

The Veil

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- [0 : 0 0] Well if we could, this evening, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling, if we could turn back to that first portion of scripture that we read in the book of Exodus and chapter 26. Exodus chapter 26, and if we just read again at verse 31. Exodus 26 and verse 31. And you shall make a veil of blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen. It shall be made with cherubim, skillfully worked into it. And you shall hang it on four pillars of acacia, overlaid with gold, with hooks of gold, on four bases of silver. So this evening we come to stand before the veil of the tabernacle. And as you know, it's this veil that separates sinful mankind from the glorious presence of their holy God. Because on the other side of this veil, as you can see, on the other side of this veil stands the Ark of the Covenant, which is the symbol of God's presence among his people.
- [1 : 1 8] But you know, as we've studied the tabernacle over the past number of weeks, with all its, we've looked at its structure and all its furniture, we've always been motioning towards this veil. We are sinners who are seeking favour, forgiveness and fellowship with our great God. And now we stand before this veil, along with all the other items of the furniture in the tabernacle. And they're all pointing us to Jesus Christ. It's all pointing us to Jesus. He is the Word who became flesh. He is the one who dwelt among us. He is the one who tabernacled among us all so that we might behold his glory. The glory on the other side of this veil. He is Jesus, our tabernacle. And over the past number of weeks, we've been making our way towards this veil. We've walked around the perimeter of the white cloth surrounding the tabernacle courtyard. And as you know, that perimeter, it leads us all the way around to the outer gate.
- [2 : 2 2] Then we entered through that entrance into the tabernacle courtyard because it was the only entrance. We can't approach God any other way except through the outer gate. There's only one way to God. And that's through Jesus, our tabernacle. And on entering into the tabernacle courtyard, we saw the altar of sacrifice that reminds us about our justification. Then we came to the bronze laver that reminds us about our sanctification. Then we came to see the four coverings of the tabernacle, four coverings that point us to our one Christ. And then on entering into the tabernacle, into the holy place, under these four coverings, we're made to realise that we're in Christ. We're covered by Jesus, our tabernacle. We're in Christ. And as those who are in Christ, these three items of furniture in the holy place of the holy king, they remind us of what sinners receive when they are in Christ.

When we looked at the golden lampstand, it was a golden tree reminding us that we have life and light because we are in Christ. When we considered the table of showbread, we learned that as those who are in Christ, we have the assurance of his presence and his provision because we're in Christ.

[3 : 40] And then we approached the altar of incense last week and we noted that it was an altar of purpose, an altar of prayer and an altar of promise. But now we've come all the way to this veil.

And as we stand before this veil that separates sinful man from their holy God, I want us to see that we're being encouraged to consider three different aspects of this veil.

Because we're being encouraged to consider the veil twined, the veil tabernacling and the veil torn. Three different aspects of this veil.

So first of all, the veil twined. The veil twined. We read about that in verse 31. Where the Lord says to Moses, You shall make a veil of blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen.

It shall be made with cherubim skillfully worked into it. And you shall hang on it, hang it on four pillars of acacia overlaid with gold, with hooks of gold on four bases of silver.

[4 : 51] And so this veil that was made of fine twined linen, it was to be suspended from four pillars made of acacia wood overlaid with gold.

And these pillars were to be supported by four bases of silver. And as the Lord described to Moses, this veil was to separate the holy place from the most holy place, which was the holy of holies.

This veil was to make that distinct separation from the holy place of the holy king, where these items of furniture were, the table of showbread, the golden lampstand, and the altar of incense.

And it was to make a distinction from the holy place from the holy of holies, where the Ark of the Covenant dwelt within the veil. And of course, this veil, it was a constant reminder that mankind can only go so far towards their holy God, and then they must stop.

Because as you know, no one was allowed within the veil. No one was allowed into the holy of holies, except Aaron the high priest, once a year, on the day of atonement.

[6 : 01] But you know what's frightening is that Aaron's two sons, his two sons, they died when they entered into the holy of holies, and offered strange fire to the Lord.

And we're told that in Leviticus chapter 10, Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, they offered strange fire to the Lord, which the Lord had not commanded.

And the result was that we're told in Leviticus 10, fire came out from before the Lord and consumed them. And they died before the Lord. A reminder that God is holy.

And you know, it must have been awful for Aaron, losing both his sons on the same day. And he lost both of them because of their disobedience to the Lord.

But you know what would have made it even harder as a father, is that as the high priest, Aaron would have to enter into the holy of holies, through the veil, he would have to enter in every year, and then stand in the place where his two sons had died.

[7 : 09] You know, that must have been very hard for a father. But you know, it was a constant reminder to the people that God is holy. He's not to be taken lightly. His word is not to be approached flippantly.

And his worship must be carried out biblically. You know, my friend, our God is a holy king. And that was the message of the veil, that this twined veil, our God is a holy king.

But as we read, the veil was made from blue and purple and scarlet yarns, and fine twined linen. And as you know, this was the same material that was used on the outer gate, and also the inner covering of the tabernacle.

And they were all made from blue and purple and scarlet yarns, and fine twined linen. And as we said before, the colours of blue and purple and scarlet, they're all royal colours.

And these colours, they were to remind the approaching sinner, they were to remind the worshipper, that the one whom they sought forgiveness from, and fellowship with, he was a holy king.

[8 : 19] He's the king of kings, and he's the Lord of Lords. Now, tradition tells us that the veil twined, it was the thickness of a man's hand, or a hand breadth thick, so, about three or four inches.

It was about three or four inches thick. And it was made from blue and purple, and scarlet yarns, and fine twined linen. And you'll notice that every time these royal colours are mentioned, every time they're mentioned in relation to the outer gate, or in relation to the inner covering of the tabernacle, and now the veil, they're always mentioned in the same order.

These three colours are mentioned in the same order. Blue, purple, and scarlet. And of course, together they're all royal colours. But when we consider them individually, we learn something more about this holy king.

Because the colour blue, was often associated with divinity. And this was because the skies and the heavens are blue. Sometimes, not today, but most of the time.

The skies are blue. And therefore, a king in the ancient world, would often wear blue, maybe on his robe, or a part of his clothing. And he would wear blue because, he was considered by his people to be divine.

[9 : 38] And as you know, pharaohs and emperors, they were worshipped because they claimed divinity. They claimed to be gods. And in a similar manner, the Lord, as the holy king over the Israelites, he was reminding his people that he's divine.

Therefore, the colour blue woven into the veil, this veil that was twined together, it reminded every worshipper that the king of kings and the lord of lords, he is divine.

And you know, what's interesting is that in Numbers chapter 4, we're told that when the Israelites would travel from place to place, and they were moving towards the promised land, they were travelling through the wilderness, going towards the promised land.

As they were travelling, all the furniture inside the tabernacle, so the golden lampstand, the altar of incense, the table of showbread, and the ark of the covenant, all these items of furniture, they were to have this outer covering of blue.

They were all to be covered with this blue cloth as they travelled through the wilderness. And it was to remind the Israelites, and also to remind all the other nations that surrounded them, and even saw them travelling, it was to remind them that Israel's king is divine, and he is to be worshipped.

[10 : 59] The Lord is to be worshipped. And so the colour blue was often associated with divinity. But then if you look at the last colour that's often mentioned in this order, it's scarlet, blue, purple, and scarlet yarns, and fine twined linen.

And the reason the colour scarlet is mentioned is to highlight and to emphasise the opposite of divinity, which is humanity. And this is also interesting because if blue is related to divinity because of the heavens or the skies, then scarlet related to humanity because of the colour of the earth.

It's said that the landscape of the promised land of Israel is scarlet or red because of the earth. And in fact, the first man, Adam, he was given that name, not only because the name Adam means man, but also because the root word which came from Adam.

The root word of the name Adam means red earth. And as Paul describes Adam in 1 Corinthians 15, Adam was of the earth, earthy.

Adam was formed and fashioned from the dust of the red earth and made in the image and likeness of his holy God. Therefore, the scarlet cover that's woven into the veil twined together, it reminded every worshipper that the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, he is able to relate to humanity.

[12 : 31] He is able to relate to humanity. And so the colour blue was associated with divinity, the colour scarlet was associated with humanity and then the colour purple which is the middle colour and it's often in the repeated order, blue, purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen.

The colour purple was the middle colour and not only because it was a blend of both blue and scarlet because if you mix blue and scarlet you get purple but also the purple colour emphasised that the King had a mediator.

He had a middleman between his people and the other kings and nations. You know that in the ancient world if kings were going to form a treaty or an alliance with another king and another nation.

Both the kings would have to negotiate terms and conditions through their mediator. And interestingly the treaty or the alliance that would be made between these two kings was called a covenant.

It was a legally binding contract between two parties. Two parties on the same standing. Two kings. And their agreement was covenanted.

[13 : 47] It was covenanted with the help of a mediator. And we'll come back to this in a wee while. So the colour blue was associated with divinity.

The colour red or scarlet was associated with humanity. The colour purple the middle colour was associated with the provision of a mediator. And of course these three colours of blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen woven together to form this field they all point us to the person and work of Jesus Christ.

They point us to Jesus our tabernacle. Which is why I want us to see secondly that the veil twined helps us and encourages us to consider the veil tabernacling.

The veil twined helps us to see the veil tabernacling. The veil tabernacling. That's what we're looking at secondly. We're told in verse 31 you shall make a veil of blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen.

Now as we read earlier we read earlier from the letter to the Hebrews and when the writer to the Hebrews wrote his New Testament letter when he wrote the letter to the Hebrews he did so in order to encourage the Jews who had heard the gospel and believed the gospel he encouraged them not to turn away from the gospel and the way in which the writer did that was by reminding them and us that all the Old Testament types and shadows that we see in the tabernacle and in many other places he was to remind us that in these things Jesus is better.

[15 : 33] In fact the writer to the Hebrews says that Jesus is better than the prophets. He's better than the angels. He's better than Moses. Jesus provides a better Sabbath rest.

He goes through all these different things. He says that Jesus is better than Aaron as the high priest. He provides a better covenant. He even provides a better sacrifice he says than all the blood of the bulls and the goats because as the writer to the Hebrews says by his own blood Jesus entered once into the holy of holies and obtained an eternal redemption for us.

And you know my friend whenever you feel that the world, the flesh or the devil is tempting you always remember Jesus is better. Jesus is better. That's the only encouragement the writer to the Hebrews could give to Christians.

Jesus is better. But what we read in Hebrews chapter 9 and 10 is that Jesus provides a better sanctuary for worship. Jesus provides for us a better tabernacle because as we've discovered over the past few weeks Jesus is the tabernacle.

He is Jesus our tabernacle. He's the word who became flesh. He tabernacled among us so that we might behold his glory. He is Jesus our tabernacle.

[16 : 58] And that's what the writer to the Hebrews picked up on because he said in Hebrews 9 that through the veil twined that was twined in the earthly tabernacle he said the Holy Spirit indicates to us that the way into the Holy of Holies is not yet opened.

But Hebrews 9 verse 11 but when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come then through the greater and more perfect tent not made with hands that is not of this creation he entered once for all into the holy places not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood thus securing an eternal redemption.

And he goes on into chapter 10 and verse 19 and says we have confidence to enter the Holy of Holies by the blood of Jesus because he has opened for us a new and living way through the curtain that is through his flesh.

Therefore what the writer to the Hebrews emphasised is that the veil twined is the veil twined in the tabernacle made from blue and purple and scarlet yarns of fine twined linen it was only a pointer to the veil tabernacling amongst us in the person of Jesus Christ.

In other words the veil in the tabernacle directs our attention to the veil of flesh that God the Son took to himself at the incarnation. Because when God became man when Jesus entered into our world when the word became flesh and tabernacled among us it was the veil in the tabernacle was directing us to the veil of flesh that God the Son took to himself at the incarnation.

[18 : 52] In fact the word incarnation it literally means the enfleshment of God. Incarnation the enfleshment of God.

And you know at this time of year we often think about the incarnation with the birth of Jesus and it's good for us to think about the incarnation. It's good for us to think about God being veiled in human flesh because you know it's the greatest mystery.

The virgin birth is the greatest mystery. Being conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary it's one of the greatest mysteries in the gospel. The incarnation the enfleshment of God God manifest in the flesh it's the greatest mystery and yet it's the most wonderful provision for sinners.

Because the thing is Jesus wasn't always flesh he became flesh he became flesh in order to tabernacle among us but in order to become flesh Jesus didn't become less divine he didn't lay aside his divinity or even his glory no the son of God the second person of the Trinity he added to his person our nature he added to his person our nature there was an early church father who put it this way far better than I could put it remaining what he was he became what he was not remaining what he was just think about that remaining what he was he became what he was not so the incarnation in the incarnation Jesus tabernacled among us by adding to himself our nature remaining what he was he remained divine he remained glorious but he became what he was not he became human by taking to himself our nature he added to himself our nature you know it was the greatest act of humiliation the incarnation as someone else put it the incarnation was subtraction by addition the incarnation was subtraction by addition it was humiliation by taking our nature the son of God humbled himself by taking to himself our human nature and that's how

Paul describes the incarnation in Philippians 2 he says that Jesus made himself of no reputation he took upon himself the form of a servant was made in the likeness of men and being found in fashion as a man he humbled himself and became obedient unto death even the death of the cross and so the veil in the tabernacle it directs our attention to the veil of flesh that God the son took to himself at the incarnation but as we said earlier these three colours of blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twine linen woven together to form the veil in the tabernacle they all point us to the person and work of Jesus Christ because as we said the blue colour associated was associated with divinity scarlet was associated with humanity purple was associated with the provision of a mediator of course they were royal colours pointing us to Jesus Christ as our King of Kings and Lord of Lords but they also point us to our person and his person and work the colour blue ought to remind us about Jesus divinity that he's the eternal son of God he's the only begotten of the father full of grace and truth the colour scarlet ought to remind us about Jesus as humanity that he's the sinless son of man who tabernacles among us veiled in human flesh and the colour purple which is a blend of both blue and scarlet it ought to remind us that Jesus is our mediator he's the mediator of the new covenant and he's the mediator between holy

[23 : 18] God and sinful man and you know this is the wonder of it all as our mediator who is both divine and human because he's both divine and human he is the only redeemer of God's elect it's only someone who was both divine and human that could redeem sinful creatures such as we are he's the only redeemer of God's elect as I know how the catechism puts it the only redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ who being the eternal son of God became man and so was and continues to be both God and man in two distinct natures and one person forever he's the only redeemer of God's elect you know my friend Jesus our tabernacle is God veiled in human flesh he's the blue and purple and scarlet veil he's the divine and human mediator between God and men he's the veil that stands between the worshipper and the holy of holies but he's also the veil that was torn he was torn in order for us to gain access into the holy of holies and into the glorious presence of our holy God and that's what I want us to consider in conclusion the veil torn so we've seen the veil twined the veil tabernacling and lastly the veil torn the veil torn you shall make a veil of blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen it shall be made with cherubim skillfully worked into it there's one aspect of this veil that we haven't really touched on yet and that's the cherubim who were woven into this veil now as we said before the cherubim were woven into the veil as a reminder of what happened in the garden of Eden because when

Adam and Eve sinned when they fell short of that perfect estate wherein they were created the Lord drove them out of the garden of Eden and then the Lord closed off their access towards their holy God by placing at the east of Eden cherubim along with a flaming sword and the cherubim were there to guard the way to the tree of life and since the fall all the way down throughout the centuries until the arrival of Jesus Christ mankind was kept out of the holy presence of their holy king and similarly many of the coverings and curtains in the tabernacle had cherubim embroidered onto them we saw that with the outer gate we saw it with the inner covering of the tabernacle and now also the veil they were all made from blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen with cherubim woven into it and the cherubim they were to guard the way into the immediate presence of a holy God one commentator said just as the cherubim with a flaming sword would slay anyone who tried to gain access into the garden of

Eden so too anyone who attempted to enter the holy of holies in the tabernacle would be struck down and you know that was the warning the veil gave to sinners trying to approach their holy God it was like this big no entry sign do not go in because if you go in you will die but you know even though the cherubim woven onto the veil was a reminder of the problem of sin that came from the garden of Eden you know the cherubim were also a reminder of the promise of salvation which also came from the same garden because you remember that when the Lord drove Adam and Eve out of the garden he drove them out with a promise he didn't leave them without hope he drove them out with a promise he said the seed of the woman will crush the head of the serpent and as the writer to the Hebrews reminded us when Christ appeared he opened for us a new and living way through the curtain that is through his flesh when God veiled in human flesh when Christ appeared we're told when he appeared veiled in human flesh his flesh was torn and shredded when his flesh was bleeding without sin forgiving and life giving blood when his flesh died upon the cross of Calvary we're told that Jesus our tabernacle opened for us a new and living way and as the gospel writers affirm to us it was in the darkness of

Calvary when Jesus had been made sin for us made a curse for us that's when Jesus cried out my God my God why hast thou forsaken me and when he gave up his spirit we're told that immediately immediately the veil in the temple was torn from top to bottom and you'll notice the way the gospel writers put it the veil was torn from top to bottom it wasn't torn from bottom to top it wasn't torn a little it wasn't torn a bit it wasn't torn halfway the whole veil from top to bottom from God to man was torn opening a new and living way when Jesus Christ died on the cross God was pleased with the covenant sacrifice of the mediator and for the first time since the garden of Eden God opened up a new and living way for sinners to come in and you know for centuries for centuries the veil twined that hung in the tabernacle and then hung in the temple it proclaimed to the people if you come in here you will die but you know the wonder of the gospel is that the veil tabernacled and the veil torn in the person of Jesus Christ it says to us if you do not come in you will die if you do not come in if you stay where you are you will die and that's why the gospel that's why the good news of Jesus Christ is an invitation to whosoever to come to come in to come to

Jesus and find rest for your soul because as sinners we must come through the veil to God's throne of grace and we must come by Jesus our tabernacle and well God willing the time is gone God willing I will get there next week we'll come through the veil and we'll stand before the ark of the covenant and receive grace upon grace so by looking at the veil we see the veil twined the veil tabernacled and the veil torn may the Lord bless these thoughts to us and let us pray oh Lord our gracious God we give thanks to thee for Jesus our tabernacle we thank thee Lord that he came among us that he was made bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh and that even in the flesh he was wounded for our transgressions bruised for our iniquities that the chastisement which brought us peace

[31 : 19] O Lord was laid upon him and Lord we thank thee that by his stripes we are healed O Lord we bless thee for Jesus that he is a wonderful savior who chose to tabernacle among us that we might experience peace with God Lord bless thy truth to us help us to love Jesus more by considering it help us to see him as one who is divine one who is human but he is also the great mediator between God and men the man Christ Jesus and Lord that we would be willing to share the invitation that the curtain has been torn that the veil has been rent that the way is now open there is a new and living way in which sinners are invited to come and Lord help us as thy people to be willing to invite to be willing to compel people to come in that the master's house may be filled Lord bless us we pray remember Lord those who are laid aside uphold them and strengthen them that they would know the peace of God that passes all understanding lead us then we pray guide us by thy spirit and go before us for we ask it in Jesus name and for his sake amen we're going to bring our time to a conclusion by singing in Psalm 84

Psalm 84 in the Scottish Psalter we're singing from the beginning down to the verse marked five Psalm 84 from the beginning page 338 in the Scottish Psalter how lovely is thy dwelling place O Lord of hosts to me the tabernacles of thy grace how pleasant Lord they be my thirsty soul longs vehemently ye fainst thy courts to see my very heart and flesh cry out O living God for thee down to the end of the verse marked five of Psalm 84 to God's praise the tabernacles of thy name and for the Lord of hosts to me the tabernacles of the Lord of hosts to me the tabernacles of the tabernacles of thy grace how blessed Lord they be my

Lord of hosts to me the tabernacles of thy grace how blessed Lord they be my my mercy soon Lord they be my mercy soon on them vehemently ye fainst thy courts to see my glory soon on them vehemently ye fainst thy courts to see my thy very heart and flesh cry out O living God for thee behold the spiral findeth thou on her swear to rest the thy soul■■■ reflects her svötzlich bar sin upon her soul with a earth be Education by best being so why Sisw

O Thou Almighty, Lord of hosts, who art my God and King.

Blessed are they in Thy house that dwell, they ever give Thee praise.

[36 : 07] Blessed is the one whose strength of art, in whose heart are Thy ways.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and forevermore. Amen.