

The Tabernacle Itself

Exodus 26:1–14

1 "Moreover you shall make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine woven linen and blue, purple, and scarlet thread; with artistic designs of cherubim you shall weave them. 2 The length of each curtain shall be twenty-eight cubits, and the width of each curtain four cubits. And every one of the curtains shall have the same measurements. 3 Five curtains shall be coupled to one another, and the other five curtains shall be coupled to one another. 4 And you shall make loops of blue yarn on the edge of the curtain on the selvedge of one set, and likewise you shall do on the outer edge of the other curtain of the second set. 5 Fifty loops you shall make in the one curtain, and fifty loops you shall make on the edge of the curtain that is on the end of the second set, that the loops may be clasped to one another. 6 And you shall make fifty clasps of gold, and couple the curtains together with the clasps, so that it may be one tabernacle. 7 "You shall also make curtains of goats' hair, to be a tent over the tabernacle. You shall make eleven curtains. 8 The length of each curtain shall be thirty cubits, and the width of each curtain four cubits; and the eleven curtains shall all have the same measurements. 9 And you shall couple five curtains by themselves and six curtains by themselves, and you shall double over the sixth curtain at the forefront of the tent. 10 You shall make fifty loops on the edge of the curtain that is outermost in one set, and fifty loops on the edge of the curtain of the second set. 11 And you shall make fifty bronze clasps, put the clasps into the loops, and couple the tent together, that it may be one. 12 The remnant that remains of the curtains of the tent, the half curtain that remains, shall hang over the back of the tabernacle. 13 And a cubit on one side and a cubit on the other side, of what remains of the length of the curtains of the tent, shall hang over the sides of the tabernacle, on this side and on that side, to cover it. 14 You shall also make a covering of ram skins dyed red for the tent, and a covering of badger skins above that.

We might have been surprised to see the intricacies of the Tabernacle. The ability to make tread and to weave it in a loom has been with us for thousands of years.

But the size of these curtains is amazing. When finished there were two curtains fastened together. Each one was 42 feet long and 30 feet wide. These two were fastened together to form the tent that was 42 by 60 feet. But then it was a tent, for that is the meaning of the word and tent is how it is translated when it refers to just a Hebrew tent.

But why so many coverings? There were four separate coverings for the tabernacle. Lets be practical. You have to take this thing down and move it every so often.

And why the different materials and colors. All these thing have significance and it is for us to understand what that significance is.

“Now each of these coverings had symbolic meaning.” McGee, J. V. (1991). Thru the Bible commentary: The Law (Exodus 19–40) (electronic ed., Vol. 5, p. 70). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

I. The curtains.

A. Fine twined linen

1. Linen was the most expensive and was worn by special people.
 - a. David the king.
 - b. The rich man in Luke 16
 - c. The glorified saints.
 - d. It was also what they used to bury Jesus.
2. In Rev. 19 the bride of Christ is allowed to wear garments that are of fine linen. And we are told that the fine linen is the righteousnesses or righteous acts of the saints.
3. Since the tabernacle is a type of Jesus Christ and His life was lived in total righteousness, then the fine linen typifies the righteousness of Jesus Christ.
 - a. The "fine twined linen," as expressive of Christ's spotless manhood, opens a most precious and copious spring of thought to the spiritual mind; it furnishes a theme on which we cannot meditate too profoundly. The truth respecting Christ's humanity must be received with scriptural accuracy, held with spiritual energy, guarded with holy jealousy, and confessed with heavenly power. C.H. Mackintosh
 - b. "Coming to His death, we see the spotless white shining in all its purity. The world puts Him between two thieves. "Ah," says Satan, "I will at least besmirch His whiteness; I will associate Him with malefactors and turn loose the rabble upon Him, railing and casting dust into the air. I will see what will become of His spotlessness! Yes, let us see what will become of His spotlessness. God only brings it out into clearer relief amidst the blackness of human and satanic wickedness. The very thief at His side is constrained to own His sinlessness (Luke 23:40, 41). The Centurion, too, who presided at the crucifixion, declared Him a righteous Man" (Mr. S. Ridout). A.W. Pink
4. The colors used to embroider the white linen were blue, purple and scarlet.
 - a. Blue pictures heaven from which Jesus alone came and which was His true home.
 - (1) "Blue" is the ethereal color, and marks the heavenly character of Christ, who, though He had come down into all the circumstances of actual and true humanity (sin excepted), yet was He "the Lord from heaven." Though He

was "very man," yet He ever walked in the uninterrupted consciousness of His proper dignity, as a heavenly stranger. He never once forgot whence He had come, where He was, or whither He was going. The spring of all His joys was on high. Earth could neither make Him richer nor poorer. C.H. Mackintosh

b. Purple is the color of royalty and therefore when they mocked Jesus they put a purple robe upon Him.

(1) "Purple" denotes royalty, and points us to Him who "was born King of the Jews;" who offered Himself as such to the Jewish nation, and was rejected; who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession, avowing Himself a king, when, to mortal vision, there was not so much as a single trace of royalty.—"Thou sayest that I am a king." And "hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." And, finally, the inscription upon His cross, "in letters of Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin"—the language of religion, of science, and of government—declared Him, to the whole known world, to be "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." C.H. Mackintosh

c. Scarlet is the picture of suffering, as Jesus would bleed and suffer for our sins.

d. The first covering was fine-twined, Egyptian linen with cherubim woven in the material. It did not touch the ground, and its beauty could only be seen on the inside of the tabernacle. This covering could not be seen from the outside at all and, frankly, the beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ can not be seen by the world. He can only satisfy His own people. It is important for believers to worship Him because we not only need to feed on Him, but we need to behold Him in His beauty. J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible Commentary: The Law (Exodus 19–40)*, electronic ed., vol. 5 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1991), 70.

B. Goat's hair

1. Goat's hair was what the normal tent was made from. And this covering is called the tent or the tabernacle on its own.
2. The second curtain was made of goats' hair and it touched the ground. This curtain speaks of Christ's worth for sinners. It is symbolic of the death of Christ, and this is the message that is to be given to the world. We read in Hebrews 9:26, "For then must he often have suffered since the foundation

of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." The word world in this verse is better translated "age." He has appeared, and this is the message that should go forth. This is the story which the goats' hair curtain tells. J. Vernon McGee

C. Ram's skins dyed red.

1. "the rams' skins dyed red" exhibit His intense consecration and devotedness to God, which was carried out even unto death. He was the only perfect Servant that ever stood in God's vineyard. He had one object, which He pursued with an undeviating course from the manger to the cross, and that was, to glorify the Father, and finish His work. "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" was the language of His youth, and the accomplishment of that "business" was the design of His life. "His meat was to do the will of Him that sent Him, and to finish His work." C.H. Mackintosh
2. Rams were offered for the sin offering, the burnt offerings and the peace offerings. Its significance to the patriarchs was that of substitution—it was a ram which was slain on behalf of Isaac. This covering was placed over the goats' hair, and symbolized the fact that substitutionary blood was the only means by which contracted and actual guilt could be dealt with. Campbell, I. D. (2006). *Opening up Exodus* (p. 111). Leominster: Day One Publications.
3. The third covering was made of rams' skin dyed red. This curtain speaks of the strength and vigor of Christ and His offering on the Cross. This curtain shows the outward aspect of His offering as our substitute. J. Vernon McGee

D. Badgers or seal skins.

1. This alone would be seen by the eyes of men as Israel were in the wilderness. It, therefore, brings before us Christ as He appeared to men. It specially portrays the fact that He "made Himself of no reputation" (Philippians 2:7). Born in a manger; brought up in despised Nazareth; working at the carpenter's bench, were examples of what the rough and unsightly badgers' skins foreshadowed. To such a degree did Christ humble Himself, the glories of His Divine person were hidden from the eyes of sinful creatures. "Is not this the carpenter?" (Mark 6:3), shows their estimation of Him. A.W. Pink
2. The fourth curtain was made of badgers' skins (sealskins). After forty years in the wilderness this curtain was marred by time and weather, but it always protected that which was within. This covering speaks of Christ's walk before men. Just as the linen covering was inside to show His beauty to the believer, so the sealskin covering had no beauty to reveal. Isaiah 53:2 tells

us this about Christ: "... he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." There is no beauty on the outside that we should desire Him; we have to go inside to behold His beauty. The world does not see in Him what we see in Him.
McGee, J. V

II. The walls.

A. The boards

B. The sockets

1. The silver speaks of redemption and the atonement money collected from each male, ½ shekel for each one.
2. This money was then used to make the sockets of silver.
3. Ex 38:25 And the silver from those who were numbered of the congregation was one hundred talents and one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary: 26 a bekah for each man (that is, half a shekel, according to the shekel of the sanctuary), for everyone included in the numbering from twenty years old and above, for six hundred and three thousand, five hundred and fifty men. 27 And from the hundred talents of silver were cast the sockets of the sanctuary and the bases of the veil: one hundred sockets from the hundred talents, one talent for each socket. 28 Then from the one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five shekels he made hooks for the pillars, overlaid their capitals, and made bands for them.
4. The foundation of the tabernacle, God's dwelling with mankind, was the redemption that we have in Jesus Christ.
5. Without His redeeming blood we would not be able to meet with God at all.
6. Aye, but though the ingots were heavy to carry, every Israelite felt proud to think that that tabernacle had a foundation of silver. You Amalekites out there cannot see the silver footing of it all; you Moabites cannot perceive it. All you can see is the badger skins outside—the rough exterior of the tent. You say, 'That tent is a poor place to be a temple; that gospel is a very simple affair.' No doubt it is to you, but you never saw the silver sockets, you never saw the golden boards, you never saw the glory of the inside of the place lit up by the seven-branched candlesticks, and glorious with the presence of God. Brethren, redemption is our honour and delight.
Campbell, I. D. (2006). Opening up Exodus (p. 111). Leominster: Day One Publications.

C. The braces

III. The veils.

- A. The outside veil.
- B. The veil at the door of the tabernacle.
- C. The inner veil.
 - 1. This veil continued in the temple of Solomon.
 - 2. It kept people out of the holy of holies.
 - 3. It was a barrier to keep people from the wrath of God against their sin.
 - 4. Heb 10:19 ¶ Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, 21 and having a High Priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.
 - 5. When Jesus died on the cross the veil of the temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom.
 - 6. This was a display that a way had been made to let us have access to God.
 - 7. Mark 15: 37 And Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and breathed His last. 38 Then the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.

IV. The floor.

- A. It was dirt.
 - 1. No provision was made to get the Priest's feet out of the dirt.
 - 2. I think this was to be a constant reminder that this was but an earthly tabernacle and only a picture of the true which is in heaven.

Everything in the tabernacle speaks of either the person or work of Christ. Every covering, every thread, and every article of furniture reveals some facet of the Savior. As the bars held the tabernacle together, so the Holy Spirit of God holds true believers together today. Believers should be held together by the Spirit. In fact, believers are told "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." McGee, J. V. (1991). *Thru the Bible commentary: The Law (Exodus 19–40)* (electronic ed., Vol. 5, p. 71). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.