, but was to be carried with acacia wood poles slipped through rings at the four corners. These, like everything associated with the altar, were to be overlaid with bronze—reinforcing the concept that judgment, sacrifice, and atonement must precede enlightenment, nourishment, and meaningful communication with God.

#### LANDSCAPE DESIGN

- (728) *Provide an enclosed court.* **“You shall also make the court of the tabernacle. For the south side there shall be hangings for the court made of fine woven linen, one hundred cubits long for one side. And its twenty pillars and their twenty sockets shall be bronze. The hooks of the pillars and their bands shall be silver. Likewise along the length of the north side there shall be hangings one hundred cubits long, with its twenty pillars and their twenty sockets of bronze, and the hooks of the pillars and their bands of silver.... All the pillars around the court shall have bands of silver; their hooks shall be of silver and their sockets of bronze.... All the utensils of the tabernacle for all its service, all its pegs, and all the pegs of the court, shall be of bronze.”** (Exodus 27:9-11, 17, 19) The Tabernacle didn’t just sit there all alone out in the desert. It was to be enclosed within a courtyard formed by erecting pillars of bronze upon bronze foundation pedestals or sockets, and suspending curtains of linen cloth between them with hooks and bands of silver. The well established symbology of the specified materials tells a story in itself. The linen represents righteousness—which is seen as a barrier that stands between the outside world and the plan of God. This righteousness is supported and upheld by judgment—the bronze pillars and sockets. This foundation of judgment is not wrath (necessarily) but rather judicial decision, the separation of the clean from the unclean, of the saved from the lost, of the inside from the outside. Holding the linen of righteousness in place between the bronze columns are hooks and bands of silver, which, you’ll recall, is indicative of the payment of a ransom, the price of blood. I found it fascinating that the word translated “bands” (*hasuq*) is derived from a verb (*hasaq*) meaning “to be attached to, to love.” Lesson: the love of God, demonstrated by the ransom He paid for our liberty, is what holds our righteousness secure in the face of judgment.

The dimensions of the courtyard are significant as well. **“And along the width of the court on the west side shall be hangings of fifty cubits, with their ten pillars and their ten sockets. The width of the court on the east side shall be fifty**

cubits. The hangings on one side of the gate shall be fifteen cubits, with their three pillars and their three sockets. And on the other side shall be hangings of fifteen cubits, with their three pillars and their three sockets.... The length of the court shall be one hundred cubits, the width fifty throughout, and the height five cubits, made of fine woven linen, and its sockets of bronze.” (Exodus 27:12-15, 18) The entire enclosure measured 50 x 100 cubits, or 5,000 square cubits. In Precept #715, we discussed how the dimensions of the Tabernacle had chronological implications—they literally defined the Kingdom age: the volume of the Most Holy Place, 1,000 cubic cubits, indicating 1,000 years for the earthly reign of Yahshua the Messiah; and that of the Holy Place, 2,000 cubic cubits, the two millennia preceding that, defining the age of His called-out assembly of Spirit-indwelled believers. Now we find that the courtyard’s dimensions tell us precisely how long the entire period of Yahweh’s covenant of blood with mankind will last, beginning with Abraham’s near-sacrifice of Isaac and lasting through the end of Yahshua’s Millennial kingdom—5,000 years: grace, a thousand times over.

Note too the dimensions of the linen sections of the outer fence. Since there were to be twenty pillars each on the long sides, north and south, each measuring one hundred cubits, each linen section was to be five cubits wide. Same thing for the back side, on the west: fifty cubits divided by ten pillars—these too were five cubits in width. Then we’re told that the fence was to be five cubits tall. So each linen section measured five cubits by five (about seven and a half feet square). Since the number five connotes grace, here we see that our righteousness (linen) is a matter of *grace multiplied by grace*. Not only was our righteousness *not* achieved through our own efforts or sacrifice, it was imputed to us as a free gift, paid for by Someone else. Grace times grace equals reconciliation with Yahweh, if only we’ll do the math.

- (729) *Make a gate or portal for the court.* **“For the gate of the court there shall be a screen twenty cubits long, woven of blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine woven linen, made by a weaver. It shall have four pillars and four sockets.”** (Exodus 27:16) There was a gap between the two fifteen-cubit-wide sections on the eastern side of the courtyard, in which a twenty-cubit wide portal or entrance was specified. Its four bronze pillars and foundation sockets indicate, if you’ll recall, the totality, the completion, of the redemption to be found within these gates. This is the portal through which one must walk in order to pass from judgment’s wrath into judgment’s vindication. It is the *only* way into the court of God’s mercy.

The sole entrances of both the court and the Tabernacle itself were to be on the eastern side, facing toward the rising sun. So it's worth noting that ancient religious superstitions tended to center on "the sun god" in one permutation or another. The prototypical pagan religion of Babylon was based on the mid-winter birth of Tammuz—marketed as the son of the sun, conqueror of winter's cold, dark barrenness (*gimme a break*). Moreover, the head of the pantheon of Egypt, the land where the Israelites had just spent four hundred years as slaves, was named Amun-Ra, the "sun god." It was this pseudo-deity whose reputation had been so thoroughly discredited by Yahweh's ninth plague—darkness over the land of Egypt. So put yourself in the sandals of the average Israelite as he approached the Tabernacle courtyard. He would have found that to enter into Yahweh's plan, he had to face the west: he had to *turn his back* on the sun god if he were to draw near to the true and living Light of the world. As the worshipper faced his God, Yahweh would have been the One "facing" the east, as if to say, "You just concentrate on meeting with Me; *I'll* deal with the sun."