

## What was the tabernacle of Moses?

<https://www.gotquestions.org/tabernacle-of-Moses.html>

The tabernacle of Moses was the temporary place of worship that the Israelites built according to God's specifications while wandering the desert and used until King Solomon built a temple. The word tabernacle is a translation of the Hebrew mishkan, which means "dwelling-place." The Feast of Tabernacles commemorates this time of wandering before the Israelites entered the land of Canaan.

The overall shape of the tabernacle of Moses followed traditional structures of the time. It consisted of an outer court, approximately seventy-five feet wide by one hundred and fifty feet long, with a fifteen-foot by forty-five-foot structure in the back (Exodus 27:9-19). The court walls consisted of linen curtains attached by bronze hooks to a series of pillars. The pillars were supported on the bottom by bronze sockets and possibly held in place with rope that attached to bronze rings. The gate, always facing east, was about thirty feet of blue, purple, and scarlet woven into a curtain of linen. The altar of burnt offering and the bronze laver that the priests purified themselves in sat in the courtyard.

The actual tabernacle of Moses sat in the back of the courtyard (Exodus 26). The sides and back were made of gold-covered acacia boards, about twenty-eight inches wide and fifteen feet high. Each board had two tenons, projections, which fit into silver sockets. Gold rings held five bars that ran the length of the boards, holding them tight. The east side was comprised of five pillars covered with a screen similar to that for the courtyard.

The tent was divided into two rooms: the Holy Place, where the table of showbread, the

golden lampstand, and the altar of incense sat; and the Holy of Holies, where the Ark of the Covenant was placed. The rooms were separated by a veil, similar to the entry screen, embroidered with cherubim and hung from four gold-covered acacia posts by gold clasps.

The exact shape of the tabernacle of Moses is unclear. It may have been a room with a slant-sided cover, somewhat like a rain fly. We do know it was covered in layers: fine linen, a fabric made of goat's hair, a covering of rams' skins, and a final layer of an undetermined, waterproof hide. The linen covered the entire tent, the panels connected by latching loops into gold clasps. The curtain of goat's hair was connected with bronze clasps and hung over the sides and back of the structure.

Although the tabernacle was heavy and had many parts, it was surprisingly portable. Priests carried the Ark and the altars on their shoulders, but the rest fit in ox-drawn carts.

The purpose of the tabernacle of Moses was to provide a place where the people could properly worship God. Priests sacrificed animals on the altar in the outer court. The bread of the presence, the continually burning lampstand, and the offering of incense were all in the Holy Place. And once a year, the high priest would enter the Holy of Holies as part of the ceremony of the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16). At no other time was anyone to enter the Holy of Holies, as the presence of God dwelt with the Ark of the Covenant. When Jesus was crucified, the veil between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies in the temple ripped from top to bottom (Matthew 27:51). Just as He fulfilled for all time the sacrificial requirements, He ushered us into the presence of God.