

Bible Study
The Tabernacle
October 6, 2021









The Tabernacle

- A moveable tent and courtyard that God commanded Moses to build – Exodus 25-31. “make this dwelling and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you” Ex. 25:9.
- A portable structure of wooden framework covered with curtains, which was carried through the wilderness in the Israelitish exodus, as a place of sacrifice and worship.
- God wanted to dwell among his people, the Israelites.
- He wanted to have fellowship with them and to communicate with them.
- The Tabernacle was the portable earthly dwelling place of Yahweh (the God of Israel)

- According to the Hebrew Bible, the Tabernacle mean residence or dwelling place
- also known as *the Tent of the meeting, the tabernacle of Moses, the wilderness tabernacle,*
- used by the Israelites from the Exodus until it was replaced by Solomon's temple in 960 BC (about 500 years).

- The Tabernacle and its courtyard was constructed according to God, not by Moses. Moses was on the mountain for 40 days as he received instructions to build the tabernacle.
- The tabernacle was built approximately 1440BC at the foot of Mount Sinai.
- All Israel contributed to the building of the tabernacle ([Exod 25:1–7](#)), yet YHVH chose two Israelite artisans, Bezalel and Aholiab ([Exod 31:1–6](#)), filled them with the Spirit of Elohim “in wisdom, understanding, knowledge an in all manner of workmanship ...”

Fundraising for the Tabernacle

Exodus 35, 36, 40

- Moses gives the Jews a vision of what God wants.
- Moses suggests practical gifts (wood, precious metals, jewels, linens etc).
- Moses put skilled craftsmen in charge of specialist projects.
- Other volunteers were trained to help the skilled craftsmen/women
- The appeal raised more than enough resources, so Moses had to tell everyone to stop donating.
- The whole project took about a year to complete.



Fundraising for the tabernacle (extracts from the Christian Bible's book of Exodus 35, 36 and 40)

4 Moses said to the whole Israelite community, This is what the LORD has commanded:

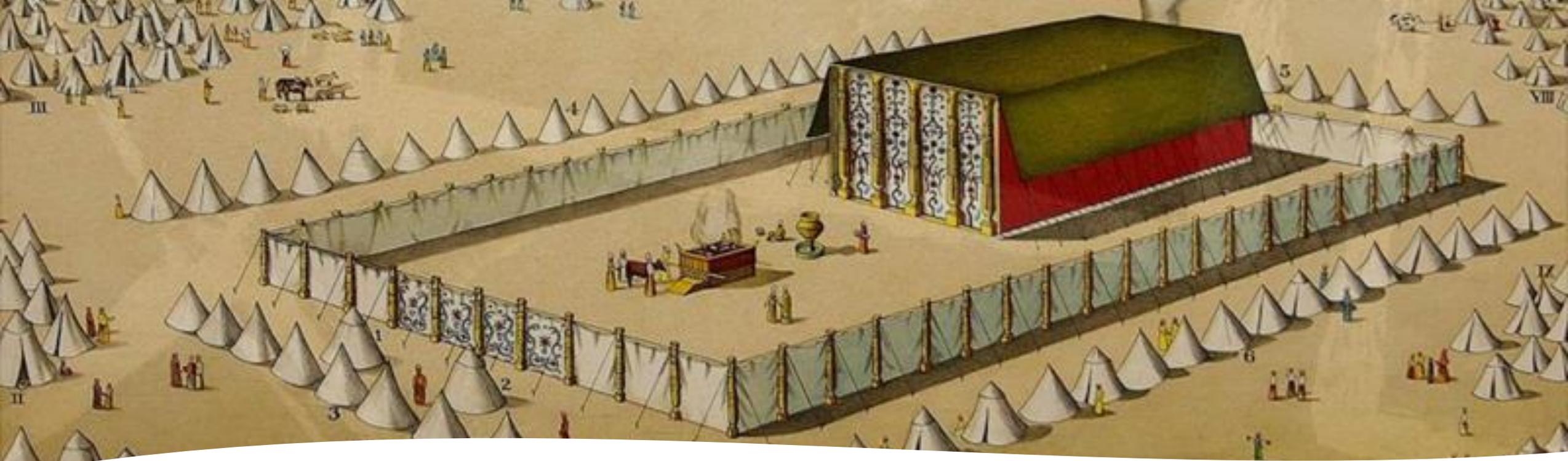
5 From what you have, take an offering for the LORD. Everyone who is willing is to bring to the LORD an offering of gold, silver and bronze;

6 blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen; goat hair;

7 ram skins dyed red and hides of sea cows; acacia wood;

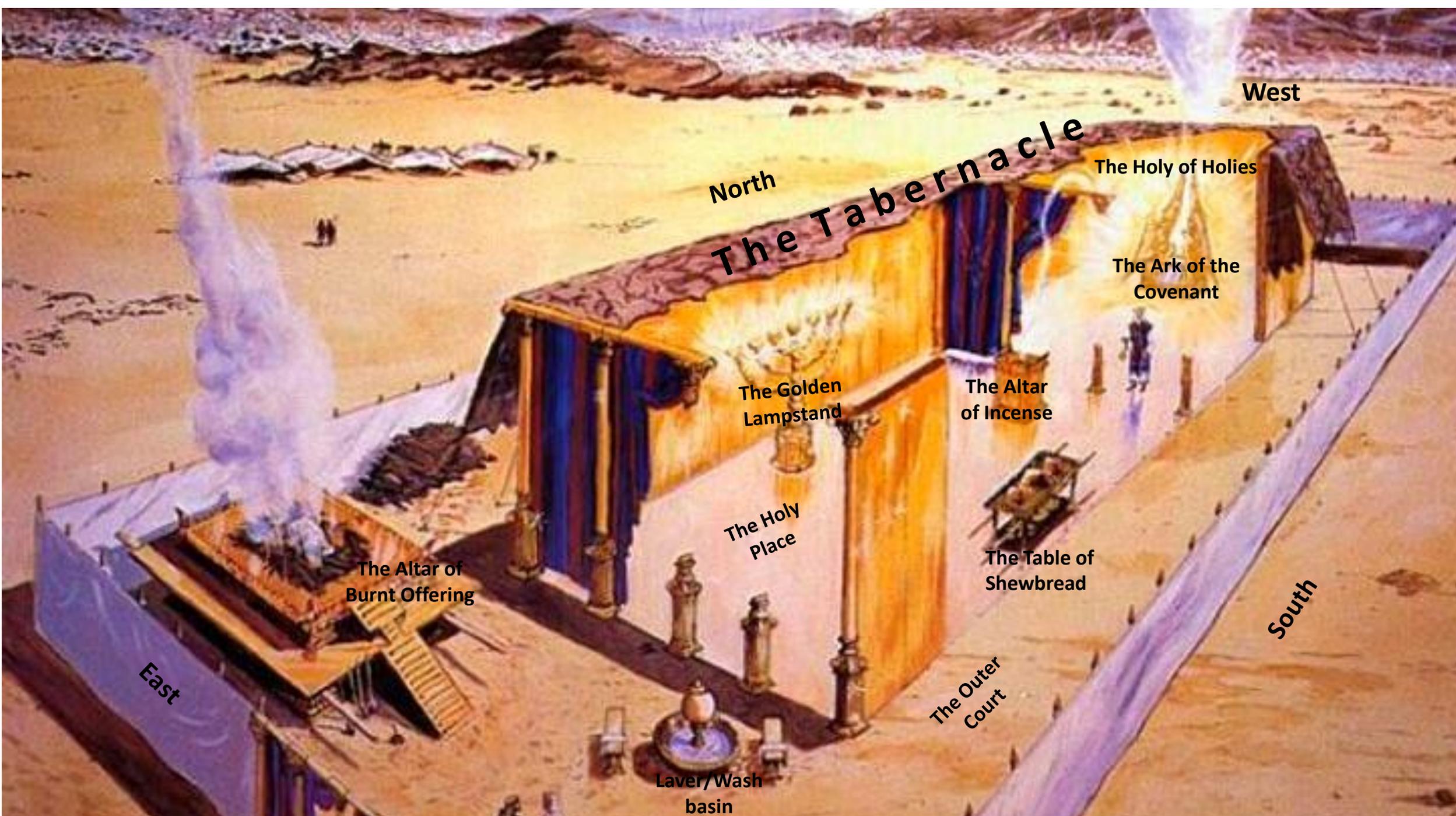
8 olive oil for the light; spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense;

9 and onyx stones and other gems to be mounted on the ephod and breast piece.



The Israelite Encampment Around the Tabernacle

- The Israelites camped around the tabernacle (Num 2:1–34).
- on the east side were Judah, Issachar and Zebulun;
- on the South side were Reuben, Simeon and Gad;
- on the west side were Ephraim, Manasseh and Benjamin;
- on the north side were Dan, Asher and Naphtali.
- The Levites camped around the tabernacle forming a protective perimeter between the Israelites and the tabernacle itself (Num 1:53).



West

North

The Tabernacle

The Holy of Holies

The Ark of the Covenant

The Altar of Incense

The Golden Lampstand

The Holy Place

The Table of Shewbread

The Altar of Burnt Offering

The Outer Court

South

East

Laver/Wash basin

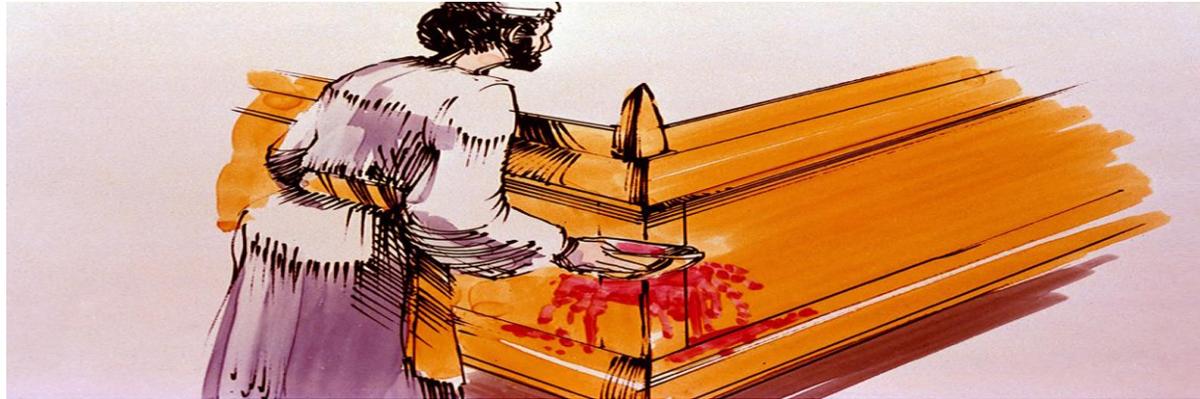
Altar of Burnt Offerings

- The altar of burnt offerings was stationed inside the tabernacle courtyard. God himself sent heavenly fire that continually burned on the altar (Lev. 9:23–24; 6:12).
- No manmade fire was allowed for sacrifice.
- A guilty person brought an animal for a sin sacrifice to the tabernacle. After the animal was killed near the gate, the priest brought its blood and fat to the altar. He burned the fat on the altar and poured the blood on the golden horns and around the altar (Lev. 4).



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- At the tabernacle, blood was not a side effect—it was the whole point. Only blood could provide atonement. God says in Leviticus 17, “For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have appointed it to you to make atonement on the altar for your lives, since it is the lifeblood that makes atonement”



- The Hebrew word for *atonement* literally means “to cover.” God appointed the blood to cover our souls.
- Sometimes, the offerer would eat some of the meat of the sacrificial animal, and most often the priest received a portion of it.

The Lever/Wash Basin

- Being clean was a serious matter. Whenever the priest entered the tabernacle or approached the altar, he washed in the bronze wash basin in the courtyard ([Ex. 30:17–19](#)).
- God warned the priests that they must be clean, or they would die ([Ex. 30:21](#)). They had to wash every time because God required perfect purity for those who approach him.
- No single washing could ever accomplish complete and final purification.



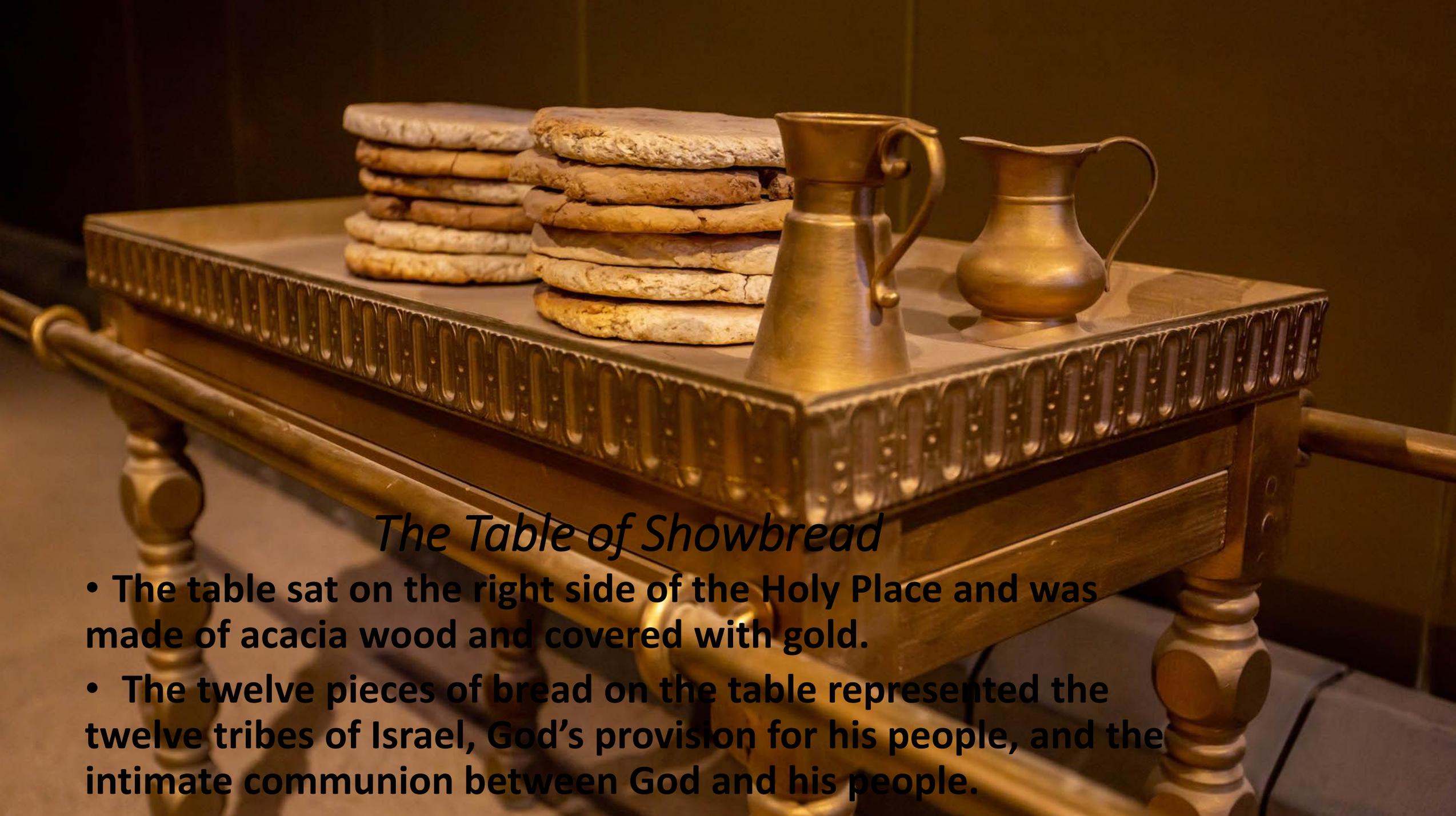
The Lampstand

- All Levites could enter the courtyard, but only priests could enter the Holy Place in the tent itself.
- Inside the Holy Place was the lampstand, one solid piece of hammered gold that burned continually ([Ex. 25:31–40](#)).
- It had three branches off each side of the central trunk, totaling seven branches with decorative almond blossoms.



- **The lampstand looked like a tree, reminiscent of the tree of life in the garden—a place of life, blessing, and perfect relationship with God. It was the only source of light in the Holy Place.**





The Table of Showbread

- The table sat on the right side of the Holy Place and was made of acacia wood and covered with gold.
- The twelve pieces of bread on the table represented the twelve tribes of Israel, God's provision for his people, and the intimate communion between God and his people.

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A golden altar of incense, likely a replica of the one in the Temple of Solomon. It features a rectangular base with a decorative Greek key pattern. The top is a flat, rectangular platform with a woven mesh surface. Four golden horns, each with a red tip, are attached to the corners. The altar is set against a background of colorful curtains and a golden pillar.

The Altar of Incense

- During sacrificial rituals, the priest smeared blood on the horns of the altar of incense, and in cases when the priest himself had sinned, they poured blood around its base ([Lev. 4:7,13–18](#)).
- David often described prayer as like incense going up before the Lord, offered by a priest on behalf of the people ([Ps. 141:2](#)).



• Inside the tabernacle, a curtain separated the daily work in the Holy Place from God's presence in the holy of holies.

• Embroidered on the curtain's fabric were the cherubim who stood guard of the entrance to the Garden of Eden.