

A STRATEGIC GRASP OF THE BIBLE-14 PORTRAITS OF CHRIST IN THE TABERNACLE 4 Curtains, 3 Doors, 1 Christ

ROAD MAP TO HEAVEN

Essentially, a brief birds eye view of our subject matter should follow along this vein:

- o First sinners approach God for salvation. In the Tabernacle we find salvation at the Brazen Altar. Simple faith in the shed blood of a lamb that was without spot or blemish was all that God required.
- o Next we see daily cleansing portrayed by the Laver. This daily cleansing by exposure to God's Word also satisfies our spiritual needs.
- o Then and only then can we come into the **Tabernacle proper**, a place of divine worship.
- o Once in the Holy Place we can see into the most Holy Place beyond the Veil, which is a symbol of Heaven itself. Heaven can only become our final resting place when we come God's appointed way.

THAT INCREDIBLE LONG TEXT

Every year when we start through God's Word we are confronted with those 50 plus chapters dealing with the Tabernacle. It is so long, so detailed, so confusing at some times and so boring at others. That is why we need to get the big picture. Here is what one seminary text mentions:

“The building¹ of the tabernacle is more than simply the building of a place of worship in the desert. The tabernacle is a microcosm of creation, a piece of heaven on earth. Even though the list of building materials, lamp stands and incense altars may seem repetitive and tedious to modern readers, it is precisely the sheer mass of this material that alerts us to the fact that we have arrived at a central concern of the Exodus story. The cosmic character of the tabernacle is indicated by the manner of its construction. The cherubim worked into the blue, purple and scarlet yarn of the curtains (26:31) were to be an ever-present reminder that the tabernacle was an earthly representation of a higher reality. Moreover, the tabernacle was to be made according to a strict and precise heavenly pattern (see 25:8–9, 40; 26:30; 27:8; 31:11; 39:32, 42–43). As thoughtful readers of the OT have remarked for centuries, the precise, perfect dimensions of the tabernacle (essentially two cubes, the outer court and the inner court, which included the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place) convey a sense of heavenly order amid earthly chaos.”

¹ Alexander, T. Desmond and Brian S. Rosner, editors, *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press) 2000.

FOUR CURTAINS

WHY

1-2-3-4

WHY

ANSWER

Exodus 26:1 "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. **This is the 1st Curtain** - - The first of the four layers coving the Tabernacle frame was WHITE linen. This pure white linen was carefully woven through with three other colors (blue, purple, and scarlet) to make a total of FOUR COLORS. This first or inner curtain², was the only curtain visible from the inside of the Tabernacle. Carefully designed into this curtain, were the Cherubim. Our Father in Heaven, the Great Designer of the Tabernacle, has given to us a beautiful picture of our Lord.

- o **PERFECT** RIGHTEOUSNESS: This curtain we can say REPRESENTS CHRIST'S PERFECT RESURRECTION GLORY. His perfect righteousness in the "fine-twined linen" which was a pure white Egyptian linen of which it has been said the world is not capable of producing today.
- o **PERFECT** REPRESENTATION OF GOD: His Four-fold presentation in the Gospels are anticipated in the four colors representing Christ as the Son of God (blue or Deity - Eagle), as King (purple or royalty - Lion), and as the Sacrificial Servant of God (scarlet or sacrificial - Ox) and Perfect Son of Man (white or perfection - man). These colors are the same as God instructed for the fabricating of the Outer Court gate.
- o **NO SIN ALLOWED**: There is one special difference. There are Cherubim woven into this entrance curtain to the Holy Place. No Cherubim appear in the Outer Court gate curtain because that Door was open to all sinners. But this was the doorway to intimacy with God and sin excludes us. Cherubim are the guardians of His holiness. God established this truth when He placed Cherubim at the east entrance to the Garden of Eden to guard the Tree of Life after Adam had sinned (Gen. 3:24).

Exodus 26:7 "You shall also make curtains of goats' hair, to be a tent over the tabernacle. You shall make eleven curtains. **This is the 2nd Curtain** - The second curtain was one of goat's hair. We find it completely hidden from view to the priest inside the Tabernacle. It was not hidden from view of those outside. It was sandwiched between the pure white (Christ's Righteousness) and the red (Christ's Substitutionary Death). This black curtain is Christ's becoming sin for us. This is Christ's IMPUTATION. This is starting to sound like a CEF "wordless book", and that is exactly what the Lord is doing.

- o **BLACK FOR SIN**: Black Goat's Hair. The goat's hair depicts for us the blackness of sin-the sin of fallen mankind. The Palestinian goat was black, and still is today. The goat is invariably used in a bad sense throughout Scripture. We read concerning the separation of the sheep from the goats in

² Glenn M. Jones, *Big Ten Tabernacle Topics*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1959, 64, [OTC EX-21]. 23-26.

respect to the good and bad nations (Matt. 25:32). Goats were used as a sin offering to God; this we find in Leviticus 16:5. This, therefore, pictures for us the blackness of sin. Leviticus 16:5 And he shall take from the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats as a sin offering, and one ram as a burnt offering.

- o HE BECAME SIN FOR US: We read in the Scriptures the goat's hair curtain was made to hang down over the edge of the Tabernacle a distance of one cubit. This portion was exposed to the view of all Israel's encampment. Is not this a picture of the One who knew no sin, yet became sin for us, and lived the short period of three years, exposed to man's insults and finally the death of the Cross? Certainly to the outside world He was despised and rejected, and ultimately judged as a malefactor. Exodus 26:12-13 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.
- o GOAT'S FOR SUBSTITUTION: Lev. 16.19-22 One requirement of Moses' law was a strange³ annual ritual involving two male goats. Both goats – note this – had to be "without spot or blemish," symbolizing purity. The Jewish high priest first laid his hand upon the head of one goat, symbolically placing all the sins of the Jewish people upon the little animal. That animal was then slain as a sacrifice upon a Jewish altar. What happened to the other goat? While thousands watched intently, Jews simply led the second goat away into the wilderness and released him! And they called that second goat "scapegoat." As soon as scapegoat vanished from view, Jews raised their hands toward Yahweh and praised Him for the removal of their sin. When John the Baptist pointed to Jesus and exclaimed, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29), he identified Jesus Christ as the perfect, personal fulfillment of Jewish scapegoat symbolism. It took both animals to depict what Christ alone would accomplish when He died for our sins. Not content merely to atone for our guilt, He would also remove the very presence of our sin!
- o OUR PARTICIPATION IS NEEDED: On the Day of Atonement, the holiest day of all the sacrificial year, two goats were used to portray Christ's sacrifice. On the Day of Atonement the scapegoat, or live goat, was brought to the door of the Tabernacle, and Aaron was to lay both his hands on his head and "confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness." The record continues: "And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited" (Leviticus 16:21-22). To borrow the language of Leviticus 16, Jesus became the "scapegoat". The Scapegoat was guilty of nothing. But the High Priest, as it were, laid all the sins of the people on the scapegoat and sent him away. He was without sin. But sin was credited to His account as if He had personally committed it and then God punished Him though the fact is He never committed any of it. That's imputation. But for

³ Richardson, Eternity, p. 105.

it to work they had to lay their hands on the goat, and confess their sins over it. So we must confess our sins and lay them upon Him.

- o **OUR SINS ARE FOREVER GONE:** Another significant observation is found in the fact that the goat's hair curtain was covered with the covering of ram's skin, dyed red. This gives us a beautiful picture of the blood of Jesus Christ covering the sins of the world. The goat's hair curtain was held together with taches of brass, telling us again of judgment associated with sin.

The 3rd Curtain - Ram Skins Dyed Red - The inner covering, which rested upon the goat's hair curtain, consisted of ram's skin dyed red. THIS CLEARLY REPRESENTS CHRIST'S SUBSTITUTIONARY DEATH. The world does not see His death as being substitutionary, neither could the world see any of the red ram's skin covering. 1 Corinthians 1:18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. Christ's blood shelters the Christian and covers his sin; so it was the ram's skin covering that sheltered the Tabernacle and covered / the goat's hair curtain.

The 4th Curtain - Badger/Porpoise (dugong) Skins-Outer Covering - We now come to the outer covering-that of badger skins. The color has not been revealed in the Scriptures, but it must have been unattractive to an observer on the outside.

- o **UGLY ON THE OUTSIDE:** Just like the Tabernacle is a picture of Christ, our salvation, we find the Tabernacle appearing unattractive to the outside world. But what glories we behold directly underneath its coverings and curtains! The Lord Jesus is unattractive to the world at large, but how precious to those who love Him, and are redeemed by His blood. 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.
- o **PROTECTION ON THE INSIDE:** The badger/dolphin skin covering provided adequate protection from the harsh desert storms; so Christ shields His own from the onslaughts of Satan. We can sing with the poet, "He hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock, and covers me there with His hand."
- o **PRECIOUS TO THE OWNERS:** The porpoise hides were treasured by desert peoples because they could be made into foot protection from the sharp rocks and scorching trails of the Sinai. Ezekiel 16:10 I clothed you in embroidered cloth and gave you sandals of badger skin; I clothed you with fine linen and covered you with silk.
- o **SACRIFICE INVITED:** God asked them to invest their treasures with Him. Exodus 25:3-5 And this is the offering which you shall take from them: gold, silver, and bronze; 4 blue, purple, and scarlet thread, fine linen, and goats' hair; 5 ram skins dyed red, badger skins, and acacia wood; Exodus 35:5-8 'Take from among you an offering to the Lord. Whoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it as an offering to the Lord: gold, silver, and bronze; 6 blue, purple, and scarlet thread, fine linen, and goats' hair; 7 ram skins dyed red, badger skins, and acacia wood; 8 oil for the light, and spices for the anointing oil and for the sweet incense; 35:23 And every man, with whom

was found blue, purple, and scarlet thread, fine linen, goats' hair, red skins of rams, and badger skins, brought them.

- o PROVISION FOR THE GIVERS: When they gave up this treasure they gave their necessities for God to use and He took care of them. Deuteronomy 8:4 Your garments did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years. Deuteronomy 29:5 And I have led you forty years in the wilderness. Your clothes have not worn out on you, and your sandals have not worn out on your feet. Philippians 4:6-7 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. 4:13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. 4:19 And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.