

The Tabernacle Tent



The tabernacle was so constructed that it could be taken apart and borne with the Israelites in all their journeyings. It was therefore small, being not more than fifty-five feet in length, and eighteen in breadth and height. Yet it was a magnificent structure. The wood employed for the building and its furniture was that of the acacia tree, which was less subject to decay than any other to be obtained at Sinai. The walls consisted of upright boards, set in silver sockets, and held firm by pillars and connecting bars; and all were overlaid with gold, giving to the building the appearance of solid gold. The roof was formed of four sets of curtains, the innermost of "fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet: with cherubim of cunning work;" the other three respectively were of goats' hair, rams' skins dyed red, and sealskins, so arranged as to afford complete protection.³⁴

The Tabernacle represented Jesus as our Savior. It was covered with four layers of material, each specified by God, each symbolic of some aspect of Jesus' work for us. The two outer layers were like a roof for the tent, protecting it from weather elements. The two inner layers were like the ceiling, more decorative. We will look at what these coverings represent starting with the outermost layer.

Layer 1

What was the outside layer?

... a covering above of _____ skins. Exodus 26:14

“Badger” skin:

The outer covering was made of leather. The type of leather is somewhat questioned since Bible scholars do not know what the Hebrew word actually means. Some think it might have been seal skin. A seal is an unclean animal so some think it was the skin of deer or antelope instead, which are clean animals. Other Bible scholars think the word was referring to a color of leather rather than an animal. We don't know what it really was, but we can know that it represented Jesus coming to this earth and taking on the flesh, the “skin” of humans.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. John 1:1, 14

What kind of flesh did Jesus accept?

... God sending his own Son in the likeness of _____ flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: Romans 8:3

Jesus took on sinful human flesh and inherited the same physical weaknesses that we have; but He never sinned. He never chose to submit to a sinful thought or do anything sinful. He overcame all sin and, through the power He provides, we can overcome sin, also.

Layer 2

What was the next layer?

And thou shalt make a covering for the tent of _____ dyed red, . . . Exodus 26:14

Rams' skins dyed red:

The Hebrew word for “red” in this verse is *'adam* (H119 in Strong's Hebrew Dictionary). It comes from the same root word as the word for “man” (H120 in Genesis 2:7) and the name “Adam” (H121 in Genesis 5:1, 2).

Who is the second Adam?

1 Corinthians 15:45-47

In certain ways Adam, as the first man, represented the whole human race. When he sinned, all of humanity shared the result of that sin with him. Jesus came to this earth and stepped into the role of Adam, as the second Adam, to get the victory over Satan where the first Adam failed. Jesus became a man, He took on “manhood,” similar to the way these rams' skins took on the red color when they were dyed.

When God asked Abraham to offer Isaac as a Burnt Offering, what did He provide as a substitute in Isaac's place.

Genesis 22:8-13

A ram was often used as a Burnt Offering. A Burnt Offering, where the entire animal was burned, was a symbol of total dedication to God. Jesus lived His whole life totally dedicated to God's purpose of saving mankind.

Layer 3

What was the third layer?

Exodus 26:7

Goat's hair curtain:

From various descriptions and definitions, it appears that these goat's hair curtains were made of fine, white goat's hair, like angora.

What does white symbolize?

Daniel 12:10

Revelation 3:5

White represents purity and overcoming. On the Tent of the Tabernacle it is a symbol of Jesus' personal purity and the perfection that He wants to give to us and develop in us. He overcame Satan and can give us the power to overcome too.

Layer 4

What was the inner layer of the Tent?
Exodus 26:1

Curtain of blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen:

What was blue a reminder of?
Numbers 15:38-39

Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness. Exodus 24:9, 10

Sapphire is a blue gemstone. The blue under God's throne and on the people's robes represents God's Law. His Commandments are the very foundation of His throne, the basis of His government. They are to always be remembered. Blue represents the divinity of Jesus and His obedience to all of God's Laws while He was on earth clothed in humanity.

Who wore purple clothes?
Judges 8:26; John 19:2, 3

Purple was a very expensive cloth dye because it was difficult to acquire, so purple garments were usually worn only by kings. What is one of Jesus' titles?
Revelation 19:16

Purple represents Jesus as the King of Kings.

Scarlet is the color of blood.

What did God specify that blood was to be used for?
Leviticus 17:11

Scarlet symbolizes Jesus' sacrifice, when His blood was spilled for the forgiveness of our sins.

When the Wisemen came to worship Jesus when He was born, they brought three types of gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. These were symbolic of who Jesus was. In the Christmas carol "We Three Kings," verse 5, we find this line: "Glorious now behold Him arise, King and God and sacrifice." Gold was a gift for kings; frankincense was burned as a symbol of prayer to God; myrrh was placed in the grave of a dead person. Jesus was a King; He was God; He died as a Sacrifice. These three colors—blue, purple, and scarlet—represent Jesus in these same roles.

What does the fine linen represent?
Revelation 19:8

White is a symbol of the totally righteous life that Jesus lived.

Summary

Badger skin—Jesus took on sinful human flesh but never committed a sin.

Ram skin dyed red—Jesus became the second Adam to succeed where the first Adam failed.

Curtain of white goat's hair—Jesus was totally pure.

Curtain of blue, purple, scarlet, fine twined linen—Jesus was God, King, and Sacrifice, completely righteous.

These all represent Jesus and His work for our salvation. He left Heaven, where everything was perfect, and stepped down from being honored as the King of the Universe to being an ordinary man on this sin-polluted world in order to save us from our sin.

By His humanity, Christ touched humanity; by His divinity, He lays hold upon the throne of God. As the Son of man, He gave us an example of obedience; as the Son of God, He gives us power to obey. It was Christ who from the bush on Mount Horeb spoke to Moses saying, "I AM THAT I AM.... Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." Exodus 3:14. This was the pledge of Israel's deliverance. So when He came "in the likeness of men," He declared Himself the I AM. The Child of Bethlehem, the meek and lowly Saviour, is God "manifest in the flesh." 1 Timothy 3:16. And to us He says: "I AM the Good Shepherd." "I AM the living Bread." "I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life." "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." John 10:11; 6:51; 14:6; Matthew 28:18. I AM the assurance of every promise. I AM; be not afraid. "God with us" is the surety of our deliverance from sin, the assurance of our power to obey the law of heaven.

In stooping to take upon Himself humanity, Christ revealed a character the opposite of the character of Satan. But He stepped still lower in the path of humiliation. "Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Philippians 2:8. As the high priest laid aside his gorgeous pontifical robes, and officiated in the white linen dress of the common priest, so Christ took the form of a servant, and offered sacrifice, Himself the priest, Himself the victim. "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him." Isaiah 53:5.

Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His. "With His stripes we are healed."³⁵