

Exegetical Notes, Exodus 27:1-8
“Reminders of His Presence: The Altar”

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Exodus 27:1-8

Verse 1

Build an altar of acacia wood, three cubits high: it is to be square, five cubits long and five cubits wide.

- God ordered Israel to build an altar of acacia wood. The altar was to be about nine feet square and about 5 feet high.

Verse 2

Make a horn at each of the four corners, so that the horns and the altar are of one piece, and overlay the altar with bronze.

- The altar was to have four horns, the symbol of strength, one at each of its corners.
- It was to be overlaid with bronze. The bronze was to protect the wood from the heat of the fire contained in the altar. However, it would not have provided sufficient protection to provide protection for the wood. Scholars believe that dirt was piled up against the inside walls of the altar and the fire made in the center. This pit of dirt or desert sand against the bronze walls of the altar would have made the altar a successful implement even though it was made of wood. Had the altar been made of solid bronze it would have been too heavy to carry.

Verse 3

Make all its utensils of bronze -- its pots to remove the ashes, and its shovels, sprinkling bowls, meat forks, and firepans..

- The altar was for offering animal sacrifice. Various utensils were required to handle the ash from the burning of the sacrifice and the sacrifice itself. All of these utensils were to be made from bronze.

Verse 4-5

Make a grating for it, a bronze network, and make a bronze ring at each of the four corners of the network. Put it under the ledge of the altar so that it is halfway up the altar.

- Inside the altar box was to be a bronze grate upon which the sacrifice was to be laid.

Verse 6-7

Make poles of acacia wood for the altar and overlay them with bronze. The poles are to be inserted into the rings so they will be on two sides of the altar when it is carried..

- As with the other furniture in the Tabernacle, the altar is to be fitted with rings and poles so that it can be carried from place to place.

Verse 8

Make the altar hollow, out of boards. It is to be made just as you were shown on the mountain.

- It does not make sense to build anything that will hold fire from wood. However, this is the instruction of God. It is to be made from wood instead of solid bronze so that it is lighter to carry. Israel is to trust God in this and follow his instructions exactly as he gave them.

(These exegetical notes are the foundational study for the sermon entitled *Reminders of His Presence: The Altar*. They have been prepared by the Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen, Senior Pastor at Cornerstone Fellowship, Coatesville Pennsylvania. All rights are reserved by Dr. Jensen and *Cornerstone Fellowship*.)