

Exodus 27:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And thou shalt make an altar of shittim wood, five cubits long, and five cubits broad; the altar shall be foursquare: and the height thereof shall be three cubits.

Analysis

The bronze altar (מִזְבֵּחַ, mizbeach) of acacia wood overlaid with bronze stands at the tabernacle entrance—the first object worshipers encounter. Bronze consistently represents judgment; this altar where animals are consumed by fire prefigures Christ bearing God's judgment in our place. Measuring $5 \times 5 \times 3$ cubits (approximately 7.5' square, 4.5' high), its size indicates the magnitude of sin requiring atonement. Christ's cross is our bronze altar where divine wrath was satisfied.

Historical Context

This altar stood in the outer court between the tabernacle entrance and the courtyard gate, visible to all Israel. Daily burnt offerings (morning and evening) were consumed here, maintaining covenant relationship between God and His people through substitutionary sacrifice.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does the bronze altar's prominent placement emphasize that atonement must precede worship?
2. In what ways did Christ's cross serve as the ultimate 'bronze altar' bearing God's judgment?

Interlinear Text

וַעֲשֵׂה יָתֶךָ	אֶת	הַמִּזְבֵּחַ	עֵץ	יָם	שֵׁט	וְחֵמֶשׁ	אֵמֹת
And thou shalt make	H853	an altar	wood	of shittim	and five	cubits	
H6213		H4196	H6086	H7848	H2568	H520	
אֵרָא	וְחֵמֶשׁ	אֵמֹת	רָחֵב	כָּבֹד	וְעַ	הַמִּזְבֵּחַ	יְהוָה
long	and five	cubits	broad	shall be four	square	H1961	an altar
H753	H2568	H520	H7341	H7251			H4196
וְשָׁלֹשׁ	אֵמֹת	וְהַגָּבֹה׃					
thereof shall be three	cubits	and the height					
H7969	H520	H6967					