

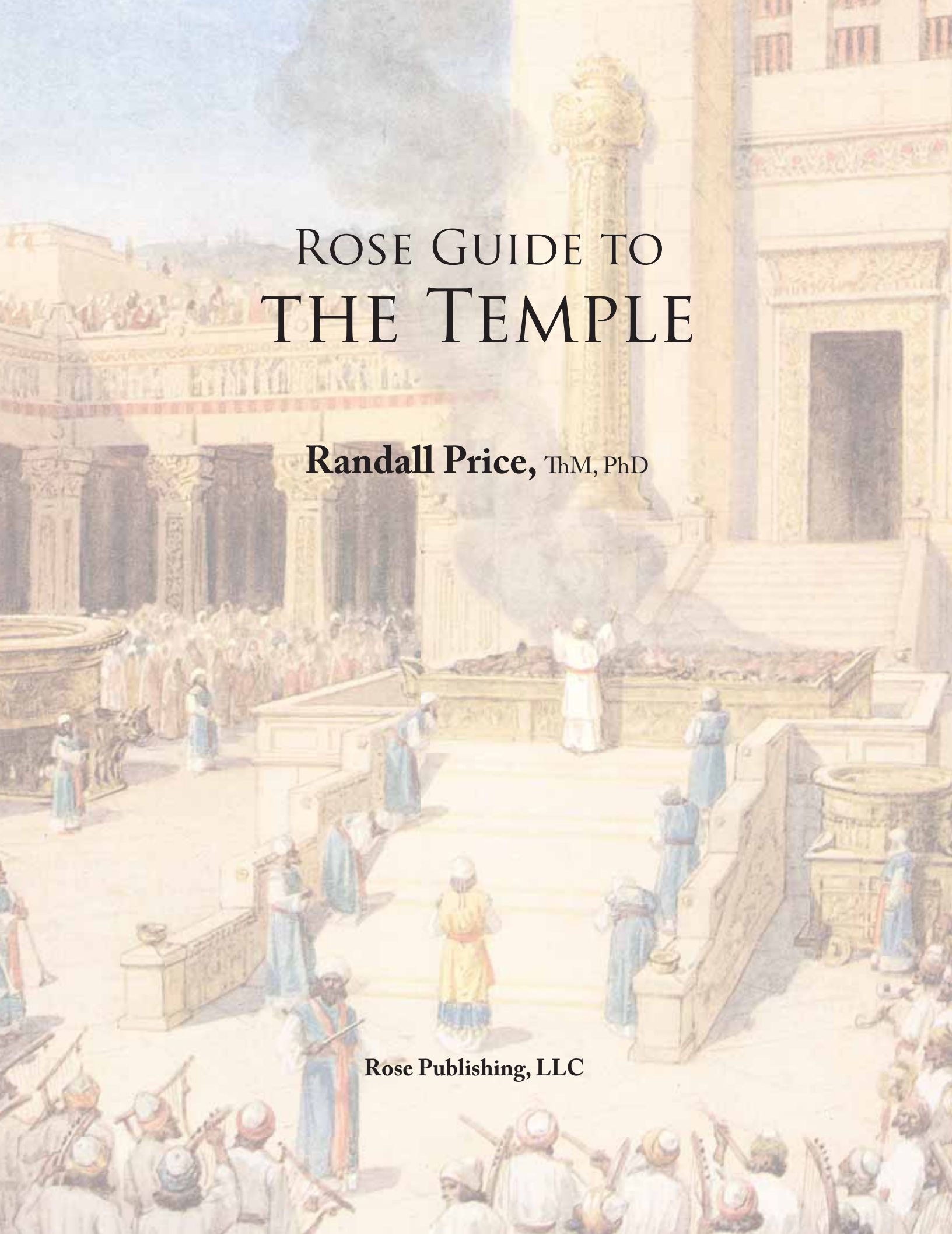
# ROSE GUIDE TO THE TEMPLE



**ROSE**  
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# ROSE GUIDE TO THE TEMPLE

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**Rose Publishing, LLC**

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# INTRODUCTION

The temple built in Jerusalem is the most important building in history. Perhaps greater and grander structures have been built, but what makes the temple the most important is that God designed this structure as the place where his glorious presence would dwell. Though many times in history religions and political leaders have sought to deny, destroy, or replace the significance of the temple with shrines or symbols of their own, the temple and its site of the Temple Mount have continued even to this day to be before the eyes of the world.

- Christianity remembers the temple in association with the teachings of Jesus and the last week of his life on earth.
- Islamic tradition claims that a stone at the Temple Mount is the place where Abraham brought his son Ishmael and from which the prophet Muhammad ascended to heaven.
- Judaism, at least its Orthodox sect, still believes the divine presence attends the site. Most Orthodox Jews believe that the temple must one day be rebuilt.

These different perspectives on the temple have produced both controversy and conflict throughout history, and therefore those who would seek to understand the cause of this conflict must understand the subject of the temple itself.

Modern Jews and Christians often have difficulty understanding the concept of the temple and its sacrificial system. Although the temple was a familiar and accepted institution in early Judaism and the early church, its absence for the past 2,000 years has contributed to a lack of understanding regarding the temple's nature and importance. However, both Jews and Christians still utilize buildings in their worship of God and believe that his presence is in some way with them as they meet. If houses of worship are important for believers today, how much more necessary was the existence of a physical sanctuary when the divine presence visibly manifested itself with his people! Though the physical temple does not stand today, the spiritual sense of the sanctuary that we experience now should help us appreciate what God provided in the past.

*“One thing I ask from the LORD, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple.” —Psalm 27:4*

It is therefore only fitting that this book presents the temple visually. God originally gave the temple to the people of Israel as a visual aid to comprehending God's glory in the heavenly temple and to show the way in which God in his holiness relates to people in their sinful condition. He provided its pattern by divine revelation and commanded that it be built according to his precise specifications. Every element in the design of the temple, like every garment and action of the priesthood, was intended for illustrating the divine ideal. From the beginning of creation, God communicated this divine ideal to humankind: He desires a relationship with his creatures, but on his terms, respecting his righteous standards.

Throughout the history of divine revelation, God has continued to express this divine ideal through the concept of a sanctuary, whether actual or symbolic. For this reason, we find the concept of sanctuary spanning the whole of written revelation—from the first book of the Old Testament to the last book of the New Testament. The more you are able to visualize this wonderful design, the greater you will enjoy this central teaching of the Word of God.

Although the Temple Mount today is the most *volatile* acreage on earth, for those who seek a relationship with the God of the universe, the study of the temple is one of the most *vital* activities for faith and worship. If you approach this study as one would approach the gates of the ancient temple with wonder and awe and then pass through with reverence, you will have the experience of the Israelites of old in gaining access to the knowledge of the Holy.





—○ SECTION 1 ○—

*God's Sanctuary Before the Temple*







—○ SECTION 1 ○—

*God's Sanctuary Before the Temple*

## OVERVIEW OF THE TEMPLE IN GOD'S PLAN

### Creation and the Fall

The Bible reveals that God created humans in his image and that he desired from the beginning of creation to have a relationship with them (Genesis 1:26; 3:8). But when sin entered the world through the tragic event known as the Fall in the garden of Eden, humankind became alienated from God and forced God to exile them from his presence (Genesis 3:8–19, 23). To prevent them in this fallen state from reentering the garden, which represented a sanctuary where God's holiness had dwelt, God stationed cherubim to guard the entrance (Genesis 3:24).



Expulsion from the garden of Eden after the Fall

### Sacrifices and Atonement

Yet God also revealed a way in which human sin could be forgiven and the broken relationship restored. God himself provided a substitute (an animal) whose blood (life) would atone for sin (Genesis 3:21). This began the sacrificial system. God also revealed the way in which he would return his presence to humanity and restore



David bringing the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem

the earthly relationship once enjoyed in Eden; this was through the building of a sanctuary and maintaining a priesthood to serve God (Exodus 25:8; 27:21). First a tent-like structure called the tabernacle served as the sanctuary; it was later replaced by a permanent structure, the temple in Jerusalem. The sacrificial system was conducted within the tabernacle in the wilderness and later in the temple in Jerusalem (Deuteronomy 12:5–14).

God commanded that an ark of the covenant be constructed and topped with figures of cherubim like those once stationed outside the entrance to Eden (Exodus 25:10; 25:18–20). This ark was placed in the holiest room of the tabernacle and later the temple. This revealed that once atonement had been made it was again possible for humankind to enter God's presence which was manifested at the ark. However, this was done only through a mediator, the high priest, who represented God's people (Exodus 28:12, 29). The sacrifices and the atonement conducted by the priests of Israel foreshadowed a coming sacrifice and a high priest who would make atonement once for all.



## Jesus

When Jesus came to earth as Messiah, much of his teaching and ministry took place at the temple. He was dedicated at the temple as an infant (Luke 2:27); he brought sacrifices from his home in Galilee three times a year to the temple (Luke 2:41–42); he often taught in the temple precincts (John 18:20); he called the temple “my father’s house” (Luke 2:49; John 2:16); and he showed great zeal for it as a holy sanctuary (John 2:17; see also Psalm 69:9). At the moment Jesus died on the cross, the temple veil was torn in two from top to bottom (Mark 15:37). With his death on the cross, Christ who was sinless became the perfect sacrifice for sin (Ephesians 5:2). He laid down his life willingly and became not only the sacrifice, but also the one who offers the sacrifice—the ultimate high priest (Hebrews 5:6–10; 7:24). The author of Hebrews writes, “...we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart” (Hebrews 10:19–22).

## The Church

After Jesus’ resurrection and ascension into heaven, the apostles and the early church continued to worship at the temple (Luke 24:53; Acts 2:46; 3:1). The apostle Paul uses the sanctity of the temple to teach that the bodies of believers as the church itself is holy because God’s presence (as the Holy Spirit) dwells there, and therefore it must not be defiled by sinful acts (Ephesians 2:21–22; 1 Corinthians 3:16–17; 6:19–20; 2 Corinthians 6:16–17). Paul likewise states that believers are “sanctified,” have a calling as “saints” and have a “spiritual service”—all language borrowed from the temple and its priesthood (1 Corinthians 1:2; Romans 12:2; 1 Peter 2:9).

## The New Jerusalem

The book of Revelation points all believers to their hope in a future heavenly home of the saints—the New Jerusalem. This will be a place whose very structure mirrors the temple’s inner sanctuary, the Holy of Holies, where God’s presence dwells (Revelation 21). This final image reminds us that all of the things related to the temple on earth were but copies of the things already eternal in the heavens, and that God’s purpose in bringing the temple into existence was to bring a bit of heaven to earth. As we keep in mind these great truths, we will increasingly see the abounding riches of God manifested in the design and duties of the temple and its priesthood, and understand the lessons God intends for us.



Christ's sacrifice for us on the cross



## THE TEMPLE BEFORE TIME

The Bible, both in the Old and New Testaments, speaks of a heavenly temple which served as the abode of God and as the pattern for the construction of the earthly tabernacle and temples. The heavenly temple is the place where God dwells, where one can seek his counsel, and the place from where he sends divine revelation.

OLD TESTAMENT	NEW TESTAMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moses, Aaron and his sons, and 70 of the elders of Israel saw a glimpse of the heavenly temple (Exodus 24:9–10).</li> <li>• David may have referred to the heavenly temple in the Psalms (Psalms 11:4; 23:6; 27:4–6; 138:2).</li> <li>• During the reign of the Israelite king, Ahab, a prophet named Micaiah saw the heavenly temple (1 Kings 22:19), as did the prophet Isaiah after entering the earthly temple to seek the Lord upon the death of the Judean king, Uzziah (Isaiah 6:1–5).</li> <li>• The prophet Ezekiel, while in exile in Babylon, saw a vision of the Lord enthroned in the heavenly temple (Ezekiel 1:1–28).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The book of Hebrews draws a distinction between the “earthly sanctuary” and a “greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation” (Hebrews 9:1, 11). This place is located in “heaven itself ... in the presence of God” (verse 24). It is the place where one can find holy, heavenly vessels and where Christ serves as High Priest (verses 21–25).</li> <li>• In the book of Revelation, the heavenly temple appears as the place where the apostle John receives revelation (Revelation 7:15; 14:17; 16:17). “After this I looked, and I saw in heaven the temple—that is, the tabernacle of the covenant law—and it was opened” (15:5).</li> </ul>

Many scholars believe that the earthly sanctuaries, like the tabernacle and the temple, were constructed to bring a sense of the heavenly temple to the earthly realm in order for God to dwell among humankind. The earthly tabernacle and temples were constructed from a divine design given by divine revelation to Moses (Exodus 25:8–9, 40) and King David (1 Chronicles 28:11–19). The earthly sanctuaries became an institution which made it possible for humans to commune with God to a limited capacity.

The author of the book of Hebrews encourages believers to look forward to a time when they will dwell in a heavenly city (Hebrews 13:14). Abraham is described as one who was “looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God ... a better country, that is a heavenly one” (Hebrews 11:10, 16). The book of Revelation identifies this city as the New Jerusalem—a city “laid out as a square” forming a cube 1,500 miles (2,414 kilometers) on each side. At first glance, it appears that the New Jerusalem doesn’t contain a temple because John doesn’t see one in his vision (Revelation 21:22). However, since the Holy of Holies bears a strong resemblance (in a much-condensed form) to the cube-shaped city, some scholars suggest that the New Jerusalem is actually the Holy of Holies—the throne room—of the heavenly temple. The New Jerusalem doesn’t *contain* a temple; the New Jerusalem *is* the Holy of Holies of the heavenly temple.

With the descent of the New Jerusalem to earth (or just above the earth), Revelation 21:3 announces that the “tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them” (NASB). It is here, within this holy city, where the complete reconciliation between God and humankind will occur. Forever, humans and God will exist together in an unlimited relationship. The earthly temples were symbols of the presence of God with his people, but at the same time, they were mere copies of the heavenly temple, which is the presence of God.

## PRE-TEMPLE SANCTUARIES

### The Garden of Eden

A number of clues in the book of Genesis reveal that God created the garden of Eden as a pre-temple sanctuary for his presence.<sup>1</sup> The garden and the tabernacle/temple share a similar physical arrangement. In Genesis, God planted the garden “toward the east, in Eden” (Genesis 2:8 NASV). Later we read that God stationed cherubim at “the east of the garden of Eden” to prevent anyone from returning west to the Tree of Life (Genesis 3:24). In the book of Numbers, this east-west orientation is the basis for the tribal arrangement for Moses, Aaron, and his sons who perform the service of the tabernacle (Numbers 3:38).

Certain sacred objects also appear in the garden and the tabernacle/temple. The sacred Tree of Life in the center of the garden can be compared to the sacred candelabra (menorah) in the central section of the Holy Place. The two cherubim posted at the east entrance to Eden (Genesis 3:24) can be compared to the two cherubim overshadowing the mercy seat on the ark of the covenant (Exodus 25:18–22), embroidered on the veil of the tabernacle (Exodus 26:31), and carved into the walls, doors, and paneling of the first temple (1 Kings 6:27–35; 7:29, 36).

The duties of Adam in the garden also suggest a sanctuary existed because his responsibility was to “work” and “keep” (Genesis 2:15). These terms, used elsewhere only of the Levites who served in the tabernacle and temple, suggest that Adam had been commissioned to act as a “priest of God” preserving and protecting the holy ground of the garden-sanctuary.

When the tabernacle was constructed, God's presence there depended upon his peoples' obedience to the laws of the tabernacle (Leviticus 26:1–46). In the same way, God's presence in the garden depended upon obedience to the one law of respecting the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (Genesis 2:17; 3:1–3). In Genesis, this exile was from the garden sanctuary (Genesis 3:23–24). For Israel, disobedience meant exile from the presence of God, the destruction of the temple, and exile from the Promised Land.

The arrangement of the garden's landscape corresponds to the arrangement of the tabernacle and temple's



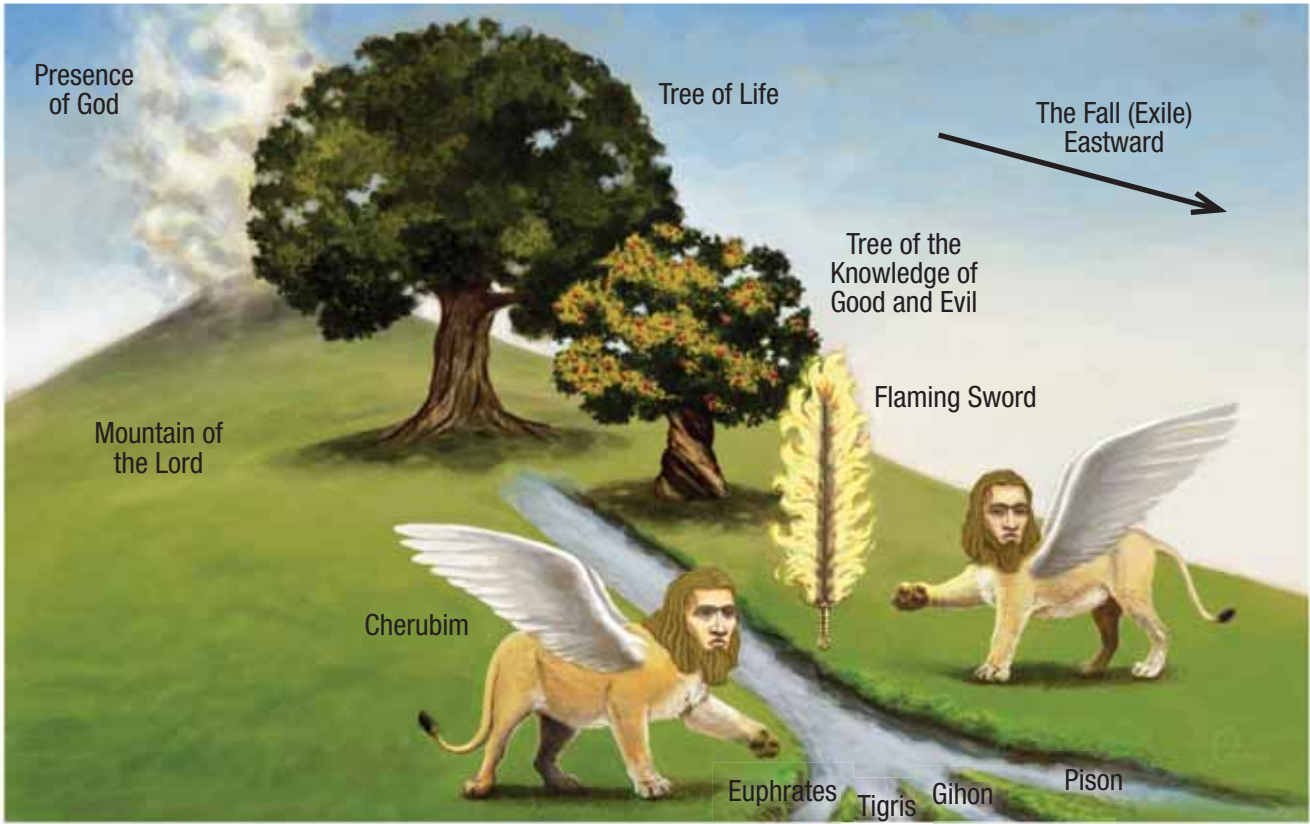
The Garden of Eden

furniture. Eastward movement (out of the garden) is away from God's presence; westward movement (through the garden) is a return of God. On the Day of Atonement, the high priest moved through the sanctuary closer to the presence of God symbolizing the people's reversal of spiritual exile from God. For these reasons, it appears that God showed the divine design for the temple at the beginning of history and that later constructions of buildings followed this pattern.

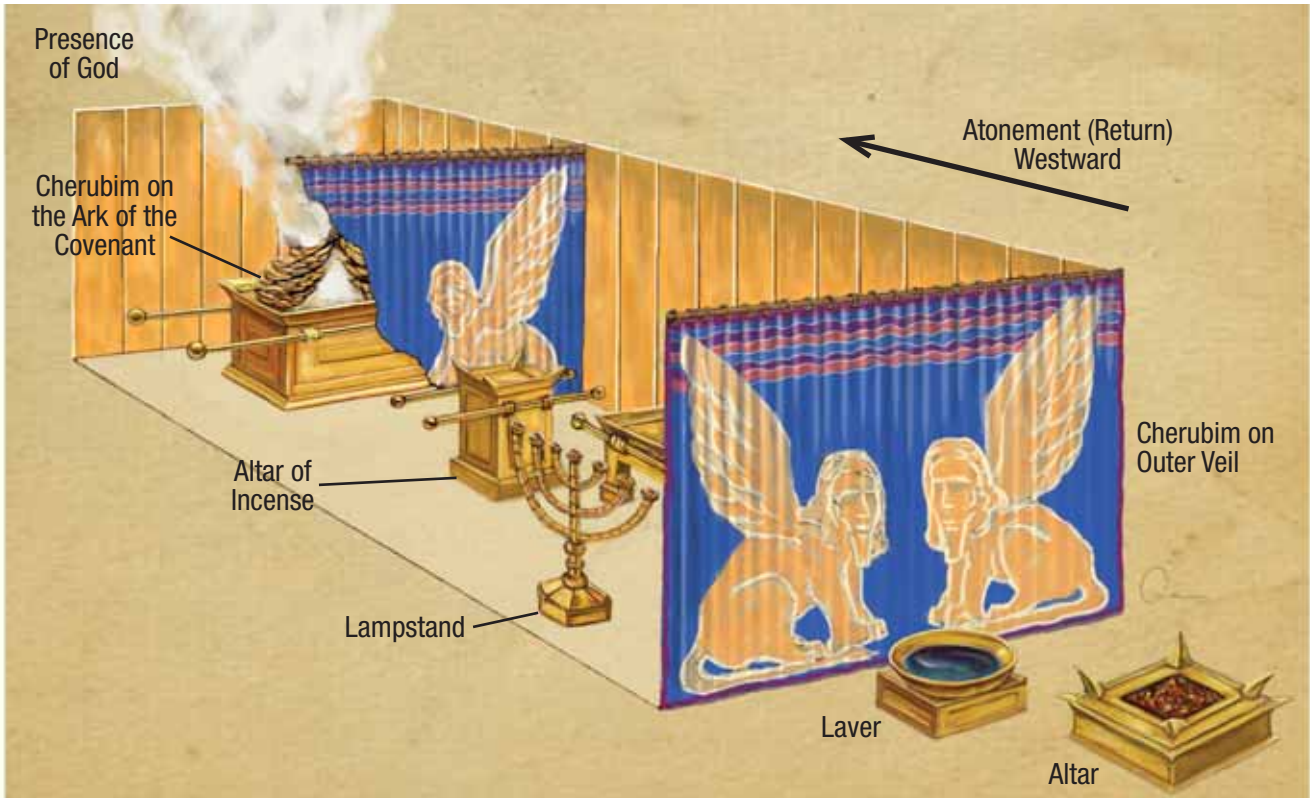
When we compare the garden sanctuary to the tabernacle we discover an important difference.



## Garden of Eden



## Tabernacle



Illustrations by Cara Nilsen



## TENT OF MEETING

During the time of the tabernacle's construction, Moses built a "tent of meeting" outside the camp so he could privately enter into God's presence (the *shekinah*) and receive divine guidance and answers to the people's prayers (Exodus 33:7–11). This tent seems to have been a provisional structure that was later incorporated into the tabernacle, since the terms *tent of meeting* and *tabernacle* are used interchangeably after the tabernacle's completion (Lev. 1:3; Deut. 31:14–15). God moved about "in a tent, even in a tabernacle" (2 Sam. 7:6). Years later when the first temple was dedicated by Solomon, the portable tent of meeting/tabernacle and its sacred vessels were incorporated into the temple (1 Kings 8:4).



The cherubim stationed at the entrance to God's presence in Eden faced *outward*, preventing people from re-entering the sacred site. However, in the Holy of Holies, the cherubim were positioned on top of the mercy seat of the ark with their faces turned *inward* toward God's presence. These cherubim, rather than turning people away from God's presence, made it possible for the high priest as a mediator to enter God's presence (Exodus 25:8, 22). The first man, Adam, served as a representative for humankind and caused exile from God's presence. The high priest served as a representative for Israel enabling God's people to reenter God's presence. God's command to build him a sanctuary was the gracious means by which he brought humanity back into a relationship with him (Exodus 25:8).

## The Tabernacle: God's Sanctuary in Motion

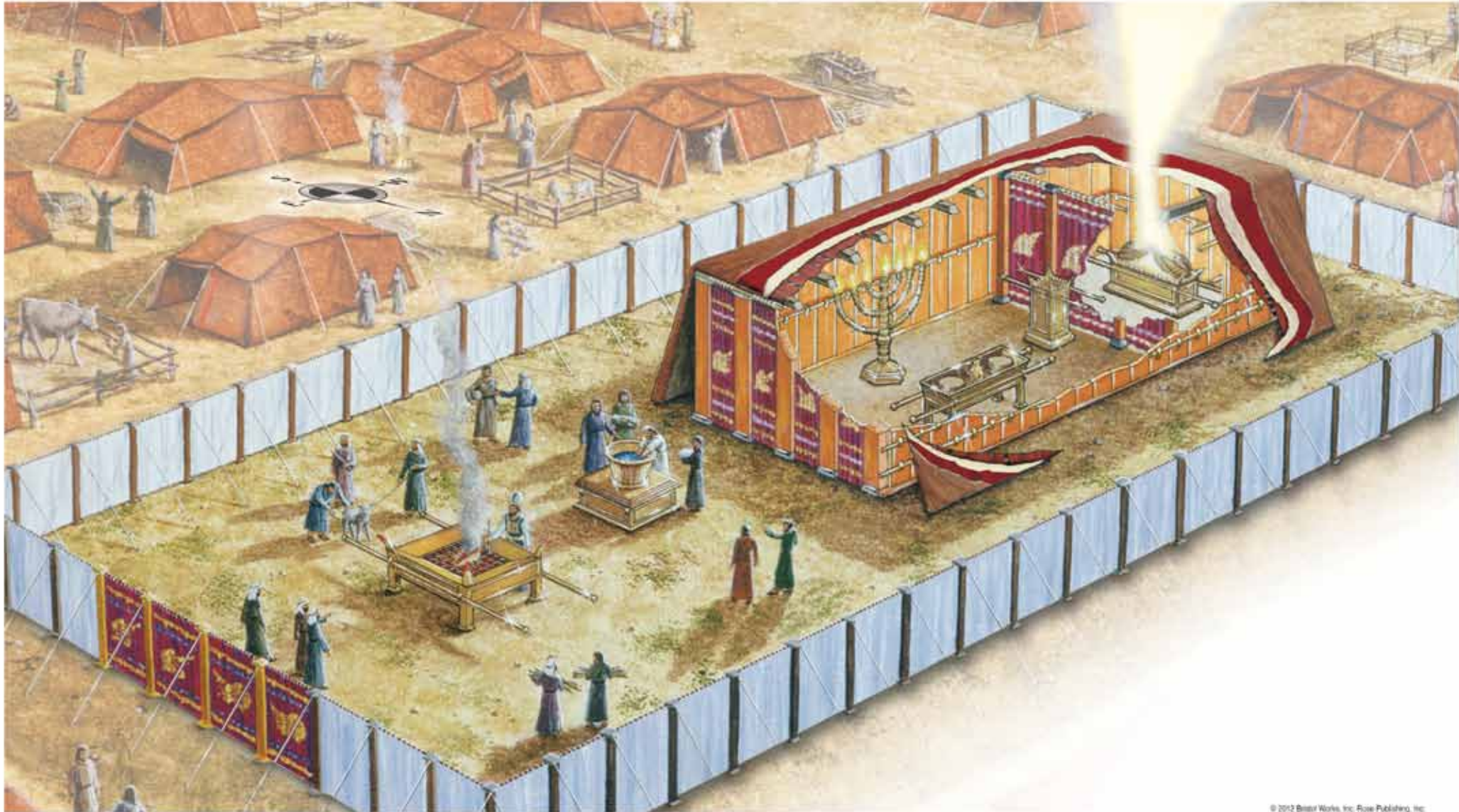
After God brought his people out of slavery in Egypt, God revealed to Moses on Mt. Sinai the divine design for the tabernacle (Exodus 25:2, 8–9, 40; Hebrews 8:5; 9:24). The tabernacle was a collapsible building that the Israelites transported through the wilderness and later during the period of settlement in the Promised Land.

This tabernacle served God's purpose as a sanctuary for 485 years (from Moses to Solomon). Its purpose was to make possible God's dwelling with his people (Exodus 25:8). It was made to be an earthly copy of the heavenly sanctuary. Because of sin, God could not physically coexist with humans (Exodus 33:20; Isaiah 59:2). Dwelling with God was only possible if there was a proper separation (the curtains of the tabernacle), a sanctified place of meeting (the ark of the covenant within the Holy of Holies), and a qualified mediator (the high priest).

The details of this structure and the rules of ritual purification that maintained its sanctity were carefully described to Moses and two craftsmen: Bezalel and Oholiab. These men were divinely appointed to supervise skilled workers in making the structural framework, tent curtains, and ritual furniture of the tabernacle (Exodus 25:10–40:33). In addition, God instructed the priests how to conduct the divine service and how to prevent ritual desecration. Also, the people were told how to live godly lives that would sustain them collectively as a priestly nation (Exodus 20:24–25:9). The materials for the tabernacle's construction came from the voluntary contributions of the people who had received these costly items of metals, skins, and fabrics as part of the "plunder from the Egyptians" (Exodus 3:22; 12:35–36; 25:2–7).

The tabernacle was situated in the middle of the twelve tribes of Israel (Numbers 2:17; 10:14–28). This location for the tabernacle was necessary because it served as the focal point of Israel's daily life. In this way, God, whose presence was manifested at the tabernacle as a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, was continually at the center of his people (Exodus 33:9–10; Numbers 14:14).

## The Tabernacle Cutaway

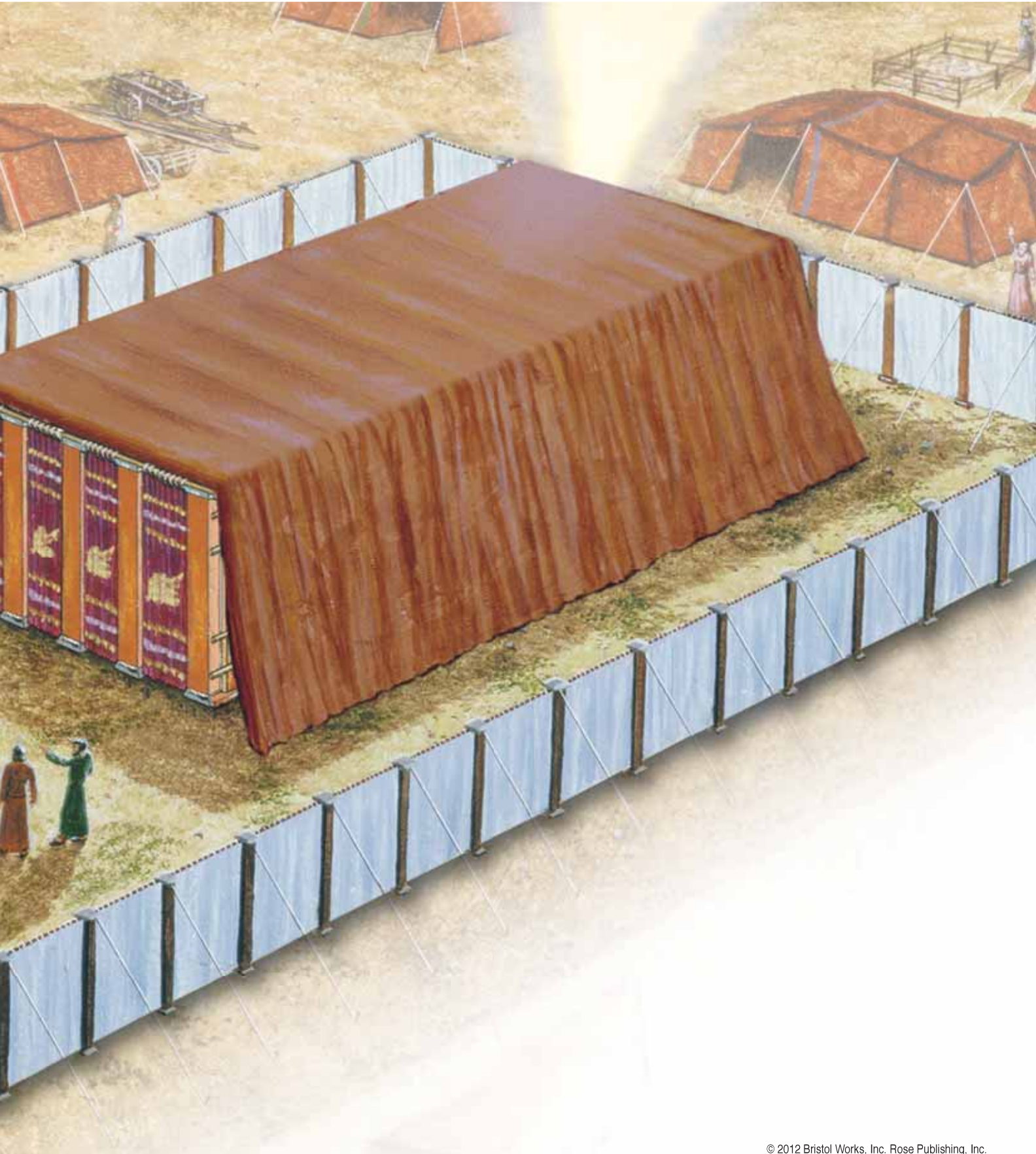




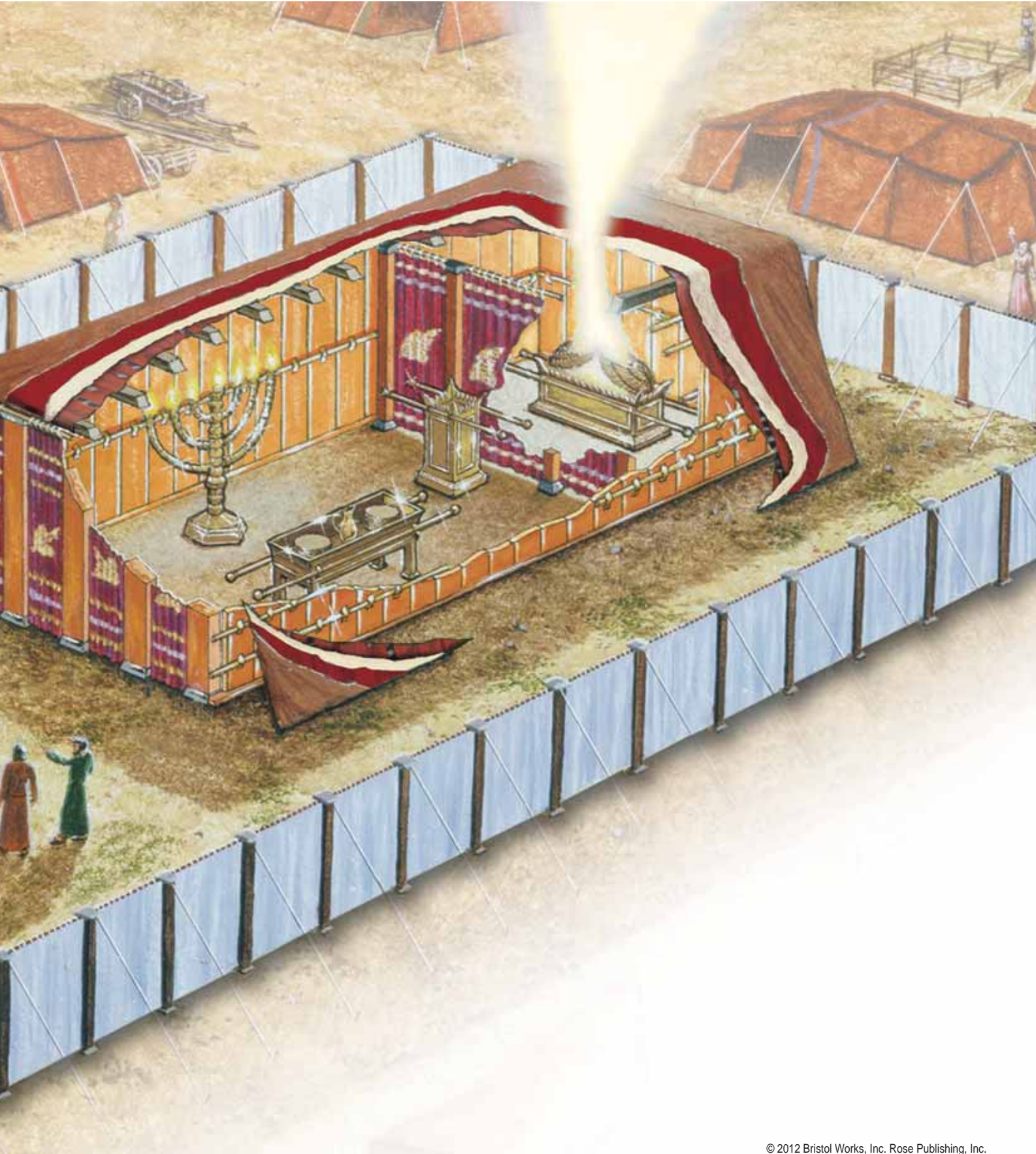
# The Tabernacle Cutaway













### THREE PARTS OF THE TABERNACLE

The tabernacle had three main sections. Each section contained special, sacred objects. Each section was also the place of different sacred activities.

#### The Courtyard

The Courtyard was the main access to the tabernacle. The wide gate was the place where ancient Israelites would bring their sacrifices and offerings. There, the priests would receive and bless people. Within the courtyard, the priests would offer sacrifices at the bronze altar. There was also a bronze laver, in which the priests could cleanse themselves to be ritually clean.

#### The Holy Place

The Holy Place housed three important objects for the service of the tabernacle: the golden lamp, the table of the bread of the presence, and the altar of incense. The priests performed daily tasks inside the Holy Place: they had to keep the lamps burning, offer incense twice a day, and bring fresh bread weekly to the table.

#### The Holy of Holies (Most Holy Place)

The Holy of Holies was a unique place. The ark of the covenant was in this room. God’s very presence dwelt in the Holy of Holies. Only the high priest could enter this room once a year, protected by a cloud of smoke from burnt incense. The most important celebration in the Jewish calendar, the Day of Atonement, had its climax in the Holy of Holies, where the high priest offered the blood of the sacrificed animal to God to atone for the people’s sin.

