

Three Veils and a Vail – Hebrews 10:14-22a

I. Introduction:

- A. Let's begin this morning with a little quiz.
1. If I gave you a piece of paper and asked you to write **Mark 15:38**, how would you spell the word "veil"?
 2. The verse reads, *"And the VEIL of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom."*
 3. Would you spell it "veil," or "vail"? Some might even spell it "vale" or "vaile."
 4. Now, in **II Corinthians 3** where Paul was saying that the hearts and minds of Israel were darkened.
 5. How would you write **verses 15 & 16** – *"But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the VAIL is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the VAIL shall be taken away"*
 6. How do you spell the word "veil" – the lacy face-covering some women used to wear?
 7. Are these words "v E i l" or "v A i l"? Do you know that in the Bible the word is spelled both ways?
 8. In addition to that, and I can't explain why, but the veil of the temple is spelled one way in the Old Testament and the other way in the New.
- B. I am going to confine my subject this morning to the New Testament use of the word "veil."
1. There are two separate Greek words and two different English spellings.
 2. And I will say that the translations are consistent – one Greek word is always spelled "VEIL" and the other Greek word is always "VAIL."
 3. I see four lessons contained in these two words, and I'd like to share them with you.
 4. Now before you turn me off, let me make it abundantly clear –
 - a. Your **understanding** of these **spellings** and **definitions** is relatively **unimportant**.
 - b. But your **relationship** – your **connection** – to these veils may mean the difference between spending **eternity with the Lord** – or eternity in the **Lake of Fire** under the Lord's judgment.
 5. So there is an important purpose in this message and Bible study.

II. Please turn to Hebrews 9.

- A. **Verse 1** – *"Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary."*
1. This "first covenant" refers to the Law which God gave to Israel.
 2. It basically said, *"If you keep my Law I will bless you."*
 3. But of course, no one has ever perfectly kept that law.
 4. The law proves that all of us are sinners in the eyes of God.
 5. Incidentally that covenant dictated the manner in which God was to be worshiped – and it provided a sanctuary.
- B. *"For there was a tabernacle made; the first (room of which), wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary."*
1. The tabernacle, replicated in Solomon's temple, had two sections – one, twice as large as the other.
 2. The first section was a place of daily service, where the priests burnt incense, tended the lamps, etc.
 3. At the end of that holy place was a veil which separated it from the "holy of holies" or "the most holy place."
- C. *"And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly. Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people."*
- D. The "Holy of Holies" essentially illustrated **the dwelling place of God** – the Lord's "most holy place."
1. That is where the Ark of the Covenant stayed, & over the Ark was the Mercy Seat – the place of salvation.
 2. Only once a year could anyone enter the Holy of Holies, and only the High Priest could do that.

3. The Day was called *"Atonement."*
4. He went behind the veil following very precise protocol and carrying a basin filled with blood – which he sprinkled on the Mercy Seat in a precisely dictated manner.
5. The High Priest went in behind the veil with bells on the hem of his robe – perhaps so that the priests outside in the *"Holy Place"* could know that he had not made a mistake and been slain by God.

E. **Exodus 26** describes the veil which separated the two rooms.

1. Moses, *"thou shalt make a veil of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen of cunning work: with cherubims shall it be made:*
 - a. *And thou shalt hang it upon four pillars of shittim wood overlaid with gold: their hooks shall be of gold, upon the four sockets of silver.*
 - b. *And thou shalt hang up the veil under the taches, that thou mayest bring in thither within the veil the ark of the testimony: and the veil shall divide unto you between the holy place and the most holy.*
 - c. *And thou shalt put the mercy seat upon the ark of the testimony in the most holy place."*
2. Jewish historians tell us that this veil was no shimmering, translucent piece of gauze.
3. It was substantial – heavy and thick – some say more than an inch thick.
4. It was as heavy as the heaviest curtain you've ever used.
5. Without a doubt, the only light behind the veil came from the Shekhinah glory of God Himself.

F. And the point is this: There is a separation – a veil – between us sinners and the Lord God.

1. No one can walk in on the Almighty God of his own free will.
2. There is an immense gulf between us, illustrated in that veil.
3. It is only the High Priest who can meet with the holy God, and only with the blood which the Lord Himself has proscribed.
4. That veil reminds us of our sinfulness and its resultant separation from God.
5. And it points to the ministry of our great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, who went behind the veil with His own precious blood.

III. Now let me compound, or intensify, that illustration with a second veil.

A. Please turn to **II Corinthians 3:12-16**.

1. Paul here contrasts his ministry of the Gospel to the ministry of Moses when he came down from the top of Mount Sinai with the law in his hands.
2. The Apostle was preaching Christ to people whom the Lord was bringing to spiritual life.
3. But Moses was bringing the law to sin-dead rebels.
4. **Verse 12** – *"Seeing then that **WE** have such hope (**salvation from sin**), we use great plainness of speech:*
 - a. *And not as Moses, which put a **VAIL** over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished (ie. salvation by way of obedience to the law.)*
 - b. *But their (**Israel's**) minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same **VAIL** untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which **VAIL is done away in Christ.***
 - c. *But even unto this day, when Moses is read, **the VAIL is upon their heart.***
 - d. *Nevertheless when it (**Israel**) shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away."*

B. Why is there so much religion in our world today but with so little goodness and godliness?

1. Simply put, it's because even semi-religious people have a veil over their hearts and minds.
2. Many of them read the Bible, as the Jews did the Old Testament, but they can't see either their sinfulness or the solution to that sin in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.
3. And as a result they go on in their sin and self-righteousness.
4. This scripture teaches that not only is there a **veil which separates** sinners from the holy God, but there is **another veil** involved which **keeps us from recognizing that separation**.

- C. But when someone is born again, whether Jew or Gentile, the veil over his heart is removed by God's grace.
1. For many of us, there was an *"ah ha"* moment, when suddenly the Lord made everything crystal clear.
 2. What became clear?
 - a. That *"all have sinned and come short of the glory God,"* and I am included in that crowd.
 - b. But it also becomes clear, by the grace of the Lord, that deliverance from sin has been provided through the sacrifice of Christ on the cross.
 3. Salvation from sin is not found in keeping the law, but in trusting the blood of the Lord Jesus, which He Himself has taken behind the veil to sprinkle on the Mercy Seat.

IV. Now let us return to the scripture with Bro. Fulton read for us earlier – *Matthew 27:50-54*.

- A. While hanging on the cross, *"Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.* He died.
1. *And, behold, the VEIL of the TEMPLE was rent in twain (torn) from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,*
 2. *And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.*
 3. *Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God."*
- B. All three of the so-called *Synoptic Gospels – Matthew, Mark and Luke* tell us about the tearing of the veil and most of these other things.
1. There is no natural explanation for some of the events which took place that day.
 2. Earthquakes are not unusual in that part of the world, but the timing of this one was suspiciously serendipitous – this was no coincidence.
 3. I suppose they could, but earthquakes don't usually open graves and tombs.
 - a. But something else occurred with this earthquake which was unique.
 - b. Never before or since have bodies arisen out of their graves, making themselves known to living people
 4. Oh, and by the way, it was only bodies of godly people – God's saints – who came out of their graves.
 5. And to whom did they appear? I would guess that it was only to living saints.
- C. At the same time the veil between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies was torn in two from the top to the bottom.
1. That veil may have been thick and heavy, but it was still made out of fabric, giving it some degree of elasticity.
 2. The nature of earthquakes and the nature of curtains offer no explanation for the tearing of this veil.
 3. It was a miracle. Never before or since has an earthquake torn apart the veil of the temple.
 4. And since the veil wasn't anchored to the sides of the temple, even if the walls fell outward, which they did not do, the veil would not have been torn as described.
 5. Scoff if you like, but this was clearly, the hand of God, ripping apart the veil which separated the two parts of the Temple.
 6. Discount it if you like, but I believe Jehovah was telling us that a way has been created for His people to enter into His presence.
 7. And when did it occur? What took place at the time?
 8. *"Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom."*
 9. Again, that was not coincidental. And it is a message which has been corroborated elsewhere in the Bible.

V. The third New Testament reference to the veil is found in *Hebrews 10*.

- A. I invite your attention to *Hebrews 10:11-22*.
1. Speaking of the Old Testament Jewish priests, the writer says, *"every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices (over and over again), which can never take away sins:*
 - a. *But this man (Christ Jesus), after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.*

- b. *For by one offering he hath **perfected** for ever them that are **sanctified**.”*
 - c. In the death of the Son of God – the perfect and final sacrifice was made, saving and perfecting those for whom Christ died.
2. *“Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before,

 - a. *This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.*
 - b. *Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.”**
 3. As Paul said elsewhere, **“If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.”**
 4. **Hebrews** goes on, *“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, **through the VEIL**, that is to say, **his FLESH**; And having an 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.”*
- B. Notice in this scripture we have reference to **a new veil** – a **new KIND** of veil.
1. In this scripture, the Holy Spirit tells us that **the flesh of Christ was a veil**. How so?
 2. We must remember that Jesus was not just a baby born in Bethlehem – He was – He is – the God-man.
 3. He was God in human flesh; God incarnate.
 4. *“Behold a virgin shall conceive & bear a son; & shall call his name Immanuel”* – which means God with us.
 5. *“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”*
 6. *“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.*
 7. *“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh...”*
- C. Again, the only access sinners have behind the veil into the **“Holy of Holies”** is through the merits of Christ.
1. But it was not in Jesus’ teaching or holy living that we have that access.
 2. It necessitated the death of Christ in His human flesh.
 3. That flesh was a veil which hid from our natural eyes His glory and His deity.
 4. And that flesh was torn asunder by death – by the death of the cross.

VI. In our last reference to the word “veil” we come full circle.

- A. Please turn now to **Hebrews 6**.
1. Paul says, when men make oaths, no matter how religious or irreligious, they often appeal to something greater than themselves.
 - a. They say things like, *“On my mother’s gave, I am telling you the truth.”*
 - b. Or – *“on the life of my son, I will keep my promise.”*
 - c. Or they put their hand on the Bible, *“I solemnly swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.”*
 2. **Verse 16** – *“For men verily swear by the greater: & an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.”*
 - a. Theoretically the matter is settled when that man appeals to the name of his son or his mother.
 - b. Of course such human-made oaths, no matter on what they rest, cannot be fully trusted.
 - c. All men are naturally liars, and they often expect others to lie to them.
 3. Of course God cannot lie, but for emphasis He has accentuated His promises with an oath of sorts.
 4. But in those oaths, as when God made His promise Abraham which is the context, or when he covenanted to save the sinner, He couldn’t appeal to anything higher than Himself.
 5. *“Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation (comfort), who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.”*

a. When the sinner flees to Christ for a refuge from the punishment of sin, he can grab the hope which God's promise contains.

b. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou SHALT be SAVED."

6. *"Which hope we have as an ANCHOR of the soul, both sure and stedfast."*

a. When we have humbly put our faith in Christ to save and deliver us from the judgment which our sins deserve, it's like dropping an anchor onto the Saviour – **it is sure and stedfast.**

b. And where is the Saviour? Where is our anchor?

7. Paul says, *"Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul... and which entereth into that **within the veil**; Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."*

B. Our only hope for salvation from our sin is the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. And where is that Christ today? He died 2,000 years ago, then three days later He arose from the grave.

2. And shortly thereafter He ascended into Heaven, to His rightful home.

3. And from there He guarantees the salvation which He has given to those who repent and trust Him.

4. **Hebrews 7:25** – *"Wherefore he is **ABLE** also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make **INTERCESSION** for them."*

5. The Christian's hope for eternity is anchored in Christ – who is behind the veil of highest *"Holy of Holies."*

6. Where is your confidence? Is your soul anchored to anything substantial?

7. My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus blood and righteousness.

8. My anchor has been dropped onto Christ Jesus who resides today behind the veil.

VII. Conclusion.

A. As I was thinking about this theme earlier in the week, I came up with a potential outline.

1. I couldn't figure out how to best use it, so I just left it tabled on my desk.

2. But I decided to pull it out in order to summarize this message.

B. There is a veil which forbids us from any approach to God.

1. It hangs impenetrably between where we are – between us and God – in the Holy of Holies.

2. That is, there is a **FORBIDDEN** veil.

3. But there is also the **OPENED** veil – the one which appeared at the moment of Christ's death.

4. Upon the death of the Atonement sacrifice – Christ, our Great High Priest, peeled back the veil and walked into the Holy of Holies bearing His blood.

5. And that particular veil was opened because of the **RIVEN** veil – the veil of Christ's flesh, which was torn to pieces and exposed to death as the required sacrifice.

6. If you aren't familiar with the word *"riven,"* I take you to the Hymn Rock of Ages as I learned it 60 years ago.

a. "Rock of Ages, cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee.

*b. Let the water and the blood, From thy **RIVEN** side which flowed.*

c. Be of sin the double cure, Save from wrath and make me pure."

C. Has the riven flesh of Christ sprinkled the saving blood upon **your** soul?

1. Has the veil into God's holiest place been opened for you to enter?

2. Is your trust for salvation in the finished work of the Saviour this morning?

3. I plead with you, by faith throw your anchor on the Saviour today.