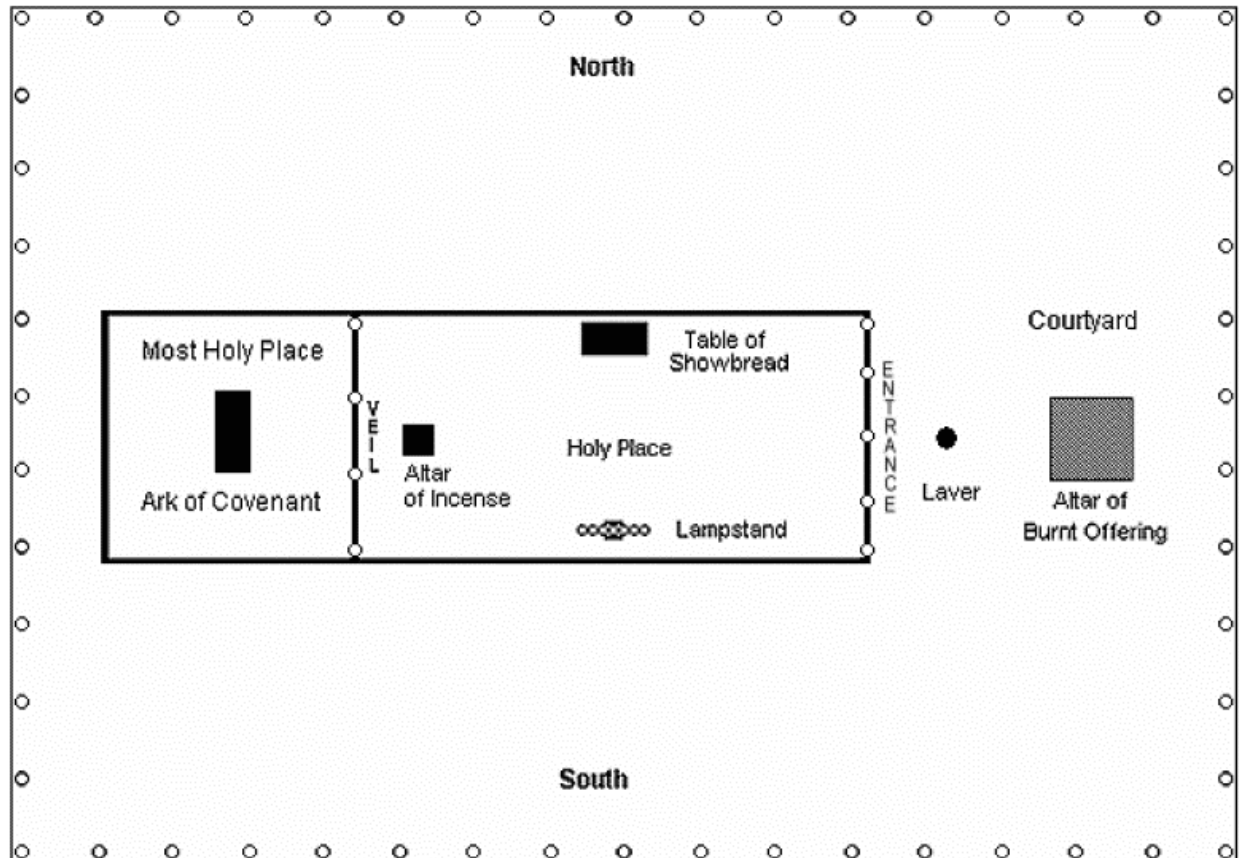


**Adult Sunday School Lesson**  
**Nassau Bay Baptist Church**  
**December 13, 2020**

**Altar of Incense**

Before we continue in Luke, let's revisit Zechariah and his duties to burn incense in the Holy Place.



Notice the Altar of Incense is directly in front of the Veil of the Temple. Incense represents the prayers of God's people going up continually unto God. Zechariah met the angel standing beside the prayers of God's people, including Zacariah's and Elizabeth's prayers.

Let's walk ourselves through the Temple/Tabernacle from the East (Right to Left). First is the Altar of Burnt Offering where the animal is sacrificed and offerings are burned. Jesus was sacrificed for us.

Second is the Laver for the washing of the priests. In the Temple, the Laver was made quite large (15' diameter circle), and it is believed that the priests physically entered the laver to wash themselves and not just their hands. Jesus was cleansed before He entered the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. We are baptized to represent our death in Him, our cleansing in His blood, and our identification with His death, burial, and resurrection on our behalf.

Third is the Holy Place.

- Table of Shewbread (Table of Presence): “And Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.” John 6:35
- Lampstand: “Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, ‘I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.’” John 8:12
- Altar of Incense: “Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” Romans 8:26 Jesus hears our prayers and makes intercession for us with the Father.
- Veil of the Temple: Represents the flesh of the Lord. Ripped at the time of His crucifixion. Note, there are three entrances in the Temple/Tabernacle. “I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.” John 10:9

Fourth is the Holy of Holies (Most Holy Place)

- Ark of the Covenant: The place of the Presence of the Lord. Once a year, on the Day of Atonement, the High Priest would enter the Holy of Holies and sprinkle blood on the Ark of the Covenant to atone for the sins of all of the people.
- “For where there is a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives. Therefore not even the first covenant was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, ‘This is the blood of the covenant which God has commanded you.’ Then likewise he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission. Therefore it was necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another—He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.” Hebrews 9:16-28

### **Mary and Gabriel**

Gabriel arrives to speak to Mary. He already had spoken to Zechariah. Soon, angels will speak to the shepherds of Bethlehem.

### **Read Luke 1:26-38**

The sixth month (26)—In context, probably the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy. Might be sixth month on the Hebrew calendar, which likely would be some time in August-September.

Virgin (27)—*parthenos*—Young, unmarried girl, who is a virgin. Same word used in Isaiah 7:14 in the Greek version of the Old Testament called the Septuagint. The Septuagint was known and quoted in Bible times.

Betrothed (27)—Engaged, but not as we understand engagement. Dr. Marshall wrote, “Betrothal could take place as early as 12 years old and usually lasted for about a year. Although it was regarded as equally binding as marriage, the girl having the same legal position as a wife, it was not normal for intercourse to take place during the period. We do not know how old Mary was; . . .”<sup>1</sup> Understanding betrothal is very important later in this story and perhaps again in Jesus’ teaching on divorce and remarriage. We do not really know what the name Mary (Mariam/Miriam) means. Joseph means something like “He Adds,” or “May He Add.”

Joseph’s Dilemma—Matthew 1:19-21—A just [righteous] man.

Angel Gabriel (26)—Sent by God to Mary in Nazareth.

(28)—Gabriel came in. Told Mary:

- Rejoice/Hail/Positive Greeting of Rejoicing
- You are highly favored/“endowed with grace”/from Greek word for grace, *Karis*
- The Lord (same word for Lord is used of Jesus—*Kurios*) is with you.
- You are blessed/spoken well of/*eulogeo*—good speech—eulogy among women.

(29)—Mary was troubled/greatly agitated. And she considered/pondered. Typical of Mary.

(30)—“Do not be afraid, Mary.” See Elizabeth and the shepherds. Fear is a natural response to Heavenly Beings. If we fear angels, how much more God Himself. Mary found favor/grace/*karis* with God.

(31)—Womb—Natural. Jesus is natural. He could have entered the world in any way, but God humbled Himself to enter as everyone else (except Adam and Eve) entered.

Prophecy of Christ’s Kingdom (32-33)

Mary’s virginity reaffirmed—(34)

(35)—Of the Holy Spirit.

(36)—Mary finds out about Elizabeth.

(37)—Nothing is impossible with God.

(38)—“Let it be to me according to your word.”

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<sup>1</sup> *Commentary on Luke* by I. Howard Marshall in the series by Eerdmans, *New International Greek Testament Commentary*, 64.