

# THE SACRIFICE

## FACILITATOR GUIDE

Today we begin a new study following Pastor Chris' new sermon series. **IN THE SHADOWS** is a sermon series about the Tabernacle God instructed Moses to erect while the Israelites were on their wilderness journey. As Pastor Chris has already pointed out, every element in the Tabernacle is a SHADOW of the Savior. What the Israelites only understood in part, we can know today in its fullness through Christ Jesus. Today we will take our first steps through the gate of the Tabernacle.

The Hebrew word for tabernacle is mishkān, meaning "**RESIDENCE**" or "**DWELLING PLACE.**" All the way back in Genesis we see that God has always had a desire to be with the people He created. In Genesis 3, we find God walking through the Garden in the cool of the evening calling out to Adam and Eve, "Where are you?"

There was one entrance to the Tabernacle located on the **EAST** side. Everyone came in the same way. There was so secret entrance for the High Priest, and no back door for the very poor.

**What do we also associate with the east? [The sun rises in the east. The day begins on the east side.]**

**Do you see a particular meaning in that with the tabernacle? [It should be a reminder to start our day by coming to the Lord and giving Him honor. The Tabernacle is a reminder that God desires to dwell with us. That relationship should begin first thing every morning. Invite Him to join you in your day and walk with Him all day long.]**

Entering through the gate, we would step into the courtyard. No doubt, stepping across that threshold would have given you chills. You would see the dedication of the priests at work. You would see the outside covering of the Holy Place, but you would know that just inside was the Holy of Holies, where the Presence of God dwelt. You would be in awe, knowing you are stepping nearer to the very Presence of God. We we need to let that soak in for a moment.

**What do you think would be going through your mind as you stepped inside? [You may be thinking about the fact that you are a sinner and you are nearing a perfect God.]**

**When was the last time you got chills knowing you were in the Presence of God?**

**Why do you think we don't get chills like that every time we pray or every time we come into the church worship center? [Perhaps we are too distracted, too many other things on our mind, or maybe we take it for granted. We need to practice just being in awe of God.]**

## THE BRAZEN ALTAR

Walking in, the very first thing we would encounter is the big brazen altar of sacrifice.

**Exodus 27:1-8**—“You are to construct the altar of acacia wood. The altar must be square, 7½ feet long, and 7½ feet wide; it must be 4½ feet high. 2 Make horns for it on its four corners; the horns are to be of one piece. Overlay it with bronze. 3 Make its pots for removing ashes, and its shovels, basins, meat forks, and firepans; make all its utensils of bronze. 4 Construct a grate for it of bronze mesh, and make four bronze rings on the mesh at its four corners. 5 Set it below, under the altar’s ledge, so that the mesh comes halfway up the altar. 6 Then make poles for the altar, poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with bronze. 7 The poles are to be inserted into the rings so that the poles are on two sides of the altar when it is carried. 8 Construct the altar with boards so that it is hollow. They are to make it just as it was shown to you on the mountain.



God’s blueprint for construction that He gave to Moses came from the design in Heaven. Notice, John’s description.

**Revelation 9:13**—Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet, and I heard a voice from the **FOUR HORNS** of the **GOLDEN ALTAR** before God,

God’s instructions for the construction of every part of the Tabernacle were VERY detailed. Imagine if you had an idea for your perfect dream home and set out to build it. You would be very detailed too, right?

Each part of the Tabernacle and its furnishings was either designed to have a **PRACTICAL USE** or a **SYMBOLIC MEANING** attached to it.

God told Moses to have the altar made of acacia [**ah-kay-shah**] wood. This particular type wood was known for its incorruptibility—resisting decay. In the desert wilderness, wood of any type would be scarce. Acacia was a dense, heavy wood, best for construction. So among the rare, it was choice. The wood also bore heavy, sharp thorns on it.

**In what ways was acacia practical? [It was sturdy. It didn’t decay quickly. It was available.]**

**In what ways was acacia symbolic of Christ? [Isaiah 53 says He was “like a root out of dry ground.” Jesus called Himself the “true vine.” Jesus bore thorns as He was becoming our sacrifice. And though He died, His body did not decay.]**

The wood was to be completely covered with bronze. Bronze was symbolic of God's judgment. When polished the bronze would shine. Both the bronze and wood were "of the earth," meaning they were not man-made materials. The altar itself was handcrafted by man, just as it is man's sin that made sacrifice necessary in the first place.

## THE HORNS

God told Moses to see to it that there were horns on the four corners of the altar. During each sacrifice, blood was to be wiped onto each of the four horns.

As a practical application, the horns were used to secure the bulls, goats, and sheep in one place. The last thing you want is for your sacrifice to take off running amok through the holy places of God! Symbolically, let's look to Jesus who bled at His head, His right hand, His left hand, and His feet.

Those horns also served as a reflection of these "horns" found in Scripture:

### 1. HORN OF **SALVATION**

**Psalm 18:2**— The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer, my God, my rock where I seek refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

The first time a sacrifice was secured by a horn can be found in Genesis 22.

**Genesis 22:13**— Abraham looked up and saw a ram caught in the thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram and offered it as a burnt offering in place of his son.

In reference to the conception of Jesus, the angel told Zechariah:

**Luke 1:69**—[God] has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of David His servant—

The last time in Scripture that find a sacrifice held securely was when Jesus was nailed to the cross!

### 2. HORN OF **WAR / VICTORY**—

**Joshua 6:20**— So the troops shouted, and the ram's horns sounded. When they heard the blast of the ram's horn, the troops gave a great shout, and the wall collapsed. The troops advanced into the city, each man straight ahead, and they captured the city.

### 3. HORN OF **ANOINTING**—

**1 Samuel 16:13**— So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully on David from that day forward.

Anointing was a way of being set apart for the service of God. It is a symbol of the Holy Spirit at work in someone's life.

#### **4. HORN OF ALARM —**

In the Old Testament, the sound of the horn was a “wake up call.” It has been called the “air-raid siren of their day.” At various times it was used as an alarm for danger, the call to march forward, a call to war, and in the processional of a king. The blowing of the ram's horn is associated with the Jewish New Year (Rosh Hashanah), which is both a celebration and a call to repentance, which lasted for 10 days until the Day of Atonement. That was the one day that the High Priest entered into the Holy of Holies and prayed before the Ark of the Covenant.

Even today the sound of the horn (shofar) is a WAKE UP CALL and REMINDER to think about the way we BEHAVE and what we do in God's Presence.

In the New Testament Paul tells us that a horn will also sound:

**1 Thessalonians 4:16**— For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

When you approach God in a time of worship and repentance, consider these four horns, meant to serve as reminders of the things we need most from God: SALVATION, VICTORY, ANOINTING, and ALARM.

## **OFFERING ACCEPTED**

When we talk about bringing a sacrifice to God, we tend to look at it as LOSING something. We see sacrifice as a negative against our accounts. The Hebrew word for offering is korban, meaning “do draw CLOSE; make a personal CONNECTION; heart-felt RELATIONSHIP.”

**Do you think you could take an animal to the Brazen altar and sacrifice it?**

**What part would bother you the most?**

**Is it easier to think about Jesus dying on the cross for you than about killing an innocent animal?**

**Why or why not?**

**When you confess your sin to God, do you wonder whether He will forgive or not? Do you wonder if you have said or done enough for God to accept you?**

**Do you doubt that you are worthy to be forgiven?**

The killing of innocent animals is not about God slapping you around and telling you how bad you are. The confession of sin is not about making you feel like a horrible person whose name is at the bottom of God's most lovable list. It is meant to serve as a **BRIDGE** spanning the gap between you and God.

After the Tabernacle was constructed, the furnishings were made, the priests were trained and anointed, then an initial sacrifice was made to God. Only if they had done well would God have accepted their offering.

**Leviticus 9:6**—And Moses said, “This is the thing which the Lord commanded that you should do; and the glory of the Lord shall appear to you.

Now compare that to John 15:10-11:

**John 15:10-11**— If you keep My commands you will remain in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commands and remain in His love. 11 “I have told you these things so that My joy may be in you and your joy may be complete.

Don't misunderstand— **OUR OBEDIENCE** doesn't make God any **GREATER** than He already is. His essence is unchanged by our obedience or disobedience. Anything that God asks us to do is so that our joy may be full—the joy of seeing His glory revealed to us and in us!

Just as the offering of sheep and goats couldn't atone for the sins of the people forever, nothing we can do on our own today can bring redemption for our sins. Only the blood of Jesus can satisfy God's requirement. So nothing we can do can save us. Only what Jesus did can save us. We come to God through Jesus' name.

**Leviticus 9:7; 22-24**— Then Moses said to Aaron, “Approach the altar and sacrifice your sin offering and your burnt offering; make atonement for yourself and the people. Sacrifice the people's offering and make atonement for them, as the Lord commanded.”

22 Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them. He came down after sacrificing the sin offering, the burnt offering, and the fellowship offering. 23 Moses and Aaron then entered the tent of meeting. When they came out, they blessed the people, and the glory of the Lord appeared to all the people. 24 Fire came from the Lord and consumed the burnt offering and the fat portions on the altar. And when all the people saw it, they shouted and fell face down.

The people had followed all the orders. The priests had all done their part. They all stood there waiting.....Would God approve?

**What happened when Moses and Aaron came out of the Tabernacle and blessed all the people? [Fire from God came down and consumed the offering.]**

The fire was the seal of God's approval—a divine display of His acceptance. God Himself christened the altar with His own fire. Don't miss the perpetual significance of this heavenly fire.

**Leviticus 6:12-13**— The fire on the altar is to be kept burning; it must not go out. Every morning the priest will burn wood on the fire. He is to arrange the burnt offering on the fire and burn the fat portions from the fellowship offerings on it. 13 Fire must be kept burning on the altar continually; it must not go out.

Now, compare to 2 Timothy...

**2 Timothy 1:6**— This is why I remind you to fan into flames the spiritual gift God gave you when I laid my hands on you.

**According to 2 Timothy, what is your responsibility after God lights His fire in you? [Keep the fire burning! ]**

**What are some ways that you can make sure to “keep the fire burning” in your life and daily walk? [Keep in the Word daily. Keep your prayer life active. Confess any wrong doing. Etc.]**

At nightfall, Aaron and his sons were ordered to slay and burn an evening sacrifice that God commanded to be left burning on the altar all night. They were to rise early in the morning and wait for the last of the ashes to fall through the brass grate of the altar. The ashes fell at dawn. The ancient Hebrew history records that the moment the last ash fell, the priests would blow the trumpets in celebration, shouting “It is finished!”

**John 19:30**— When Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, “It is finished.” Then bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.

And the New Testament also reminds us that what Jesus accomplished was greater than the sacrifice of innocent animals.

**Hebrews 8:5-6**— These serve as a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was warned when he was about to complete the tabernacle. For God said, Be careful that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown to you on the mountain. 6 But Jesus has now obtained a superior ministry, and to that degree He is the mediator of a **BETTER COVENANT**, which has been established on **BETTER PROMISES**.

## **PRAYER TIME**

As you pray, consider these prayer points:

- Thank God you live on this side of the cross, knowing that Jesus has died once and for all for our sins. Take some time to express your gratefulness for Jesus' sacrifice.
- Ask God to show you ways that you can better enhance your relationship with Him.
- Pray that others might open their hearts to God, seeing the offering of themselves on the altar of faith is not a "loss" but a great "gain."