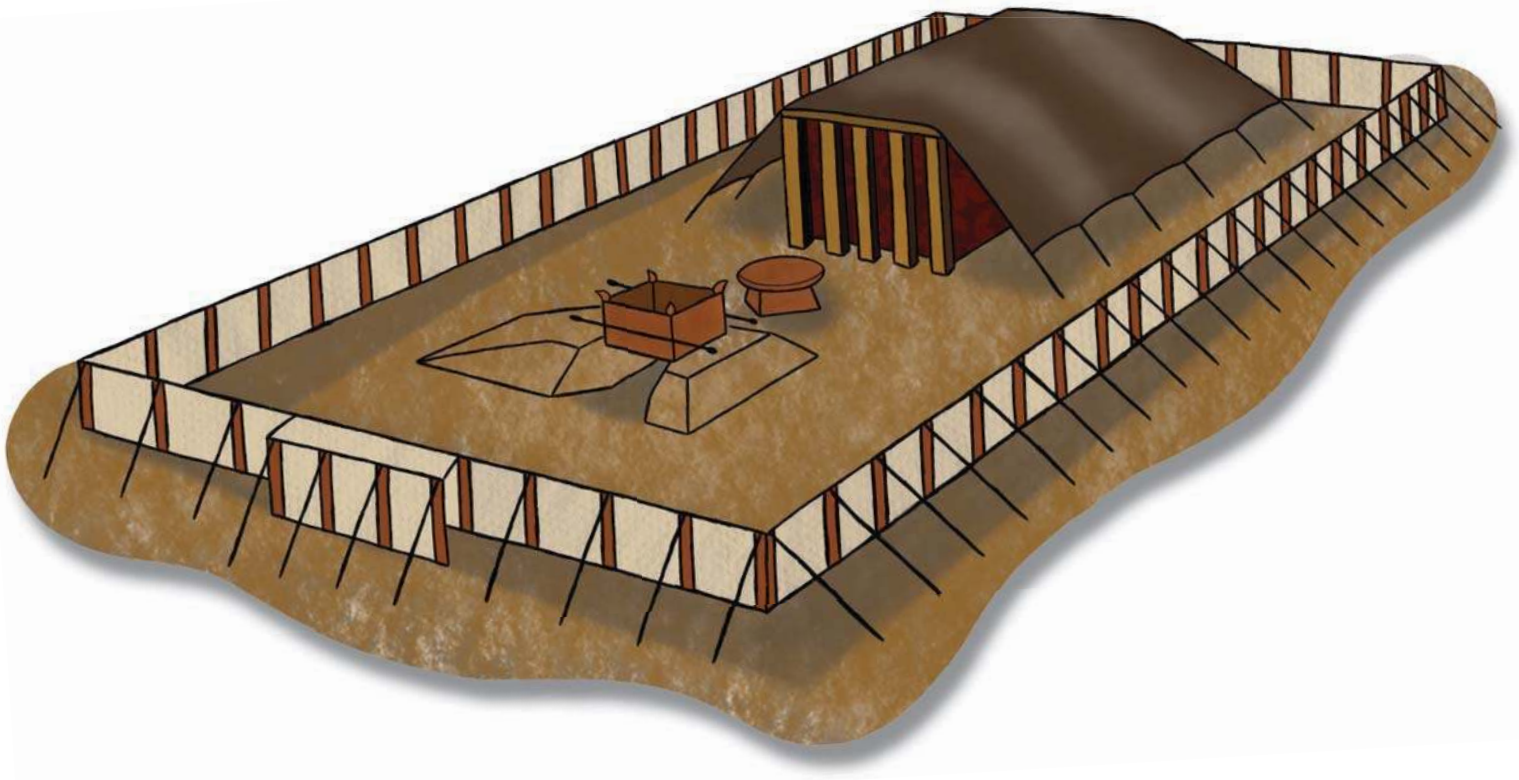
THE MISSIONARY BAPTIST VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL LITERATURE COMMITTEE PRESENTS

TOURING THE TABERNACLE



SEEING CHRIST THROUGHOUT

AGES 0-4

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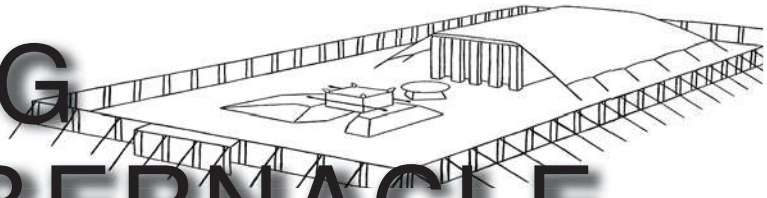

SEEING CHRIST THROUGHOUT

For Preschool Ages 0-4

ALL LESSONS WRITTEN BY SISTER MICHELLE CORDER

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LESSON SERIES INTRODUCTION FOR TEACHERS

The tabernacle was a tent. A tent designed by God so that He could be among His people. This was a tent with wooden framework and covered in gold with golden furniture inside.

At this tent, the Israelites learned how sinful people could meet with a Holy God: perfectly pure and good. We can still learn from the tabernacle because it was made to be a picture of what Jesus would do for everyone who believes in Him.

There were many, many Israelites camped in the desert near Mt. Sinai. A lot had happened to them; they had left Egypt, where they were slaves. Pharaoh's army chased them to the Red Sea where God parted the waters and they crossed on dry land. As the waters returned, the Egyptians were drowned. They were hungry and thirsty, so God provided manna and water.

In everything that happened to them, God was teaching His people that He was able to save them, provide for them and protect them.

The Israelites were not going to live in the desert forever. They were on a journey to Canaan, the land promised to them by God. While they were traveling, God called Moses up to the top of Mt. Sinai. God gave him the law that would teach the Israelites how they should live, the pattern for making the very special tent, and the furniture to go inside.

God gave Moses the instructions and several times he was told that everything must be made just as he was shown. Materials that were needed for the construction of the tent included gold, silver, bronze; blue, purple and scarlet thread, linen, goat's hair, animal skins and acacia wood. Every detail was given so that there could be no mistakes. Everything in the tabernacle teaches us about *Jesus Christ*.

Many skills would be needed for this work. There would be wood to carve, jewels to cut and set, gold, silver and bronze to work with. There would

also be engraving, tapestry work and weaving to be done. God told Moses that He had given two Israelite men, Bezalel and Aholiab, skills in all these things; they would also be able to teach these skills to others. There were many skilled craftsmen who were able to share in the very special work.

Moses told the Israelites all about the tabernacle that God had commanded them to make. He told them what materials would be needed. No one was forced to give. Those who had any of the necessary materials and were willing to give them should bring them as an offering.

Each morning, men and women came to Moses, gladly giving their possessions as an offering to God. Some brought gold jewelry, some brought silver, bronze or wood. Women were able to make colored thread and linen. There were people who gave animal skins and goat's hair. The rulers brought precious stones, oil and spices. Soon the craftsmen told Moses they had enough materials for everything that was to be made.

THE CAMP

The nation of Israel was made up of twelve tribes – the families descended from Jacob's sons and grandsons: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph and Benjamin. Each of the twelve tribes had a specific area of the camp to live in. They were divided into groups of three and evenly situated at a certain distance around the tabernacle. Four of the tribes, Judah, Reuben, Ephraim and Dan were recognized as tribal leaders. There are thirteen names when we identify their places in the camp. That is because of the special privilege given to the tribe of Levi when they supported Moses and the Lord. They were ordained for the service of God and set apart as the priestly tribe. The House of Joseph was divided into half tribes between his sons Ephraim and Manasseh.

The tabernacle was always set up in the center of the camp of the Israelites. The tribe of Levi was responsible for everything about the tabernacle. They prepared the tabernacle for any journey it was to make; remember, the tabernacle was never meant to stay in one permanent place. The tribe of Levi had three families; Merari, Kohath and Gershon. The Merarites camped on

the north side. They guarded and carried the structural components of the tent and the court (frames, bar, pillars, bases, pegs and cords). To transport these items, they had 4 carts and 8 oxen. The Kohathites camped on the south side. They guarded and carried the items within the tabernacle (ark of the covenant, the table of shewbread and vessels, the altar of incense, and the lampstand). These were the most precious objects and were carried on the men's shoulders with golden rods. It took 24 people to carry these items. The Gershonites camped on the west side. They guarded and carried the coverings and hangings of the courtyard. To transport these items, they had 2 carts and 4 oxen. Moses, Aaron, and the priests camped on the east side next to the entrance. They guarded the tabernacle and performed the ceremonies prescribed by God for His worship, and protected Israel.

THE PRIESTS

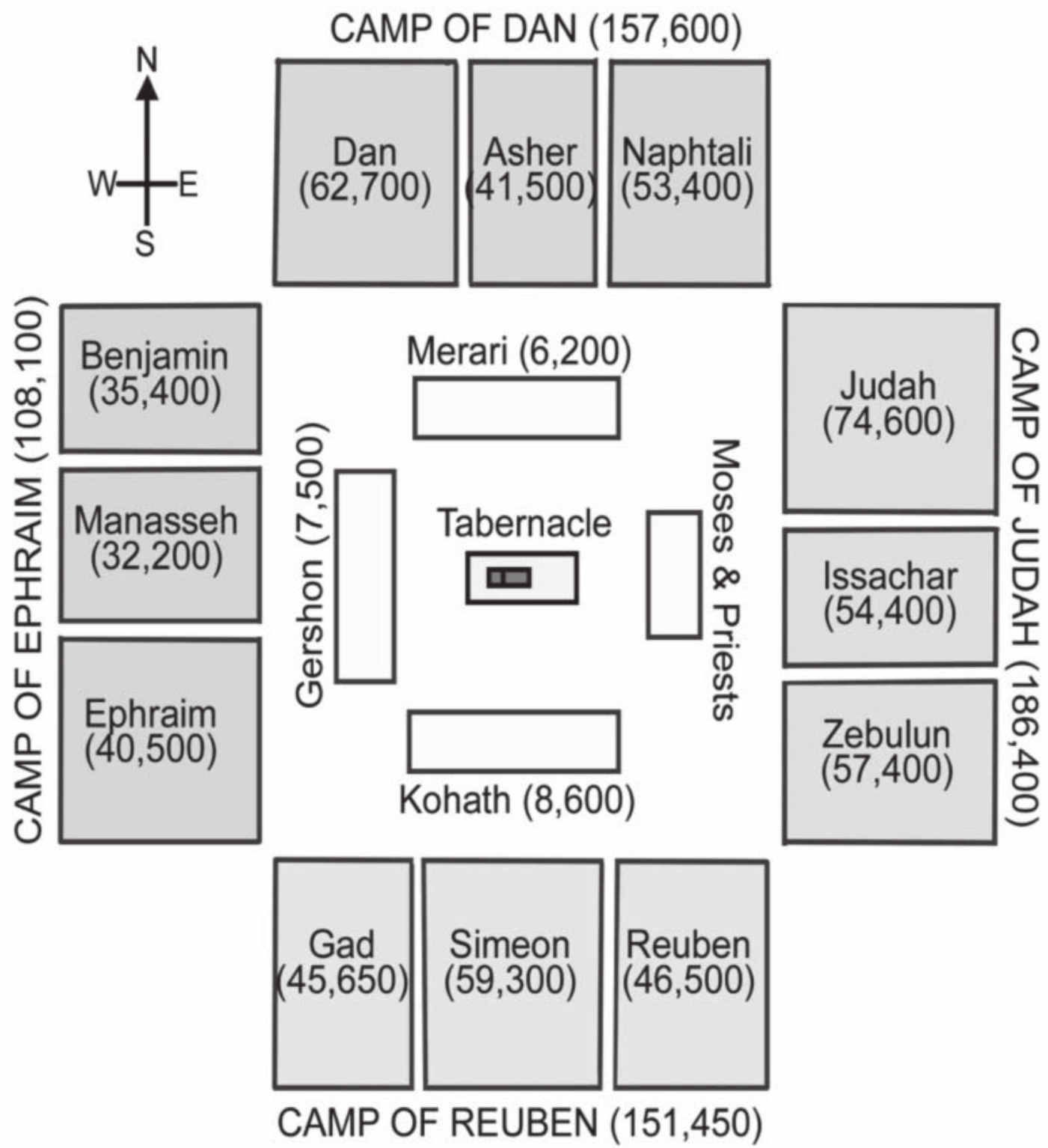
Not all of the Levites were priests, but all the Priests were Levites. Only the sons of Aaron could be the actual priests. They were the only ones who could conduct the rituals and ceremonies. There was only one High Priest at a time and he was always a descendant of Aaron's son, Eleazar. He served as the High Priest for life. All the other Levites were to be servants and helpers to the priests.

The Kohathites were the gatekeepers. They opened the gates for morning services and closed them in the evenings. They were also responsible for baking the shewbread.

The Gershonites and Merarites worked in and around the tabernacle.

There was always a large number of priests on duty at all times. They served for one week at a time. They were up and ready before daybreak for their daily assignments. Assignments could include filling the laver, preparing the altar, trimming the wicks in the lampstand, burning incense, singing and playing music. They renewed the shewbread on the Sabbath day. They kept watch around the tabernacle at night.

They did not all serve in the same office or do the same job. They maintained different and specific positions during a journey.



Arrangement of the Camp of Israel

Numbers 2:1-3:39

Lesson One: AT THE GATE

Written By: Sister Michelle Corder

LESSON TEXT: EXODUS 27:9-19

There was only one gate by which the Israelites could enter into the tabernacle courtyard. The gate was thirty feet wide and it provided access for a sinful nation to find forgiveness. The gate was strongly supported by four pillars. It was located directly in the center of the outer court on the east end. The opening of the gate was covered by a curtain made of finely twisted linen with blue, purple and scarlet thread.

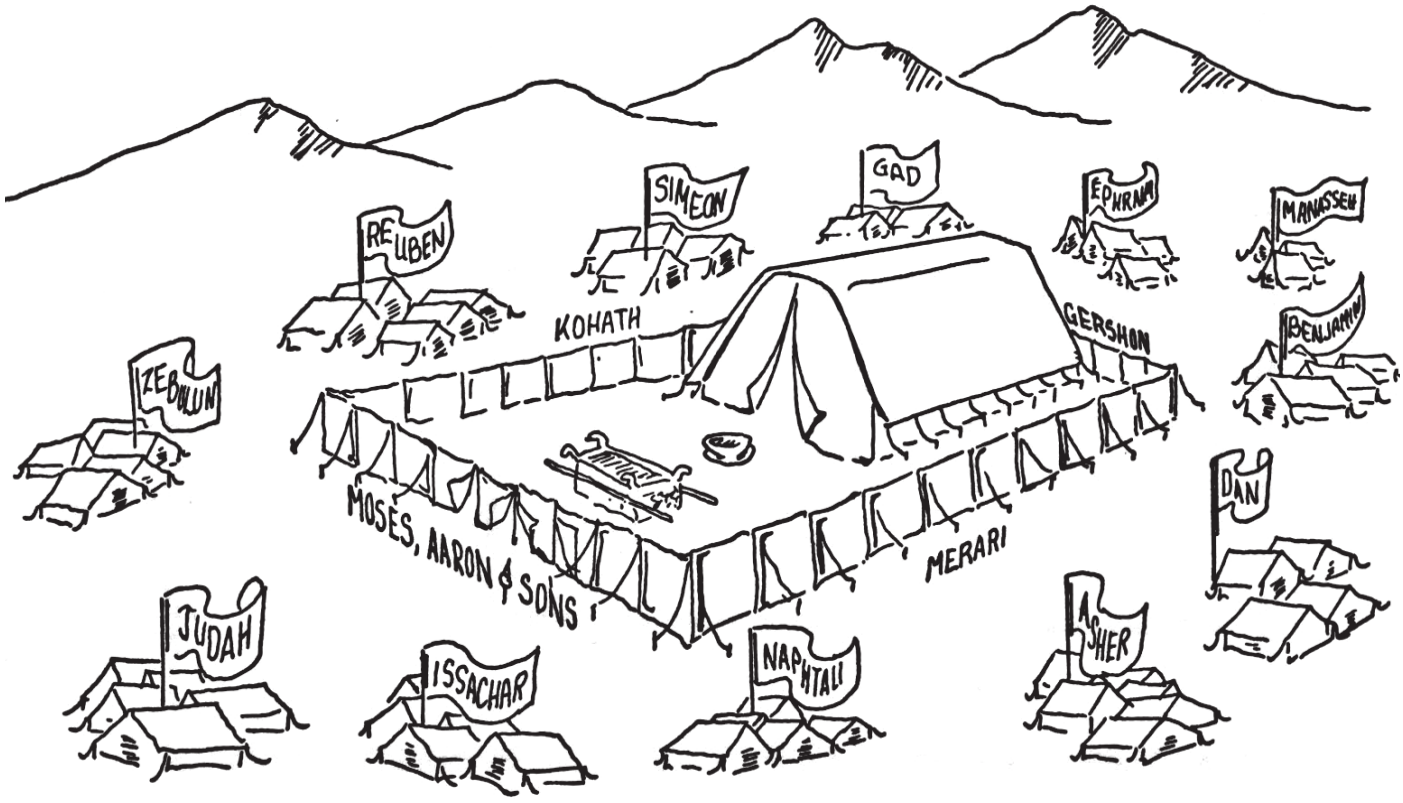
The priest on duty at the gate would meet the Israelites to receive their sacrifice. These offerings were a reminder to the Israelites that sin has terrible consequences. To receive forgiveness from sin required the shedding of blood.

God set up a system of animal sacrifices for the Israelites. Only certain animals were allowed for the sacrifice. For the person offering the sacrifice to understand how serious sin was, God required that person to lay his hand on the animal while the priest killed it.

The Israelites also came to give praise to God for the blessings they received. The offerings were a way to praise God for His goodness.

The gate was always open. By entering, one showed his desire to find forgiveness of sin and fellowship with God.

COLOR THE PICTURE OF THE TABERNACLE AND THE 12 TRIBES OF ISRAEL



Lesson Two: IN THE COURTYARD

Written By: Sister Michelle Corder

LESSON TEXT: EXODUS 27:1-8; 30:17-21

The space around the tabernacle was called the courtyard. A fence surrounded the courtyard. It was made of linen which hung from sixty wooden pillars. Only priests from the tribe or family of Levi were allowed to touch the tabernacle. So, the fence protected the people from coming too close.

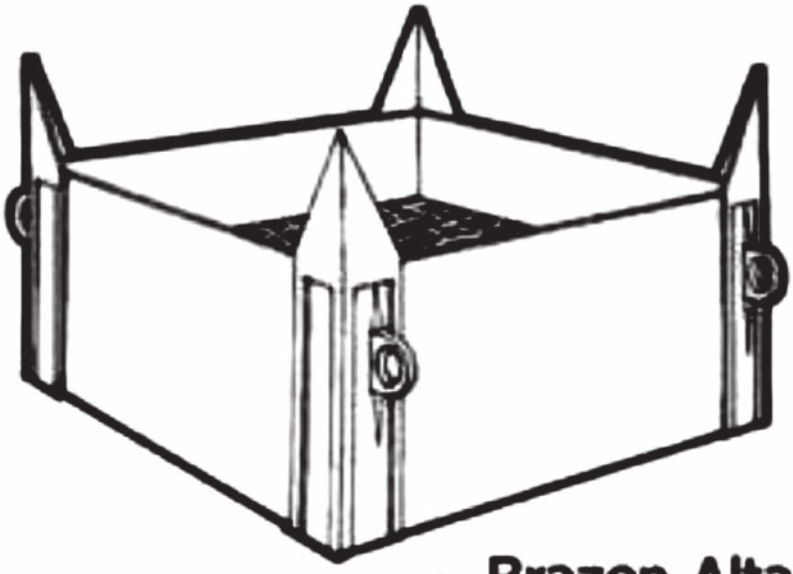
The courtyard contained two items:
Just inside the gate was the bronze altar. The altar was square. It was made of acacia wood overlaid with bronze. It stood on a raised mound of dirt, higher than all of the other furniture. It was square, five cubits in length (7 ½ feet) and five cubits in width (7 ½ feet) and three cubits in height (4 ½ feet). There were horns at each corner. Horns were a symbol of power and strength. When the sacrifice was made, the priest dabbed blood on the horns to signify the power of the blood.

The fires from Heaven on the bronze altar burned day and night. Because these sacrifices only temporarily covered the sins of the people, they needed to be offered on a regular basis.

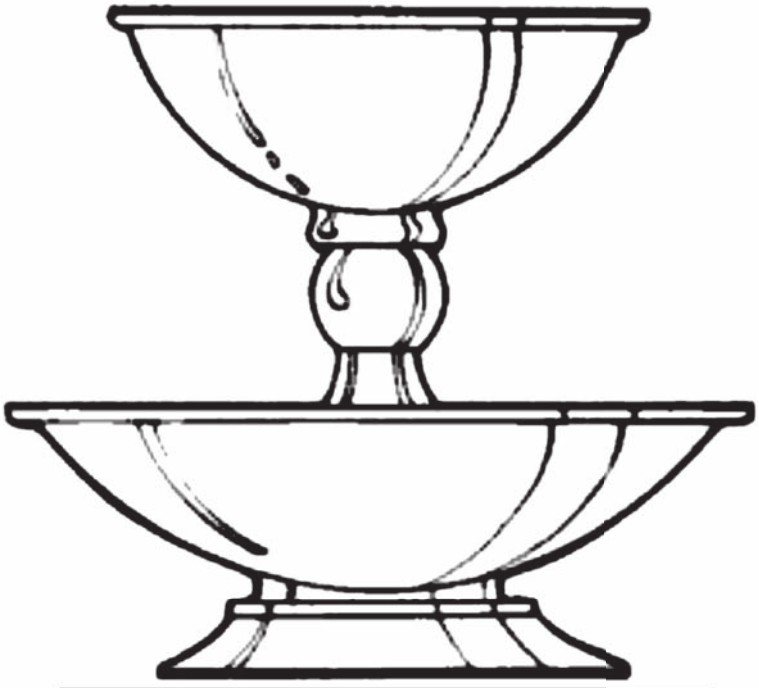
The bronze altar showed the Israelites that the first step for sinful man to approach a Holy God was to admit he was a sinner.

Directly behind the bronze altar was the laver. It was a large bowl filled with water and was located halfway between the bronze altar and the Holy Place. God did not give specific measurements for the laver except that it was to be made entirely of bronze. The priests were to wash their hands and feet before entering the Holy Place. It was very important for the priests to be clean when they went into the tabernacle to work.

COLOR THE COURTYARD ELEMENTS



▲ **Brazen Altar**



Brazen Laver
The Place of Cleansing

Lesson Three: OUTSIDE THE TENT

Written By: Sister Michelle Corder

LESSON TEXT: EXODUS 26:1-30

The tabernacle itself had four coverings that made a roof. The inner most covering was made of finely twisted linen and woven together with blue, purple and scarlet threads. It was decorated with figures of cherubim (angels). As the priests worked in the Holy Place they saw the figures above and around them all the time.

The second covering was made of goat's hair. It was slightly larger than the linen covering. This layer was pure white.

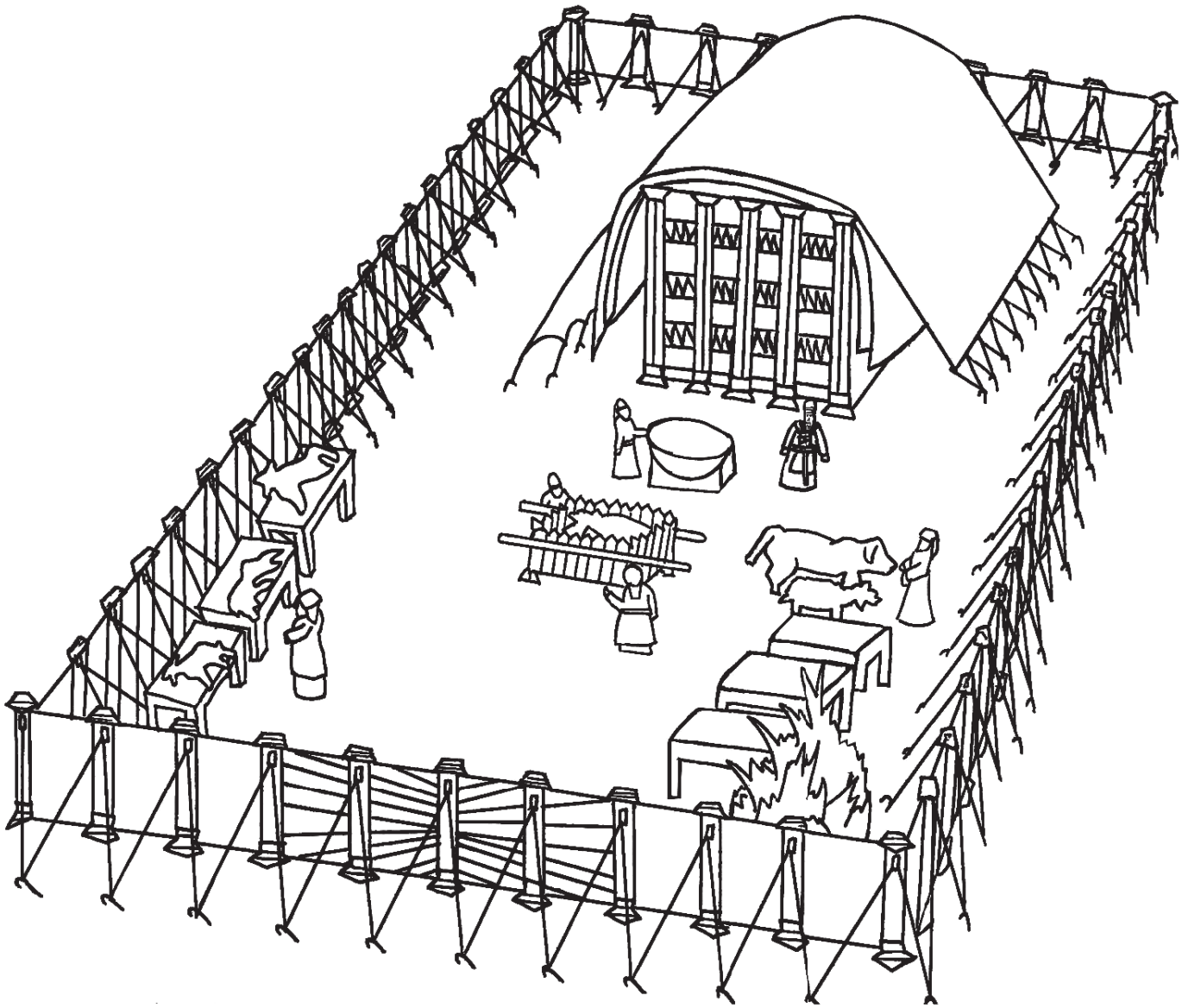
The third layer was made of ram skins dyed red. It was waterproof.

The fourth layer was made of badger skin. It was also waterproof. This layer was visible to all the Israelites. It was not very pretty but provided the necessary protection for the tabernacle. It had to bear the desert heat and any storms.

THE DOOR

The door of the tabernacle was made of finely twisted linen like the walls. The colors woven together were blue, purple and scarlet but there were no cherubim embroidered on the door. This door separated the Holy Place from the court. After the priests finished their work in the courtyard, they would pass through this door to work in the Holy Place. The Israelites who came to the tabernacle with their offering could not see beyond the door.

COLOR THE TABERNACLE SCENE



Lesson Four: INSIDE THE TENT

Written By: Sister Michelle Corder

LESSON TEXT: EXODUS 25:23-40; 30:1-10

THE ALTAR OF INCENSE

The altar of incense sat in front of the curtain that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. It was square, with each side measuring one and a half feet and was three feet high. It was made of acacia wood overlaid with gold and it was taller than the other furniture in the tabernacle. It had horns on each corner. Rings of gold were built into the altar so it could be carried by golden poles. The priests were required to burn special incense constantly. It was a special sweet incense, a mixture of spices that could only be used in the tabernacle.

THE TABLE OF SHEWBREAD

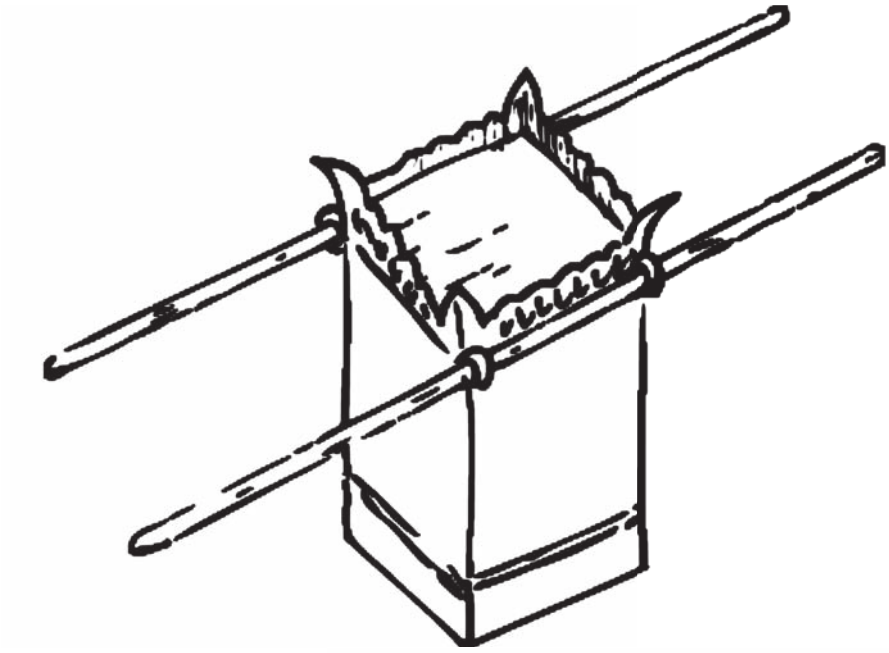
The table of shewbread sat on the right side of the tabernacle. It measured three feet by one and a half feet and was two feet, three inches high. It was made of acacia wood overlaid with gold. Rings of gold were built into the legs so that it could be carried by golden poles. The table held twelve cakes of bread made of fine flour. They were placed in two rows of six. There were four vessels of pure gold on the table with the bread; breadplates, spoons, pitchers, and bowls.

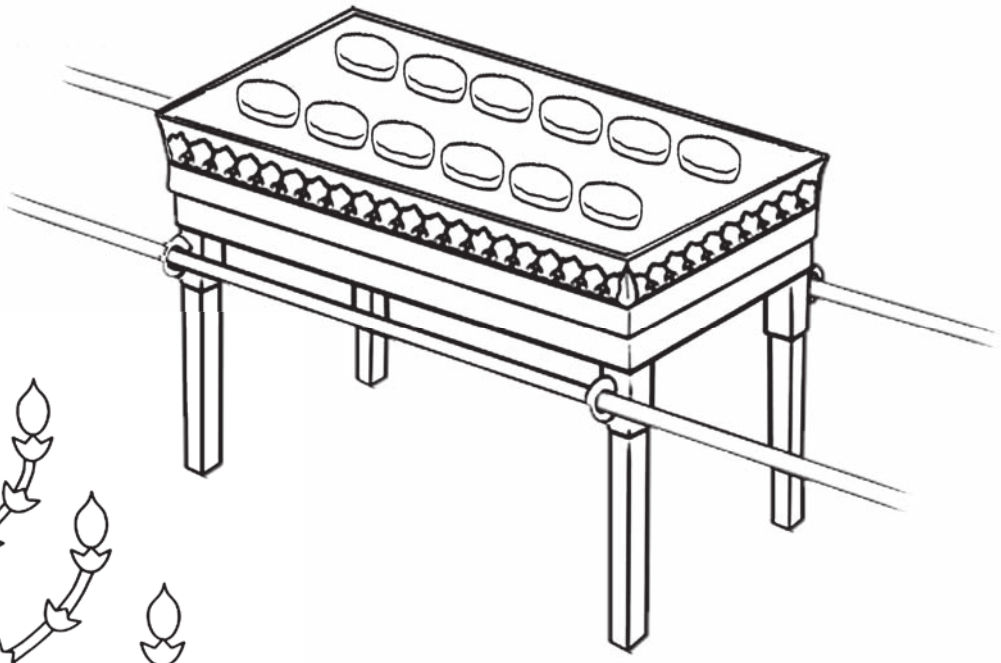
Every Sabbath day, fresh loaves were provided by the priests. The priests were allowed to eat the old loaves.

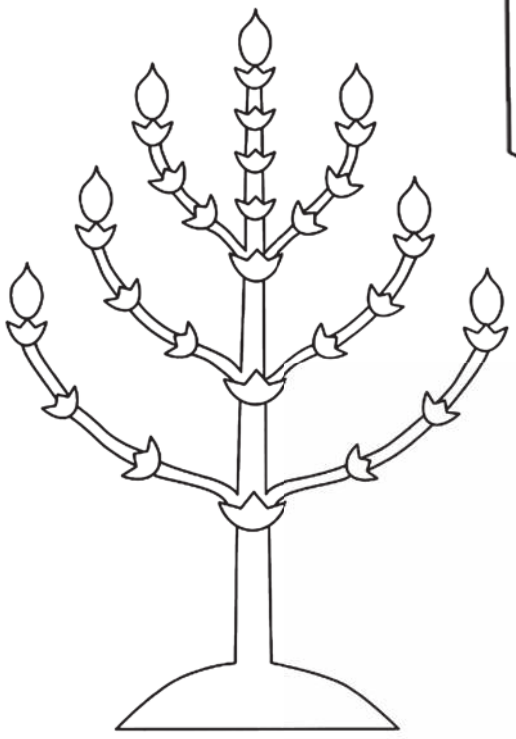
THE LAMPSTAND

The lampstand sat on the left side of the tabernacle. It was made from one piece of solid gold and provided the light inside the tabernacle. It had a main shaft with three branches on each side. There were places for seven lamps on top of each branch. Each of the seven lamps contained a wick and was filled with pure olive oil. The priests trimmed the wicks daily to keep them burning brightly.

COLOR THE TENT ELEMENTS







Lesson Five: BEYOND THE VEIL

Written By: Sister Michelle Corder

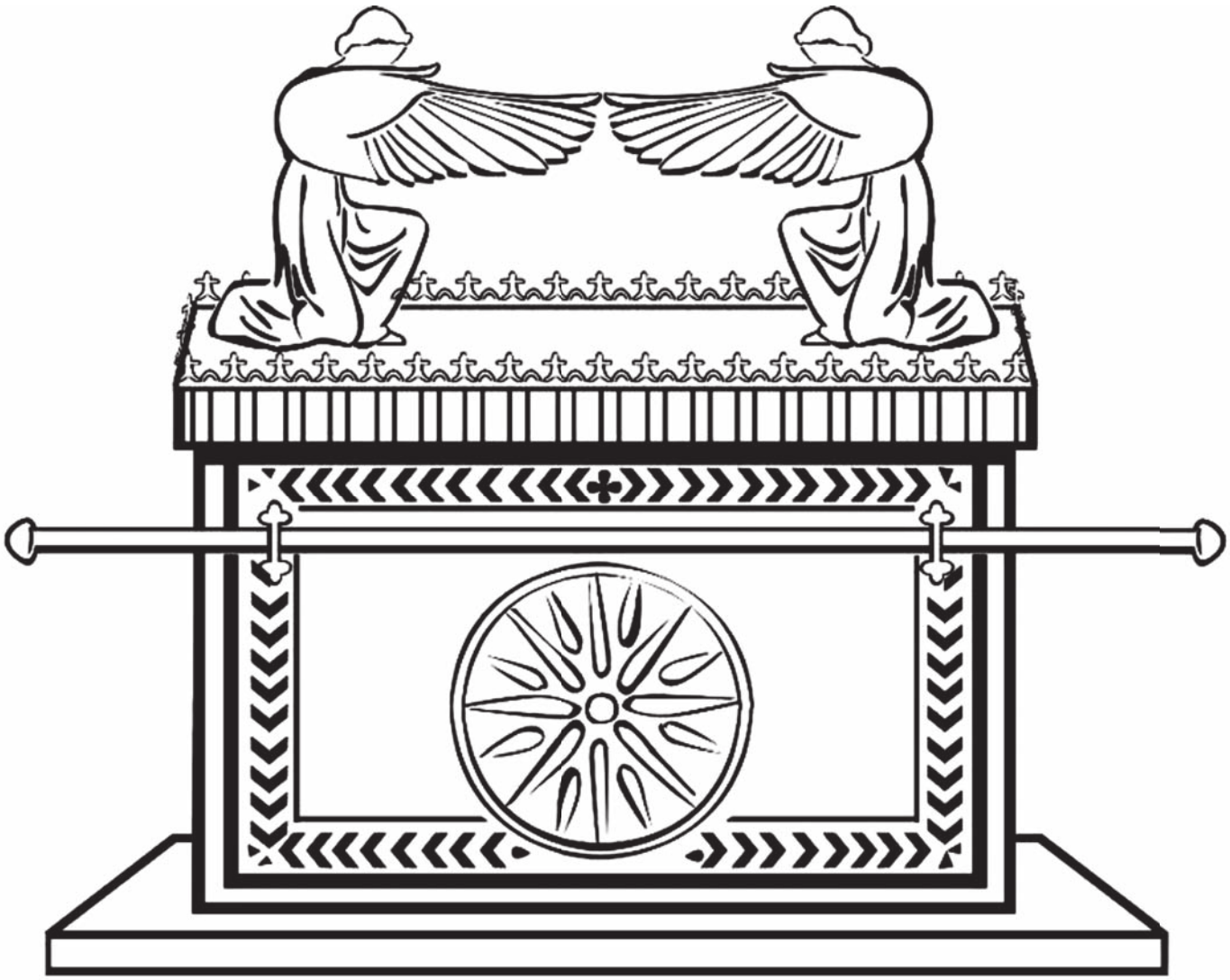
LESSON TEXT: EXODUS 25:10-22

The veil or curtain divided the tabernacle into two rooms; the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. It was made of heavy woven cloth of blue, purple and scarlet, with cherubim embroidered on it. There was no separation in the veil, the priest had to go around the side. Only the high priest could enter the Most Holy Place one time per year. The veil hung right in front of the Ark of the Covenant.

The Ark of the Covenant was a chest made of acacia wood overlaid with pure gold, inside and out. Inside the Ark was a golden pot of manna, Aaron's staff that had budded and the two stone tablets that the Ten Commandments were written on. Rings of gold were built into the sides so it could be carried by golden poles.

The lid of the Ark or "mercy seat" was made of pure gold. Two cherubim sat facing each other on the top. God dwelt on the mercy seat below the cherubim wings. He appeared as a cloud by day, or a pillar of fire by night.

COLOR THE ARK OF THE COVENANT



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