

Architectural detail...a look at interior design...

1. Review Exodus 26 and gain a dimensional sense of the Tabernacle, its rooms, construction, and tent material. Study in particular Exodus 26: 31-35, and determine the purpose of the curtain. What's a cubit?

The Tabernacle was a tent that served as the place of worship for the nation of Israel on their way to the Promised Land. The tent was 10 x 30 cubits and its only entrance faced east. Supported by a gold plated acacia wood plank frame, the tent was comprised of an inner lining of intricately designed linen covered by 3 types of animal hair, skins, or hides. The curtain separated two rooms from each other: the **Most Holy Place** also known as **Holy of Holies** (10 x 10 cubits) from the **Holy Place** (10 x 20 cubits). Access to the **Most Holy Place** was permitted to the Old Testament high priest once a year on the Day of Atonement. The **Most Holy Place** housed the ARK OF THE COVENANT and its cover. The **Holy Place** held the Table of the Bread of the Presence, the Lampstand which burned year around, and the Alter of Incense on which no offering was sacrificed except once a year on the Day of Atonement. There are two types of cubits: a) standard Hebrew cubit which is 17.6 inches, and b) long or royal cubit which is 20.4 inches.

2. What is the role of the Levitical Priesthood with regard to the **Holy Place** and the **Most Holy Place**?

Only the Levitical Priesthood, when dressed properly, could enter the **Holy Place**. In the **Holy Place**, they maintained the Table of the Bread of the Presence, maintained the Lampstand, which provided 24 hour light to work by, by servicing it at morning and at sunset, and burning incense twice a day on the Alter of Incense. Only one priest, the high priest, could enter the **Most Holy Place**, and only once a year. The Day of Atonement was recognition of people's inability to make any atonement for their sins. Only the high priest could approach the MERCY SEAT, the golden lid of the ARK OF THE COVENANT, to offer the blood sacrifice of a goat. After the sacrifice, the high priest would confess all of the sins of the people on the head of live goat; this scapegoat represented the transfer of guilt from the people and with its release to the wild, represented the removal of sin from their midst. It was symbolic of God's pardon for sin.

3. There is little reference to Herod's temple in the Bible. Built originally by Solomon, Herod's was the third time the temple was built at the same site. The first temple was built by King Solomon (approx 959 BC), the second time it was rebuilt by Zerubbabel and the Jewish Exile (approx 516/515 BC) who returned from Babylonia, and the third by King Herod the Great (64 AD) who, as the Roman ruler of Judea, sought to showcase Jerusalem for commerce and placate his Jewish subjects. Much of what is known is based on historical documents authored by Roman historians. From those documents we know that the curtain was 60 cubits (over 90 feet) in height. What are the implications of this small detail in light of Matt 27:51 and Mark 15:38?

The tearing of the curtain most likely occurred while the priests were conducting the Jewish evening sacrifice. Three important implications emerge from this: 1) Only God could rip this huge thick 60 cubit curtain from *top* to bottom. 2) No more sacrifices or scapegoats had to be made; Jesus made a living sacrifice for all of man's sins. 3) Through Jesus, the torn curtain was symbolic of man having direct access to God; all of the priesthood could now enter the **Most Holy Place**. Jesus has replaced the Old Testament high priest, and Christians now makeup the royal priesthood (1 Pet 2: 9, Rev 1:5-6).

"Rules for Bible interpretation: 1) obtain a reliable text, 2) understand Scripture's logic, 3) compare parts of Scripture with each other, 4) maintain a humble, seeking attitude so that the Holy Spirit can instruct." John Wycliffe (1330-1384)

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