

Message #54**Exodus 26:31-37**

We cannot help but be impressed with the fact that God is a God of great detail especially when it comes to the matter of worship. God is not loosey goosey when it comes to anything. His creation is very detailed and so is His sanctuary.

Now what we have seen so far is that specific furniture items were made to go into this tabernacle and that this tabernacle is a tent type of structure comprised of curtains and frames. The curtains were made with specific material and were made to meet very detailed specs. The frames and the crossbars were to be made of acacia wood overlaid with gold.

Last time we saw the specs of the lumber used for the frame. So now we come to the design of things inside of the sanctuary. God had designed the furniture; He had designed the specs for the actual construction and now He is designing the inside.

There were two curtains that needed to be made differing from the coverings that were already made. These were very important curtains because these curtains would separate specific places of worship.

THE SANCTUARY FOR WORSHIPING GOD WAS TO CONTAIN A SPECIFIC INNER AND OUTER VEIL/CURTAIN THAT WOULD SEPARATE SPECIFIC WORSHIP PLACES.

Now these veils or curtains would be very important. One would actually be used to close off the most holy place in the sanctuary in the back room (Holy of Holies) from the front room of the sanctuary (The Holy Place). The other would be used to close off the sanctuary from the outside.

All of the curtains were identical in their color match (26:1)—blue, purple, scarlet linen. So God wanted both the outside and the inside decorated with specific color codes.

We may analyze this text under two main veils:

VEIL #1 – The design of the inner veil. **26:31-35**

There are a series of nine features that we want to see pertaining to this inner veil:

Feature #1 - The inner veil is to be made with material of specific color. **26:31a**

The colors are specifically said to be blue, purple and scarlet material. We know that this is a type of Jesus Christ and these colors are critical. Blue represents the heavenly nature of Jesus Christ; purple represents the Kingly royalty of Jesus and scarlet represents the sin sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Feature #2 - The inner veil is to be made with cherubim. **26:31b**

Now cherubim are the highest ranked angels and they are always in the presence of God. By virtue of the fact that these cherubim were to be weaved into the material, it illustrated this reality.

Now what is interesting is that for the most part, no one got into this place to see these cherubim; but God wanted them there because they are always present in the place of His presence. This is why I believe that there are angels connected to the church. I believe those angels of churches in Revelation 2-3 are literal angels. Wherever God's presence is, there are the angels.

Now notice from **verse 31** that God stresses that these cherubim were to be made by a skillful workman. This is the second time that this point is brought out (26:1). So it is clear that God wants us to understand that this is to be made by the "work of a skillful workman" and the other curtain is to be made by "the work of a weaver" (**v. 36**).

The word "workman" seems to suggest very careful thought and meditation (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 311). A skillful workman can carefully think through something and then construct it. The word "weaver" suggests one whose business it is to do this kind of work (*Ibid.*, p. 497).

What this means is that was not some ministry opportunity that was open to anyone. This was not to be some sign-up ministry opportunity for anyone who wanted to have a ministry. Those who were to make these things were to be very skilled people. They were not to be novices. These were to be high-end skilled construction people, who know their craft.

Now there are some applications I want to make from this point:

- 1) God's Word is not to be taught by unskilled novices. There are services being led and home studies being led by those who are not skilled in the Word of God and it is not acceptable to God. God wants "skillful workmen" handling His Word. In fact, Paul challenged Timothy to carefully study God's Word so that he would not be a workman who would end up ashamed.
- 2) Sacred ministry is not to be led by novices. The church is to be led by seasoned veterans who have proved themselves as faithful people of God.
- 3) When we do something for God, we should be skilled at what we do. As we will see from this very tabernacle, those vessels and utensils were to be washed and when those dishes were washed they had better be washed right because it was important. So whatever we do for God, even if it is washing dishes, needs to be done skillfully.

Feature #3 - The inner veil is to be hung on four pillars. **26:32a**

These were four pillars made of acacia wood that were overlaid with gold. On these pillars would hang these curtains.

Feature #4 - The veil was to contain hooks made of gold. **26:32b**

Feature #5 - The four pillars were to be put into four sockets of silver. **26:32b**

Feature #6 - The inner veil is to be hung under the clasps. **26:33a**

The veil is to be hung under the golden clasps.

Feature #7 - The inner veil is to be a partition between the Holy Place and Holy of Holies place. **26:33b**

Now we are not told exactly how thick this inner veil was to be. But according Charles Ryrie, who cites Josephus, he claims the veil was four inches thick. In fact, he claims that the veil in Jesus' day was so strong having been weaved together, that horses tied to each side could not pull it apart.

Now when Jesus Christ was on the cross and cried out His final words, the inner veil, which could not be ripped apart by horses, was torn from top to bottom (Matt. 27:51). The fact that it was ripped from top to bottom shows God did it and through the sacrificial work of Jesus Christ the way had been opened for all people to have access to the presence of God.

Feature #8 - The inner chamber is to contain the mercy seat on the ark of the testimony. **26:34**

This inner back room chamber, which is the Holy of Holies, was to contain the mercy seat top which was to sit on top of the ark/box which contained the Word of God. The High Priest could only go into this place one time a year. It is clear that no one but the high priest was ever supposed to be able to look into this area. In fact, the writer of Hebrews made this point very clear (Hebrews 9:2-9). Now the good news for us is that because of the work of Jesus Christ and His shed blood, we are able to enter into the Holy Presence of God by faith in Him (Heb. 10:9-10).

Now one question is why would God go to all the trouble to have a beautiful ark/box built that would house His Word and then not let anyone see it? Truth is this was never put on public display. Why?

Well, we may speculate it is because God did not want His people falling into the trap of worshipping an idol rather than Him. We know later that she did do this very thing (I Sam. 4:3-5). They took the ark box to fight the Philistines and God let them be defeated because they trusted in the box and not in Him. So it may be that this is one reason why God did not let the people see the box.

But the truth is this is simply what God wanted. He wanted people to realize that His sacred Word is very special in worship. God's Word is to be taken very seriously.

We should always be impressed with the sacredness of the Word of God and the mercy and grace involved in us having God's Word.

Feature #9 - The inner chamber is not to contain the table or the lamp stand. **26:35**

Outside of the back-room chamber is the Holy Place. In this Holy place were the table and the lampstand. Now if you walked into the Holy Place from the front and looked toward the back, the table would be on the right/north side and the lampstand would be on the left/south side.

Now what is actually missing from this curtain business are its dimensions. We may surmise that it was perhaps 15 feet high and most definitely 15 feet wide based on the fact that this would actually cover the dimensions we know so no one could look in on this.

Actually you could have a curtain 10 to 12 feet high and no one would be able to look over that. Truth is we just don't know.

VEIL #2 – The design of the outer veil. **26:36-37**

There was another curtain that made up the inside of this sanctuary. This was to be a distinct curtain from the others that were already made. It was distinct from the interior side curtains and ceiling curtains and it was distinct from the Holy of Holies curtain.

Feature #1 - The outer veil was to be a screen for the door way of the tent. **26:36a**

So this curtain was to be an entrance curtain to be hung at the front of the tabernacle. This curtain actually formed the outer door of entrance into this tabernacle. So this curtain would be that which could be seen in the outer court.

Feature #2 - The outer veil was to be made of material that is blue, purple and scarlet. **26:36b**

Now this was to be the specific work of a weaver. Again these are the same colors as used in other curtains. But we will notice that there are no cherubim weaved into this curtain.

Feature #3 - The outer veil is to be connected to five pillars overlaid with gold. **26:37a**

This would be another five pillars separate from the pillars that held up the inner holy of holies.

Feature #4 - The outer veil is to be connected to gold hooks. **26:37b**

Feature #5 - The outer veil is to be connected to five pillars in five sockets of bronze. **26:37c**

Douglas Stuart does not believe it is a coincidence that the sockets here are of bronze and not silver. This entryway was the farthest point away from the presence of God. The farther one is away from the presence of God, the lesser the value of the material (*Exodus*, p. 594).

This point is something we all need in our lives. The farther we are away from God, the lesser our value. The closer we are to God, the greater our value. This point is beautifully illustrated right here.

Now the beauty of our time is that Jesus Christ has opened the door for each of us to draw very near to God—in salvation and in sanctification.