

## Lesson 3: The Brazen Altar

### Read: Exodus 27:1-8

The brazen altar, bronze altar, or altar of sacrifice was situated right inside the courtyard upon entering the gate to the tabernacle. The Hebrew root for altar means “to slay” or “slaughter.” The Latin word *alta* means “high.” So an altar is a “high place for sacrifice/slaughter.” The brazen altar in the tabernacle courtyard stood raised on a mound of earth, higher than its surrounding furniture.

The altar was made of wood from the acacia tree and overlaid with bronze (usually symbolic of judgment on sin in the Bible), measuring 7.5 feet on all four sides and 4.5 feet deep. Four horns projected from the top four corners and a bronze grating was inside to hold the animal.

### Discussion:

1. The brazen altar was situated very strategically: It was placed in the courtyard right inside the gate, so that it was the first thing one encountered upon entering the tabernacle complex. Why?
2. God laid out various laws for different kinds of animal sacrifices in the book of Leviticus. Read Leviticus 4:3, 23 and 28. What is the significance of bringing an animal without defect?
3. Read Leviticus 4:15 and 29. What is the significance of laying hands on the animal before it is slain?

4. Read Leviticus 17:11 and Hebrews 9:22. “Atonement” means “covering for sin,” and blood was the agent for atonement in the Old Testament. What was the significance of blood and how could it atone for sins?
  
5. Read John 1:29 and 1 Peter 1:18-19. What did John the Baptist and Peter recognize about Jesus so that they would call Jesus a “lamb”? Relate this to what we have been studying about the animal sacrifices and the brazen altar.
  
6. Read Hebrews 10:1-18. How is the sacrifice of Christ fundamentally different from that of the animal sacrifices presented year after year in the Old Testament?
  
7. Horns were a symbol power and strength in biblical times. When the sacrifice was made, blood was dabbed on the horns of the altar. In light of Christ’s sacrifice, what do the horns on the brazen altar mean to us as believers?