

**Exegetical Notes, Exodus 26:1-37**  
**“Reminders of His Presence: The King’s Tent”**

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**Exodus 26:1-37**

**Verse 1**

*Make the tabernacle with ten curtains of finely twisted linen and blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, with cherubim worked into them by skilled craftsmen.*

- Behind the word translated “tabernacle” is the Hebrew word “MISHKAN.” It is a very ordinary Hebrew word. It is best translated “dwelling.” “Tabernacle” comes from the Latin word for tent. The Tabernacle is a tent that God ordered Israel to construct as his dwelling.
- At the center of every ancient military encampment was the king’s tent. It was always the largest and most elaborate tent in the encampment. It symbolized the wealth and power of the king in the midst of his people and was a constant reminder of his presence with them. The Tabernacle was to be the King’s tent in the midst of Israel’s encampment. It was to remind them of the wealth and power of YHWH and of his presence in their midst.
- The inside walls of the King’s tent were to be made of fine linen of blue, and purple and scarlet. These are the colors that symbolize royalty. Linen was the finest of materials woven at that time. Worked into the pattern of the curtains, not embroidered onto them, were to be cherubim. There were to be ten such curtains.

**Verse 2**

*All the curtains are to be the same size – twenty-eight cubits long and four cubits wide.*

- Each curtain was to be about 50 feet long and 8 feet wide.
- Scholars estimate that the overall size of the Tabernacle was about 55 feet long by 18 feet wide by 18 feet high. (This measure assumes the use of a royal cubit equaling about 22 inches.)

### **Verse 3-6**

*Join five of the curtains together, and do the same with the other five. Make loops of blue material along the edge of the end curtain in one set, and do the same with the end curtain in the other set. Make fifty loops on one curtain and fifty loops on the end curtain of the other set, with the loops opposite each other. Then make fifty gold clasps and use them to fasten the curtains together so that the tabernacle is a unit.*

- Through a special design of loops and clasps the two sections of curtain were to be joined together so that the tabernacle curtain was joined as one. This curtain of colorful fine linen formed the inner lining of the Tabernacle.

### **Verse 7-13**

*Make curtains of goat hair for the tent over the tabernacle -- eleven altogether. All eleven curtains are to be the same size -- thirty cubits long and four cubits wide. Join five of the curtains together into one set and the other six into another set. Fold the sixth curtain double at the front of the tent. Make fifty loops along the edge of the end curtain in one set and also along the edge of the end curtain in the other set. Then make fifty bronze clasps and put them in the loops to fasten the tent together as a unit. As for the additional length of the tent curtains, the half curtain that is left over is to hang down at the rear of the tabernacle. The tent curtains will be a cubit longer on both sides; what is left will hang over the sides of the tabernacle so as to cover it.*

- The Tabernacle was to have three external coverings. The first and most inner external covering was to be made of goats' hair and joined in a way similar to the inner covering of fine linen.

### **Verse 14**

*Make for the tent a covering of ram skins dyed red, and over that a covering of hides of sea cows.*

- The second external covering was to be made of rams' skins dyed red. The red dyeing is unusual since this covering could not be seen from either inside or outside the tabernacle. Scholars suggest that this skin would resemble morocco leather.
- The third external covering was made of the hides of sea cows, manatees. This leather was water impermeable. Together these three external linings of the tabernacle would have protected the interior from water and the heat of the desert sun.

### **Verse 15-25**

*Make upright frames of acacia wood for the tabernacle. Each frame is to be ten cubits long and a cubit and a half wide with two projections set parallel to each other. Make all the frames of the tabernacle in this way. Make twenty frames for the south side of the tabernacle and make forty silver bases to go under them -- two bases for each frame, one under each projection. For the other side, the north side of the tabernacle, make twenty frames and forty silver bases -- two under each frame. Make six frames for the far end, that is, the west end of the tabernacle, and make two frames for the corners at the far end. At these two corners they must be double from the bottom all the way to the top, and fitted into a single ring; both shall be like that. So there will be eight frames and sixteen silver bases -- two under each frame.*

- Between the linen curtain and the curtain of goat hair there was to be a solid wooden wall that was fitted together and stood in silver footings. These walls stood on three sides of the tabernacle. The end that faced east when the tent was erected was the gate and was left free of the solid wall. This wall was doubled at the corners for stability.

### **Verse 26-29**

*Also make crossbars of acacia wood: five for the frames on one side of the tabernacle, five for those on the other side, and five for the frames on the west, at the far end of the tabernacle. The center crossbar is to extend from end to end at the middle of the frames. Overlay the frames with gold and make gold rings to hold the crossbars. Also overlay the crossbars with gold.*

- The wooden infrastructure of the tabernacle was to be connected with cross beams. All of it was to be overlaid in gold.

### **Verse 30**

*Set up the tabernacle according to the plan shown you on the mountain.*

- This plan is yet to be given. It is found in Exodus 40.

### **Verse 31-35**

*Make a curtain of blue, purple, and scarlet yarn and finely twisted linen, with cherubim worked into it by a skilled craftsman. Hang it with gold hooks on four posts of acacia wood overlaid with gold and standing on four silver bases. Hang the curtain from the clasps and place the ark of*

***the Testimony behind the curtain. The curtain will separate the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. Put the atonement cover on the ark of the Testimony in the Most Holy Place. Place the table outside the curtain on the north side of the tabernacle and put the lampstand opposite it on the south side.***

- Inside, the tabernacle was to be divided into two rooms separated by a curtain that resembled those which lined the tent.
- Scholars say that the smaller room, a cube about 18' X 18' X 18' was the Most Holy Place. In it was the Ark of the Covenant. The larger room was known as the Holy Place. In it was the Table that held the showbread and the lampstand.

### **Verse 36-37**

***For the entrance to the tent make a curtain of blue, purple, and scarlet yarn and finely twisted linen -- the work of an embroiderer. Make gold hooks for this curtain and five posts of acacia wood overlaid with gold. And cast five bronze bases for them.***

- The gate into the tabernacle was to be made of five gold covered bases. This would have allowed four gates. A curtain similar in color and texture to the other inside curtains was to be hung at the gate to the tabernacle. However, this cloth was to be embroidered.

(These exegetical notes are the foundational study for the sermon entitled *Reminders of His Presence: The King's Tent*. They have been prepared by the Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen, Senior Pastor at Cornerstone Fellowship, Coatesville Pennsylvania. All rights are reserved by Dr. Jensen and *Cornerstone Fellowship*.)