

Tabernacle

Introduction

The Tabernacle had four coverings. These were made in sections so they could be taken up and down. Like the Tabernacle as a whole, each of these covering point to a unique aspect of Jesus. Lets enter our study!

Exodus 26:1-14

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.

The Frame

Exodus 26:15-29 gives the directions for the constructing of the frame of the tabernacle.

The posts and crossbars were made out of acacia wood. This wood represents Jesus' humanity. These beams were covered in gold representing Jesus' deity. This is a picture of Jesus as the perfect God-man. Jesus was 100% God and 100% man!

Each post was anchored on the bottom into a base of silver. Remember that silver represents redemption. The silver that forms these bases came from the redemptive price of the firstborn.

So get the picture. Jesus as the God-man comes down from heaven to earth. But that which joins Jesus to the earth is redemption. Why did Jesus come to earth? To redeem us from our sin!

The Frame

These bases of “redemption” form the foundation of the Tabernacle. Jesus’ payment for our sin has become the foundation of Judaism and Christianity.

1 Corinthians 3:11

For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Our standing before a Holy God is not based upon our works, or how good we perceive ourselves to be. It is based solely upon the atoning sacrifice of Jesus. His sacrifice redeemed us from sin and death and into His Eternal Life that He freely offers to all who will come to Him!

The Inner Covering – Fine Linen

The inner covering consisted of fine linen (finely twisted) woven together with blue, purple and scarlet material. The colors were dyed linen. The word for 'finely twisted' linen as given in the text is an Egyptian one. Egypt was famous at the time for their production of linen and especially 'twined linen' in which every thread was twisted from many strands.

This curtain was decorated with figures of cherubim which were skillfully embroidered on it. Cherubim were only found embroidered on this curtain and the veil. Therefore whether it be the holy place or the holy of holies the Cherubim were seen through the framework on the innermost curtain and on the veil.

The Inner Covering – Fine Linen

Cherubim (which is the plural of cherub) were celestial angelic beings in the spiritual realm. They are always associated with the holiness of God. When Adam sinned cherubim were stationed at the entrance to the Garden of Eden to guard the way to the Tree of Life.

They represent the righteous government of God, and are the executors of God's righteous judgment.

As the priests ministered in the Holy Place they saw above them and around them at all times - the four faced Cherubim were visual reminders of the holiness of God. The Lord continually reminded them:

Leviticus 11:44-45

For I *am* the Lord your God. You shall therefore consecrate yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I *am* holy. Neither shall you defile yourselves with any creeping thing that creeps on the earth. ⁴⁵ For I *am* the Lord who brings you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I *am* holy.

The Inner Covering – Fine Linen

This first beautiful covering with its cherubim put over the framework really formed the tabernacle and made it one:

Exodus 26:6 "And you shall make fifty clasps of gold, and couple the curtains together with the clasps, so that it may be one tabernacle."

There were 10 of these curtains coupled together. Each of them was 28 cubits long (42 feet) by 4 cubits wide (6 feet) so one single length being hung over the roof and down the sides of the framework would hang 1 cubit (18 inches) short of the ground on either side. In fact they were not hung individually but five of them were joined together to make two large units, each 28 by 20 cubits.

In order to couple these two curtains together fifty loops of blue thread were sewn on the side of one curtain and the same on the other curtain. Fifty clasps of gold were then used to join the curtains to one another in order, as the instructions went, 'that it may be one tabernacle'

The Inner Covering – Fine Linen

It is interesting that this bringing together and making one, is just like the words that Jesus used when He prayed for the lives of his followers:

John 17:20-22 " I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; ²¹ that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. ²² And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one "

Just as there must be no possibility of the separation or drawing apart of the curtains covering the holy place, so the body of Christ (His Church) should be one and not divided.

The Second Covering – Goats Hair

Exodus 26:7

You shall also make curtains of goats' *hair*, to be a tent over the tabernacle

Over this first tent covering there was a second tent placed which was slightly larger in size. It was made from black goat's hair woven together. Instead of starting with ten narrow curtains, this time eleven were used, each of them was 30 cubits by 4 cubits. This meant, that because it was 2 cubits longer than the linen curtain, it reached right down to ground level and entirely covered the first one.

Six of these curtains were joined to make a large curtain and the remaining five to form another. The two large curtains were then united in a similar way to the first.

The clasps holding the 50 loops were made of bronze and not of gold.

The entire length of the completed curtain, 44 cubits (66 feet) by 30 cubits (45 feet) was used for making a fold in front above the entrance and also for overlapping the under-curtain around the sides and at the back of the tent.

The Second Covering – Goats Hair

Exodus 26:7

You shall also make curtains of goats' *hair*, to be a tent over the tabernacle

Our verse says these curtains were made out of goats' hair. Notice that "hair" is italicized. This means "hair" is not in the original text. The emphasis of the text is on "goats." These were goat coverings. When Israel collectively stood before God, the goat was the only animal ever sacrificed. The goat is a type of Christ dying in the place of His people

1. A goat was slain during the Feast of Unleavened Bread for a sin offering (Numbers 28:17).
2. A goat was slain as a sin offering for atonement during Pentecost (Leviticus 23:15,19).
3. A goat was also slain during the Feast of Trumpets (Numbers 29:1-5).
4. Two goats, a slain goat and a scapegoat, were given on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16).
 5. A goat was slain during the Feast of Tabernacles (Numbers 29).

In addition to these national convocations:

 6. A goat was slain when a ruler sinned (Leviticus 4:23).
 7. A goat was slain when a commoner sinned (Leviticus 4:27,28).
 8. A goat was slain when a sin was committed out of ignorance (Numbers 15:24,27).
 9. A goat was slain at the beginning of each month (Numbers 28:11,15).
 10. A goat was slain at the consecration of a priest (Leviticus 9:2,3).
 11. A goat was slain at the dedication of the altar (Numbers 7:16).

11 times in Scripture the sacrifice of the goat was to be offered and sacrificed.

The Second Covering – Goats Hair

When not sacrificed, goats are usually seen in an evil connection as when Rebekah deceived Isaac using goats' skins (Genesis 27), or when Joseph's brothers killed a goat and dipped his coat in the blood, or when the Lord will separate "the sheep and the goats."

In short, goats in Scripture represent sin. Christ on the cross became sin.

2 Corinthians 5:21 --- "He who knew no sin was made sin for us."

It is interesting to note that what joined the five curtains with the six curtains were rings of brass which represent judgment.

The Third Covering – Ram Skins Dyed Red

The third covering was of ram skins dyed red. It was the first of the two weatherproof coverings

Exodus 26:14a

“You shall also make a covering of ram skins dyed red for the tent”

Rams were used for sacrifice, and the red always represents blood for the atonement.

When Abraham was about to offer Isaac, his son, upon the altar of sacrifice unto Jehovah, an angel stayed his hand and directed his attention to the ram caught in the nearby thicket which ram was then offered “in the place of his son.” (Genesis 22:2–13)

It is interesting that there were no measurements given for this covering.

The Third Covering – Ram Skins Dyed Red

When we come to the Levitical ordinances, we find the ram playing a prominent role. It was very frequently used:

- For a burnt-offering (Lev. 8:18; Lev. 9:2; Lev. 16:3, 5),
- For a peace-offering (Lev. 9:18; Num. 6:14; Num. 7:88),
- For the trespass-offering (Lev. 5:16; Lev. 6:6; Lev. 19:21).

But perhaps its fullest significance is seen in the offering for the consecration of the priests (Ex. 29:15-26). Here a bullock and two rams were taken; the bullock was for a sin-offering, one of the rams for a burnt-offering, and the other was called "the ram of consecration." The priests laid their hand upon this ram, as showing their identification with it; then it was slain, and its blood sprinkled not only upon the altar, as showing God's acceptance of the sacrifice, but put upon the ear, thumb, and great toe of the priest, as showing that he now was specifically and completely set apart to God, who had an **absolute claim upon the obedience, as shown by the ear; upon the service, as suggested by the hand; and upon the walk, of which the foot speaks.** Thus the ram of consecration was the measure of full, **complete devotedness unto God.**

The Outer Covering – Badger Skin

The fourth covering was made of badgers' skins and again no measurements were given.

Exodus 26:14b

... and a covering of badger skins above that.

The Hebrew word for badger skins 'tachash' may refer to a badger or a Dugong or Sea Cow. A Dugong is an aquatic mammal previously found swimming along the shores of the Red Sea, it is now almost extinct.

In the tabernacle covering there was a progression from the most beautiful to the less attractive. From the first covering of the finest white linen woven with blue, purple and scarlet and decorated with cherubim to the badger skin covering on the outside.

Since the outer cover of badger skins was far from beautiful, you can't help but imagine what a foreigner passing by must have thought to see this unattractive tent as the focal point for the worship of Yahweh. But as with everything in the kingdom of God, the harder we search and the deeper we look for the things of god, the more beauty and splendor we find.

The Outer Covering – Badger Skin

Each of the tabernacle coverings pointed to Jesus Christ. The innermost curtain with its four colors and the cherubim woven into the fine white linen, the second covering of goats hair spoke of Jesus Christ and His sacrifice, remember the scapegoat that carried away the sins of the nation in the wilderness, and the third covering of rams skins dyed red also pointed to Jesus as our substitute just as the ram was the substitute for Isaac when his father Abraham was lifting the knife. But the last covering was of the badger skins. It also pointed to Jesus Christ. As the badger skins had that unattractive outward appearance so Jesus was a normal Israelite man with nothing especially attractive about Him that would make us think he was the King of kings. He was humble in character. No one has any idea what Jesus looked like.

In the tabernacle there was a clear resemblance to Jesus Christ. The person who looks at Him on just the outside at his physical appearance would never grasp the beauty and the wonder that resides in Jesus.

As Isaiah prophesied:

Isaiah 53:2 "For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, And as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, *There is* no beauty that we should desire Him."

So What ...

As we have looked at the beauty of Jesus, have you trusted Him to take away your sin. People often look at Him as a man, but we must remember that He is the Creator God of the Universe.

Like the priests that worked in the Tabernacle, let us each dedicate ourselves to faithful service following Him!