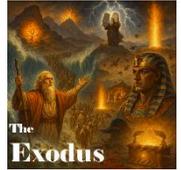




The Tabernacle and the Courtyard Exodus 26:1 - 27:1-21 & 30:17-21 (Lesson #27)



26:1 "Moreover, you shall make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twined linen and blue and purple and scarlet yarns; you shall make them with cherubim skillfully worked into them. 2 The length of each curtain shall be twenty-eight cubits, and the breadth of each curtain four cubits; all the curtains shall be the same size. 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 on the edge of the outermost curtain in the first set. Likewise you shall make loops on the edge of the outermost curtain in the second set. 5 Fifty loops you shall make on the one curtain, and fifty loops you shall make on the edge of the curtain that is in the second set; the loops shall be opposite one another. 6 And you shall make fifty clasps of gold, and couple the curtains one to the other with the clasps, so that the tabernacle may be a single whole.

In these verses, we find the instructions for the first of the four coverings of the tabernacle proper.

As previously stated, the "*fine twined linen*" used here was likely high-quality Egyptian white linen, which serves to highlight themes of purity and holiness.

The specific colors chosen for these curtains are not merely decorative; they are intended to evoke profound biblical associations:

- **Blue** points toward heaven and the throne of God
- **Purple** signifies royalty
- **Scarlet** represents sacrifice and blood.

Furthermore, the inclusion of **cherubim**, skillfully worked into the fabric, serves as a vivid reminder of the Garden of Eden and the **guarded presence of God**.

Regarding the dimensions, each curtain measured twenty-eight cubits in length. When draped over the tabernacle structure, the fabric would have stopped exactly one cubit (approximately 18 inches) short of the ground on each side, preserving the holy material from the desert floor.

Finally, it is significant to notice the layer visible from the inside of the tabernacle: the two sets of curtains are joined together by fifty **gold clasps**, uniting the various parts so that the sanctuary becomes a single, beautiful, cohesive whole (three vibrant, beautiful colors and gold).

26:7 ¶ You shall also make curtains of goats' hair for a tent over the tabernacle; eleven curtains shall you make. 8 The length of each curtain shall be thirty cubits, and the breadth of each curtain four cubits. The eleven curtains shall be the same size. 9 You shall couple five curtains by themselves, and six curtains by themselves, and the sixth curtain you shall double over at the front 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 that is outermost in the second set. 11 "You shall make fifty clasps of bronze, and put the clasps into the loops, and couple the tent together that it may be a single whole. 12 And the part that remains of the curtains of the tent, the half curtain

that remains, shall hang over the back of the tabernacle. 13 And the extra that remains in the length of the curtains, the cubit on the one side, and the cubit on the other side, shall hang over the sides of the tabernacle, on this side and that side, to cover it. 14 And you shall make for the tent a covering of tanned rams' skins and a covering of goatskins on top.

In this passage, Moses outlines the second, third, and fourth coverings of the tabernacle. Several specific details regarding the construction of these layers merit closer attention.

First, note the deliberate change in dimensions. While the inner linen curtains were 28 cubits long, this second layer of goat hair is 30 cubits long.

This extra length creates a **protective overhang**; that additional cubit on each side (v. 13) ensured that the beautiful, expensive inner curtains never touched the desert floor. It provides a vivid picture of protection for the holy.

Second, verse 9 mentions an eleventh curtain—one more than the inner layer—which was to be "doubled over" at the front.

This likely created a sort of "valance" or reinforced entrance, signaling that even the exterior possessed a specific architectural flourish. Additionally, while the inner curtains were joined by gold clasps, these goat-hair curtains are joined by **bronze**.

Regarding the final layers, although we cannot be certain of the exact material of the outermost covering—as translations for the final skin are quite varied—we can be sure that the Tabernacle appeared very plain on the outside while remaining absolutely stunning and beautiful from the inside.

As we have previously noted, this serves as a powerful parallel to **Isaiah 53:2**, which describes the Messiah: "*He had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him.*" Much like the Tabernacle itself, Christ's true glory was veiled by a humble, human exterior.

APPLICATION QUESTION: Why would God place the most beautiful elements where no one but the priests could see them?

This arrangement challenges our modern desire for "outward show" and serves as a reminder that God deeply values the hidden beauty of the heart and the private sanctuary of worship. Here, in these four layers, we see the complete covering that shielded the presence of God.

Yahweh will not shift to the tabernacle building itself.

26:15 You shall make upright frames for the tabernacle of acacia wood. 16 Ten cubits shall be the length of a frame, and a cubit and a half the breadth of each frame. 17 There shall be two tenons in each frame, for fitting together. So shall you do for all the frames of the tabernacle. 18 You shall make the frames for the tabernacle: twenty frames for the south side; 19 and forty bases of silver you shall make under the twenty frames, two bases under one frame for its two tenons, and two bases under the next frame for its two tenons; 20 and for the second side of the

tabernacle, on the north side twenty frames, 21 and their forty bases of silver, two bases under one frame, and two bases under the next frame. 22 And for the rear of the tabernacle westward you shall make six frames. 23 And you shall make two frames for corners of the tabernacle in the rear; 24 they shall be separate beneath, but joined at the top, at the first ring. Thus shall it be with both of them; they shall form the two corners. 25 And there shall be eight frames, with their bases of silver, sixteen bases; two bases under one frame, and two bases under another frame.

In this section, Yahweh describes to Moses the structural framework of the tabernacle. The "upright frames" (or boards) were constructed of durable acacia wood, each standing ten cubits high.

As previously mentioned, acacia (*shittim*) was known for being "incorruptible" or rot-resistant, which is why it was the primary material for the furniture and frames—symbolizing the enduring nature of God's sanctuary.

To secure these frames, the design utilizes a series of "*tenons*"—projections at the bottom of each board—that fit precisely into heavy sockets.

In total, there were ninety-six blocks of solid silver into which the boards of the tabernacle were slid. It is important to keep these silver bases in mind, as a significant discussion regarding their origin and purpose will arise in **Exodus 30**.

From a structural standpoint, the immense weight of this silver provided a massive, immovable anchor for the entire building, ensuring that God's dwelling place remained firm and steadfast even in the midst of the wilderness.

Vs 23-24 - The description of the corner frames being "*joined at the top*" suggests a unique reinforcement. This reinforces the theme of the Tabernacle as a "*single whole*" (v. 6), showing that even the structural corners were bound together in unity.

26:26 "You shall make bars of acacia wood, five for the frames of the one side of the tabernacle, 27 and five bars for the frames of the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the frames of the side of the tabernacle at the rear westward. 28 The middle bar, halfway up the frames, shall run from end to end. 29 You shall overlay the frames with gold and shall make their rings of gold for holders for the bars, and you shall overlay the bars with gold. 30 Then you shall erect the tabernacle according to the plan for it that you were shown on the mountain.

Following the description of the upright frames, Moses outlines how the Tabernacle is to be strengthened and unified.

These five bars of acacia wood served as horizontal cross-members, binding the vertical frames together into a rigid wall. The wood was entirely overlaid with gold and secured to the frames using gold rings, which served as holders for the bars.

There is some scholarly question as to whether the middle bar mentioned in verse 28 ran externally through the rings like the others, or if it ran internally through the center of the paneling itself.

If the latter is true, it represents amazing craftsmanship for the period; an internal bar running *"from end to end"* would have provided incredible stability and durability, essentially locking the entire side of the structure into a single, immovable unit.

In the tabernacle we find multiple times acacia wood overlaid with gold. This points to the nature of Jesus, fully man, yet full God.

Finally, verse 30 serves as a solemn reminder of the divine origin of this project. Moses is commanded to erect the Tabernacle *"according to the plan"* shown to him on the mountain. This reinforces the truth that the Tabernacle was not a product of human imagination or Egyptian influence, but a **physical shadow of a heavenly reality**.

Next Yahweh moves to discuss the construction of the veil that was to separate the holy of Holies from the Holy Place.

26:31 "And you shall make a veil of blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen. It shall be made with cherubim skillfully worked into it. 32 And you shall hang it on four pillars of acacia overlaid with gold, with hooks of gold, on four bases of silver. 33 And you shall hang the veil from the clasps, and bring the ark of the testimony in there within the veil. And the veil shall separate for you the Holy Place from the Most Holy. 34 You shall put the mercy seat on the ark of the testimony in the Most Holy Place. 35 And you shall set the table outside the veil, and the lampstand on the south side of the tabernacle opposite the table, and you shall put the table on the north side. 36 "You shall make a screen for the entrance of the tent, of blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen, embroidered with needlework. 37 And you shall make for the screen five pillars of acacia, and overlay them with gold. Their hooks shall be of gold, and you shall cast five bases of bronze for them."

In this final section of the chapter, we see the instructions for the inner veil, the outer screen, and the specific arrangement of the furnishings within the Holy of Holies and the Holy Place.

1. The Veil (*Parokhet*): The Boundary of the Presence (vv. 31–33)

The inner veil was the most critical divider in the entire complex. The Hebrew name *Parokhet* comes from a root meaning "to shut off" or "to separate." Unlike a standard door that opens easily, this was a heavy, woven barrier that functioned as a "Keep Out" sign for everyone except the High Priest, who entered only once a year.

Like the inner ceiling, this veil featured *"skillfully worked"* cherubim—the "guardians of the throne." To look at the veil was to be reminded that the way to God was barred by the angelic sentinels who took their posts after the Fall.

2. The Layout of the Holy Place (v. 35)

God specifies the furniture placement with military precision. On the **North Side** sat the Table of Showbread (the Table of Presence), and on the **South Side** stood the Lampstand (the Menorah).

As the priest walked toward the Veil, the light was on his left and the bread was on his right, creating a path of "**light and life**" leading toward the Divine Presence.

3. The Screen (*Masak*): The Outer Entrance (vv. 36–37)

While the inner Veil and the outer Screen were made of the same colors, there are subtle but vital differences to note:

- "**Needlework**" vs. "**Skillful Work**": The inner Veil was *chosheb* (woven in), making it more complex and dimensional, while the outer Screen was *roqem* (embroidered), a simpler construction.

REMDINER: It was the heavier more complex *chosheb*, that hung in the temple that was torn from top to bottom the moment of Jesus' death:

"50 And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. 51 And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split." (Mt 27:50-51 ESV)

- **No Cherubim:** There are no cherubim mentioned on the outer Screen. The "guardians" only appear as one is inside the tabernacle.
- **The Bases of Bronze:** The inner Veil sat on **silver bases** (representing redemption), but the outer Screen sat on **bronze bases** (representing judgment). The further one moves out toward the world, the "harder" and less precious the foundation material becomes.

We will now shift to look at the final two pieces of furniture, those pieces located in the courtyard.

27:1 ¶ "You shall make the altar of acacia wood, five cubits long and five cubits broad. The altar shall be square, and its height shall be three cubits. 2 And you shall make horns for it on its four corners; its horns shall be of one piece with it, and you shall overlay it with bronze.

As we move into Chapter 27, Yahweh begins outlining the specifications for the **Bronze Altar**, located prominently in the courtyard.

This was the largest piece of furniture in the entire tabernacle complex, measuring five cubits long, five cubits wide, and three cubits tall (approximately 7 ½ feet square and 4 ½ feet high). Its square shape highlights the stability and equity of God's justice.

The altar was to be constructed with horns on each of its four corners, fashioned as a single piece with the wooden frame, and then the entire structure was overlaid with bronze.

These horns were not merely decorative; they were the points where the blood of the sacrifice was applied, symbolizing the power and reach of the atonement to the four corners of the earth.

While the interior furnishings of the Holy Place were crafted of gold, the Altar is strictly bronze. This shift in metal is theologically significant:

- **The Metal of Judgment:** In biblical typology, bronze is the metal that can endure the fire. While gold would melt under such intense heat, bronze endures. It represents the strength of God's judgment and His ability to withstand the fire of holiness.
- **The Connection to the Serpent:** Just as Moses lifted the "bronze serpent" in the wilderness to heal the people (**Numbers 21**), the bronze altar was the place where the judgment for sin was consumed by fire so that the people could live.

According to **Leviticus 6:13**, the fire on this altar was never to go out:

"Fire shall be kept burning on the altar continually; it shall not go out." (Le 6:13 ESV)

It appears that the flame was originally ignited by God Himself:

"And fire came out from before the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the pieces of fat on the altar, and when all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces." (Le 9:24 ESV)

From this point on it appears the fire was to be maintained by man—a vivid picture of the ongoing, daily necessity for atonement and the perpetual availability of God's mercy.

27:3 You shall make pots for it to receive its ashes, and shovels and basins and forks and fire pans. You shall make all its utensils of bronze.

The functionality of the Altar required a specific set of tools, all of which were to be forged from bronze to match the Altar itself. These utensils were essential for the daily maintenance of the sacrificial system and the proper handling of the holy fire and offerings.

- **Pots and Shovels:** These were used for the removal of the "ashes". Even the waste of the sacrifice was handled with dedicated, sanctified tools, showing that every aspect of the transition from sacrifice to ash was governed by God's order.
- **Basins:** These were perhaps the most critical utensils, as they were used for collecting the blood of the animals.

This blood was then dashed against the sides of the altar or applied to its horns, reinforcing the central truth that *"without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins"* (**Heb 9:22**).

- **Forks and Fire Pans:** The "flesh-hooks" or forks were used to arrange the pieces of the sacrifice upon the wood to ensure they were consumed properly, while the fire pans were used to carry coals from the Bronze Altar to the Altar of Incense.

By crafting these tools out of bronze, God ensured they were durable enough to withstand the constant heat and the heavy labor of the courtyard.

4 You shall also make for it a grating, a network of bronze, and on the net you shall make four bronze rings at its four corners. 5 And you shall set it under the ledge of the altar so that the net extends halfway down the altar.

Yahweh continues the description of the altar's architecture, focusing on the internal mechanisms that allowed it to function as a perpetual furnace.

The "grating" was a network of bronze designed to serve two vital purposes: it acted as a sieve for the ashes to fall through and, perhaps more importantly, it allowed air to be pulled into the altar from below to provide the oxygen necessary for the fire to burn intensely.

Attached to this network were four bronze rings located at the four corners. These were the anchor points for the poles used to carry the altar during Israel's journey through the wilderness.

Moses was also directed to set a "**ledge**" (*karkob*) around the structure. Scholars offer varying interpretations of its function:

- **The Priestly Platform:** Some suggest this ledge served as a walking platform for the priests to stand on while tending the fire and arranging the heavy sacrifices.
- **The Decorative Rim:** Others view it as a structural or decorative rim that reinforced the frame.

Regardless of the ledge's specific use, the placement of the grate is mathematically precise. By extending the net halfway down the altar—approximately 2.25 feet from the top—God created a deep, protected "fire box."

This design ensured that the fire was contained and shielded from the unpredictable desert winds, preventing dangerous sparks from flying into the fine linen curtains of the surrounding courtyard.

6 And you shall make poles for the altar, poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with bronze. 7 And the poles shall be put through the rings, so that the poles are on the two sides of the altar when it is carried. 8 You shall make it hollow, with boards. As it has been shown you on the mountain, so shall it be made.

To ensure the portability of the sanctuary during the wilderness journey, God commands the construction of poles made of acacia wood.

Much like the poles for the Ark of the Covenant, these were designed for transport, though in this case, they were overlaid with bronze rather than gold to match the courtyard's theme of judgment and endurance.

When the camp moved, these poles were inserted into the rings on the two sides of the altar, allowing the Levites to carry the heavy structure without touching the altar itself.

The altar was constructed to be "hollow, with boards," likely making it manageable for transport and providing the necessary space for the internal grating and air circulation discussed previously.

Again, this design was not left to Moses' discretion; for the third time in this context, the text reiterates that it must be built exactly as it was "***shown on the mountain.***"

This repetition serves a vital purpose. It emphasizes that the Altar is not merely a convenient or utilitarian way to cook meat; it was a shadow of a heavenly reality.

Every dimension and material was a physical manifestation of a spiritual reality, anchoring the people's worship in the very blueprints of heaven.

Next we would expect Yahweh to outline the construction of the Laver, but Moses will not record that until chapter 30, we will bring it forward here:

30:17 ¶ The LORD said to Moses, 18 "You shall also make a basin of bronze, with its stand of bronze, for washing. You shall put it between the tent of meeting and the altar, and you shall put water in it, 19 with which Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet. 20 When they go into the tent of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister, to burn a food offering to the LORD, they shall wash with water, so that they may not die. 21 They shall wash their hands and their feet, so that they may not die. It shall be a statute forever to them, even to him and to his offspring throughout their generations.

The final of the seven pieces of furniture articulated by Yahweh to Moses is the **Bronze Basin** (or Laver). Both the basin and its stand were to be constructed of bronze and filled with water for the ritual purification of the priesthood.

While not mentioned in this specific verse, we learn in (**Ex 38:8**) that this basin was fashioned from the bronze mirrors of the women who served at the entrance to the tent—a detail that emphasizes the transition from self-reflection to God-reflection.

This washing was a mandatory requirement for Aaron and his sons. It occurred every time they entered the tent or approached the altar to minister. The gravity of this command is underscored by the repeated warning, *"so that they may not die."* It was established as a statute that was to last forever, governing the physical and spiritual approach to the Divine Presence.

The location of the basin *"between the tent of meeting and the altar"* is vital for understanding the "map" of the Tabernacle and the progression of the believer:

1. **The Altar:** Where the penalty of sin is dealt with (**Justification**).
2. **The Basin:** Where the pollution of sin is dealt with (**Sanctification**).
3. **The Tent:** Where the fellowship with God begins (**Communion**).

Theological Application

This sequence reveals a profound spiritual truth: even those who are "saved" or consecrated for service need the daily *"washing of water with the word."*

"25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word," (Eph 5:25-26 ESV)

While the sacrifice at the Altar was a singular event, the washing at the Basin was a repetitive necessity.

APPLICATION: As Christians, though we are justified once by the blood of Christ, we require the ongoing cleansing of our "hands and feet" as we navigate a fallen world, ensuring our walk and our work remain pure before the Lord.

Finally, Yahweh outlines the tabernacle complex, we looked at this a few weeks ago, as I conducted an overview but it is worthy of repeating since we are here now.

27:9 ¶ "You shall make the court of the tabernacle. On the south side the court shall have hangings of fine twined linen a hundred cubits long for one side. 10 Its twenty pillars and their twenty bases shall be of bronze, but the hooks of the pillars and their fillets shall be of silver. 11 And likewise for its length on the north side there shall be hangings a hundred cubits long, its pillars twenty and their bases twenty, of bronze, but the hooks of the pillars and their fillets shall be of silver. 12 And for the breadth of the court on the west side there shall be hangings for fifty cubits, with ten pillars and ten bases. 13 The breadth of the court on the front to the east shall be fifty cubits. 14 The hangings for the one side of the gate shall be fifteen cubits, with their three pillars and three bases. 15 On the other side the hangings shall be fifteen cubits, with their three pillars and three bases. 16 For the gate of the court there shall be a screen twenty cubits long, of blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen, embroidered with needlework. It shall have four pillars and with them four bases. 17 All the pillars around the court shall be filleted with silver. Their hooks shall be of silver, and their bases of bronze. 18 The length of the court shall be a hundred cubits, the breadth fifty, and the height five cubits, with hangings of fine twined linen and bases of bronze. 19 All the utensils of the tabernacle for every use, and all its pegs and all the pegs of the court, shall be of bronze.

We saw this two weeks ago when we have talked about the transition from bronze and silver to gold.

We have talked about the colors (blue, purple, and scarlet) as well as the cherubim once you get inside the tabernacle (on the veil leading to the Holy of Holies and on the ceiling).

We have talked about the size of the courtyard 100 cubits (150 feet) by 50 cubits (75 feet). As you approached the courtyard unless you were coming from the east you would only see a white, fine twined, linen fence and the top of the tabernacle standing up above the fence.

Finally, as we close out chapter 26, we find instructions around the lampstand.

20 ¶ "You shall command the people of Israel that they bring to you pure beaten olive oil for the light, that a lamp may regularly be set up to burn. 21 In the tent of meeting, outside the veil that is before the testimony, Aaron and his sons shall tend it from evening to morning before the LORD. It shall be a statute forever to be observed throughout their generations by the people of Israel.

The text specifies "beaten" oil rather than oil from a press. Olives were hand-crushed in a mortar and then strained. This produced a much clearer, sediment-free oil that burned with significantly less smoke and a brighter flame than pressed oil.

The people were to bring pure beaten olive oil for the light, that a lamp might regularly burn in the tabernacle. Can you imagine what it would have looked like to be in the golden room lit only by seven olive oil lamps?

Again, as we read earlier, this lamp was the only man-made source of light in the tabernacle and more precisely the Holy Place.

Vs 21 – The lamp again is located outside the veil and Aaron and his sons shall tend it in the morning and in the evening. The menorah was never supposed to go out. This represents the "perpetual" nature of God's presence and the constant watchfulness of the priesthood.

God provided the design and the fire, but the *people* had to provide the oil, and the *priests* had to trim the wicks. It was a partnership. Finally, we see this was a "forever" statute and it was to be observed throughout their generations (perpetually) by the people of Israel.

These offerings and activities were to be kept perpetually. They were to be kept forever.

Each piece of furniture in the Tabernacle represents a specific office or work of Jesus:

- **The Brazen Altar:** Represents the **Sacrifice**. Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (**John 1:29**).
- **The Laver:** Represents **Cleansing**. Jesus is the one who washes us by the "washing of water by the word" (**Ephesians 5:26**).
- **The Golden Lampstand:** Jesus is the "Light of the World" (**John 8:12**). It was the only source of light in the Holy Place.
- **The Table of Showbread:** Jesus is the "Bread of Life" (**John 6:35**) who provides spiritual sustenance for his people.
- **The Altar of Incense:** Represents **Intercession**. Jesus "always lives to make intercession" for us at the right hand of the Father (**Hebrews 7:25**).
- **The Ark of the Covenant:** The meeting place between God and man. The **Mercy Seat** (the lid of the Ark) is where the blood was sprinkled—Jesus is our *propitiation* (the Greek word is *hilasterion*, which means "mercy seat") for our sins (**Romans 3:25**).

The Veil and its meanings:

- **The Veil: Access Forbidden:** The thick, heavy veil separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies, barring access into the Holy of Holies. Only the High Priest was allowed into the very presence of God, represented by the Ark and the Mercy Seat and he could only go once a year.

This veil in the tabernacle and then in the temple would stand, as a separating boarder until 33 AD (approximately 1478 years, almost 1500 years)!

- **The Veil: Access Offered:** At the moment of Jesus' death, the veil was torn from top to bottom indicating open access to the very throne room of God through the blood of Jesus (**Matthew 27:50-51**).