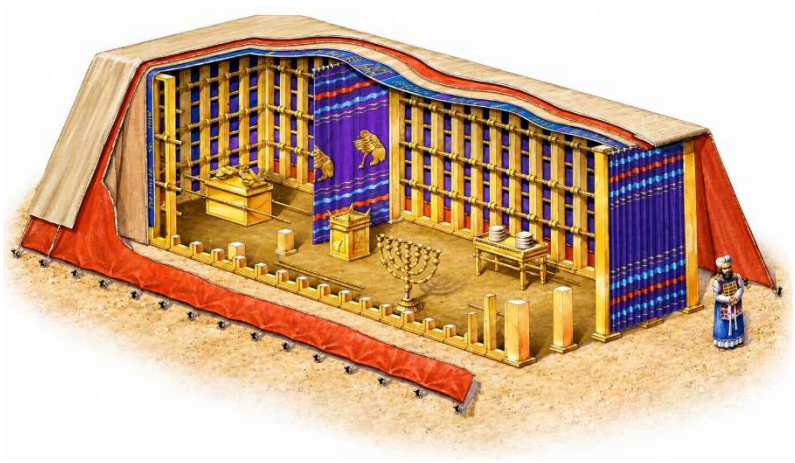


Exodus 26:1-37

SEEING BEHIND THE CURTAINS

It would seem that this chapter contains prescriptions utterly unworthy of God… That he should lay down rules for "taches," "couplings," "corners," and "rings," and all those minute and little details seem to us in themselves so contemptible. But they really are not so. There is as much architectural skill displayed in the creation of a beetle…as there is in the arrangement of one of the fixed stars. There is as much of God's wisdom revealed in minute things that the microscope shows us, as there is displayed in the magnificent things that come within the range of the telescope… Just as in the material world there are great things and small things, all mingled together, yet each having its place, so it is here... It does not follow that because we cannot see the use of every arrangement here, we are therefore to conclude that it is useless. We cannot dig twenty feet into the earth, without finding ten thousand things that we cannot tell the end, the object, and the reason of. The fact is, we think ourselves much greater than we really are; and it is a lesson that we need to learn, to lean upon an Omnipotence that we cannot comprehend… Let us believe that whatever God has made in the outer world has its meaning, its end, and its object, though we cannot see it; and that in the inner world—the Bible—everything—the taches, rings, curtains, coverings—all have their meaning, their end, and use, though we do not now understand it.
—Dr. John Cumming (1807-81)



Exodus 26 provides us with the overall dimensions of the tabernacle. Based on the measurements of the 20 framing boards (15' x 2 ¼') and the four coverings (42' x 60' & 45' x 60'), the tabernacle would be 45' long, 15' wide, and 15' high. The Holy of Holies would be a perfect cube at 15' x 15' x 15' and the Holy Place would be 30' x 15'.

TYPOLOGICAL INFERENCES FROM THE TABERNACLE

The Four Colors of the Inner Curtains

- White (Rev. 19:8,14)
- Blue (Ex. 24:10)
- Purple (John 19:2)
- Scarlet (Is. 1:18; Heb. 9:19)

The presence of numerical symbolism in the Bible cannot reasonably be doubted, although some have gone too far in their speculations... The numbers which are unmistakably used with symbolic meaning are 7 and its multiples, and 3, 4, 10 and 12… 7 is the number of totality, completeness… 3 is symbolic of a complete, ordered whole… 4 is a symbol of completeness of range, of comprehensive extent…
—William Taylor Smith
Int'l Standard Bible Encyclopedia

Linen. Heb., *shesh,* "something bleached white; linen, alabaster."

The pure white linen of these curtains suggests to us our Lord's perfect humanity. Blue is the heavenly color and is suggestive of Christ's deity. Scarlet speaks to us of sacrifice. Purple is the color of kings.
—Louis T. Talbot

Scarlet. Heb., *tola,* "worm, scarlet, crimson." Red dye was made from the worm, *coccus ilicis*.

The Four Faces of the Cherubim (Ezek. 1:4-14; Rev. 4:6-8)

- Man (Gen. 1:27)
- Lion (Gen. 49:9)
- Ox (Lev. 1:3)
- Eagle (Ex. 19:4)

The Four Layers of the Tabernacle

- Fine linen (Rev. 19:8)
- Goats' hair (Lev. 16:5)
- Red-dyed rams' skins (Gen. 22:13)
- Dugong (sea cow) skins (Ezek. 16:10)

The Twofold Nature of the Structure

- Acacia Wood
- Gold

The Three Metals of the Tabernacle

- Gold (Rev. 21:18, 21)
- Silver (Ex. 30:11-16; 38:25-27)
- Bronze (Ex. 27:2; Num. 21:9)

The Other Details?

- Fifty loops and clasps (Lev. 23:16; 25:10)
- Four/five pillars at the entrances (Ex. 26:32, 37)

THEOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES FROM THE TABERNACLE

1. God is the perfect balance of _____ and _____.

2. The greatest glories in this world remain _____.

3. Our greatest need is _____ into God's presence.

4. Our greatest praise should be for our _____.

5. Our greatest desires should reflect our new position in Christ.

Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, 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. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching. —Hebrews 10:19-25

The cherubim were four-faced and their faces represented how the Son of God was revealed. 'The first was like a lion,' symbolizing His royal authority. 'The second was like a calf,' symbolizing His sacrificial, priestly role. 'The third had the face of a man,' which clearly describes his coming as a man. 'The fourth was like a flying eagle' indicating the gift of the Spirit hovering with His wings over the Church.

—Irenaeus (AD 130-202)

Only those who pass through the door and by the altar and into the tabernacle itself can behold the breath-taking and indescribable beauty inside. But the man on the outside sees only a rectangular building, draped under a coarse, dull leather covering, which held no attraction. It is a picture of our Lord Jesus Christ in His humanity as He walked here upon the earth.

—M. R. DeHaan

Badger skins. Heb., *tachash,* an unknown kind of animal skin. It was perhaps a marine animal such as the dolphin, seal, or sea cow. Used in Ezek. 16 as shoe leather.

Gold is the glory of the divine nature, the glory of God actually and fully present in the beauty of his holiness… Silver serves as a reminder to us when we enter the Lord's presence that we do so as the Lord's redeemed for whom payment has been made… Bronze speaks of holiness, wrath, satisfaction and acceptance.

—J. Alec Motyer

Woven into the fabric of the curtains were images of cherubim, apparently intended to recall the theme of 'paradise lost' by alluding to the cherubim which guarded the 'tree of life' in Genesis 3:24.

—John Sailhamer