

## The Tabernacle

### Exodus 26

#### Introduction

This is the third visit we are making as we view this Old Testament Structure - the Tabernacle. We have had an introduction to the subject and we have considered the outer court. Let me remind you again what we have sketched already. In the midst of the great congregation of the Children of Israel was to be erected a tabernacle with the purpose of God communing with and meeting with mankind. We considered how that surrounding the whole of this complex was a curtained fence. It demonstrated that man in his sin could not approach God because the Lord is Holy. Nothing that defiles shall enter in. This curtained fence prevented access - speaking of judgement. It was also protective, there was a gracious nature to it. This was a warning to the people of the only approach possible to the Lord Jehovah. Any deviation from the prescribed way would not be tolerated. It prevented accidental, inappropriate and careless wanderings into the presence of the Lord which would have resulted in death. In the middle of one of the sides was a door or a gate, and it was only through this way that there was entrance into this complex. So we noted how the way, or gate or door to the Lord is by Jesus Christ alone. We made some comment about the gate speaking of the Lord Jesus. As we then moved through that Outer Court we came immediately to the Brazen Altar where sacrifice was offered, blood was shed, the innocent for the guilty, the just for the unjust. There we saw the precious sacrifice of the Saviour for sinners. Christ was seen in the Brazen Altar. Then connected with the altar was the brazen laver. This was for the washing of the priests involved in priestly activities. Sacrifice and cleansing is seen together. We see the great works of Justification and Sanctification. In the Outer Court - there was appeasement for sin, and there was cleansing of the sinner - all spiritually speaking.

This morning we come to the Tabernacle itself.

- 1) **Description of its Structure**
- 2) **Christ the Tabernacle**
- 3) **The Inner Covering**
- 4) **The Outer Covering**

#### 1) **Description of the Structure**

The Tabernacle was essentially a tented enclosure. Its description is found in Exodus 26. The tent (tabernacle proper) was made of acacia (Shittim) wood boards overlaid with gold and fitted together to form the walls, measuring 45 by 15 feet. On top, four layers of curtains acted as a roof to shield the tabernacle from sun and rain: The innermost layer was woven with fine linen and embroidered with figures of cherubim (angels), the second layer was made of goat's hair, the third layer was made of rams' skins dyed red, and the outermost layer was made of badger skins. The curtains were pinned to the ground with loops and clasps.

What we have this morning is essentially a large tent. There are gold plated boards for walls with four coverings for the roof. Within the tabernacle it was divided into two parts. There was the Holy Place with the Golden Candlestick, Table of Shewbread and the Golden Altar of incense. Then behind the veil or another curtain was the Holy of Holies or the Holiest Place where the Ark of the Covenant with the mercy seat was situated.

As we come to Exodus 26 we may feel that what is before us is hard going as we read it. We may not be like those who say that such a chapter is irrelevant to us in these modern ages. We may view them as passages of the Scripture, yes inspired and infallible. But we consider them to be more technical data. So practically speaking we not see much profit for us in them.

***All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.  
2 Timothy 3:16***

***For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost  
2 Peter 1:21***

When we look at such verses as these, it must strike as a challenge to have such a view that a certain portion of the Word of God practically speaking has no benefit. When Paul wrote to Timothy he bought this statement that 'All Scripture'. Every part is given by inspiration of God, it is breathed out by God. This is the Lord's Word. As we come to a passage such as Exodus 26 we must come with awe and a holy pondering as to the Lord's Word here. Paul continues he says that this 'all scripture' is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. It is for the equipped and building of the child of God. Exodus 26 is not merely the building regulations from Moses to the people concerning the Tabernacle but it has been given and preserved for us because of the will and purpose of the Lord God.

With the Lords help let us come carefully and reverentially to this chapter with this prayer on our heart that the Lord himself would teach us his message.

## **2) Christ the Tabernacle**

The Tabernacle in the wilderness was a model or an illustration of the fuller way that Christ would be to his people the supreme meeting place. We have some idea as to what this means. In some major building project, perhaps a town development where an area is to be upgraded, the architects will put down on paper the plans for the project. There will be details of materials to be used and extensive documentation as to how things will proceed. One of the clearest ways we have of demonstrating how something will look is by the use of models. It is a representation of the finished project. However the materials used is inferior, the size has been scaled down, the details are somewhat limited but it gives an idea. Likewise when we view this Tabernacle in the Wilderness we have a model of the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We can see some parallels with the Lord Jesus Christ and this Tent of Meeting. When we come to look at the details of this structure we ought to have that sense in which we are asking the question - how does this show Christ? How do I see a different facet to his work and ministry.

What are the parallels:

### **a) Place of Meeting**

As we have explored a little already the Tabernacle was a place of meeting for God and Men. In the person of the Lord Jesus Christ we have the place of meeting between God and Men.

***For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus  
1 Timothy 2:5***

In the incarnation of Jesus we see so clearly this was the means to come to God. The Messiah would come, In Him would be that appointed place of meeting. He would be called Emmanuel. John's prologue we have him saying this -

***And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth  
John 1:14***

The Greek word that we have translated dwelt - means to dwell in a tent. The Word, which is God, comes and tabernacles with men in flesh. This is God and Man mysteriously joined for eternity together. The God-Man. When the writer to the Hebrews wrote in those chapters which are essentially a commentary or explanation of the principles of the ceremonial law - we have him saying this -

***Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.  
Hebrews 10:5-7***

Quite properly we have in the Lord Jesus a place of meeting, a place of God tabernacling with men. Jesus would say

***If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.  
John 14:9***

### **b) Temporary Appearing**

The Tabernacle was not a permanent structure, it was designed to be on the move. In a sense it was a temporary manifestation. It would later be replaced by the Temples. In the same way with the Lord Jesus - he would say of himself that:

***And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.  
Matt 8:20***

He would go from place to place. There was that ever continuing journey. He did not set up an headquarters of operation. He moved from town to town, village to village. He obviously returned to places he had visited previously but there was no where which was home to him. Even as a child he was born in Bethlehem, fled to Egypt and grew up in Nazereth. We can think of his ministry it was a temporary appearing. He tabernacled and then is now seated at the right hand of the Father on high.

### **3) The Inner Covering**

With this in view that the Tabernacle itself is Christ let us consider these coverings described in Ex 26. In the first verse of this chapter we have this inner covering described. Let us remember that this was hidden from view to the people outside. Only those permitted into the Holy Place would have had the privilege of seeing this inner covering. We have to notice the similarity with the gate of the Court of the Tabernacle. In 27:16 we read concerning the gate -

***And for the gate of the court shall be an hanging of twenty cubits, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, wrought with needlework: and their pillars shall be four, and their sockets four***

***compare with 26:1***

***Moreover thou shalt make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet: with cherubims of cunning work shalt thou make them.***

The construction of the gate and of this inner covering of the Tabernacle were identical with one exception. There were no cherubim embroidered on the gate. We have already discovered and made the point that the gate spoke of Christ. In this inner covering again we have the same allusion to Christ.

## Blue

In Exodus 24, Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu and the seventy elders of Israel were invited to Mount Sinai to meet with God. We have a very interesting verse found in 24:9-10 concerning that encounter.

***Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness.***

***Ex 24:9-10***

In this heavenly vision the only colour mentioned in this revelation of God to these men was this paved sapphire stone. Sapphire we know is a deep blue colour. This colour is spoken of throughout scripture such as in

***And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it.***

***Ezekiel 1:26***

It is used in connection with the heavenly throne. This covering or tent has one of its prominent colours being blue or sapphire. As we view Christ in the Tabernacle we see him being Divine or Heavenly. In the meeting of God with men there must be the Divine. We can think of the words given to Mary

***And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.***

***Luke 1:31-35***

As we view the Divine in the inner part of the Tabernacle so is with Christ that he is God.

## Fine Twined Linen

We have this fine twined linen. We could view the linen garments that the priest would wear on the day of atonement. This was to signify cleansing and purity. The priest had been via the Altar, the scapegoat had been taken, the washing of the laver. To appear before the Lord clothed in linen garments. In Revelation 19:7-8 it is described as being the righteousness of the saints. We have no righteousness of ourselves save what has been given to us in Christ. It is his righteousness that we can stand in.

***Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;***

***Titus 3:5***

As we view the Lord Jesus Christ we see perfection, we see obedience, we see holiness. In the earthly ministry of the Saviour there were many attempts to tempt him to sin. There were many occasions when the intent of the people was to catch him out. Even the lies brought at his trial were clearly seen to be falsehood. The witness of Pilate, the thief on the cross, the Roman centurion was that he was righteous. He had done nothing amiss. The writer to the Hebrews in speaking about Jesus said:

***For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;  
Hebrews 7:26***

As we are looking at this internal covering we see the heavenly and the holy.

### Purple

The colour purple was a colour used by kings. Mainly due to its high cost to extract. In Judges 8:26 - the Midian kings are spoken of as having purple raiment about their necks. Mordecai in Esther 8:15 after being honoured by the king was dressed in purple along with other colours. Scarlet. The Lord Jesus was clothed in purple and was ridiculed as being the King of the Jews. This was a colour of nobility and regality. In the Tabernacle we have signified in this model that the mediator between God and Men would be sovereign. In Christ he has a name above every other name. He has a throne and his footstool is his enemies. Though the nations of the earth join against him he will hold them in derision. In Christ we see the pre-eminent one. In Christ we have the one for whom all things exist. In Christ we have King of Kings and Lord of lords.

### Scarlet

This was the red colour. In order to procure this dye it required the worm from which the dye came to be crushed and the resultant juices were used for the dye. We have in Psalm 22 the Lord speaking of himself being a worm. On the cross we see Jesus being crushed under the weight of sin and divine wrath. The result was his blood flowed.

### Cherubim

In this inner place we have weaved or embroidered cherubim. Angelic beings. The first mention is in Eden where there is positioned a cherubim to prevent access to the Tree of Life. Here they are depicted and it is as if they were gazing on the furniture and events of the Tabernacle. Its like they are looking down upon the altar of incense, table of shewbread, and golden candlestick and seeing the mercy seat. These worshipping beings gazing and wondering at Redemption for man. We read of Angels at the birth of Jesus saying Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace goodwill toward me. These heavenly beings looking and beholding with wonder the person and work of Christ.

***Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.  
1 Peter 1:11-12***

They wonder at such love because they themselves cannot partake in it. Those fallen angels that we read of in Jude were cast out into outer darkness. There is no redemption for them. They wonder at the saving grace of God and his eternal mercies that in Christ there should be this way. How is it that God manifest in flesh should come and then die bearing the sin and shame of his people. Why is it that God should deal with men like this. It is holy wonder. We too know a little of this wondering - do you ever ponder why grace has been shown to you and not to another. It should be a source of holy amazement to us. Furthermore provoke us to humility and true heartfelt worship of God.

In this inner covering we see the heavenly, holy, kingly, crushed and worshipped one. Dear Friends this is our Saviour portrayed. This is a model of him. Furthermore we see the other coverings.

#### 4) The Outer Coverings Exodus 26:7,14

Whilst the inner covering was hidden from view, these outer coverings were seen though. Next to the innermost covering was a covering of goats hair, next rams skin dyed red and then on the outside badger skin.

##### a) Goats Hair

What is the significance of the goats hair. On the day of Atonement that we have in Leviticus 16 there was a ceremony involving two goats. One of which was taken and sacrificed and the other was taken out into the wilderness and let go. The significance of this was to demonstrate to the people that the guilt and the sin had been removed from the people. It had been taken away. It has been credited or imputed to that animal. The Scapegoat took the blame of the people. It was driven away. It was never to return. When we view our sin we need a scapegoat - who is Christ. He suffered outside the gate. Our sin if it has been atoned for by Christ - it has been removed as far as the east is from the west. It has been buried in the depths of the sea. If we are in Christ, our sin will not be judged twice, firstly by Christ and then by us. He is our scapegoat and has carried it away.

##### b) Ram's Skin Dyed Red

In Genesis 22 we have the offering of Isaac on the altar. There on the mount Moriah a substitute was provided by God. The Ram caught by its horns in the thicket. God gives his name to Abraham - Jehovah-Jireh. Here in the Tabernacle we see that the Lord has provided a substitute for his people. Here is the substitutionary sacrifice. The Ram's skin dyed red. This is the great work of Christ. His death for his people.

***Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.***

***Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:  
By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope  
of the glory of God  
Romans 4:25-5:2***

***But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the  
chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed  
Isaiah 53:5***

He is our sacrifice. He shed his blood, gave his life for his people to redeem their souls from death, from the grave and from the righteous judgement of God.

***But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand  
of God;  
Hebrews 10:12***

##### c) Badger Skin

The very outermost covering which was visible to all was the covering of badger skin. There is some debate as to the exact animal. In the Hebrew it is 'takh'-ash'. In Ezekiel 16:10 we have there the description of the tenderness of the Lord with his covenant people. He speaks how he gave to them embroidered garments. On their feet they had badger skins.

***I clothed thee also with broidered work, and shod thee with badgers' skin, and I girded thee  
about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk.  
Ezekiel 16:10***

Whatever this creature was, its skin was strong and suitable for wearing as shoes. When we see this on the Tabernacle coverings, it was the outermost and so to protect all inside it would need to

be waterproof. So this covering was durable but not attractive. It was used for soling shoes. There is not much beauty or elegance, but plain and despised.

When we view the Lord Jesus Christ in his humanity. We don't see people flocking to him due to his appearance. We see the Saviour weeping at the tomb of Lazarus, sweating drops of blood in the Garden of Gethsemane. We see him tired, exhausted and asleep. We see him groaning and crying out. We see him moved with compassion. The people would say of him:

***And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?  
how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?  
John 6:42***

from the prophecy of Isaiah we see an insight into the suffering servant.

***For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath  
no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should  
desire him  
Isaiah 53:2***

From the outside this tabernacle looked bland, unappealing and covered. In the Lord Jesus on earth born in a stable, laid in a manger, no where to lay his head and buried in a borrowed tomb. As far as the world was concerned - rather unimpressive. When we speak to people about the Saviour - unless the Spirit is at work - the response of people is that he is unimpressive. This is what we thought before we saw him as he was. To know Christ is to know him in all of these coverings.

***Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the  
stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,  
1 Peter 2:7***

Those that know him describe him in other terms -

***His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my  
friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.  
Song of Solomon 5:16***

***My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand.  
Song of Solomon 5:10***

This Lamb of God that the world in sin hides away from

***And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that  
sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:  
Revelation 6:16***

To the child of God that has tasted and seen that the Lord is good - we will

***And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as  
are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and  
power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.  
Revelation 5:13***

The question comes to us today - do you know him. Do you really know Christ? Have you seen in him the heavenly, holy, kingly, redeeming Saviour. The one who takes your sin, removes it, pays for it and gives you that very blessed gift of peace with God and communion with him forever. May it be so.