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**C0725 – July 18, 2007 – Ex 35:4-39:43 – The Construction Of The
Tabernacle**

D. The Construction of the Tabernacle (35:4-40:38)

I want to review the basic idea of the Tabernacle, the basic significance in light of what was going on in the world at that time. Egypt was the world superpower. Egypt had all the technology, all the architecture, all the culture, the best economy located on the money-producing Nile River with its rich soils and God destroyed that superpower in a series of ten judgments upon that culture. See, Egypt was great in the eyes of paganism but in the eyes of God it was a detestable thing because, despite all they had going for them, all their self-perceived greatness they lacked one thing; God. Every culture needs to learn the lesson of Egypt because every great superpower, whether it be Greece or Rome or France or Great Britain, no matter how large the empire, no matter how trained the military, no matter how cultivated when they lacked the central component is left out judgment came and those empires fell like a bad habit. And there was no way God was going to come down and dwell in that pagan Egyptian culture. That culture that had exalted itself against Him and whom had elevated their Pharaoh to the status of a god. Yet God had a plan and purpose for that people embedded within Egypt and, on the basis of His promises to them in the Abrahamic covenant it was time to move out. Now they'd been down there for 400 years and had become an enslaved people and you've got to be wondering as a Hebrew slave in that pagan society, you and your ancestors for the last few centuries have been making mud-thatch bricks day after day building the Egyptian Empire, and you've got to wonder, "What's going on here?" "Is our God really there?" "Does our God care about us?" "If He is there, is He able to keep His promises?" Well, to make a long story short, something was going on, God was turning the wheels of history. He was getting all his pieces in place to make a last minute move which would destroy the

kingdom of Satan and begin the building of His Kingdom. But if you're going to have a kingdom you've got to have a nation of people over whom to rule. And Egypt was the perfect place to build the population of the nation of Israel. Why's that? Why was Egypt perfect? Because Egyptians detested those Asiatic people we know as the Hebrews. Egyptians didn't mingle with them. Egyptians didn't intermarry with them. Egyptians didn't even eat with them. And this is one of the great failures of Satan. Satan thought he had the Hebrews confined within Egyptian culture, doing his kingdom building. Satan thought there was no way out. He's got them enslaved and when the time came he was going to wipe them out so the promised Messiah couldn't come and yet everything he tried, all the way down to killing baby boys was a failure. So, here we see again how God controls history and He's got His people down here in the midst of a people that keep themselves separate from His people and this allowed for the growth of a nation within a nation. And when the time came, when all the pieces on the chess table were set God delivered His people. God called out a counter-culture in the Jewish people, a people that were to be holy unto Him, a people among whom He could dwell, and this, this is the key point I want to emphasize, God wants to dwell among men.

Exodus 25:8 "Let them construct a sanctuary for Me, that I may dwell among them.

Now, this is a startling thing if you think of it. God wants to dwell with man? Make it personal. God wants to dwell with me? Yes, God wants to dwell with you. We may not know why. We may not want Him to dwell among us but this is God's desire. He made us in His image and even after we've fallen and damaged that image He's out there wanting to repair us so He can dwell among us. That's how much He loves us and now He's setting up the pre-conditions for dwelling among Israel by giving the Mosaic Law and the construction plans for the Tabernacle. Everything has to be done just as God says because He's holy, He has a definite character and we're sinful so He's calling the shots. As long as we submit to the one calling the shots everything is cool but when we rebel against His authority there are consequences and sometimes very painful consequences. So, we want to look at those pre-conditions He laid out for dwelling among them and we want to remember that this must have been a startling revelation from God at this time in history. "God wants to dwell among us. Why, He hasn't dwelled among men since Adam and Eve in the garden." So, what we have here is historically momentous because it's God coming to dwell among man and

that's precisely why the Temple Mount and Jesus Christ are such a controversy. The theology of Islam cannot and will not tolerate a God who dwells among men. They have a god who is sovereign and transcendent but they don't have a god who comes down and dwells with man. They don't have a god who loves. You can look at all 120 attributes of Allah but you won't find love. So, they hate this idea of a loving God who wants to come down here and dwell with man. So, when you see the political machinations of the Arab world directed toward Jerusalem and you see the Palestinians trying to get a hold of the Temple Mount you keep Islamic theology in mind. "Allah does not dwell among men. I hate this idea of a God dwelling among men so I'm going to do everything humanly possible by way of jihad to take over that Temple Mount, destroy any remnant of the Jewish God and make it a Muslim holy place." That's the background for the controversy and here we're looking at the beginning of this controversy, the construction of the Tabernacle in Moses day which would later become the Temple in David's day.

1. The Call for Contributions (35:4-9)

Exodus 35:4 Moses spoke to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, saying, "This is the thing which the LORD has commanded, saying, ⁵**Take from among you a contribution to the LORD; whoever is of a willing heart.** This was not a tithe which was an obligatory national tax system. This was a freewill offering from the heart. **Let him bring it as the LORD'S contribution: gold, silver, and bronze, ⁶and blue, purple and scarlet *material*, fine linen, goats' *hair*, ⁷and rams' skins dyed red, and porpoise skins, and acacia wood, ⁸and oil for lighting, and spices for the anointing oil, and for the fragrant incense, ⁹and onyx stones and setting stones for the ephod and for the breastpiece.** Where had all these items come from, at least the majority, from Egypt. The night of the Exodus they had plundered the Egyptians and the national economy of Egypt was transferred to Israel. What's the first thing they did with their new economy? They built a house for God, the place of worship. God was the center of the new nation.

2. The Call for Skilled Laborers (35:10-19)

Exodus 35:10 'Let every skillful man and in the Hebrew it's the word of wise. Wisdom doesn't just have to do with skill in living it also refers to skill in architecture, engineering, metallurgy, etc...among you come, and make all that the LORD has commanded: ¹¹the tabernacle, its tent and its covering, its hooks and its boards, its bars, its pillars, and its sockets; ¹²the ark and its poles, the mercy seat, and the curtain of the screen; Okay, everything needed for the house of God as a place of daily worship, let's skip on down to verse 20. ¹³the table and its poles, and all its utensils, and the bread of the Presence; ¹⁴the lampstand also for the light and its utensils and its lamps and the oil for the light; ¹⁵and the altar of incense and its poles, and the anointing oil and the fragrant incense, and the screen for the doorway at the entrance of the tabernacle; ¹⁶the altar of burnt offering with its bronze grating, its poles, and all its utensils, the basin and its stand; ¹⁷the hangings of the court, its pillars and its sockets, and the screen for the gate of the court; ¹⁸the pegs of the tabernacle and the pegs of the court and their cords; ¹⁹the woven garments for ministering in the holy place, the holy garments for Aaron the priest and the garments of his sons, to minister as priests.'”

3. The Contributions of the People (35:20-29)

Exodus 35:20 Then all the congregation of the sons of Israel departed from Moses' presence. ²¹Everyone whose heart stirred him and everyone whose spirit moved him came *and* brought the LORD'S contribution for the work of the tent of meeting and for all its service and for the holy garments. ²²Then all whose hearts moved them, both men and women, came *and* brought brooches and earrings and signet rings and bracelets, all articles of gold; so *did* every man who presented an offering of gold to the LORD. Here's the freewill response to God's grace. See, God had graciously delivered them from bondage and this is their freewill response to God's grace. They're giving out of what He gave them to begin with because they had nothing and He gave them everything. ²³Every man, who had in his possession blue and purple and scarlet *material* and fine linen and goats' *hair* and

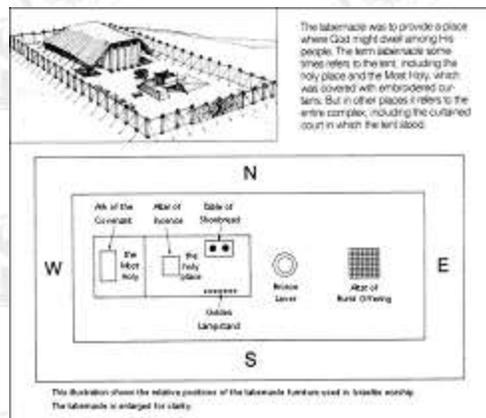
rams' skins dyed red and porpoise skins, brought them. So, here we go into the supplies, everything needed to build the Tabernacle and the court. Let's drop down to verse 30. ²⁴Everyone who could make a contribution of silver and bronze brought the LORD'S contribution; and every man who had in his possession acacia wood for any work of the service brought it. ²⁵All the skilled women spun with their hands, and brought what they had spun, *in blue and purple and scarlet material and in fine linen.* ²⁶All the women whose heart stirred with a skill spun the goats' hair. ²⁷The rulers brought the onyx stones and the stones for setting for the ephod and for the breastpiece; ²⁸and the spice and the oil for the light and for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense. ²⁹The Israelites, all the men and women, whose heart moved them to bring *material* for all the work, which the LORD had commanded through Moses to be done, brought a freewill offering to the LORD.

4. The Skilled Laborers (35:30-35)

Exodus 35:30 Then Moses said to the sons of Israel, "See, the LORD has called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. ³¹"And He has filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding and in knowledge and in all craftsmanship; ³²to make designs for working in gold and in silver and in bronze, ³³and in the cutting of stones for settings and in the carving of wood, now this guy was a real piece of work. He was already a skilled man but here God fills him with the Spirit and this is not the norm in the OT so this is going to take his skill level to a supernatural level. If you work in some kind of craftsmanship when you get to heaven you're going to want to search this guy out so. **so as to perform in every inventive work.** The Hebrew word for inventive refers to "creating new ideas". The things he was going to be making required a new level of technology unheard of in the ancient world and so, God was indirectly inserting new technology into the creation through this man Bezalel and I imagine, if we original source material we would find that these techniques entered creation through the Israelites and were disseminated to the nations. So, what we got here was a jolt, a jump start in the realm of technology, probably his

techniques are still fundamental to craftsmanship. ³⁴“**He also has put in his heart to teach, both he and Oholiab**, that is, the hearts of both he and Oholiab the desire to teach others the new technology, **the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan.** ³⁵“**He has filled them with skill to perform every work of an engraver and of a designer, the word designer refers to brilliant imagination. and of an embroiderer, in blue and in purple and in scarlet material, and in fine linen, and of a weaver, as performers of every work and makers of designs.** These guys had multiple talents, even sewing which is not normally considered a male occupation or activity but these guys were jolted in their abilities because they were filled with the Spirit of God for this unique project.

5. The Tabernacle Constructed (36:1-38:20)



a. The Tabernacle Underwritten (36:1-7)

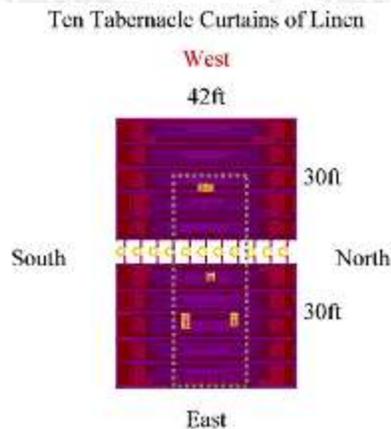
Exodus 36:1 “**Now Bezalel and Oholiab, and every skillful person in whom the LORD has put skill** see, the Lord was the source of it. That means the things they were making cannot be made by any unaided human skill. **and understanding**, this word refers to keen ability. It was used of Esau when it says he was a skilful hunter. The guy had a keen ability to hunt animals and here that’s used of the two leaders and the skillful people under their leadership, **to know how to perform all the work in the construction of the sanctuary, shall perform in accordance with all that the LORD has commanded.**” There was a general pattern they were after but some room for creativity as the text suggests. ²**Then Moses called**

Bezalel and Oholiab and every skillful person in whom the LORD had put skill, everyone whose heart stirred him, to come to the work to perform it. ³They received from Moses all the contributions which the sons of Israel had brought to perform the work in the construction of the sanctuary. And they still *continued* bringing to him freewill offerings every morning. ⁴And all the skillful men who were performing all the work of the sanctuary came, each from the work which he was performing, ⁵and they said to Moses, “The people are bringing much more than enough for the construction work which the LORD commanded *us* to perform.” So, the financial underwriting of the Tabernacle was no problem. ⁶So Moses issued a command, and a proclamation was circulated throughout the camp, saying, “Let no man or woman any longer perform work for the contributions of the sanctuary.” Thus the people were restrained from bringing *any more*. ⁷For the material they had was sufficient and more than enough for all the work, to perform it. Now we move into the various divisions of labor, the various things that had to be made for the construction of the Tabernacle and its accoutrements.

b. The Tabernacle Curtains of Linen (36:8-13)

Exodus 36:8 All the skillful men among those who were performing the work made the tabernacle with ten curtains; of fine twisted linen and blue and purple and scarlet *material* now, these were dyes not fabric, so the fabric was dyed with these color dyes and they twisted the dyed fabrics together so that they portrayed **cherubim, the work of a skillful workman**, literally, “creative artist”, Bezalel made them. ⁹The length of each curtain was twenty-eight cubits (42 feet) and the width of each curtain four cubits (6 feet); all the curtains had the same measurements. ¹⁰He joined five curtains to one another and *the other* five curtains he joined to one another. ¹¹He made loops of blue on the edge of the outermost curtain in the first set; he did likewise on the edge of the curtain that was outermost in the second set. ¹²He made fifty loops in the one curtain and he made fifty loops on the edge of the curtain that was in the second set; the loops

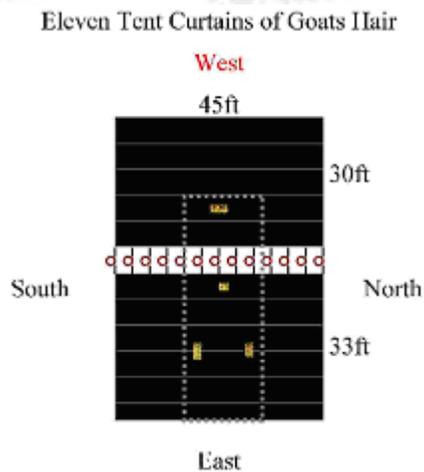
were opposite each other. ¹³He made fifty clasps of gold and joined the curtains to one another with the clasps, so the tabernacle was a unit. Technically, these curtains are the outermost part of the Tabernacle and though there will be other coverings for the Tabernacle proper they are not formally part of the Tabernacle as we will see. You want to note that everything within the Tabernacle proper is made of gold or acacia overlaid with gold



c. The Tent Curtains of Goats' Hair (36:14-19)

Exodus 36:14 Then he made curtains of goats' *hair* for a tent over the tabernacle; It was there to protect the tabernacle. Goats hair was black, silky and full, he made eleven curtains in all. ¹⁵The length of each curtain *was* thirty cubits (45 feet) and four cubits the width (6 feet) of each curtain; the eleven curtains had the same measurements. ¹⁶He joined five curtains by themselves and *the other* six curtains by themselves. The additional curtain caused an offset so the tabernacle curtains were completely covered. ¹⁷Moreover, he made fifty loops on the edge of the curtain that was outermost in the *first* set, and he made fifty loops on the edge of the curtain *that was outermost in the second set*. ¹⁸He made fifty clasps of bronze not gold because this is not formally a part of the Tabernacle (*mishkan*) but the Tent (*ohel*) which covered the Tabernacle. to join the tent together so that it would be a unit. ¹⁹He made a covering for the tent of rams' skins dyed red, and a covering of porpoise skins above. So, even the Tent was covered with a red cover. Tradition says it was 15 feet x 45 feet so it did not

hang over the edges. The covering of porpoise skins was most likely the carrying case for the other coverings as we see over in Numb 4:6.



d. The Boards (36:20-30)

Exodus 36:20 Then he made the boards for the tabernacle of acacia wood, standing upright. This acacia wood which came from the *shittim tree* was quite common in that region. ²¹Ten cubits *was* the length of each board (15 feet) and one and a half cubits the width of each board (2 feet 3 inches). ²²There were two tenons (projections) for each board, fitted to one another; thus he did for all the boards of the tabernacle. ²³He made the boards for the tabernacle: twenty boards for the south side (making 45 feet in length); ²⁴and he made forty sockets of silver under the twenty boards; two sockets under one board for its two tenons and two sockets under another board for its two tenons. ²⁵Then for the second side of the tabernacle, on the north side, he made twenty boards (again 45 feet in length, ²⁶and their forty sockets of silver; two sockets under one board and two sockets under another board. ²⁷For the rear of the tabernacle, to the west, he made six boards (13 ½ feet). ²⁸He made two boards for the corners of the tabernacle at the rear. The corner boards were probably only nine inches wide so that the total width of the outside of the tabernacle was 10 cubits or 15 feet. ²⁹They were double beneath, and together they were complete to its top to the first ring; thus he did with both of them for the two corners. ³⁰There were eight

boards with their sockets of silver, sixteen sockets, two under every board.

e. **The Bars (36:31-34)**

Exodus 36:31 Then he made bars of acacia wood, five for the boards of one side of the tabernacle, ³²and five bars for the boards of the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the tabernacle for the rear *side* to the west. ³³He made the middle bar to pass through in the center of the boards from end to end. ³⁴He overlaid the boards with gold and made their rings of gold *as* holders for the bars, and overlaid the bars with gold. These were like stretchers to support the walls and keep them from bowing.

f. **The Veil (36:35-36)**

Exodus 36:35 Moreover, he made the veil of blue and purple and scarlet *material*. These deep colors were the most expensive dyes in the ancient world. and fine twisted linen; he made it with cherubim, the work of a skillful workman. The Hebrew means “creative artist”. ³⁶He made four pillars of acacia for it, and overlaid them with gold, with their hooks of gold; and he cast four sockets of silver for them. The veil as well as the four pillars separated the Most Holy Place from the Holy Place. The Most Holy Place was a perfect cube 15 feet³ just like the Most Holy Place in Solomon’s Temple (30 feet³), albeit it was larger, and just like the new Jerusalem which is much larger than either (1,500 mile³). But throughout Scripture this perfect dimension is consistently enjoined.

g. **The Screen (36:37-38)**

Exodus 36:37 He made a screen for the doorway of the tent, of blue and purple and scarlet *material*, and fine twisted linen, the work of a weaver; ³⁸and *he made* its five pillars with their hooks, and he overlaid their tops and their bands with gold; but their five sockets were of bronze.

In the end, if you walked inside the sanctuary you would see the golden furnishings, golden walls, and a ceiling of intricately woven linen cherubim in violet-blue, violet-red and crimson. “Anyone inside the tabernacle looking upward would see the cherubim, which symbolized the celestial throne of God, and he would also see the gold clasps, in which, too, there was an allusion to the heavens, as the sages of the Talmud already realized...’and the clasps appeared in the tabernacle like stars in the sky.” (cf Cassuto, 352) So, by way of décor the sanctuary was a microcosm of the macrocosm and God was in the midst of His people.

h. The Golden Ark of the Covenant (37:1-9)

Exodus 37:1 Now Bezalel made the ark of acacia wood; it was a wooden box or coffin, its length was two and a half cubits (3 feet 9 inches), and its width one and a half cubits, (2 feet 3 inches), and its height one and a half cubits (2 feet 3 inches); ²and he overlaid it with pure gold inside and out, the gold was hammered into sheets and then tacked onto the ark, and made a gold molding for it all around. ³He cast four rings of gold for it on its four feet; even two rings on one side of it, and two rings on the other side of it. ⁴He made poles of acacia wood and overlaid them with gold. ⁵He put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark, to carry it. ⁶He made a mercy seat of pure gold, the Hebrew word for “mercy seat” is *kipper* which was the place of annual atonement (Lev 16), we found this word comes from an Akkadian stem meaning “to cleanse, to purify”. It always has as its object people or object and never God or sin. From studies in Leviticus and Ezekiel related to atonement we know that people and objects used in worship were atoned for when they were defiled by sin so Shechinah Glory could dwell in their presence. The sacrifices that atoned for them were animal sacrifices and it cleansed them from external impurity, not internal impurity, only Christ could do that and this is what the author of Hebrews 9 is arguing. Christ had to come and be sacrificed to deal with internal defilement. So, we have this interesting foretaste of Christ’s sacrifice pictured in the OT as well as an explanation for why animal sacrifices will be re-instituted in the Millennial Kingdom. **two and a half cubits long (3 feet 9 inches) and one and a half cubits wide (2 feet 3 inches). ⁷He made two cherubim of gold; he made them of**

hammered work at the two ends of the mercy seat; ⁸one cherub at the one end and one cherub at the other end; he made the cherubim *of one piece* with the mercy seat at the two ends. ⁹The cherubim had *their wings spread upward* so that it formed a kind of throne for the Lord who was enthroned above the cherubim, covering the mercy seat with their wings, with their faces toward each other; the faces of the cherubim were toward the mercy seat so they were actually looking down.

i. The Golden Table of the Showbread (37:10-16)

Exodus 37:10 Then he made the table of acacia wood, two cubits long (3 feet) and a cubit wide (18 inches) and one and a half cubits high (2 feet 3 inches). As you can see from the picture they would stack the bread in two stacks of six so there was a total of twelve loaves symbolizing the twelve tribes of Israel. The bread was made each week and placed in the rack on Sabbath. Tradition says the bread remained hot and fresh so it could be eaten by the priests when removed. Jesus is the bread of life. ¹¹He overlaid it with pure gold, and made a gold molding for it all around. ¹²He made a rim for it of a handbreadth (~3 inches) all around, and made a gold molding for its rim all around. ¹³He cast four gold rings for it and put the rings on the four corners that were on its four feet. ¹⁴Close by the rim were the rings, the holders for the poles to carry the table. ¹⁵He made the poles of acacia wood and overlaid them with gold, to carry the table. ¹⁶He made the utensils which were on the table, its dishes and its pans and its bowls and its jars, with which to pour out drink offerings, of pure gold.

j. The Golden Lampstand (37:17-24)

Exodus 37:17 Then he made the lampstand of pure gold. He made the lampstand of hammered work, its base and its shaft; its cups, its bulbs and its flowers were *of one piece* with it. It was something like a flowering plant if you can imagine it. ¹⁸There were six branches going out of its sides; three branches of the

lampstand from the one side of it and three branches of the lampstand from the other side of it; ¹⁹three cups shaped like almond *blossoms*, a bulb and a flower in one branch, and three cups shaped like almond *blossoms*, a bulb and a flower in the other branch—so for the six branches going out of the lampstand. ²⁰In the lampstand *there were* four cups shaped like almond *blossoms*, its bulbs and its flowers; ²¹and a bulb was under the *first* pair of branches *coming* out of it, and a bulb under the *second* pair of branches *coming* out of it, and a bulb under the *third* pair of branches *coming* out of it, for the six branches coming out of the lampstand. ²²Their bulbs and their branches were *of one piece* with it; the whole of it *was* a single hammered work of pure gold. ²³He made its seven lamps. Seven is the perfect number. These were oil lamps that sat within the petals and sepals of the flowers. They were removable. **with its snuffers** these were like tweezers to trim and remove old wicks **and its trays of pure gold** which were used to carry out the lamps, tweezers and old wicks. The lamps would be removed for cleaning. They remained lit continually. Jesus is the light of the world. ²⁴**He made it and all its utensils from a talent of pure gold, 75 pounds, worth ~\$8million dollars in modern currency.**

k. The Golden Altar of Incense (37:25-29)

Exodus 37:25 Then he made the altar of incense of acacia wood: a cubit long (18 inches) and a cubit wide (18 inches), square, and two cubits high (3 feet); its horns were of one piece with it. ²⁶He overlaid it with pure gold, its top and its sides all around, and its horns; and he made a gold molding for it all around. ²⁷He made two golden rings for it under its molding, on its two sides—on opposite sides—as holders for poles with which to carry it. ²⁸He made the poles of acacia wood and overlaid them with gold. ²⁹And he made the holy anointing oil and the pure, fragrant incense of spices, the work of a perfumer, the recipes of which have been described in detail earlier in the narrative.

l. The Bronze Altar of Burnt Offering (38:1-7)

Exodus 38:1 Then he made the altar of burnt offering of acacia wood, five cubits long (7 ½ feet), and five cubits wide (7 ½ feet), square, and three cubits high (4 ½ feet). ²He made its horns on its four corners, its horns being *of one piece* with it, these could be used to suspend animal sacrifices over the fire. and he overlaid it with bronze. ³He made all the utensils of the altar, the pails and the shovels for removing ash and the basins for removing blood, the flesh hooks for handling the sacrifice and the firepans used for keeping the fire going while the altar was being cleaned. The fire was originally lighted by God from heaven; he made all its utensils of bronze. ⁴He made for the altar a grating of bronze network beneath allowing air to come up from beneath and keep the fire going, under its ledge, reaching halfway up (2 ¼ feet). ⁵He cast four rings on the four ends of the bronze grating as holders for the poles. ⁶He made the poles of acacia wood and overlaid them with bronze. ⁷He inserted the poles into the rings on the sides of the altar, with which to carry it. He made it hollow with planks (perhaps some kind of inner grate).

m. The Bronze Laver (38:8)

Exodus 38:8 Moreover, he made the laver of bronze with its base of bronze, this was a wash basin. It was made from the mirrors of the serving women these actually reflected quite well but not as well as our glass mirrors who served at the doorway of the tent of meeting. The laver was where the priests daily washed their hands and feet to cleanse them from impurities they picked up while slaughtering animals in the court. It is a daily reminder of the importance of confessing our sins and being cleansed (1 John 1:7, 9).

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