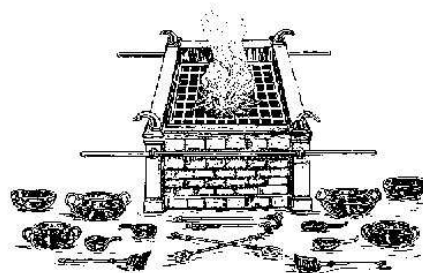
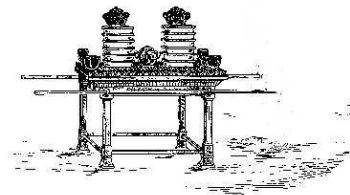
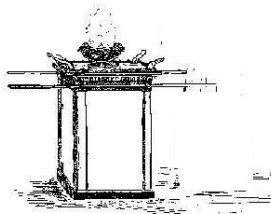
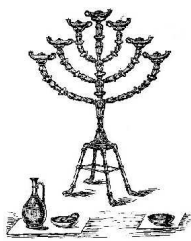
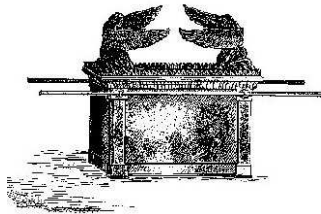


EASTERN BIBLE CONFERENCE – 2012  
- YOUNG ADULTS BIBLE STUDY -  
THE FURNITURE OF THE TABERNACLE



## Sunday:

### **Introduction- Exodus 25:8, 9**

The study of the furniture of the tabernacle is a subset of the study of the tabernacle and has the same emphasis. What can we learn about God and the ways of God as he relates to his people? This is captured in the divinely given reasons for constructing the tabernacle:

*“...that I may dwell among them.”* God desires to dwell among and have communion with his people. The sanctuary (tabernacle) and all of the furniture and pieces were required to be constructed *“according to all that I show you... so shall you make it.”*

### **The Ark and Mercy Seat – Exodus 25:10-22**

#### **Ark**

**What it was:** A chest/box made from acacia wood, overlaid inside and out with pure gold. A golden crown was around the box. Dimensions: (assuming 18 in./cubit) 45” L x 27” W x 27” H. Four gold rings on the corners, two per side; two poles made of wood, overlaid with gold, were inserted through the rings and used to carry the ark.

**Why:** “Place in the ark the testimony that I will give” (Exodus 25:16)

#### **Mercy Seat**

**What it was:** A lid that fit on top of the ark, made of pure gold. Dimensions: 45” L x 27” W. On the lid were two cherubim, angelic beings, one on each end facing one another, looking downward on the lid, with their wings stretched overhead. The lid was over the ark, in which the testimony God would give was to be placed (Exodus 25:21; twice this is mentioned!).

**Why:** “There I will meet with thee, I will commune with thee, above the mercy seat between the cherubim; of all things I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.” (Exodus 25:22)

#### **A Brief History:**

1. Designed and ordered (Exodus 25:10-22)
2. Constructed (Exodus 37:1-9)
3. Put in the tabernacle, behind the veil (Exodus 40:1-3)
4. Prominent on the Day of Atonement – the censer of incense was used, and the smoke covered the mercy seat; the blood of the bullock was sprinkled on the mercy seat and in front of the mercy seat seven times (Leviticus 16:10-14)
5. Additional contents: a golden pot of manna (Exodus 16:33,34) and Aaron’s rod (Numbers 17:10; Hebrews 9:4)

6. Led the people on many occasions:
  - a. In the wilderness (Numbers 10:33)
  - b. Over the Jordan (Joshua 3, 4)
  - c. In battle (Joshua 6)
7. Captured in battle with the Philistines (1 Samuel 4:1-11)
8. The ark returned (1 Samuel 5,6)
  - a. Dagon, the Philistine god, falls before it
  - b. Returned on a cart by Philistines (after seven months)
  - c. 50,070 died after looking inside the ark at Beth-shemesh
  - d. Twenty years in Kirjath-jearim
9. David sets out to bring the ark to Jerusalem (2 Samuel 6, 1 Chronicles 13)
  - a. a new cart was built for this purpose
  - b. Uzzah slain for touching/steadying the ark.
  - c. Ark in the house of Obed-edom for three months
  - d. In a great procession the ark was returned and placed in a tent David built for it
10. The ark brought into the temple Solomon built (1 Kings 8)

### **Lessons to Learn:**

How can God, who dwells in light no man can approach (1 Timothy 6:16), dwell with men who are sinful and unable to endure the greatness of God's glory?

*"There is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:15)*

As the ark was the place where God would meet and commune with man, it is only in Christ and through Christ that we can have a relationship with God.

The ark and the mercy seat are prefigures of Christ and His work to bring us into a relationship with God.

- 1) The wood – The Lord Jesus' humanity
- 2) The gold – The Lord Jesus' deity
- 3) The golden crown – The Lord Jesus the Christ - the anointed king
- 4) Contained the testimony – the Lord delighted in the law of God; Psalm 40:8, "Thy law is within my heart"
- 5) The cherubim – the watchers, executors of God's justice ( Genesis 3:24)
- 6) The mercy seat – Jesus Christ our propitiation (Romans 3:25); who and what meets God's holy demands? – the blood sprinkled on and before it answers to the blood of Christ
- 7) The golden staves to carry the ark – We look to and follow the Lord for direction in life; in the wilderness, in victory over the flesh, and the world
- 8) The holiness and dignity of the person and work of Christ is jealously guarded by God
- 9) Disregard of the holiness and dignity of the Person and Work of Christ will meet with severe consequences!

Tuesday:

### [The Table of Showbread – Exodus 25:23-30](#)

**What it was:** A four-legged table of acacia wood, overlaid with pure gold. Dimensions: 2 cubits long x 1 cubit wide x 1-1/2 cubits high (36” L x 18” W x 27” H). The edge of the table was surrounded by a border about a handbreadth (about four inches) wide.

A crown of gold was on each side of this border, all around the table. Implements for the service included dishes, pans (or spoons), pitchers (or covers), and bowls, all made of pure gold. The border of the table may have been where some of these were kept.

The table was placed on the north side of the tabernacle (on the right when facing the veil), across from the lampstand (Exodus 26:35). Two wooden staves overlaid with gold were inserted through the four rings at the corners for carrying the table.

**Purpose:** Twelve loaves of showbread were kept on top of the table “before Me always” (Exodus 25:30; 40:23).

**The showbread (Leviticus 24:5-9):** The term *showbread* means “bread of the presence.” Twelve cakes of fine flour, baked, were placed on the table in two equal rows of six (or possibly stacks of six). Each cake was made of an equal amount of flour, a “two-tenths” measure (amount uncertain). Fresh loaves were set out every Sabbath, and there was to be bread continually before the Lord.

### **Lessons to Learn:**

- 1) The service of Bezaleel in following the pattern (Exodus 37:10-16)
- 2) The humanity and divinity of Christ in the wood overlaid with gold
- 3) The table displayed the showbread; made of fine flour, it represents Christ’s perfect earthly life; no unevenness seen in Him
- 4) Frankincense upon each row of the showbread (Leviticus 24:7); the fragrance of Christ
- 5) A table often suggests fellowship; cp. 1 Cor. 1:9, the fellowship of God’s Son, 1 John 1:1-3; Christ the bread that gives life, Jn. 6:33-35
- 6) The bread has the character of Christ but is also linked with His people (12 cakes)
- 7) The golden implements provide all that is necessary to enjoy what is on the table
- 8) The table as a means of support for the showbread, with the crown, or rim, providing security; Colossians 3:1-3, our life is hidden a) with Christ and b) in God; the border or frame around the table was also a “margin of protection” as some describe it
- 9) The incident with David and his men, who ate the showbread after it had been replaced by twelve new cakes (1 Samuel 21:1-6); this highlights God’s mercy
- 10) Baking the flour suggests the Lord’s enduring suffering, the contradiction of sinners against Himself (Hebrews 12:3)

Wednesday:

### The Lampstand – Exodus 25:31-40

**What it was:** The lampstand is sometimes referred to as the “candlestick;” however, “lampstand” is a more accurate description. It is sometime called a *M'nourah* which means *light bearer*. The lampstand provided light in this otherwise dark room. The priests trimmed the wicks to keep them burning brightly. The lampstand was made from a single piece of gold; it was not pieced together. It had a central shaft with six branches, three on each side, making it a seven-branched lampstand. Each branch had knobs, flowers, and an almond-shaped bowl to hold pure olive oil (Leviticus 24:2, 4).

**Where it was located:** It sat in the Holy Place where only the priests could enter. The lampstand sat across from the table of showbread on the south side of the tabernacle (on the left when facing the veil) and would have been the first item seen upon entering (Exodus 26:35, 40:24). Its position and structure were intended to give light “in front of it,” (Exodus 25:37), which would illuminate the table of showbread in particular.

### **A Brief History:**

- 1) God designed the lampstand, and Bezaleel made it (Exodus 37:17-24). No dimensions are given; Jewish tradition suggests it may have been five feet high and three feet wide.
- 2) Aaron and his sons would tend the lamp, trimming the wick and filling the oil (Exodus 27:20-21)
- 3) The oil for the lamp was pure oil of pressed olives, and the lamp was to burn continually (Leviticus 24:1)
- 4) Made from an entire talent of gold (Exodus 25:31-40, 37:17-24)
- 5) The light would almost go out in the days of Eli (1 Samuel 3:3)
- 6) Zechariah (ch. 4) has a vision of a golden lampstand connected with Israel as a witness for God
- 7) The two witnesses in Revelation 11:4 are also referred to as lampstands
- 8) The Apostle John has a vision of the seven lampstands (Revelation 1:12-20) where Christ is walking in the midst of the seven lampstands. The seven lampstands are seven churches of Asia Minor (ch. 2-3).
- 9) Unfaithfulness would cause the figurative lampstand to be removed (Revelation 2:5).

### **Lessons to Learn:**

- 1) Gold – The glory and deity of Christ, with no reference to His humanity (Hebrews 1:2-3; Isaiah 43:10; John 1; Colossians 1; John 12:41; Romans 9:5).
- 2) It was beaten or hammered out, which would remind us of the sufferings of Christ.
- 3) Knobs (or buds), flowers, and almond blossoms speak of the resurrection of Christ (Numbers 17:8, Jeremiah 1:11, 12; Genesis 43:11, a gift for the exalted Joseph).
- 4) One piece speaks of the unity of the Spirit (Ephesians 4:3).

- 5) Seven lamps of oil tell of the sufficiency of the Spirit as Christ's gift, who takes what is His and reveals it to us (John 16:14). The Spirit's seven-fold ministry is referred to in Isaiah 11:1-3 (compare Revelation 5:6) and is symbolized by the lampstand, giving spiritual light to those ministering before God. Moses' face shone after his private time with God (Exodus 34:29).
- 6) God is light (1 John 1:5).
- 7) The Lord Jesus, as the true light (John 1:9), is the one who illuminates what is important to God. The lampstand threw its light on the tapestry of the tent and shone on the table and the altar of incense. It "brings to light" (pun intended) what God wants those who approach Him to enjoy.
- 8) The written Word of God is a light for believers (Psalm 119:105). The lampstand's position inside the tabernacle enclosure emphasizes that priests (believers) need light for their service.
- 9) The Lord Jesus is the Word who became flesh (John 1:1, 14).
- 10) The Lord Jesus is also the Light of the world (John 8:12, 9:5, 12:46).
- 11) The light of Christ lives inside believers.
- 12) Believers are God's light to the world (Ephesians 5:8, John 12:46).
- 13) We are called to be lights in a dark place (Phil. 2:15, 1 Peter 2:9, Matt. 5:14-16).
- 14) Wicks must be trimmed (Exodus 25:38), perhaps suggesting our submission to discipline (Hebrews 12) and pruning (John 15) as well as maturity for more light (Hebrews 6).

Thursday:

### The Brazen Altar – Exodus 27:1-8

**What it was:** Boards of acacia wood, overlaid with bronze. Dimensions: 5 cubits square, 3 cubits high (7.5 feet square x 4.5 feet high). A horn protruded from each corner, and there were rings on each corner for carrying the altar. The wooden staves were overlaid with bronze. The altar was hollow inside, and a bronze grate hung inside the altar, halfway down, by means of four hooks. There were also bronze utensils connected with this altar: pans, shovels, basins, flesh hooks, and fire pans.

The brazen altar was located in the courtyard of the tabernacle (Exodus 40:6) and was the first article of furniture encountered when approaching the tabernacle.

#### **Points of Interest:**

Bezaleel followed the design of the Lord in making it, although he made it after the altar of incense (Exodus 38:1-7).

A note on metals: The KJV terms “brass” and “brasen” may or may not be the copper-zinc alloy meant today. The NKJV and others use the word “bronze” to suggest a copper-tin alloy, which some feel may be more likely. In any case, the construction of a wooden board clad in a copper alloy is known to withstand intense heat.

#### **Lessons to Learn:**

- 1) The place of sacrifice is the starting point for access to God’s presence. Justification, being declared righteous, is received through the atonement of the blood (Leviticus 17:11; Romans 3:25-26; Exodus 29:12).
- 2) Christ the perfect man, who alone could endure the fierce judgment of God. His feet in Revelation 1:15 had the appearance of glowing bronze; and the bronze serpent was lifted up among the people (Numbers 21:9).
- 3) The burnt offering was a sweet-smelling aroma to God, Ephesians 5:2; compare Noah’s sacrifice in Genesis 9
- 4) Constructed of “boards,” not just one piece of wood, perhaps suggesting the various aspects of Christ’s sacrifice
- 5) Horns to bind the sacrifice (Ps. 118:27); it would not be moved, just as the Lord would not come down from the cross (Matthew 27:42), held by love (Exodus 21:5), obedience (John 4:34), zeal (John 2:17), and joy (Hebrews 12:2). The horns suggest strength, and they were anointed with blood (Exodus 29:12).
- 6) The grate for the sacrifice was inside the altar; unseen judgment. He knew no sin, yet was made sin for us (2 Corinthians 5:21).

- 7) This altar was made after incense altar, though God described it first; perhaps Bezaleel appreciated the sweet aroma of the incense before the judgment implied by this altar
- 8) In the incident concerning Korah, the censers of those who sinned were used to make “broad plates” to cover the altar (Numbers 16:36-40, probably referring to this altar); approach based on the wrong relationship brings judgment

### [The Altar of Incense – Exodus 30:1-10](#)

**What it was:** Acacia wood overlaid with pure gold. Dimensions: one cubit square by two cubits high (18” square x 36” high). As with the brazen altar, there were four horns and four rings at the corners, and it was carried with wooden staves overlaid with gold. The description of the rings seems to emphasize that they are in pairs.

It was placed in front of the veil, the last piece of furniture before reaching the ark. There were to be perpetual incense offerings made by Aaron each morning and evening, at the same time as the lighting of the lamps

**The incense** was compounded, “tempered together after the art of the apothecary,” using four spices—one of which was “pure frankincense”—in a holy mixture that was not to be imitated (Exodus 30:34-38).

#### **A Brief History:**

- 1) Made by Bezaleel, following God’s design (Exodus 37:25-29)
- 2) With every sin offering, some blood of the animal was placed on the horns of this altar (Leviticus 4:7)
- 3) Incense was used on the day of atonement; also, this altar was again anointed and sprinkled with blood of the sin offering on that day (Leviticus 16:12-13, 18-19)
- 4) The incident of strange fire with the incense, offered by Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10:1-3)
- 5) Also called the “golden altar” (Exodus 39:38; 40:5, 26)
- 6) Mention of the “golden censer” (Hebrews 9:4)

#### **Lessons to Learn:**

- 1) Once again the humanity and divinity of Christ are presented
- 2) The incense was not to be copied for any other use; the unique sweetness of Christ



- 3) The perpetual offering of incense reminds us of Christ as the great intercessor (Hebrews 7:25) and the exhortation for us to pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17; Revelation 5:8)
- 4) We carry the sweet savor of Christ (2 Corinthians 2:14).
- 5) Incense was not to be mixed with ordinary coals (Leviticus 10)
- 6) The judgment of Nadab and Abihu (and also those who followed Korah, carrying censers) indicates the need of dignity in presenting the incense to God

Friday:

### The Laver – Exodus 30:17-21, 38:8, 40:7, 30-32

**What it was:** The laver, or basin, was a large bowl filled with water located between the brazen altar and the Holy Place. Although God did not give specific measurements for the laver, it was to be made entirely of bronze. It was probably round and of considerable size, although its exact shape and size are not stated in scripture. However we may surmise that the “stand” was separate since it is always given special mention (e.g., Exodus 30:18). The priests were to wash their hands and their feet in it before entering the Holy Place.

#### **Points of Interest:**

The laver was located in a convenient place for washing and stood as a reminder that people need cleansing before approaching God (Exodus 40:30). The priests atoned for their sins through a sacrifice at the brazen altar, but they cleansed themselves at the laver before serving in the Holy Place so they would be pure and not die before a holy God (Exodus 30:18). It was similar to a washing bowl because the purpose was **for Aaron and his sons** (the priesthood) **to wash** their hands and feet before ministering at the altar (Exodus 30:17-21).

The pattern called for the laver to be placed between the tent (tabernacle) and the brazen altar (Exodus 40:7). Each piece of furniture was to be placed exactly where God said, because they were “signifying” (Hebrews 9:8) truths in the “true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man” (Hebrews 8:1-5; 9:1-26).

**Why washing was needed:** Only the priests had access to the laver, whereas the bronze altar was accessible to all. There was cleansing by blood, giving the thought of justification; and there was cleansing by water, giving the thought of sanctification. The priests were obliged to wash their hands and feet before entering God's presence; to disobey would mean death (Exodus 30:19-21). There was no floor in the court or the tabernacle; therefore, the priests' feet would be defiled by the constant contact with the earth, and their hands by the work at the altar and other work. Therefore they had to wash before any ministry at the altar, to make them clean before communion with God and before service to man.

#### **Lessons to Learn:**

At their consecration the priests were washed all over at the laver before being clothed with priestly garments and anointed (Exodus 29:4-7). They did not wash themselves at their consecration but were washed by someone else (Leviticus 8:6). This act was never repeated (a picture of our positional sanctification, Hebrews 10:10, 22; Titus 3:5). Afterwards the priests had to wash their own hands and feet at the laver, which would be a daily exercise.

The laver was made from the freewill gift of bronze mirrors made by the women (Exodus 38:8) and enabled the priests to see their reflection. When we come to the Word of God, the Bible, it is to us a mirror for our souls (James 1:25) that will cleanse us if we are willing to apply its purifying water to our lives; 1 Corinthians 11:31, self-judgment.

The thought of God's word being a laver is seen in the New Testament, when Paul in Ephesians 5:26 writes "that he might sanctify her (the Church), having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word"(NASB). The Greek word used there translated as *washing* is "*loutron*," which means "laver"—it's the Greek word used in the Septuagint for the laver in the court of the tabernacle. If in the passage we were to use the word laver it would read, "that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the laver of water, with the word." This gives the real insight of the verse, a standing in the place of sanctification that comes through the word of God. The cleansing power of God's word is also seen in Psalm 119:9, John 15:3, and 1 Peter 1:22.

### **Other Notes:**

1. The laver's water was also required for the washing of the inward parts of the sacrifices (Leviticus 1:9,13), and so it is that our inner thoughts and motives need divine cleansing (cp. Matthew 15:1, 8-11, 17-20).
2. We need to allow ourselves to stand in that place where the word of God can cleanse and sanctify us daily. Accepting its authority will sanctify us for service (1 Thessalonians 2:13, 3:13, 4:3, 5:23).
3. We see the laver in heaven in Revelation 15:2 with the saints standing on or beside it, signifying the place or state of absolute holiness with no more defilement to be cleansed.
4. We need to come to that place by the laver for cleansing prior to ministry before God or to other people on behalf of God.
5. The laver had no dimensions given, implying that the cleansing of God's Word is fully thorough and without limit.
6. There was also no cover; it was accessible. God desires us to be cleansed, sanctified, and joyful (John 17:16; 1 John 1:9; Psalm 51:7, 12-13).