
EXODUS 26:1 "Moreover you shall make the tabernacle with ten curtains; of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, with cherubim. The work of the skilful workman you shall make them."

The ten curtains of the tabernacle, and of what composed, Exo 26:1. Their length, Exo 26:2, Exo 26:3; their loops, Exo 26:4, Exo 26:5; their taches, Exo 26:6. The curtains of goats' hair for a covering, Exo 26:7; their length and breadth, Exo 26:8. Coupled with loops, Exo 26:9, Exo 26:10, and taches, Exo 26:11. The remnant of the curtains, how to be employed, Exo 26:12, Exo 26:13. The covering of rams' skins, Exo 26:14. The boards of the tabernacle for the south side, Exo 26:15; their length, Exo 26:16, tenons, Exo 26:17, number, Exo 26:18, sockets, Exo 26:19. Boards, etc., for the north side, Exo 26:20, Exo 26:21. Boards, etc., for the west side, Exo 26:22; for the corners, Exo 26:23; their rings and sockets, Exo 26:24, Exo 26:25. The bars of the tabernacle, Exo 26:26-30. The veil, its pillars, hooks, and taches, Exo 26:31-33. How to place the mercy-seat, Exo 26:34. The table and the candlestick, Exo 26:35. The hanging for the door of the tent, Exo 26:36; and the hangings for the pillars, Exo 26:37.

Verse 1

Thou shalt make the tabernacle - מִשְׁכַּן *mischan*, from שָׁכַן *shachan*, to dwell, means simply a dwelling place or habitation of any kind, but here it means the dwelling place of Jehovah, who, as a king in his camp, had his dwelling or pavilion among his people, his table always spread, his lamps lighted, and the priests, etc., his attendants, always in waiting. From the minute and accurate description here given, a good workman, had he the same materials, might make a perfect facsimile of the ancient Jewish tabernacle. It was a movable building, and so constructed that it might be easily taken to pieces, for the greater convenience of carriage, as they were often obliged to transport it from place to place, in their various journeyings. For the twined linen, blue, purple, and scarlet, see Clarke's note on Exo 25:4, etc.

Cherubims - See Clarke's note on Exo 25:18.

Cunning work - חֹשֶׁב *chosheb* probably means a sort of diaper, in which the figures appear equally perfect on both sides; this was probably formed in the loom. Another kind of curious work is mentioned, Exo 26:36, רֹקֵם *rokem*, which we term needle-work; this was probably similar to our embroidery, tapestry, or cloth of arras. It has been thought unlikely that these curious works were all manufactured in the wilderness: what was done in the loom, they might have brought with them from Egypt; what could be done by hand, without the use of complex machinery, the Israelitish women could readily perform with their needles, during their stay in the wilderness. But still it seems probable that they brought even their looms with them. The whole of this account shows that not only necessary but ornamental arts had been carried to a considerable pitch of perfection, both among the Israelites and Egyptians.

The inner curtains of the tabernacle were ten in number, and each in length twenty-eight cubits, and four in breadth; about sixteen yards twelve inches long, and two yards twelve inches broad. The curtains were to be coupled together, five and five of a side, by fifty loops, Exo 26:5, and as many golden clasps, Exo 26:6, so that each might look like one curtain, and the whole make one entire covering, which was the first.

EXODUS 26:2 The length of each curtain shall be twenty-eight cubits, and the breadth of each curtain four cubits: all the curtains shall have one measure.

EXODUS 26:3 Five curtains shall be coupled together one to another; and the other five curtains shall be coupled one to another.

EXODUS 26:4 You shall make loops of blue on the edge of the one curtain from the edge in the coupling; and likewise you shall make in the edge of the curtain that is outermost in the second coupling.

EXODUS 26:5 You shall make fifty loops in the one curtain, and you shall make fifty loops in the edge of the curtain that is in the second coupling. The loops shall be opposite one to another.

EXODUS 26:6 You shall make fifty clasps of gold, and couple the curtains one to another with the clasps: and the tabernacle shall be a unit.

EXODUS 26:7 "You shall make curtains of goats' hair for a covering over the tabernacle. You shall make them eleven curtains.

Verse 7

Curtains of goats' hair - Stuff made of goats' hair. See Clarke's note on Exo 25:4. This was the second covering.

EXODUS 26:8 The length of each curtain shall be thirty cubits, and the breadth of each curtain four cubits: the eleven curtains shall have one measure.

EXODUS 26:9 You shall couple five curtains by themselves, and six curtains by themselves, and shall double over the sixth curtain in the forefront of the tent.

EXODUS 26:10 You shall make fifty loops on the edge of the one curtain that is outermost in the coupling, and fifty loops on the edge of the curtain which is outermost in the second coupling.

EXODUS 26:11 You shall make fifty clasps of brass, and put the clasps into the loops, and couple the tent together, that it may be one.

EXODUS 26:12 The overhanging part that remains of the curtains of the tent, the half curtain that remains, shall hang over the back of the tabernacle.

EXODUS 26:13 The cubit on the one side, and the cubit on the other side, of that which remains in 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.

EXODUS 26:14 You shall make a covering for the tent of rams' skins dyed red, and a covering of sea cow hides above.

Verse 14

Rams' skins dyed red - See Clarke's note on Exo 25:5. This was the third covering; and what is called the badgers' skins was the fourth. See Clarke's note on Exo 25:5. Why there should have been four

coverings does not appear. They might have been designed partly for respect; and partly to keep off dust and dirt, and the extremely fine sand which in that desert rises as it were on every breeze; and partly to keep off the intense heat of the sun, which would otherwise have destroyed the poles, bars, boards, and the whole of the wood work. As to the conjecture of some that "the four coverings were intended the better to keep off the rain," it must appear unfounded to those who know that in that desert rain was rarely ever seen.

EXODUS 26:15 "You shall make the boards for the tabernacle of acacia wood, standing up.

Verse 15

Thou shalt make boards - These formed what might be called the walls of the tabernacle, and were made of shittim wood, the acacia Nilotica, which Dr. Shaw says grows here in abundance. To have worked the acacia into these boards or planks, the Israelites must have had sawyers, joiners, etc., among them; but how they got the tools is a question. But as the Israelites were the general workmen of Egypt, and were brought up to every kind of trade for the service of their oppressors, we may naturally suppose that every artificer brought off some of his tools with him. For though it is not at all likely that they had any armor or defensive weapons in their power, yet for the reason above assigned they must have had the implements which were requisite for their respective trades.

EXODUS 26:16 Ten cubits shall be the length of a board, and one and a half cubits the breadth of each board.

Verse 16

Ten cubits shall be the length of a board - Each of these boards or planks was about five yards and two feet and a half long, and thirty-two inches broad; and as they are said to be standing up, this was the Height of the tabernacle. The length being thirty cubits, twenty boards, one cubit and a half broad each, make about seventeen yards and a half, and the Breadth was about five yards.

EXODUS 26:17 There shall be two tenons in each board, joined to one another: thus you shall make for all the boards of the tabernacle.

EXODUS 26:18 You shall make the boards for the tabernacle, twenty boards for the south side southward.

EXODUS 26:19 You shall make forty sockets of silver under the twenty boards; two sockets under one board for its two tenons, and two sockets under another board for its two tenons.

EXODUS 26:20 For the second side of the tabernacle, on the north side, twenty boards,

EXODUS 26:21 and their forty sockets of silver; two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board.

EXODUS 26:22 For the far part of the tabernacle westward you shall make six boards.

EXODUS 26:23 You shall make two boards for the corners of the tabernacle in the far part.

EXODUS 26:24 They shall be double beneath, and in the same way they shall be whole to its top to one ring: thus shall it be for them both; they shall be for the two corners.

EXODUS 26:25 There shall be eight boards, and their sockets of silver, sixteen sockets; two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board.

EXODUS 26:26 "You shall make bars of acacia wood: five for the boards of the one side of the tabernacle,

EXODUS 26:27 and five bars for the boards of the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the side of the tabernacle, for the far part westward.

EXODUS 26:28 The middle bar in the midst of the boards shall pass through from end to end.

EXODUS 26:29 You shall overlay the boards with gold, and make their rings of gold for places for the bars: and you shall overlay the bars with gold.

Verse 29

Thou shalt overlay the boards with gold - It is not said how thick the gold was by which these boards, etc., were overlaid; it was no doubt done with gold plates, but these must have been very thin, else the boards, etc., must have been insupportably heavy. The gold was probably something like our gold leaf, but not brought to so great a degree of tenuity.

EXODUS 26:30 You shall set up the tabernacle according to the way that it was shown to you on the mountain.

EXODUS 26:31 "You shall make a veil of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, with cherubim. The work of the skilful workman shall it be made.

Verse 31

Thou shalt make a veil - פרוכת parocheth, from פרך parach, to break or rend; the inner veil of the tabernacle or temple, (2Chr 3:14), which broke, interrupted, or divided between the holy place and the most holy; the Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was standing. Compare Heb 9:8. The Septuagint constantly render it by καταπετασμα. Does not the Hebrew name פרוכת parocheth moreover intimate the typical correspondence of this veil to the body or flesh of Christ? For this καταπετασμα or veil was his flesh, (Heb 10:20), which, being rent, affords us a new and living way into the holiest of all, i.e., into heaven itself. Compare Heb 10:19, Heb 10:20; Heb 9:24. And accordingly when his blessed body was rent upon the cross, this veil also (το καταπετασμα του ιερου) εσχισθη, was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; Mat 27:51 - See Parkhurst, under the word פרך.

The veil in the tabernacle was exceedingly costly; it was made of the same materials with the inner covering, blue, purple, scarlet, fine twined linen, embroidered with cherubim, etc. It served to divide the tabernacle into two parts: one, the outermost, called the holy place; the other, or innermost, called the holy of holies, or the most holy place. In this was deposited the ark of the covenant, and

the other things that were laid up by way of memorial. Into this the high priest alone was permitted to enter, and that only once in the year, on the great day of atonement. It was in this inner place that Jehovah manifested himself between the cherubim. The Jews say that this veil was four fingers' breadth in thickness, in order to prevent any person from seeing through it; but for this, as Calmet observes, there was no necessity, as there was no window or place for light in the tabernacle, and consequently the most simple veil would have been sufficient to obstruct the discovery of any thing behind it, which could only be discerned by the light that came in at the door, or by that afforded by the golden candlestick which stood on the outside of this veil.

EXODUS 26:32 You shall hang it on four pillars of acacia overlaid with gold; their hooks shall be of gold, on four sockets of silver.

Verse 32

Their hooks shall be of gold - וויהם vaveyhem, which we translate their hooks, is rendered κεφαλιδες, capitals, by the Septuagint, and capita by the Vulgate. As the word וו vav or vau, plural ווים vavim, occurs only in this book, Exo 26:32, Exo 26:37; Exo 27:10, Exo 27:11, Exo 27:17; Exo 36:36, Exo 36:38; Exo 38:10, Exo 38:11, Exo 38:12, Exo 38:17, Exo 38:19, Exo 38:28; and is used in these places in reference to the same subject, it is very difficult to ascertain its precise meaning. Most commentators and lexicographers think that the ideal meaning of the word is to connect, attach, join to, hook; and that the letter ו vau has its name from its hooklike form, and its use as a particle in the Hebrew language, because it serves to connect the words and members of a sentence, and the sentences of a discourse together, and that therefore hook must be the obvious meaning of the word in all the above texts. Calmet thinks this reason of no weight, because the ו vau of the present Hebrew alphabet is widely dissimilar from the vau of the primitive Hebrew alphabet, as may be seen on the ancient shekels; on these the characters appear as in the word Jehovah, Exo 28:36. This form bears no resemblance to a hook; nor does the Samaritan vau, which appears to have been copied from this ancient character.

Calmet therefore contends,

1. That if Moses does not mean the capitals of the pillars by the ווים vavim of the text, he mentions them nowhere; and it would be strange that while he describes the pillars, their sockets, bases, fillets, etc., etc., with so much exactness, as will appear on consulting the preceding places, that he should make no mention of the capitals; or that pillars, every way so correctly formed, should have been destitute of this very necessary ornament.

2. As Moses was commanded to make the hooks, ווים vavim, of the pillars and their fillets of silver, Exo 27:10, Exo 27:11, and the hooks, vavim, of the pillars of the veil of gold, Exo 36:36; and as one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five shekels were employed in making these hooks, vavim, overlaying their chapters, ראשיהם rasheyhem, their heads, and filleting them, Exo 38:28; it is more reasonable to suppose that all this is spoken of the capitals of the pillars than of any kind of hooks, especially as hooks are mentioned under the word taches or clasps in other places. On the whole it appears much more reasonable to translate the original by capitals than by hooks.

After this verse the Samaritan Pentateuch introduces the ten first verses of Exodus 30, and this appears to be their proper place. Those ten verses are not repeated in the thirtieth chapter in the Samaritan, the chapter beginning with the 11th verse.

EXODUS 26:33 You shall hang up the veil under the clasps, and shall bring the ark of the testimony in there within the veil: and the veil shall separate the holy place from the most holy for you.

EXODUS 26:34 You shall put the mercy seat on the ark of the testimony in the most holy place.

EXODUS 26:35 You shall set the table outside the veil, and the lamp stand over against the table on the side of the tabernacle toward the south: and you shall put the table on the north side.

EXODUS 26:36 "You shall make a screen for the door of the Tent, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, the work of the embroiderer.

Verse 36

A hanging for the door of the tent - This may be called the first veil, as it occupied the door or entrance to the tabernacle; the veil that separated the holy place from the holy of holies is called the second veil, Heb 9:3. These two veils and the inner covering of the tabernacle were all of the same materials, and of the same workmanship. See Exo 27:16.

1. For the meaning and design of the tabernacle see Clarke's note on Exo 25:40 : and while the reader is struck with the curious and costly nature of this building, as described by Moses, let him consider how pure and holy that Church should be of which it was a very expressive type; and what manner of person he should be in all holy conversation and godliness, who professes to be a member of that Church for which, it is written, Christ has given himself, that he might sanctify and cleanse it; that he might present it unto himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. See Eph 5:25-27.

2. In the Jewish tabernacle almost every thing was placed out of the sight of the people. The holy of holies was inaccessible, the testimony was comparatively hidden, as were also the mercy-seat and the Divine glory. Under the Gospel all these things are laid open, the way to the holiest is made manifest, the veil is rent, and we have an entrance to 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; Heb 10:19, Heb 10:20. How abundantly has God brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel! The awful distance is abolished, the ministry of reconciliation is proclaimed, the kingdom of heaven is opened to all believers, and the Lord is in his holy temple. Sinner, weary of thyself and thy transgressions, fainting under the load of thy iniquities, look to Jesus; he died for thee, and will save thee. Believer, stand fast in the liberty wherewith God has made thee free, and be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage.

EXODUS 26:37 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 sockets of brass for them.
