

**Angels Woven into the Fabric**  
**(Exodus 26)**  
Expository Lessons from the Book of Exodus

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**I. Review from the Two Previous Lesson on the Tabernacle**

- a. Many Christians are inclined to skip over this part of the Bible, which covers instructions for building the tabernacle, *especially* chapter 26, which we are covering today. However, I believe there is a wonderful gem hidden in this chapter, which we will uncover.
- b. Moses and Joshua have ascended Mount Sinai. Moses is there 40 days and 40 nights, during which time he is fasting. He will receive the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments (for the first time).
- c. The Lord gives Moses detailed instructions regarding the tabernacle, a portable structure that the Israelites are to build, which will be at the center of their community as they travel through the Wilderness. During the time of Solomon, this portable tent-like structure will be replaced by a permanent structure: the temple in Jerusalem.
- d. **Hebrews 8-10** explains the significance of the tabernacle and its ministry. The tabernacle is a type or model of things in the heavenly realm. Its details are all very purposeful, reflecting things regarding heaven, the church, and the saving sacrifice of Jesus.
- e. We learned from **Hebrews**, as discussed in the prior lesson:
  - i. The High Priest foreshadowed Christ, our High Priest.
  - ii. The Most Holy Place, which had the ark of the covenant in it (covered by the “mercy seat”), foreshadowed heaven.
    1. “For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into *heaven itself*, now to appear in the presence of God for us;” (**Hebrews 9:24**, NKJV)
    2. As the Jewish High Priest was the only one allowed to enter the Most Holy Place, and only once a year (on the Day of Atonement), with blood; Jesus entered Heaven itself with His own blood, once for all time.
  - iii. The veil of the temple, between the Holy Place (the sanctuary) and the Most Holy Place, represented the flesh (body) of Christ. (**Hebrews 10:19-20**, NKJV).

1. Recall that this is the veil that was “torn in two, from top to bottom” when Jesus died on the cross.
- iv. The priests who ministered in the Holy Place represent Christians. In **Hebrews, 1 Peter** and some of the writings of Paul, in various ways, we Christians are referred to as *members of a priesthood*, who are offering spiritual sacrifices.
  1. Therefore the Holy Place, which had the three articles in it (lampstand, table of showbread and golden altar of incense), represents the church and our ministry. In the prior lesson, we discussed the significance of these three things, foreshadowing what God is calling us to be devoted to.
- f. The Lord was VERY specific regarding specifications for the temple, since it was a detailed pattern of things in the spiritual realm, including prophecies of things that would come 1400 years later. It pointed to heaven, Jesus, the church and our salvation.
- g. Review of the tabernacle layout
  - i. The tabernacle was 30 cubits x 10 cubits (with a cubit equivalent to about 1.5 feet or ½ meter).
  - ii. The tabernacle had two rooms: the Most Holy Place (a perfect cube: 10 cubits x 10 cubits x 10 cubits high) and the Holy Place (10 cubits x 20 cubits x 10 cubits high). All the main items to be located within it were made of gold (and incorruptible wood).
  - iii. The Most Holy Place:
    1. Ark of the covenant kept there.
    2. Only the High Priest could enter, only once a year (on the Day of Atonement), and only with blood from an animal sacrifice.
  - iv. The Holy Place:
    1. The priests would minister in this room.
    2. Three items in there:
      - a. Golden altar of incense, located in front of the veil leading to the Most Holy Place.
      - b. Table of showbread, located on the north side, where twelve loaves of bread are laid out each week.
      - c. Lampstand with seven lights, located on the south side.

- h. In the courtyard, outside and in front of the tabernacle were two things.
  - i. Laver for priests to wash in (before being anointed as priests, and when they would minister in the tabernacle).
  - ii. Bronze altar of animal sacrifices.

## II. Significance of the Construction Details (Thus Far)

- a. The details regarding the construction are very specific, for a purpose.
- b. Materials of construction
  - i. Gold used within the tabernacle, versus bronze in the courtyard.
  - ii. The closer you get to the presence of God (represented by the Most Holy Place), the more precious the metals.
- c. Numbers and dimensions
  - i. 10 x 10 x 10-cubit cube for the Most Holy Place
  - ii. 3:1 ratio for the overall tabernacle layout (30 cubits x 10 cubits); and three items in the Holy Place where the priests ministered.
    - 1. The spiritual special significance of the number three: the Father, Son and Holy Spirit
  - iii. Seven lights on the lampstand
    - 1. Early Christians associated with the 7-fold characteristics of the Holy Spirit in **Isaiah 11:1-3** in the LXX, and also in **Revelation**.
  - iv. Twelve loaves of bread on the showbread table, to be replaced with fresh bread each Sabbath (**Leviticus 24:5-7**).
    - 1. I think of the number twelve in Scripture (12 apostles, 12 tribes of Israel, 12 spies sent out in **Numbers 13**) represents *all the people*.
  - v. As we discussed in an earlier lesson, the number forty is typically associated with a time of trial, testing or suffering.
    - 1. The long fasts of Moses and Jesus were for 40 days.
    - 2. The time of testing in the Wilderness journey was for 40 years.
    - 3. In the account of the Flood in **Genesis 7**, it rained “40 days and 40 nights”.

### III. What the Tabernacle Itself Looked Like, and How Constructed

- a. Overview of the tabernacle structure.
  - i. This was a portable structure. It was designed so that it could be disassembled, packed up, moved to a new location and reassembled on the journey through the Wilderness.
  - ii. Exterior structural shell was vertical wooden boards, interconnected, that were each 10 cubits high x 2 cubits wide (with a cubit = about 1.5 feet or half a meter). These vertical boards were mounted in silver (or bronze) bases.
  - iii. There was a fabric curtain at one end of the Holy Place. There was *only one entrance* to the structure.
  - iv. The top was covered by four layers of different fabrics.
  - v. There was a fabric veil hanging as a separation between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place.
  - vi. There were long fabric curtains (not sure if these were mounted vertically or horizontally over the top), that were visible as well.
- b. Read **Exodus 26:1-14**
  - i. Ten long curtains: two sets of five, linked together.
    - 1. Blue, purple and scarlet fabric (fine woven linen).
    - 2. Woven in designs of *cherubim*.
      - a. Cherubim are a class of *angels*.
  - ii. Also coverings of goat's hair, ram's skins dyed red and skins dyed blue.
    - 1. Note the deliberate color scheme.
    - 2. The Lord wants specific colors that will require dying the animal skins (to colors that are not found naturally in the skins and hair of sheep, goats or rams).
  - iii. While this information may seem irrelevant to many of us, keep in mind that this construction is a pattern or scale model of the church, heaven and important spiritual realities.
- c. Read **Exodus 26:15-17**
  - i. Vertical wood posts, mounted in silver bases, all around the exterior.

d. Read **Exodus 26:30-37**

- i. Assemble everything “according to the pattern shown you on the mountain”.
  - 1. Perhaps Moses was also shown a model or image of what this would look like, in addition to getting the specific instructions.
- ii. The “veil” (a cloth barrier separating the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place) is a curtain suspended from bars above. It is made of blue, purple and scarlet fabric and fine woven linen. Cherubim images are woven into it.
- iii. General setup of the Holy Place and Most Holy Place described (where to put the major items).
- iv. The “screen” (front and only entrance) of blue, purple and scarlet fabric.

## e. Imagine what it would have looked like, for someone (a priest) entering the Holy Place.

- i. Restricted access.
- ii. High ceiling (10 cubits, or about 15 feet high)
- iii. Sparse and austere: only three things in the space (20 cubits long x 10 cubits wide, or about 30 feet x 15 feet).
- iv. Dark (multi-layer covering over the top) unless the seven lamps on the lampstand are lit
- v. Color scheme is rather somber: blue, purple and scarlet

1. **Question:** Why specify *those particular* colors?

2. **Possible Significance:**

a. *Purple* is the color often associated with royalty.

- i. It is the color of the robe that Jesus was given when the Roman soldiers mocked Him prior to the crucifixion, saying “Hail, King of the Jews”, as described in **Mark 15:17-20** and **John 19:2-5**.

b. *Scarlet* is the color of blood. I also think of...

- i. “‘Come now, and let us reason together,’ Says the LORD, ‘Though your sins are like *scarlet*, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red

like crimson, they shall be as wool.” (**Isaiah 1:18**, NKJV)

- ii. Early Christian writers saw the “*scarlet cord*” that was the sign by which Rahab was saved (**Joshua 2**), as a foreshadowing of the blood of Christ.
  - 1. See Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, book 4 chapter 20; found in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 1, p. 492.
  - 2. See also Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, chapter 111; found in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 1, p. 254.
- iii. This also reminds me of the blood of the Passover Lamb that saved those who remained under its protection, during the 10<sup>th</sup> plague (**Exodus 12**).
- iv. Also, in the Passion account in **Matthew 27:28-31**, it says Jesus had a *scarlet* robe put on him when he was mocked and scourged.
  - 1. As noted above, the robe is described as a purple robe in **Mark 15** and **John 19**. Not sure whether there were two robes or if the robe had both colors on it (perhaps one color on each side). However, I do not doubt that somehow, both descriptions are correct.
- c. In a discussion on colors of the tabernacle, Clement of Alexandria noted that blue is the color of *air*, presumably referring to the sky, or the heavens.
  - i. See Clement of Alexandria, *The Stromata* or *Miscellanies*, book 5, chapter 6; found in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 2, p. 452.
- vi. **Question:** What is the only design woven into the fabric?
  - 1. **Answer:** Cherubim (angels).
- vii. As a priest ministering in the tabernacle, you would see the image of cherubim, a type of angel, all about you (either overhead or possibly on the walls all around you), woven into the cloth.

1. **Question:** If the Holy Place represents the church, where we (members of the new royal priesthood) are ministering, *why would God insist* on the image of *angels* being woven into the fabric?

- a. What is the Lord trying to show us by this detail?

#### IV. The Significance of Angels

- a. Angels have been used by God in critical situations in the past
  - i. After having lunch with Abraham and “the Lord”, two angels are sent to Sodom to escort Lot and his family out of the city before they destroy it.
    1. Read **Genesis 19:1-3** and **19:12-29**.
    2. What we learn about angels from this incident.
      - a. God uses them to do His work.
      - b. They have the ability to look and act like regular human beings.
      - c. They are powerful. God sent *only two* to obliterate Sodom and Gomorrah.
        - i. The angels said, “We will destroy this place ...” (**Genesis 19:13**).
      - d. They reveal the will of God and issue warnings of things to come.
      - e. They protect the righteous. The two angels took Lot and his family members *by the hand*, leading them out of the city.
      - f. They were kind toward Lot in granting his request to stop at the small city of Zoar, when he thought he could not make it all the way to the mountains.
    - ii. An angel spoke to Zechariah, father of John the Baptist, in the Holy Place of the temple.
      1. Read **Luke 1:5-20**.
      2. What we learn about angels from this story

- a. An encounter with an angel can be terrifying. So much so, that they often greet people by first saying, "Don't be afraid!"
  - i. When Mary first saw the angel Gabriel, she was distressed, and the angel said to her, "*Do not be afraid*, Mary..." (**Luke 1:30**).
  - ii. When an angel appeared to the shepherds to announce the birth of Christ: "Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, '*Do not be afraid*, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people.'" (**Luke 2:8-10**, NKJV)
- b. Angels have individual names.
- c. God uses them as His messengers.
- d. They are close to God and can speak with great authority. One of them (Gabriel) said, "I stand *in the presence of God*" (**Luke 1:19**).
- e. We had better take them, and whatever they say, very seriously!
- iii. Jesus indicated that the angels are close to the Father.
  - 1. Speaking of the time of His return, Jesus said, "But of that day and hour no one knows, *not even the angels of heaven*, but My Father only." (**Matthew 24:36**, NKJV)
- iv. An angel appeared to strengthen Jesus in the hour of His greatest trial, praying in the Garden of Gethsemane.
  - 1. "And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done." *Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him.* And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground." (**Luke 22:41-44**, NKJV)



- v. The Lord answered Hezekiah's prayer by sending *just one angel* to decimate the mighty Assyrian army.
  - 1. Read **2 Chronicles 32:20-22**
  - 2. Note that in the account in **2 Kings 19** (designated 4 Kingdoms in the LXX), it says that 185,000 men of the Assyrian army were struck down by the angel, in one night.
- vi. Consider what Jesus said when He was surrounded and captured by His enemies at the Garden of Gethsemane:
  - 1. "Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?" (**Matthew 26:53**, NKJV)
  - 2. As a point of reference, in the first century, one "legion" of the Roman army consisted of about 5,000 men.
  - 3. While I don't know how many angels are in an angelic legion, clearly, Jesus had a *vast army* of these spiritual warriors at His disposal.
    - a. However, in this instance, Jesus voluntarily chose not to call for them to rescue Him.
- b. Some unfortunate *bad news* for us: *Satan also has angels* working on his side, working to defeat us.
  - i. "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:'" (**Matthew 25:41**, NKJV)
  - ii. Satan himself was a fallen angel, a member of the cherubim, as several early Christian writers understood the passage about the "king of Tyre" in **Ezekiel**. Read **Ezekiel 28:11-19**.
    - 1. A cherub who was close to God fell because of pride and is doomed to destruction by fire.
    - 2. For early Christian writers view of this passage in **Ezekiel 28** applying to Satan, see:
      - a. *Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs*, ed. David Bercot, article on "Satan".
      - b. Tertullian (writing c. 207 AD), *Against Marcion*, book 2, chapter 9; found in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 3, p. 305.

- c. Origen (writing c. 225 AD) *De Principiis*, book 1, chapter 5; found in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 4. pp. 258-259.
- iii. Peter warns us to be vigilant regarding our enemy, the devil:
  - 1. “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.” (**1 Peter 5:8-9**, NKJV)
- iv. Paul reminds us that our real battle not against flesh and blood (humans) but against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realm (Satan and his angels).
  - 1. “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against *spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places*.” (**Ephesians 6:12**, NKJV)
  - 2. This is why Paul says we need to take up “the whole armor of God” (**Ephesians 6:13**).
- c. But there is some very *good news* for us regarding angels, as well.
  - i. “But to which of the angels has He ever said: ‘Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool’? Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?” (**Hebrews 1:13-14**, NKJV; where **Psalms 110** is quoted)
    - 1. The angels are ministering spirits *sent to assist us* (humans, Christians) who will inherit salvation.
    - 2. This is very encouraging to me!
  - ii. “Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven *their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven*.” (**Matthew 18:10**, NKJV)
    - 1. **Question:** Does this refer to ‘guardian angels’, which I heard about as a child? Are there angels individually assigned to specific people?
    - 2. Consider what the disciples said after Peter was released by an angel from prison and he knocked at the door.
      - a. “But they said to her, ‘You are beside yourself!’ Yet she kept insisting that it was so. So they said, ‘It is *his angel*.’” (**Acts 12:15**, NKJV)

- b. The disciples speaking with Rhoda in this story from **Acts 12** apparently believed that Peter had an angel assigned to him.
  - 3. For insights from early Christians on their view of guardian angels, see *Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs*, ed. David Bercot, article on “Angel/Angels, II. Guardian Angels”.
- iii. “Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels.” (**Hebrews 13:2**, NKJV)
  - 1. Perhaps this is a reference to the story of Lot in **Genesis 19**.
  - 2. Regardless, the point being made by the author of Hebrews seems to be that angels are still operating among us. We typically are not aware of their activity here on the earth, since they can take on the appearance of normal humans. We don’t recognize them as angels.
- iv. The book of **Hebrews** uses the language and imagery of the tabernacle to describe the church. Read **Hebrews 12:18-24**.
  - 1. You have come to the church, to “an innumerable company of angels....”
  - 2. **Question:** Are the angels now among us, in the church?
    - a. Consider Paul’s reasoning for women covering their heads while praying:
      - i. “For this reason the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, *because of the angels*.” (**1 Corinthians 11:10**, NKJV)
      - ii. Obviously this reason has nothing to do with local culture!
- d. **In Closing:** Lord, open our eyes!
  - i. Read **2 Kings 6:8-17** (designated **4 Kingdoms 6** in the LXX).
  - ii. It appears that the prophet and his assistant are outnumbered and completely surrounded by their enemies. However, the prophet is aware of the spiritual forces of heaven arrayed around the enemies.
  - iii. Elisha prays, “Lord open (his) eyes...and let him see.”
  - iv. The Lord opens his servant's eyes to the spiritual reality: the mountain is filled with horses and chariots of fire.

- v. May the Lord open our eyes to the angels surrounding us, powerful spiritual warriors sent to assist us in our own battle.
  - 1. The cherubim were woven into the fabric of the tabernacle for a good reason, to remind God's priesthood of their ever-presence among us.
  - 2. There are angels on both sides of the battle we are engaged in. However, let us be encouraged that *those who are with us are more than those who are with them!*