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The Size of the Courtyard in the Tabernacle 27:9-15, 18-19 and 38:9-13 and 20

The size of the courtyard in the Tabernacle DIG: Why was the Tabernacle have curtains made of white linen surrounding it? What about the physical layout enhances the worship of God?

REFLECT: What is your primary incentive to be holy? Does being holy also mean being stuck-up? How can you avoid that tag and still be the holy person God wants you to be?



The white **linen** that surrounded **the courtyard of the Tabernacle** served as a constant reminder to the sinning **Israelites** that **God's** dwelling place was **holy**. Sin separates the sinner from **God**. But in **His** love, **YHVH** provided a **gate** and an altar; therefore, **He** was often reminding **His** people to live apart from the godless world around them. The key words of **Leviticus** are: **Be holy because I, ADONAI your God, am holy (Leviticus 19:2)**.⁵¹³

The courtyard of the Tabernacle measured 100 cubits by 50 cubits, the long sides running north and south. **The gate of the Tabernacle** faced **east**. Based on an 18-inch cubit it was 150 feet long and 75 feet wide, or about fifty yards long and twenty-five yards wide (**to see link click [Ex - The Courtyard and Gate of the Tabernacle](#)**). **The courtyard** was composed of white **linen curtains**, just like the gate, the covering of the Sanctuary, the inner veil and outer veil. They were **five cubits high** and hung on acacia

wood posts that stood in **bronze bases**. **They were hung from the wood posts like sails of a ship hanging from the mast.** The **posts** were about seven and a half feet apart, and **the curtains** were kept tight by **bronze tent pegs**.⁵¹⁴ Because the metals used in the construction of **the Tabernacle** are listed in descending order of value, the further away you went from the Most Holy Place, the less valuable the metal used. Thus, **the courtyard** was mostly constructed of **bronze**, which spoke of judgment.

Next, they made the courtyard. The south side was a hundred cubits long, or about 150 feet, **and had curtains of finely twisted linen, with twenty acacia wood posts and twenty bronze bases, and with silver hooks and bands on the posts (27:9-10, 38:9-10).** The height of **the sixty posts in the courtyard** were exactly the same, they were seven and a half feet tall.

The designs of the north and south sides of the courtyard were identical. They were about 150 feet **long** (or half the length of a football field) **and had twenty acacia wood posts and twenty bronze bases, with silver hooks and bands on the posts (27:11, 38:11).** The exact same wording is repeated in the description of each; that is a Hebrew way of emphasizing the concept of sameness.⁵¹⁵



The west end of the courtyard was fifty cubits wide, or about 75 feet, **and had curtains, with ten vertical acacia wood posts and ten bronze bases, with silver hooks and bands on horizontal posts (27:12, 38:12).** The Word of **God** does not state what the horizontal **posts** were made of. The **bases of bronze** and the **hooks and bands of silver** are alone mentioned. But we can conclude they were made of acacia wood for two reasons. First, we are told that the post **tops were overlaid with a silver cap (38:17)**; and secondly, when the gold, **silver** and **bronze** for **the Tabernacle** are listed, no mention is made of any of these three metals being used to form the **posts of the courtyard**.⁵¹⁶

The **east** of the **Tabernacle** is treated differently because it contains a gate, the only entrance to the structure. On **the east end, toward the sunrise, the courtyard was also** about 75 feet **wide (27:13, 38:13)**. The term **the east end** is a Hebrew idiom that literally means, *eastward to the place of sunrise*. **Curtains fifteen cubits long are to be on one side of the gate, with three acacia wood posts and three bronze bases, and curtains fifteen cubits long are to be on the other side, with three acacia wood posts and three bronze bases (27:14-15)**. In the middle of the eastern side was **the gate**, or a curtain thirty feet long. On either side of **the gate** were more **curtains**, each 22 and one half feet long.

The courtyard was 150 feet **long and** 75 feet **wide, with curtains of finely twisted linen five cubits high**, or seven and a half feet tall, **with bronze bases (27:18)**. **All the other articles used in the service of the Tabernacle, including all the tent pegs of the surrounding courtyard, were made of bronze (27:19, 38:20)**. The word *peg* is also translated *nail* in **Judges 4:21-22 (KJV)**, and *stake* in **Isaiah 33:20** and **54:2 (KJV)**. The *peg* or *nail* is a symbol **Jesus**. In **Isaiah 22:22, a near historical prophecy**, **God** is speaking of Eliakim **His** servant that he would lead the nation. **God** said: **I will place on his shoulders the key to the house of David; what he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open. I will drive him like a peg into a firm place; he will be a seat of honor for the house of his father.** After **His** death, resurrection and ascension into heaven, **Jesus** applied this scripture to **Himself**, saying: **To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These are words of Him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What He opens no one can shut, and what He shuts no one can open (Revelation 3:7)**. So **Jesus Himself** is the **peg** in a **firm place**, to whom that far-reaching prophecy refers.⁵¹⁷

The size of **the courtyard** was determined by the length and width of the fine **linen** hangings. The **posts**, from which the hangings were suspended, stood within **the courtyard**. Therefore, anyone who approached **the Tabernacle** without entering **the gate** could not know upon what the curtain hung. **He** would see the white **linen**, but would not be aware that it hung from **hooks and bands** of silver **on the posts**.⁵¹⁸ As a result, the whole arrangement of **the courtyard**, and in particular the placement of the **bronze** altar and basin, point most clearly to man's approach to **God**.⁵¹⁹

At this point my commentary is not in chronological order, but

Haftarah T'rumah for 27:19: M'lakhim Alef (First Kings) 5:12-6:13 (see my commentary on Deuteronomy, to see link click [Af](#) - Parashah)

Building a **Tabernacle** dominates both the Parashah and its Haftarah. In both instances, the purpose is the same; that **YHVH** may dwell with **His people**. Most glaring is the contrast between **ADONAI's** way of receiving t'ruman (offering) from willing hearts and **Solomon's** way of conscripting hard labor (**First Kings 5:27**). In the end, **Solomon's** ways tore the Kingdom apart! **Ha'Shem's** words still ring true today: **If you will live according to My regulations, follow My rulings and observe all my mitzvot and live by them, then I will establish with you My promise . . . I will live . . . among the people of Isra'el, and I will not abandon My them (First Kings 6:12-13)**. What sustains **God's Presence** is the willingness to submit one's life and conduct to guidance under Torah (teaching), our blueprint for living - not **the Sanctuary** built as a reminder of **His Presence** among us!

B'rit Hadashah suggested readings for 27:19 Parashah T'rumah: Messianic Jews (Hebrews) 8:1-6, 9:23-24, 10:1

Cheerful giving **overflows into the thanks that people give to God (Second Corinthians 9:12)**. Not only are the needs of **God's people** being met, but the gift multiplies the praises **God** receives with the recipients of such gifts return glory to **God!** Rabbi Sha'ul urges the **Corinthians** to give to the poor in **Jerusalem**, but **not grudgingly or under compulsion (Second Corinthians 9:7a)**. He reminds the **Corinthians** that **their** mere pledge to the **Jerusalem** Fund stirred up the poor of **Macedonia** to give generously and **beyond their means (Second Corinthians 8:3-4)**. Indeed, the **Macedonians** gave more than money - **they gave themselves (Second Corinthians 8:5)**. Rabbi Sha'ul insists that the importance of generous giving is two-fold: first, **God** will supply the means (**Second Corinthians 9:6-10; Deuteronomy 8:7-10**), and secondly, the results of generosity redound to the glory of **God (Second Corinthians 9:11-15)**. The humble person who praises **ADONAI** will be lifted up.

And for **Chapter 38** verse 20:

Haftarah va'Yak'hel for 38:20: M'lakhim Alef (First Kings) 7:40-50 (A); 7:13-26 (S)

Hiram finished the work of building **YHVH's** dwelling in Jerusalem. The account followed the form of archival records, and in fact, ends with words mirroring **God's** creative activity on day six of the creation account: **Hiram completed all the work he had done (First**

Kings 7:40b). Hiram, like Bezalel, was commissioned to represent his people (Second Chronicles 2:13-14; Exodus 31:2-5). Interestingly, the Haftarah abruptly stops just before verse 51, when King David's **gold**, the spoils of war, is added to the Temple treasury. Seized **gold** was not to be used in the Temple. Rather, the Temple was to be constructed solely from pure **gold** of the offerings of King Solomon. Like the Tabernacle which preceded it, Solomon's **Temple** would house a holy **God**, who dwelt among only the purest offerings.

B'rit Hadashah suggested readings for 38:20 Parashah Vayak'hel: Second Corinthians 9:1-15; Messianic Jews (Hebrews) 9:1-14; Revelation 11:1-13

In effect, **the Tabernacle** introduced a system of barriers (**Hebrews 9:2-5**) which limited the access of worshippers to the Sh'khinah glory of **God**. Only **the priests** could enter **the Holy Place (Hebrews 9:6)**, and only **the high priest** could enter **the Most Holy Place** - and that was only once a year, subject to formal ritual procedures. **Blood** was always required to effect cleansing (**Leviticus 16:15-16**) in order to enter **the Most Holy Place (Hebrews 9:7)**. The author of **Hebrews** comments that this shows that **the way into the Tabernacle in heaven had not been disclosed as long as the first Tabernacle was still standing (Hebrews 9:8)**. The Levitical priesthood was unable to provide a way of access to **God** because **the Most Holy Place** was limited to **the high priest**. This temporary system was meant to prove that without a **Redeemer**, without **the Messiah**, without a **Savior**, there is no access to **YHVH**. **The Ruach Ha'Kodesh** was teaching the impossibility of access to **ADONAI** without a perfect **Priest**, a perfect **Sacrifice**, and a perfect **Covenant**. By allowing the people to go no farther than the outer court, **God** was illustrating that through the Levitical system there was no access to **Him**, only symbolic access through **the high priest**.

After **Messiah's** death on the cross, thus fulfilling the Levitical priestly sacrifices, **the curtain of the Temple was torn in two from top to bottom** (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ [Lw](#) - Accompanying Signs of Jesus' Death**). This was **God's** object lesson to the Aaronic priesthood that its ministry was over with, that **the Tabernacle** (and then **the Temple** later on) was to be closed, and that a new **Priest** had arisen after the order of Melchizedek. The way into **the Most Holy Place** of all, into heaven itself and the presence of **ADONAI**, had been opened at the cross. **God** made it impossible for **the high priest** in **Isra'el** to enter within the veil, all of which was enough to show **Isra'el** that the true **High Priest, Messiah**, had entered the heavenly **Most Holy Place**, and that the earthly one was a thing of the past.