

does not suggest the presence of a fancy top piece on the pillar.

"Fillet" in 36:38 is a word meaning a junction rod, or something which is attached or fastened together. It possibly refers to rods connecting the pillars. Whether the screen was hung from these fillets, as from a curtain rod, or just hung on the hooks like the veil, is not clearly indicated.

Keil and Delitzsch felt that the fillets formed a sort of architrave, a solid wooden (but gold-overlaid) section above the pillars.<sup>12</sup> Cassuto says that the fillets formed a pole lying on the hooks, and that this prevented the side boards from inclining inwards because of the weight of the curtains suspended over them.<sup>13</sup>

We cannot tell whether the pillars were inside or outside the screen. We are of the opinion that they were inside, because they were covered with gold. Gold was reserved for the things inside the tabernacle, except for the outside of the side boards, and even they were covered by the curtains. However, the fact that the pillars had bronze sockets shows that they were regarded as near or part of the items in the court, which were of bronze.

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THE TEXT OF EXODUS  
TRANSLATION

**27** And thou shalt make the altar of acacia wood, five cubits long, and five cubits broad; the altar shall be foursquare: and the height thereof shall be three cubits. (2) And thou shalt make the horns of it upon the four corners thereof; the horns thereof shall be on one piece with it: and

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<sup>12</sup>*Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 182.

<sup>13</sup>*Op. cit.*, p. 361.

thou shalt overlay it with brass. (3) And thou shalt make its pots to take away its ashes, and its shovels, and its basins, and its flesh-hooks, and its firepans: all the vessels thereof thou shalt make of brass. (4) And thou shalt make for it a grating of network of brass; and upon the net shalt thou make four brazen rings in the four corners thereof. (5) And thou shalt put it under the ledge round the altar beneath, that the net may reach halfway up the altar. (6) And thou shalt make staves for the altar, staves of acacia wood, and overlay them with brass. (7) And the staves thereof shall be put into the rings, and the staves shall be upon the two sides of the altar, in bearing it. (8) Hollow with planks shalt thou make it: as it hath been showed thee in the mount, so shall they make it.

(9) And thou shalt make the court of the tabernacle: for the south side southward there shall be hangings for the court of fine twined linen a hundred cubits long for one side: (10) and the pillars thereof shall be twenty, and their sockets twenty, of brass; the hooks of the pillars and their fillets *shall be* of silver. (11) And likewise for the north side in length there shall be hangings a hundred cubits long, and the pillars thereof twenty, and their sockets twenty, of brass; the hooks of the pillars, and their fillets, of silver. (12) And for the breadth of the court on the west side shall be hangings of fifty cubits; their pillars ten, and their sockets ten. (13) And the breadth of the court on the east side eastward shall be fifty cubits. (14) The hangings for the one side *of the gate* shall be fifteen cubits; their pillars three, and their sockets three. (15) And for the other side shall be hangings of fifteen cubits; their pillars three, and their sockets three. (16) And for the gate of the court shall be a screen of twenty cubits, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, the work of the embroiderer; their pillars four, and their sockets four. (17) All the pillars of the court round about shall be filleted with silver; their hooks of silver, and their sockets of brass. (18) The length of the court shall be a hundred cubits, and the breadth fifty every where, and the height five cubits, of fine twined linen, and their sockets of brass. (19) All the instruments of the tabernacle in all the

service thereof, and all the pins thereof, and all the pins of the court, shall be of brass.

(20) And thou shalt command the children of Is-ra-el, that they bring unto thee pure olive oil beaten for the light, to cause a lamp to burn continually. (21) In the tent of meeting, without the veil which is before the testimony, Aar-on and his sons shall keep it in order from evening to morning before Je-ho-vah: it shall be a statute for ever throughout their generations on the behalf of the children of Is-ra-el.

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EXPLORING EXODUS: CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN  
QUESTIONS ANSWERABLE FROM THE BIBLE

1. After reading the chapter carefully, propose a brief chapter topic for it.
2. Of what materials was the altar made? (27:1, 2, 8)
3. What was the general shape of the altar? (27:1)
4. What were the dimensions of the altar? (27:1)
5. What stuck out of the upper corners of the altar? (27:2)
6. What accessory utensils were made for the altar? (27:3)
7. What was the grating (net-work) made from? (27:4)
8. Where were the bronze rings of the altar set? (27:4)
9. Where was the grating of the altar placed? (27:5)
10. Where were the poles placed? (27:7)
11. What were the poles (or staves) used for? (27:7)
12. When were sacrifices made on the altar? (Lev. 6:9, 12, 13)
13. Of what would the altar be a type? (Hebrews 13:10-12; John 1:29; Matthew 23:19)
14. Suggest some ways in which the altar resembled that of which it was a type.
15. What were the dimensions (including height) of the court? (27:9, 13, 18)
16. What formed (or enclosed) the court? (27:9, 10)

17. Describe the way the court was constructed. (27:9-13)
18. How many pillars were used in the court? (27:10-15)
19. On which side of the court was its entrance? (27:13, 14)
20. How wide was the entrance of the court? (27:14, 15)
21. What was hung across the court entrance? Describe it. (27:15)
22. Who might enter the court? (Lev. 17:8-9; 22:18; 6:9-10; 3:1-2)
23. What items of furniture were in the court? (Ex. 40:6-8)
24. Of what may the court have been a type? (Compare Rev. 11:1-2)
25. Of what material were the utensils of the tabernacle made? (27:19)
26. Who was to bring pure olive oil? For what use? (27:20)
27. Of what may olive oil be a type? (Compare Heb. 1:9; Acts 10:38; Zech. 4:2-6)
28. When did the lamp burn? (27:20)
29. In what room (or area) did the lamp burn? (27:21)
30. What is the "testimony"? (27:21; Ex. 32:15; 34:29)
31. Who tended the lamp? (27:21)
32. How long was the law about the burning of the lamp to continue? (27:21)

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### EXODUS TWENTY-SEVEN: ALTAR, COURT, OIL!

1. The altar; 27:1-8
  - a. Made of wood and bronze; 27:1, 8.
  - b. Made with horns; 27:2-3.
  - c. Made with a grating; 27:4-5.
  - d. Made portable; 27:6-7.
  - e. Made according to the pattern; 27:8.
2. The court; 27:9-19.
  - a. Made of curtains upon pillars; 27:9-10, 17.

- b. Made according to dimensions given by God; 27:11-13, 18.
- c. Made with an entrance; 27:14-16.
- d. Made of sturdy bronze; 27:19, 3.
- 3. The oil; 27:20-21.
  - a. Brought by the people; 27:20.
  - b. Burned before Jehovah; 27:21.
  - c. Brought for ever; 27:21.

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THE ALTAR, A TYPE OF CHRIST'S DEATH (27:1-8)

- 1. A place of power! (It had horns!) Ex. 27:2; Eph. 1:19.
- 2. A place of death! Lev. 17:11; Rom. 6:23, 3-5.
- 3. A place of atonement (or covering)! Lev. 1:4; 4:20; Heb. 9:24-26.  
(The atonement was continual! Ex. 29:42)
- 4. A place of meeting God! Ex. 29:42; Eph. 2:16-18.
- 5. A place of sweet smell unto the Lord! Lev. 1:9, 13, 17; Eph. 5:2.
- 6. A place of thanksgiving! Lev. 7:15-17; Col. 1:12-13.

"The altar shall be most holy!" (Ex. 40:10)

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THE COURT, GOD'S OUTREACH TO MEN! (27:9-19)

- 1. The court was separated from the outside world.
  - a. The court was enclosed by high hangings. (27:12-15)
  - b. We must "draw near" to God. (Isa. 55:6; James 4:8)
- 2. The court was open to all. (Ex. 27:16)
  - a. To priests (Lev. 4:3-4)
  - b. To Israel (Lev. 4:27-29)
  - c. To Gentiles (Num. 15:14)
- 3. The court contained the altar and the laver. (Ex. 40:29, 30, 33)
  - a. The altar, a place of blood atonement. (Lev. 17:11)
  - b. The laver, a place of washing. (Ex. 30:18-21; Titus 3:5)

"Enter into his courts with praise!" (Psalm 100:4)

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## OIL FOR THE LAMP! (Ex. 27:20-21)

“Let your lamp be burning” (Luke 12:35). “Let your light shine before men; that they may . . . glorify your Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 5:16). See Matthew 25:2-9.

1. Brought by the people. (27:20)
  2. Beaten from the olives - to be the best oil!
  3. Burned continually! (27:20)
  4. Brought daily! (27:21)
  5. Brought for ever.
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## OIL — A TYPE OF GOD’S SPIRIT! (27:20-21)

1. Priests anointed with oil (Ex. 29:7); Jesus anointed with the Spirit (Acts 10:38; Heb. 1:9)
  2. The lamp light fueled by oil (Ex. 27:20; Zech. 4:2-3, 6); The light of God’s word fueled (inspired) by the Holy Spirit (II Pet. 1:20-21; II Tim. 3:16)
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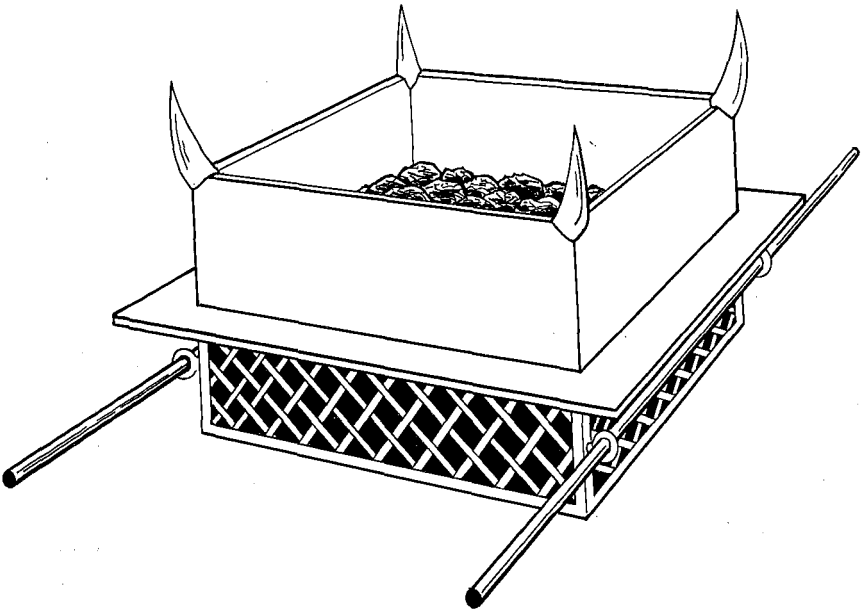
## EXPLORING EXODUS: NOTES ON CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

1. *What is in Exodus twenty-seven?*

The chapter gives the instructions for making the altar of burnt-offering, and for making the pillars and hangings around the courtyard of the tabernacle. It closes with instructions about oil for the lamp. Probably it is simplest to remember the chapter as relating to “Altar and Court.”

2. *What was the material used in making the altar? (27:1-2)*

Its basic framework was made of acacia wood (25:5). The frame itself was hollow (27:8). Apparently there was no internal bracing. The altar was overlaid with bronze (or copper). At a later time (about a year later) the bronze



Probable design of the altar of burnt-offering, or brazen altar. The altar was hollow, wooden, and copper-plated. It had a network of copper reaching halfway up the altar, under the ledge round about the altar. The altar was almost shoulder-high to a man (three cubits, or four and a half feet). The ledge therefore probably served as place for priests to stand or to lay objects. Uncut field stones may have been placed in the altar to hold up the firewood and sacrifices (Ex. 20:24-26). (Drawing by James Sherrod)



The high priest in his holy garments. The garments include (1) the breastplate with twelve gemstones, (2) the ephod, an apron-like garment with straps over the shoulders, (3) the blue robe of the ephod with pomegranates and bells at its bottom, (4) the inner "coat" of fine linen, (5) the girde (sash) of the ephod, and (6) the mitre (or turban) with its inscribed golden plate. (Art by Ellen Cline)



censers (incense burners) of certain rebels who sought to become priests were beaten into plates and attached to the altar as additional covering for it (Num. 16:37-39). We suspect that this was done because the wooden framework needed more protection from the fire than had been originally provided (although the stated reason was that these censers were holy).

The use of bronze for the altar is an obvious contrast to the use of gold for the furniture in the tabernacle building. We observe that the value and beauty of the materials used decreased as they were located further out from the Holy of Holies. (We also notice that the order in which the various objects of furniture are described is generally progressively outward from the Holy of Holies, through the Holy place, and now into the court.)

It has been proposed frequently that the hollow altar was filled with natural uncut stones or earth when it was in use. See 20:24-25. The fire that burned the sacrifices would in that case have actually burned on the stones in the center of the altar. This would have left the altar less exposed to heat damage, as well as conforming to the instructions about making altars of earth or stones. There is, however, no definite statement that the altar was actually filled with stones or earth.

3. *What are the names of the altar?*

It is called the "altar of burnt-offering" (Lev. 4:7; 10:18); or the "brazen altar" (Ex. 38:30), to distinguish it from the "golden altar" of incense (Ex. 39:38). When the altar is referred to, it is always **THE** altar, because it was the only such article in the Israelite religious rituals. King Solomon's temple had ten lavers, ten tables of showbread, etc. But even it had only one altar. Perhaps this points toward the fact that we have in Christ our *only* altar for covering sins.

4. *What were the dimensions of the altar? (27:1; 38:1)*

It was five cubits long, five wide, and three high (7½ feet by 7½ feet by 4½). King Solomon's temple had a much larger altar, twenty by twenty by ten cubits (II Chron. 4:1).

Some have thought that the tabernacle altar was wider at the bottom than at the top, because the sides of the altar below the "ledge" (vs. 5) extended downward from the outside edge of the ledge. The text does not actually describe it this way; however, it really does not preclude this as possibly being the real design. (We doubt that it was.)

5. *Why was the tabernacle equipped with an altar?*

This was necessary because a blood atonement has always been required before men can obtain fellowship with God. "All things are cleansed with blood, and apart from shedding of blood there is no remission" (Hebrews 10:22). Sin requires payment of life. A life is required as a substitute for a life forfeited by sin. See Lev. 17:11.

As repulsive as altars may seem to us, they are part of the necessary education of people to understand the cross. We cannot understand the death of Christ without thinking in terms of altars and sacrifices. Altars speak of *death*. It was not a pleasant object lesson - burning, smelling, smoky, blood-smeared.

We Christians have an altar (Heb. 13:10). The death of Jesus provides for us both an altar and a sacrifice. Christ's death was just as painful and grisly as any burnt-offering on the altar. And, most grievous of all, He had to die because we have sinned. But he loved us and gave himself for us because we could not save ourselves. Because of this supreme gift of Himself, we should concentrate our preaching on "Christ and him crucified" (I Cor. 2:2).

Because of the presence of the altar, an infinitely holy God became approachable by His unworthy people. Israel (like ourselves) approached the LORD by the way of the court, the altar, the laver, the lamp, the bread, and incense, the veil, and into the presence of the Lord.

God's covenant with Israel was ratified at the first by the sprinkling of blood (24:8). The presence of "continual burnt-offerings" on the altar (29:42) was a perpetual reminder of the covenant, and a constant means of keeping within the covenant. The sacrifices done at the altar are described

in detail in Leviticus 1-7.

6. *What was upon the corners of the altar?* (27:2; 38:2)

Horns! They were not detachable, but were made "of one piece" with the altar (literally, "from it").

As the horns of an animal give it power, so *horns* came to be a symbol of power and strength. Note Psalm 75:10; Micah 4:13.

The horns indicate the power in the blood atonement - power to remove condemnation and power to cleanse the life of a transgressor. Because of divine power, we are more than conquerors through him that loved us (Romans 8:37).

In the sin-offerings blood was smeared upon the horns of the altar. See Lev. 4:7; 8:15; 9:9; 16:18; Ex. 29:12.

Sacrificial animals were sometimes tethered to the horns of the altar (Ps. 118:27). Men pleading for their lives sometimes clutched onto the horns of the altar (I Kings 1:50; 2:28; Ex. 21:14).

7. *What accessory equipment was made for use at the altar?* (27:3; 38:3)

(1) Pots (KJV: "pans") to hold ashes being taken away; (2) shovels; (3) basins for sprinkling blood (Lev. 1:5); (4) flesh-hooks (or forks) for moving pieces of flesh about (I Sam. 2:13; (5) fire-pans. This is a translation of the Hebrew word rendered "snuffdishes" in 25:38 and 37:23, and "censers" in Lev. 10:1 and 16:12. All of these items were of brass (27:19).

Similar equipment was prepared for the altar in Solomon's temple. (I Kings 7:45)

8. *Where was the network of brass placed?* (27:4-5; 38:4-5).

The exact positions of the "network" and the "ledge" (KJV: "compass") are difficult to determine. Cole<sup>1</sup> suggests that the brass network (or grating) lay horizontally *inside* the altar framework, and was supported upon a ledge protruding from the inside walls of the altar frame and located

<sup>1</sup>Cole, *op. cit.*, pp. 196-197.

halfway up the sides. If this was the real design, then the sacrificial animals were burned upon the grating and the ashes dripped below. This design would account for the fact that the wooden altar frame was not damaged much by fire, and explain how the ashes in the altar were spilled out when the altar of Jeroboam I was split apart (I Kings 13:15). (We do not think that the sacrificial animals were burned upon the grating. The text does not definitely state that the network was supported by the ledge. In fact, the network was *under* the ledge. See 27:5)

Most commentators think that the network stood upright (vertically) on edge as part of the outside structure of the altar, extending from the ground upward to halfway up the sides. This design would provide an air draft for the fire on the altar. To us this seems the better view, because the rings employed to hold the staves to carry the ark were of necessity on the *outside* of the altar, and these rings are said to have been mounted on the corners of the network.

Also the net-work is clearly said to have been installed "unto half (way up) the altar." To us this seems meaningless if the net-work were not vertical and on the outside.

As for the "ledge" itself, Cassuto<sup>2</sup> suggests that it was a kind of horizontal projection that encompassed the altar on all sides, and that its purpose was purely ornamental. He does not think that it was supported under its outer edge by the network or anything else.

This view would interpret the altar as having the same external dimensions at the bottom as it had at the top. We favor this view, because no suggestion is made in the text that the altar was wider at the bottom than at the top.

Keil and Delitzsch<sup>3</sup>, Barnes<sup>4</sup>, and others have felt that the ledge was a bench or shelf protruding at right angles from the sides of the altar halfway up its sides, and that the

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<sup>2</sup>*Op. cit.*, p. 364.

<sup>3</sup>*Op. cit.*, p. 186.

<sup>4</sup>*Op. cit.*, p. 73.

network of brass stood vertically under the outer edge of the ledge so as to support the outer edge of it. This design would result in the altar's being wider at the bottom than at the top. Keil and Delitzsch suggest that the priests stood upon this ledge when offering the sacrifices, and that this would explain how Aaron could "come down" from offering sacrifices. (Lev. 9:22).

The use of the ledge as a place upon which the priests might stand seems reasonable (though unproven). The altar was four and a half feet tall (three cubits, or fifty-four inches). Thus a bench or ledge halfway up its sides (twenty-seven inches up) would make the work of lifting firewood, pieces of flesh, pots, tools, etc. upon the altar much easier. Possibly a ramp of earth (certainly no steps!) was sloped up beside the altar to the level of the ledge. See Ex. 20:26.

After all has been said, we have to admit that we do not know the precise purpose of the ledge around the altar. Probably it was used for whatever purposes it might conveniently serve. We also do not know the width of the ledge.

9. *How was the altar of burnt-offering transported about?* (27:6-7; 38:5-7)

It was carried by staves thrust into rings mounted on the corners of the altar, upon the net of brass. The staves were overlaid with brass, unlike the staves with the furniture inside the tabernacle, which were overlaid with gold.

When being transported the altar was covered with a purple cloth and a covering of sealskins. (See 25:5.) Only this altar had a purple covering. The other furniture had blue coverings.

10. *What material was used for the frame of the altar?* (27:8)

"Planks" (KJV & RSV: "boards") were used. The Hebrew word for "plank" (*luach*) in 27:8 is not the same word used of the boards of the tabernacle building. *Luach* is the word also used to refer to the stone tablets of the ten commandments (Ex. 24:12; 31:18). It may mean table, tablet, plate of stone or metal, wooden plate, board, or plank. (Harkavy's *Lexicon*)

11. *What was the name of the enclosure around the tabernacle? (27:9; 38:9)*

It was called the *court* of the tabernacle. "Court" simply means yard or enclosure. There the people could come and and assemble at God's house for worship. The court marked the outer limit of the area dedicated exclusively to the service of God. Later temples in Jerusalem would have stone walls marking off their courts (I Kings 7:12). We do not read of vast crowds thronging the tabernacle courts as they did in the temple courts later (Isa. 1:12).

Even Gentiles could enter the court. Lev. 17:8; 22:18; Num. 15:14-16. This shows that the LORD has always been rich unto all who call upon Him (Rom. 10:12, 13).

There was joy in coming into the court. "Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, That he may dwell in thy *courts*" (Ps. 65:4). "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his *courts* with praise" (Psalm 100:4).

The court shows the two principles of exclusion and inclusion.<sup>5</sup> The nation of Israel was unholy in its deeds, and thus could NOT go into the immediate presence of Yahweh in the Holy of Holies. The veil before the Holy of Holies and the screen before the Holy Place excluded all but certain peoples. There are barriers between a holy God and unholy men. But the great message in God's good news is that God has reached out to men and provided a meeting place where men may come to Him. The walls of the court are up, but the door is open. God has set forth to reach out and reconcile the world unto Himself (II Cor. 5:16-21). While God's holiness excludes us as unworthy sinners, yet his love and mercy include us in a divine outreach.

This is the reason we have spoken of the court as a type of God's outreach into the world.

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<sup>5</sup>Ramm, *op. cit.*, pp. 162-164.

In some manner God's heavenly kingdom also has a "court." See Rev. 11:1-2. We see in this fact another illustration of the truth that the tabernacle on earth was a copy of the things in the heavens (Heb. 9:23).

12. *What were the dimensions of the court?* (27:9, 12, 18)

It was fifty cubits wide (75 feet) on the east and west, and a hundred cubits (150 feet) on the north and south. Its entrance was on the east side (27:13-14). The entrance was twenty cubits wide (27:16), and located in the center of the east side.

If in Egypt the Israelites had ever worshipped the rising sun, this practice would have been unlikely to be continued at the tabernacle, because their backs would have been toward the rising sun as they approached the tabernacle facing west, toward its entrance on the east.

13. *What was the court made of?* (27:9-10; 38:9-10)

It consisted of pillars five cubits tall (7½ feet), which held up a hanging of fine twisted linen cloth (38:16, 18). The court was too tall to gaze over, even on tiptoe. People had to come inside to see what was going on inside.

The material of the pillars is not specifically stated, but probably it was acacia wood. The columns were not made of brass, a fact indicated by the non-mention of the columns in 38:29-31, where the uses of the brass are itemized.

The columns had sockets (bases, or pedestals) of brass, but hooks and fillets of silver at their tops. The capitals (or decorated tops) of the pillars were overlaid with silver (38:17). Josephus (*Ant.* III, vi, 2) says that the brass bases had sharp ends like spears, which were stuck into the ground. The scripture does not mention such a fact.

The hooks were used to hold up the cloth hangings. Cassuto suggests that the hooks were Y-shaped, like the Hebrew letter *waw*.

The nature of the "fillets" remains quite uncertain. See 38:10. The Hebrew word for fillet (*chashuq*) comes from a verb (*chisheq*) meaning "to fasten together" (Harkavy). Therefore, some have suggested that the fillets were

silver connecting rods, like curtain rods, connecting the tops of the pillars to one another; and that the "hanging" hung from these rods. Other commentators suggest that the fillets were bands or rings of silver encircling the pillars at various points, perhaps at the tops, bottoms, and middles, and that the hangings may have been anchored to the pillars at their fillets. The function of the fillets is not clearly indicated. We somewhat favor the view that they were bands of silver upon the pillars, and did not extend from one pillar to the next one.

The expression "south side southward" in 27:9 is literally "to the side of the Negev, to the south." See notes on 26:18.

14. *How many pillars were used in the court? (27:10-15; 38:10-15)*

Sixty pillars. Twenty were on the north and on the south side. Ten were on the east and on the west ends.

The most probable layout is that the pillars were exactly five cubits apart. The pillar at each corner was probably counted as belonging to only one side, even though each corner pillar supported an end of the hanging on two adjacent sides. Keil and Delitzsch affirm that anyone may easily convince himself of the correctness of the number of sixty pillars by drawing a figure of their layout. We agree.

15. *How large was the entrance of the court? (27:16; 38:18-19)*

It was twenty cubits (30 feet) wide. It was made of the same colored linen material as that used at the doorway of the tent. See 26:36. (Regarding *linen*, see 25:4.) The hanging at the entrance to the court was embroidered with needlework. It was held up on four pillars, which rested on four sockets (pedestals). See 27:10. On either side of the entrance fifteen cubits of linen curtains were hung up.

The expression in 38:18 "the height in the breadth" is a rather singular one, and "breadth" there is to be understood of the doorway of the court. It emphasizes that the screen at the court entrance was the same height as the rest of the court.

Regarding the "fillets" of 27:17, see notes on 27:9-10.



16. *What material were the tabernacle instruments made of?* (27:19; 38:20)

Of brass. See 25:3. The instruments referred to are probably the vessels and tools used at the altar (27:3), and possibly others also.

The "pins" of the tabernacle are probably the tent pins which provided anchors to the guy ropes holding upright the pillars of the court. Ex. 27:19 also indicates that the main tabernacle building used "pins." Possibly they held the side boards of the tabernacle rigid, although their position and function are not stated.

17. *What was used as fuel for the light?* (27:20)

Pure olive oil obtained by beating olives was to be brought by the children of Israel to the priests. The Jewish *Mishna*<sup>6</sup> indicates that the very best oil was produced by beating the olives lightly with rods. This oil was clear and colorless and burned with little smoke. The lower grades of oil were obtained by crushing the olives completely in a press or mortar.

The small amount of oil required by the lamp could have been obtained from caravans passing through the wilderness. There is no need to question the Biblical text because oil was (supposedly) not available in the desert.

The Hebrew words for "light" (*ma'or*) in 27:20 and for "lamp" (*ner*) are different from the word (*menorah*) translated "candlestick" in 25:31. Some have therefore thought that they refer to a different light, perhaps some much simpler light. To us it appears that Ex. 35:14 and 39:37 clearly indicate that all these Hebrew words refer to the same "light."

The wording of Lev. 24:2-4 is almost identical to Ex. 27:20-21.

The lamp is said to "burn continually."

It seems somewhat surprising to find at this point (27:20)

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<sup>6</sup>See Cole, *op. cit.*, p. 198.

the instructions about bringing olive oil for the lamp. We would have imagined that such information would have been given back in 25:31ff where the lamp was described. But it is the usual pattern in Exodus to keep the descriptions of the construction of the items of furniture separate from the information about the rituals associated with them.

Also, 27:20-21 may be considered the start of a new section of subject matter, giving directions for the priesthood. Note that chapter twenty-eight continues the discussion of the priesthood. Cassuto<sup>7</sup> notes that 27:20, 28:1, and 28:3 all begin (in Hebrew) with the word "and thou." He considers this an indication of connection between 27:20-21 and the following chapter. We do not feel that this is a certainty, but it is a possibility.

18. *When was the lamp to burn? (27:20-21)*

It was to burn "continually" (Heb., *tamid*). This word itself may mean either continuously, without interruption; or regularly, that is, every night. It is used with the second meaning in Psalm 34:1: "His praise shall *continually* be in my mouth." This can hardly mean an unbroken flow of praise.

The lamp was to burn "from evening to morning" (27:21; Lev. 24:3; Ex. 30:7-8; I Sam 3:3) I Sam. 3:3 says, "The lamp had not yet gone out."

Nonetheless, we are of the opinion that the seven lamps were never all extinguished at one time. They were the only source of light in the Holy Place. Light would frequently be needed in the Holy Place in the daylight hours, as well as at night. See Lev. 4:7; 24:7-8. Later Jewish practice was to keep the lamp burning unceasingly.

19. *Where was the lamp to burn? (27:21)*

It burned in the "tent of meeting" (KJV: "tabernacle of the congregation"). This was the Holy Place, the room just "without (outside of) the veil," which was before the

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<sup>7</sup>*Op. cit.*, p. 369.

testimony (the tablets of the ten commandments in the ark).

The expression "tent of meeting" is used here for the first time as a title for the Holy Place. After this time it is often employed. The word "meeting" (Heb. *mo'ed*) refers to the place, the time, and the event of a "meeting" between God and man.

20. *Who was responsible for caring for the light? (27:21)*

Aaron (the high priest) and his sons (the other priests).

The light was kept "before Jehovah." Keeping the light burning was important to God. It said something about Him and about His people also.

Burning the lamp was to be a statute (or law) "for ever," literally, a "statute of eternity." The Hebrew word *'olam* (translated "for ever") sometimes means existence without end, as in the expression in Gen. 21:33, "the *everlasting* God." However, sometimes it refers to long periods of time which may have an end. Thus we read that slaves might become servants "for ever," that is, for life (Deut. 15:17). Also the grave is called the "everlasting home" in Eccl. 12:5, even though there will be a resurrection. God put His name in Solomon's temple "for ever"; nevertheless, Solomon's temple was destroyed. Thus also circumcision was an "everlasting covenant" (Gen. 17:13), even though at present neither circumcision nor uncircumcision matters at all (Galatians 5:6).

These uses of "for ever" (and related expressions) make clear how the lamp could be a "statute for ever," and yet exist no more at present.

The burning of the lamp was "on behalf of" the children of Israel. This expression is translated "by" in the R.S.V., and "for" (margin: Lit. *from*) in the New American Standard version. The Hebrew has a compound preposition literally reading "from with." Primarily it means "from," but the idea that it was also "with" Israel seems true here. God's light was "from" them in the sense that they furnished the oil, but it was "with" them in that it was *God's* light in their tabernacle.