

section No. 19 above. Similarly in the gospel of Christ we have been granted all things that pertain unto life and godliness (II Pet. 1:3).

(3) The lamp was fueled by olive oil, which is often a symbol of the Holy Spirit. See Acts 10:38; Heb. 1:9; Lev. 8:12; Zech. 4:2-6. Thus the light was the light of the Spirit. Compare Rev. 4:5 (which tells of a vision of God's throne): "There were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God."

The fact that the scriptures were written by men moved by the SPIRIT (II Pet. 1:21) confirms a correspondence between the tabernacle lampstand and the scriptures. The lampstand was fueled by oil; the scriptures were inspired by the Holy Spirit, which the oil symbolized.

To say that the lampstand was a type of just one thing (as, for example, the Bible alone) is to give an incomplete interpretation of it. Perhaps we could sum it up in a broad way by saying that it symbolized the light of the gospel of Christ (II Cor. 4:4).

THE TEXT OF EXODUS TRANSLATION

26 Moreover thou shalt make the tabernacle with ten curtains; of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, with cher-u-bim the work of the skilful workman shalt thou make them. (2) The length of each curtain shall be eight and twenty cubits, and the breadth of each curtain four cubits: all the curtains shall have one measure. (3) Five curtains shall be coupled together one to another; and *the other* five curtains shall be coupled one to another. (4) And thou shalt make loops

of blue upon the edge of the one curtain from the selvedge in the coupling; and likewise shalt thou make in the edge of the curtain that is outmost in the second coupling. (5) Fifty loops shalt thou make in the one curtain, and fifty loops shalt thou make in the edge of the curtain that is in the second coupling; the loops shall be opposite one to another. (6) And thou shalt make fifty clasps of gold, and couple the curtains one to another with the clasps: and the tabernacle shall be one WHOLE.

(7) And thou shalt make curtains of goats' hair for a tent over the tabernacle: eleven curtains shalt thou make them. (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. (9) And thou shalt couple five curtains by themselves, and six curtains by themselves, and shalt double over the sixth curtain in the forefront of the tent. (10) And thou shalt make fifty loops on the edge of the one curtain that is outmost in the coupling, and fifty loops upon the edge of the curtain which is *outmost in* the second coupling. (11) And thou shalt make fifty clasps of brass, and put the clasps into the loops, and couple the tent together, that it may be one. (12) And the overhanging part that remaineth of the curtains of the tent, the half curtain that remaineth, shall hang over the back of the tabernacle. (13) And the cubit on the one side, and the cubit on the other side, of that which remaineth 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. (14) And thou shalt make a covering for the tent of rams' skins dyed red, and a covering of sealskins above.

(15) And thou shalt make the boards for the tabernacle of acacia wood, standing up. (16) Ten cubits shall be the length of a board, and a cubit and a half the breadth of each board. (17) Two tenons shall there be in each board, joined one to another: thus shalt thou make for all the boards of the tabernacle. (18) And thou shalt make the boards for the tabernacle, twenty boards for the south side southward. (19) And thou shalt 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: (20) and for the second side of the tabernacle, on the north side; twenty boards, (21) and their forty sockets of silver; two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board. (22) And for the hinder part of the tabernacle westward thou shalt make six boards. (23) And two boards shalt thou make for the corners of the tabernacle in the hinder part. (24) And they shall be double beneath, and in like manner they shall be entire unto the top thereof unto one ring: thus shall it be for them both; they shall be for the two corners. (25) And there shall be eight boards, and their sockets of silver, sixteen sockets; two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board. (26) And thou shalt make bars of acacia wood; five for the boards of the one side of the tabernacle. (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 hinder part westward. (28) And the middle bar in the midst of the boards shall pass through from end to end. (29) And thou shalt overlay the boards with gold, and make their rings of gold for places for the bars: and thou shalt overlay the bars with gold. (30) And thou shalt rear up the tabernacle according to the fashion thereof which hath been showed thee in the mount.

(31) And thou shalt make a veil of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined line: with cher-u-bim the work of the skilful workman shall it be made: (32) and thou shalt hang it upon four pillars of acacia overlaid with gold; their hooks *shall be* of gold, upon four sockets of silver. (33) And thou shalt hang up the veil under the clasps, and shalt bring in thither within the veil the ark of the testimony: and the veil shall separate unto you between the holy place and the most holy. (34) And thou shalt put the mercy-seat upon the ark of the testimony in the most holy place. (35) And thou shalt set the table without the veil, and the candlestick over against the table on the side of the tabernacle toward the south: and thou shalt put the table on the north side.

(36) And thou shalt make a screen for the door of the Tent,

of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined line, the work of the embroiderer. (37) And thou shalt make for the screen five pillars of acacia, and overlay them with gold; their hooks shall be of gold: and thou shalt cast five sockets of brass for them.

EXPLORING EXODUS: CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX
QUESTIONS ANSWERABLE FROM THE BIBLE

1. How many curtains were made for the first covering of the tabernacle? Of what material? With what colors and decorations were they to be made? (26:1)
2. What were the dimensions of these curtains? (26:2)
3. How were the ten curtains joined together? (26:3-6)
4. What other items in the tabernacle did these curtains resemble in material, decoration, and in color? (26:31, 37; 27:16)
5. What was the number of goats' hair curtains? (26:7)
6. What were the dimensions of the goats' hair curtains? (26:8)
7. How were the goats' hair curtains joined together? (26:9-11)
8. How was the additional goats' hair curtain (one more than the linen curtains) arranged and positioned? (26:12)
9. What were the other two tabernacle coverings made from? (26:16)
10. What materials were the tabernacle boards (frames?) made of? (26:15)
11. What were the dimensions of each board? (26:16)
12. What material was used for sockets (bases or pedestals) under the boards? (26:19)
13. How many sockets were under each board? (26:19)
14. How many boards were on the south (and north) side of the tabernacle? (26:18)
15. What were made to hold the boards into their sockets?

(26:17, 19)

16. How were the rear (west) corners of the tabernacle walls strengthened? (26:23)
17. How many bars on each side held the tabernacle boards together? (26:26-27)
18. How did the middle bar differ from the upper and lower ones? (26:27-28)
19. Of what material were the rings on the boards for the bars to be made? (26:29)
20. According to what plan was the tabernacle to be erected? (26:30)
21. What were the materials and colors of the veil? (26:31)
22. Upon how many pillars was the veil hung? (26:32)
23. Of what material were the sockets under these pillars to be made? (26:32)
24. Why was the ark called the "ark of the testimony"? (26:33; 32:15; 40:20)
25. What covered the ark? (26:35)
26. Draw a rough sketch of the tabernacle floor layout, showing the position of all items of furniture. Indicate directions. (26:35; 40:2-8)
27. What was hung at the doorway of the tabernacle building? (26:37)
28. How many pillars were at the tabernacle door? (26:37)
29. Of what material were the sockets under the pillars at the tabernacle door made? (26:37)

EXODUS 26: ENCLOSINGS!

(The architectural items described in Exodus 26 enclosed the tabernacle building completely.)

1. *Curtains*; 26:1-14.

- Furnished beauty, worshipful atmosphere (26:1), unity (26:6, 11), and protection (26:12-14).

2. *Boards and Bars*; 26:15-30.

- Furnished strength (not seen by men) (26:15-16), portability (so it could always be with men), and beauty (26:29).

3. *Veil and Screen*; 26:31-37.

- Showed a separation between earth and heaven (26:33).
- Showed a separation between the world and the church. (Only the priests served in the holy place [Num. 4:18-20; 3:38]).

CURTAINS! (26:1-14)

1. Glory hidden from those on the outside.
2. Glory revealed to those on inside.
3. Unity produced from many parts (26:6, 11)
4. Protection for the sanctuary (26:12-14).

BOARDS! (26:15-25)

1. The boards provided great **STRENGTH**. (This strength could not be seen from the outside because the boards were concealed behind curtains.)
2. The boards provided great **BEAUTY**. (They were gold-covered, but this gold could only be seen from the inside.)
3. The boards provided great **ACCESSIBILITY**. (The tabernacle was always accessible to the people because its board framework was easily disassembled, carried about, and reassembled wherever the people moved.)

FURNITURE OF THE HOLY PLACE - For Priests Only!
(Numbers 3:10, 38)

1. The showbread - God's people in God's presence!
2. The lampstand - A perfect light, fueled by the oil of God's

Spirit.

3. The incense altar - The prayers of saints (Rev. 5:8).
(All Christians are priests unto God [I Peter 2:5, 9]. They have free access to those things symbolized by the holy place and its furniture!)

THE HOLY OF HOLIES - God's Throne Room!

(The Holy of Holies was a type of heaven. Heb. 9:11-12, 23-24)

1. God was enthroned in both. (Psalm 99:1; Rev. 4:1-2)
2. Both have divine light and glory. (Lev. 16:2; Rev. 21:23)
3. Both have worshipping cherubim. (Ex. 25:18; Rev. 4:6-8)
4. Both are golden. (Ex. 25:11, 17; 26:29; Rev. 21:18)
5. Both are "foursquare." (Ex. 26:16; Rev. 21:16)
6. Both have God's law in them. (Ex. 40:20; Ps. 119:89; 89:14)
7. Both are places where blood atonement is made. (Lev. 16:15-16; Heb. 9:11-12, 24-25)

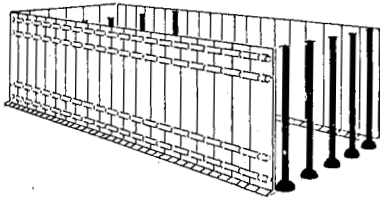
THE VEIL - A Type of Christ's Flesh! (Heb. 10:19-20)

1. The unbroken veil showed that the way into the Holiest place (heaven) was not yet clear. (Heb. 9:8)
2. The rent veil shows the way into God's presence is now open. (Matt. 27:51; II Cor. 5:6, 8)

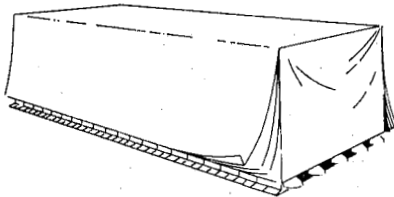
EXPLORING EXODUS: NOTES ON CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

1. *What is in Exodus twenty-six?*

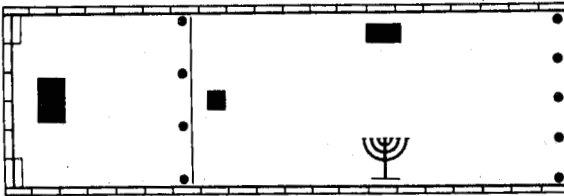
The chapter contains God's instructions to Moses about how to make the ENCLOSINGS of the tabernacle - the curtains and coverings over it (26:1-14), the boards of its walls (26:26-30), the veil that separated the two rooms



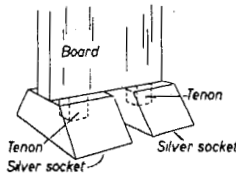
Tabernacle building - showing boards, bars, sockets, pillars, and the two rooms



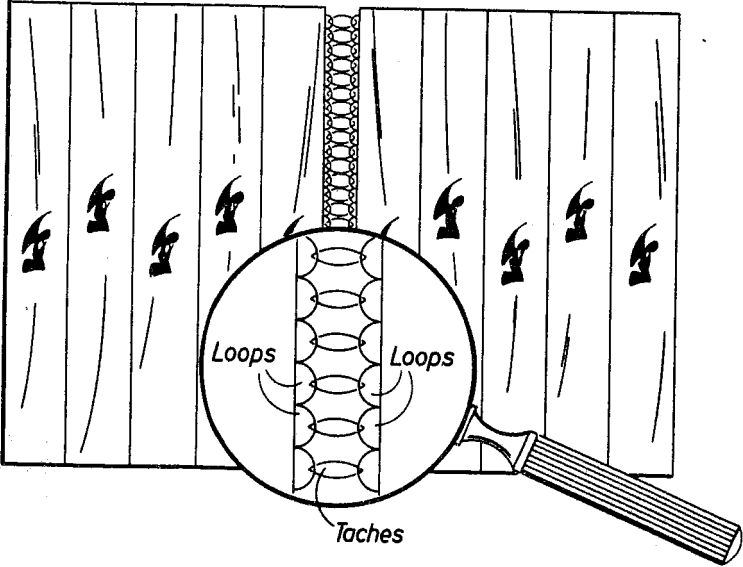
Tabernacle building showing its four coverings and the "hanging" across the front



Floor plan—showing its boards



A tabernacle board with its tenons and sockets.



The innermost (linen) curtains of the Tabernacle. Note that it was formed of two groups of five curtains decorated with cherubim, and joined by loops and taches (or clasps).

(26:31-35), and the screen that closed the entrance (26:36-37).

2. *What was the material of the innermost curtains?* (26:1; 36:8-13)

They were made of fine linen. The threads were prepared by twisting many strands of linen fibre together. These were woven together with blue, purple, and scarlet thread (Ex. 35:25). Cherubim figures were woven into the fabric by a skilled weaver. The expression "work of the skillful workman" literally says "work of a thinker." (It does refer to a weaver.) Regarding the *cherubim*, see notes on 25:19. The material of these curtains was the same as that of the veil (26:31), the screen (26:36), and the screen at the entrance of the court (27:16).

Note that the linen curtains formed a covering called the "tabernacle" (Heb. *mishkan*, meaning dwelling). The same limited technical use of the term *tabernacle* is found in 26:6 and Num. 3:25. However, the term also refers to the entire structure of the tabernacle building in such passages as Ex. 25:9; 26:12, 30. In Ex. 27:19 it even refers to the tabernacle and the court around it.

The word *tabernacle* is derived from the verb *shakan*, meaning to dwell temporarily, suggesting the brevity of Israel's sojourn. The earthly sojourn of all of God's people is brief.

3. *How many linen curtains were joined together, and in what way?* (26:2-6)

Ten curtains, each four by twenty-eight cubits (six by forty-two feet), were joined together. Five were joined together into one set by sewing them together along their long sides.¹ These formed two very large sets of curtains twenty by twenty-eight cubits. Then along one edge of each set fifty loops of blue thread were attached. These rows of loops were placed side by side, and then gold clasps

¹To describe how the curtains were placed side by side, the Hebrew uses the idiom "a woman to her sister."

(K.J.V., "taches") were used to couple the two large sets of curtains into a single covering. The loops would have been spaced slightly over one-half cubit apart. ("Selvedge" in 26:4 means "end," "border," or "extremity.")

4. *What is the significance of the linen curtains?*

The scripture does not state that they had a specific significance. Some interpreters seek to find symbolism in all their colors and numbers. But those who do this produce widely different interpretations, and show how futile speculative interpretation is. It may be edifying to meditate about such matters, but our conclusions must always remain private opinions.

Probably we are not speculating too much to say that the beauty of the curtains suggests the beauty of God's divinely revealed religion. The cherubim figures suggest the presence of God, because they are always associated with God's presence in scripture. (Note that the inside walls of Solomon's temple were decorated with cherubim. I Kings 6:29).

5. *What material comprised the second tabernacle covering? (26:7; 36:14-18)*

Goats' hair (literally, just "goats"). This was the usual material of nomads' tents, and still is. It is black (or nearly so), strong, and gives good protection from the weather. The goats' hair was spun (twisted) into yarn by wise (skilled) women, and then woven into cloth (35:26).

The goats' hair coverings are called the "Tent" (Heb. *ohel*). See 26:11, 13; 36:14; 40:19 for other examples of this specialized use of the term *tent*. However, Ex. 26:36 uses *tent* to refer to the entire tabernacle building. Also Num. 24:5; Isa. 54:2, and Jer. 30:18 use the terms *tent* and *tabernacle* as synonyms referring to dwelling places generally.

6. *How many goats' hair curtains were joined, and in what way? (26:8-11)*

Eleven curtains, each four by thirty cubits, were made and then coupled together along their long sides in sets of five and six curtains. Fifty loops were set in one edge of

each set and the sets were joined by placing bronze clasps in the loops that lay side by side. Note that the clasps were bronze, not gold as with the linen curtains. (The material of the loops is not indicated. Probably it was goats' hair cord) The clasps joined the two sets into one huge covering, thirty by forty-four cubits.

The coupling together of the sets of curtains produced ONE tent (26:11). The unity of the tabernacle was a significant feature of it, just as the unity of the church should be a significant quality about it.

7. *How were the first two coverings over the tabernacle positioned? (26:12-13)*

Apparently they were draped flat over the tabernacle, the linen curtains first and the goats' hair curtains over them.

Some interpreters have proposed that this flat-roofed design does not form a "tent." They feel the coverings must have been suspended on a slope from a ridge pole running lengthwise over the tabernacle. The lower ends of the curtains would then have been tautly staked down. The presence of five pillars at the west end of the tabernacle is thought to strengthen this view, because the middle pillar of the five was possibly higher than the rest and served as one support for the ridgepole.

We feel that the flat roof arrangement is more probably the actual one used. Among the desert dwellers "tent" did not usually suggest a sloping roof. Their tents were (and are) generally flat-roofed, except for the spots where the interior stakes hold small areas of the black curtains up in points.

There is no indication that the middle pillar at the front was taller than those about it. The scripture does not mention any ridgepole. And it mentions no pole at the back end of the tabernacle to support that end of a ridgepole.

It is hard to see how the goats' hair coverings could have hung down "over the backside" of the tabernacle if they had been suspended high enough over a ridgepole to have

formed a sloping roof. They would have formed many uneven folds as they hung down from the angle of the sloping roof.

The clasps of the linen curtains were placed directly over the veil separating the holy place from the Holy of Holies. See 26:33. This position would cause the linen curtains to extend exactly to the front edge of the tabernacle boards on the east (the entrance), and to extend westward clear back to the end of the Holy of Holies, and then drape down to the very bottoms of the tabernacle boards on the west end.

With their length of twenty-eight cubits the linen curtains would span the open top of the tabernacle (ten cubits) and hang down over both sides to within one cubit of the bottoms of the tabernacle boards on the north and south.²

The goats' hair curtains were draped flat over the top of the tabernacle boards and over the linen curtains. Being two cubits longer, they completely covered them on the sides, and indeed hung down to the very bottoms of the tabernacle boards on the north and south, extending one cubit lower than the linen curtains.

The set (or coupling) of the six goats' hair curtains was placed over the east (front) part of the tabernacle. It was so positioned that the sixth curtain (which would appear to be the first as one approach the tabernacle) was "doubled over" at the forefront.³ This doubling over (or doubling

²Keil and Delitzsch (*Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 176) suggest that the linen curtains hung down *inside* the boards of the holy place, so that the cherubim figures would be visible on the side walls inside, as well as on the ceiling above. They feel that the elaborate cherubim embroidered on the curtains would be largely needless if they were never seen on the outside of the boards. We do not deny that this might have been the position of the linen curtains. The presence of cherubim figures on the walls of Solomon's temple is a possible parallel. Nonetheless, the text in Exodus does not clearly state that the linen curtains hung inside the walls. And no reference is made to any supports at the tops of the boards from which the curtains may have hung down on the inside.

³Cassuto, *op. cit.*, p. 352, suggests that the folded-back goats' hair curtain was folded *beneath* the front edge of the linen curtain in order to cover its edge well and give it thorough protection. We find neither proof nor disproof of this idea.

back) would reduce its width to two cubits. Thus the second curtain from the tabernacle forefront started just two cubits from the forefront edge. In this position it would cause the clasps joining the two large sets (couplings) to lie two cubits behind the clasps joining the sets of linen curtains. Having the joints (the clasps) "staggered" in this way would be helpful in keeping out wind and rain from the tabernacle. (Rain was not much of a problem in the Sinai peninsula, but infrequent cloudbursts do occur in winter.)

Since the clasps joining the sets of goats' hair curtains came two cubits behind the clasps of the linen curtains, there would have been eight cubits from the point of the clasps of the goats' hair to the back edge of the tabernacle. But there were twenty cubits of goat's hair extending back from the clasps. This would cause the goats' hair to cover the tabernacle top completely and then dangle down to the ground (ten more cubits), and still have "half a curtain" (two cubits) to remain over at the back, lying on the ground (26:12). Cassuto quotes a passage from the Talmud which said that the two cubits of goats' hair trailed on the ground "like a woman walking in the street with her train trailing behind her."⁴

The dark goats' hair curtains gave no hint of the brilliant colors beneath and within it. The tabernacle materials were so chosen that there was a consistent movement from less valuable materials to more valuable as one moved closer to the most holy place from the outer areas. In a similar way, the nearer that one draws to God and Christ, the greater are the riches that he finds.

8. *What were the two outer tabernacle coverings?* (26:14; 36:19; 39:34)

Coverings of *rams' skins* dyed red and of *sealskins* were placed over the goats' hair curtains. Regarding these materials, see notes on 25:5.

⁴*Op. cit.*, p. 353.

Sacred tent-shrines, some with red coloring, are known to have been used by Moslems; and also even farther back, into the third-first centuries B.C. at Palmyra; and in the seventh century B.C. in Phoenicia.⁵ Certainly this does not necessarily indicate that either the pagans or the Israelites borrowed the idea of a red-covered sacred tent from one another.

The ancient rabbis held that the covering of red rams' skins was ten by thirty cubits, only large enough to have covered the top area of the tabernacle. Cassuto (also Jewish) feels that it may have hung down a little over the walls.⁶ These opinions are hardly solid evidence.

The R.S.V. translation of 26:14 suggests that the two coverings of rams' skins and sealskins were actually just ONE covering made of the two materials. However, the Hebrew text uses the words for "a covering of skins" before *both* the terms translated "rams' skins" and "sealskins." Also the sealskins are said to be "above" the other covering. These facts argue strongly for two separate coverings.

There is, however, a bit of uncertainty about whether the rams' skins and sealskins were one or two coverings. In the account of the erection of the tabernacle in 40:19, the word for "covering" is in the singular, possibly indicating that only the covering of rams' skins was placed over the tabernacle when it was set up. Certainly the two outer coverings would have been very heavy and unwieldy. Some authors suggest that possibly the sealskins were used only as a tent bag or wrapping to protect the outer coverings when they were being moved.⁷ Compare Num. 4:6, 8, 11, 12.

We still think the tabernacle was covered with separate

⁵Frank M. Cross, Jr., "The Priestly Tabernacle," reprinted in *The Biblical Archaeologist Reader*, edited by G. Ernest Wright and David Noel Freedman (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1961), pp. 217-219.

⁶*Op. cit.*, p. 353.

⁷Cole, *op. cit.*, p. 194. Cassuto, *op. cit.*, p. 354.

coverings of rams' skins and sealskins.

From the standpoint of outward beauty the tabernacle could not be considered attractive. In a similar way, even Christ Jesus had no outward beauty that we should desire him (Isa. 53:2). The preciousness is seen by those who believe (I Peter 2:7).

9. *What formed the walls of the tabernacle?* (26:15-18)

Boards of acacia wood overlaid with gold (26:29), stood on end like pillars, and held together by rods through gold rings, formed the walls. The boards were ten cubits (fifteen feet) long and a cubit and a half wide (twenty-seven inches). Twenty such boards were on the south side,⁸ and twenty were on the north, but only six with these dimensions were on the west (back) side. Two extra corner boards were also on the west.

The thickness of the boards is not stated. Josephus (*Ant.* III, vi, 3) says that they were four fingers thick, about three inches. This seems very reasonable, but is hardly conclusive evidence. Some Jewish commentators have said that the walls were one cubit thick! This would make the boards into impossibly heavy beams. (This thick dimension was proposed because of a desire to make the tabernacle's inside measurements exactly ten cubits. By assuming that all of the eight boards [26:22-25] on the west side were one and a half cubits wide, they calculated that this side was twelve cubits wide. To reduce this to ten cubits, it was proposed that the side boards were each one cubit thick, and their *outside* faces were even with the ends of the west wall.)

⁸"For the south side" in 26:18 is literally "to the side of the Negev, southward." Similarly "westward" in 26:22 is literally "to the sea." Some critics have argued that the use of these geographical orientations as indicators of directions reveals that the writer of Exodus lived in Canaan, probably long after Moses' time. but inasmuch as the Hebrew language was used even before Israel sojourned in Egypt (Gen. 42:22-23), these geographical expressions indicating directions had probably become established idiomatic usages before the sojourn, and continued to be used by the Hebrews even when they were in areas that did not have the Negev at the south and the Great Sea to the west.

Cassuto comments that most probably the thickness of the boards was small, and hence the question as to whether the tabernacle dimensions (the ten cubits width) were external or internal is of little consequence, since there was no appreciable difference.

Each board of the walls had two tenons (Heb. "hands") in the lower end of it. These were "joined one to another" (literally "the woman to her sister"). It seems that the tenons, though side by side in the ends of the boards, were also joined to one another, perhaps by another short board (or piece of metal) into which they were mortised. This combination of the two tenons and their coupling-pieces could then be attached to the bottom of each board. This design would make the tenons more rigid and less likely to break out of the boards when under strain.

It is widely held that the "boards" of the tabernacle were not boards but hollow "frames" made of two upright pieces and two or more cross pieces at the ends, and perhaps in between, making them somewhat like ladders. The R. S. V. translates the Hebrew word *qeresh* ("board") as "frame." However, it renders the same word as "deck" (of a ship) in Ezek. 27:6, demonstrating that the Hebrew word does not always have the meaning of "frame."

Several arguments have been advanced for the use of *frames* rather than solid boards. (1) Acacia trees were not large enough to yield such large boards. (See our notes on 25:5 on the size of acacia trees. Even if one tree were not large enough for a whole board, wood from several of them could be spliced together.) (2) The solid boards would be so heavy they could hardly have been handled. (This argument depends upon how thick the boards were.) (3) The fact that the cherubim decorations on the linen curtains on the side walls could not be seen if draped on the outside of walls of solid wood argues that the walls were of frames, through which the wall decorations could be seen. This is based on the assumption that everything beautiful in the tabernacle had to be visible. This is hardly

the case. The curtains in the Holy of Holies were seen only once a year. The gold overlay inside the ark of the covenant was never to be seen. The gold overlay on the outside of the tabernacle walls was covered by the goats' hair curtains. The beauty was seen by God, even if it was invisible to men. Men would be aware of its beauty even though it did not always hang in plain sight. Certainly the decorations on the curtains were visible above, on the tabernacle ceiling.

(4) The Hebrew word translated "board" is from a root word meaning "cut off" in other Semitic languages, and in the Ugaritic language the noun is used of a pavillion of the Canaanite god El, which might suggest framework here.⁹ Also Canaanite and Assyrian buildings were made of wooden framework. To this we reply that the example of Assyrian buildings is irrelevant since they date from centuries after the Israelite tabernacle. Furthermore, there is no evidence that the Israelites patterned God's tabernacle after Canaanite architecture. Also the fact that the word for board is derived from a word meaning "to cut off" hardly proves the boards were frames. The boards themselves were also "cut off."

We agree with Cassuto, who says it is hard to suppose that the boards were not actually boards.¹⁰

10. *What supported the boards?* (26:19-21)

Two sockets, or pedestals, or bases, of silver supported each board. Each socket was of one talent (about seventy-five pounds) of silver (38:27). The presence of two sockets under each board with each mortised to receive the tenons under a board, would keep the boards from rotating, as they might have done if each board had had only one tenon at top and bottom. We do not know the shape of the sockets, but they probably were wider at the bottom than at the top.

Altogether one hundred sockets supported the tabernacle

⁹Cole, *op. cit.*, pp. 194-195.

¹⁰*Op. cit.*, p. 351.

boards and the pillars holding up the veil (Ex. 38:27). Wagons were used to transport these heavy silver sockets. See Num. 4:31; 7:3, 6-8.

11. *How were the back corners of the tabernacle designed?* (26:22-25)

The boards for the two back corners are mentioned separately, as if they had different dimensions or designs from the other boards. Their width is not stated. We find ourselves in agreement with various authors who feel that they were only half a cubit wide. Two of them with this width would add only one cubit to the nine-cubit width of the other six boards at the west end of the tabernacle, making ten cubits.

Ex. 26:24 is a difficult verse. We have not found any two commentators in agreement about its meaning. The verse says that the corner boards were in some way "doubled" (paired, or twinned) together "beneath," that is, at the bottom. Possibly this means that the boards were made of two thicknesses of board for a few cubits at the bottom. Perhaps each of the two thicknesses was stuck into one of the sockets. Then the boards extended on up "entire" (or whole, unbroken, perhaps meaning unspliced) to *its* [singular] top (or head), unto "the one ring." This suggests to us that at the top of the boards some type of a ring clamped each corner board to the adjoining end boards of the south and north sides. (The meaning of the Hebrew technical term translated "doubled" is not fully known.)

12. *What bound the tabernacle boards together?* (26:26-30; 36:31-34)

Five bars of acacia wood overlaid with gold were thrust through rings of gold attached to the tabernacle boards. Five such bars were placed on the north side and on the south side, and the west end of the tabernacle. The middle bar on each side was "in the midst of the boards" and "passed through from the end to the end."

This design made the tabernacle easy to assemble and disassemble as the Israelites moved from place to place.

How cleverly designed it was!¹¹

The statement about the middle bar reaching from end to end causes most interpreters to feel that the other four bars did not reach from end to end along the sides of the tabernacle, but probably only half way. These four bars were probably arranged into just two rows, one above and one below the long middle bar. Thus there were only three rows of bars, even though there were five bars, because the top and bottom rows consisted of two bars, each only extending half the length of the walls. We feel this is a probability, but by no means a certainty.

Some have felt that the long middle bar was inserted not through rings, but through holes bored in a straight line through the midst of the boards from edge to edge. However, the text surely sounds as though all the bars were thrust through rings.

Cassuto felt that the rings and bars were on the *inside* of the tabernacle walls. Noth felt that the bars were "presumably on the outside." We think they were on the outside.

The obscurity in the instructions about the boards and bars in our Bibles was cleared up for Moses, because God had showed him exactly how he was to set up the tabernacle (26:30). Observe that even the manner of setting up the tabernacle was not left to human judgment. God has given careful directions to his children on all matters wherein exact obedience is required.

13. *What separated between the two tabernacle rooms? (26:31-33; 36:35-38)*

A beautiful veil separated the rooms called the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place (Holy of Holies). The word *veil* (Heb. *paroketh*) means "that which separates." Its

¹¹Noth, *op. cit.*, p. 211, fails to sense the reasonableness and efficiency of this design. Instead he imagines that a priestly writer (P) living a thousand years after the time of Moses, fused together two disparate story elements, first of a tent sanctuary such as nomads use; and then the pattern of the Jerusalem temple, which the priestly writer transformed into a wooden structure capable of being dismantled. Such daring, dogmatic assertions of unproven and destructive theories never cease to amaze us.

dimensions seem to have been ten cubits square. It is called the "veil of the screen" in 40:21; 35:12; 39:34, although the term *screen* is usually associated with the hanging at the entrance to the Holy Place.

The description of the material and decorations of the veil is almost identical to that of the linen curtains over the tabernacle. (See 26:1.)

The veil was hung on four pillars of acacia wood overlaid with gold. These pillars were supported on four sockets (pedestals) of silver. See 26:19. The pillars had hooks of gold at their tops, and the veil was hung upon these hooks, hanging directly below the clasps (*taches*) that joined the two large sets of linen curtains. (See section 7 of the notes on this chapter.)

The "ark of the testimony" (see 25:10-16) was to be brought into the innermost room (the Holy of Holies). Ex. 40:20-21 indicates that when the tabernacle was erected, the ark was put into its position in the tabernacle first and then after that the pillars and veil were set up. Thus 26:33 does not set forth a sequence of acts to be followed in erecting the tabernacle.

14. *What was the significance of the veil?*

The New Testament clearly identifies the veil as a symbol, or type, of Christ's FLESH, which was broken on the cross of Calvary (Heb. 10:19-22).

The Holy of Holies was *God's throne room*, a type of heaven. See Heb. 9:11, 24. The Holy of Holies was closed off by the veil, and no one went past it except the high priest, and he only one day of each year (Heb. 9:7; Lev. 16:2, 34). The Holy Spirit signified to men by this visual means that the way into the true holiest place (heaven!) was not yet made open and plain as long as the tabernacle of Moses was still standing with its veil intact. The same condition continued on into the times of Solomon's temple (which replaced the tabernacle) and later temples. The way into heaven was at that time simply NOT made manifest (open, plain)!

Thus in the O.T. times there was some uncertainty about the future life and immortality. Job cried, "If a man die, will he live again?" (Job 14:14). In later times God revealed the promise of the resurrection of men's dead bodies (Dan. 12:2), but it was still a matter of future hope and not present assurance.

At the hour our Lord Jesus died, the veil in the temple in Jerusalem was ripped in two from top to bottom (Matt. 27:51). This veil corresponded to the one in the tabernacle. It separated the two innermost rooms of the temple, which corresponded to the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies.

When Christ's fleshly body died, the true veil (his flesh!) was torn apart. The barrier between God and man, between earth and heaven, between death and immortality, was swept aside for ever!

Now men may approach boldly to God's heavenly throne. "Let us draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace" (Heb. 4:16). We can now KNOW that we have eternal life (I John 5:13). We are of good courage, knowing that even when we are absent from the body (dead!) we are "AT HOME WITH THE LORD" (II Cor. 5:8). We depart from this world and are "WITH CHRIST" (Phil. 1:23). More than that, our mortal bodies will themselves be resurrected at the end to become immortal (I Cor. 15:50-53).

Thanks be to God for sending the Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel! (II Tim. 1:10)

Thanks be to God for a mighty savior, who rent the veil in two through the death of himself, and then rose again from the dead!

15. *How was the tabernacle furniture arranged? (26:34-35)*

In the Holy of Holies there was only the ark and its mercy-seat covering. See 25:16-21. "Outside the veil," in the Holy Place, was the *lampstand* on the south side, the *table* of showbread on the north and the *altar of incense* up near the veil at the west part of the Holy Place (30:6; 40:23-26).

The Holy Place was probably a type of the *church*. As the Holy of Holies was entered only from the Holy Place, so heaven is entered only from the church. As the Holy Place was for priests only, so the church is for priests (Christians) only.

The tabernacle building was a surprisingly small building, only ten by ten by thirty cubits (fifteen by forty-five feet floor size). But it did not need to be extremely large, since no one entered it but the priests. The congregation worshipped at the door of each man's tent. See 33:8. Probably only a small portion of the people ever even entered the courtyard, since even it was small (fifty by a hundred cubits, seventy-five by one hundred fifty feet). On feast days they could view the sacrifices from just outside the court, or from further distance.

16. *What closed the entrance to the door of the tent?* (26:36-37; 36:37-38; 38:18-19)

A "screen" (hanging, curtain) of cloth hung at the door of the Holy Place. Its colors and fabric were like those of the veil and the linen curtains (26:1, 31), except that it had no cherubim figures woven into it. Cherubim were present only in those places immediately associated with God's presence. The colors of the screen were embroidered into it.

The screen was supported by five pillars, one more than held up the veil. Five pillars were probably used here because additional support was needed at the entrance, on account of the frequency with which the screen would be drawn aside for priests to enter.

The five pillars were overlaid with gold, and had gold hooks at the top. See 26:32. Its sockets (pedestals) were of bronze, unlike the silver sockets of the rest of the tabernacle.

Exodus 36:37-38 speaks of the pillars at the entrance having capitals and fillets of gold. We read of no capitals nor fillets on the pillars holding up the veil. The word *capital* here is simply the word meaning top or head. It

does not suggest the presence of a fancy top piece on the pillar.

"Fillet" in 36:38 is a word meaning a junction rod, or something which is attached or fastened together. It possibly refers to rods connecting the pillars. Whether the screen was hung from these fillets, as from a curtain rod, or just hung on the hooks like the veil, is not clearly indicated.

Keil and Delitzsch felt that the fillets formed a sort of architrave, a solid wooden (but gold-overlaid) section above the pillars.¹² Cassuto says that the fillets formed a pole lying on the hooks, and that this prevented the side boards from inclining inwards because of the weight of the curtains suspended over them.¹³

We cannot tell whether the pillars were inside or outside the screen. We are of the opinion that they were inside, because they were covered with gold. Gold was reserved for the things inside the tabernacle, except for the outside of the side boards, and even they were covered by the curtains. However, the fact that the pillars had bronze sockets shows that they were regarded as near or part of the items in the court, which were of bronze.

THE TEXT OF EXODUS TRANSLATION

27 And thou shalt make the altar of acacia wood, five cubits long, and five cubits broad; the altar shall be foursquare: and the height thereof shall be three cubits. (2) And thou shalt make the horns of it upon the four corners thereof; the horns thereof shall be on one piece with it: and

¹²*Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 182.

¹³*Op. cit.*, p. 361.