

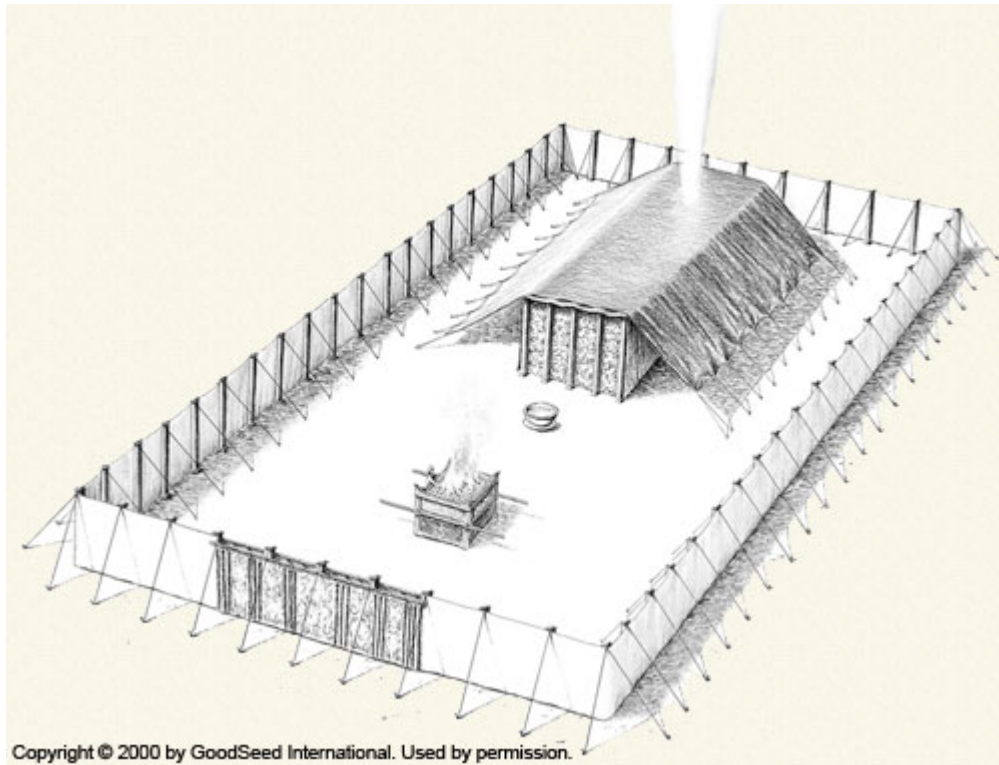
Lesson 2: The Basic Layout of the Tabernacle and the Gate

Read: Exodus 26:1-30, 27:9-19

To summarize this long passage, the tabernacle consisted of a tent-like structure (the tabernacle proper) covered by rug-like materials for a roof, and an external courtyard. The whole compound was surrounded by a high fence. The fence was made of linen hangings held by pillars.

The tent – the tabernacle proper – was divided into the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. The tent was made of acacia wood boards overlaid with gold and fitted together to form the walls (45 by 15 feet). On top, four layers of curtains acted as a roof to shield the tabernacle from sun and rain: The innermost layer was woven with fine linen and embroidered with figures of cherubim (angels), the second layer was made of goat's hair, the third layer was made of rams' skins dyed red, and the outermost layer was made of porpoise skins. The curtains were pinned to the ground with loops and clasps.

The whole compound (150 feet by 75 feet) was surrounded by a high fence (7 feet in height) with only one entry way (30 feet wide). The gate was located directly in the center of the outer court, always on the east end. It was covered by a curtain or screen made of finely twisted linen in blue, purple and scarlet.



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5. Read John 10:9 and 14:6, two of Jesus' famous "I am" statements. How did the tabernacle gate point to Jesus Christ?

6. The significance of the tabernacle's layout was not only in the fence and the gate, but also in the way the pieces of furniture were arranged. We will look at one of these components to begin with: The first thing that someone saw upon entering the gate was the brazen altar, where he was to present his animal sacrifice. What do you think was the implication of this arrangement to Israel?

Optional further reading: The Israelites camped around the tabernacle in a specific way. For more information on the layout of the camp, read Numbers 2. Draw a diagram of how the tribes were arranged around the tabernacle. The layout resembles a cross (or small letter "t"), with the tabernacle in the center. This signified God's dwelling always in the center of His people.