

Proper worship of God focuses on God as revealed in Scripture. The closeness to God which is allowed through the person and work of Jesus Christ does not diminish God's holiness, nor the awe which worshipers should have. Jesus is truly a friend, but remains a holy God who took on human flesh. Even when the way to God has been opened to the believer today, the tabernacle was and is a reminder of God's holiness. Three sets of physical components reveal something about their and our holy God.

**I. *The tent curtains and coverings (26:1–14) – a holy God concealed among them***

**A. *Observations on their physical structure***

“Curtains” (vvs 1–14, NIV) refer to tent material, of which there were two, plus two “coverings.” Numerous details remain uncertain.

1. The inner tent was made of ten “curtains” from “tightly twisted” linen, sown together in two sets of five curtains each, with the two sets joined by golden clasps. Figures of cherubim were worked into the curtains.
2. The next layer, another tent, was made of eleven “curtains” from woven goat hair, also sown together into two sets, which were joined by bronze clasps. This larger tent covered, hid and protected the inner tent.
3. The two coverings (v 14) consisted of one made of ram's hide and a final one made of the hide of some yet undetermined creature.

**B. *Observations on symbolic feature(s)***

1. The most beautiful and valuable of the curtains was the inner most, associated with the presence of God, and then proceeded with less fine and increasingly common or drab layers.
2. Cherubim, the fearsome guardians of Eden with both human and animal-like features, marked the walls. They are generally associated with the holiness of God.
3. Both inner tents were each joined together as one unit (vv 6, 11), enclosing the tabernacle and allowing only one entrance.
4. The extra tent and coverings protected the tabernacle and concealed all the glory that was within it.

The text curtains and coverings pointed to a holy God concealed among them. Similarly, Jesus tabernacled among men but in the form of a servant and in the likeness of men concealed the radiant glory of God's holiness. Believers, too, form a temple for God's dwelling though not revealing His radiance.

**II. *The tabernacle frame (26:15–30) – a holy God enthroned among them***

**A. *Observations on their physical structure***

There is insufficient information for us to know exactly how this was constructed. “Frames” (NIV) is better than the older “boards”, allowing both the gold and the cherubim to be seen through the ladder-like construction. “Projections” either extended into the 34 kg heavy bases or joined the frames together. The result was a structure approximately 5 by 15 meters.

**B. *Observations on symbolic feature(s)***

Israelites would have quickly recognized the structure as something very similar to that which was built for Egyptian royalty. (A similar intact structure was discovered in the tomb of Queen Hetep-heres from 2600 B.C.) Their holy God had come to live and rule among them, enthroned as king.

Similarly, Jesus came, not only to dwell among men, but to rule as king, according to the regular reminders in the NT of His Davidic descent. Jesus rules as Head of the Body, the church, a holy King, expecting His subjects to live holy lives.

**III. *The veil and the screen (26:31–35) – a holy God separated from them***

**A. *Observations on their physical structure***

The veil or “curtain” hung from four columns separating the Holy of Holies from the rest of the tabernacle. It was made of the same material as the rest of the inner tent. The “screen”, a linen “curtain” without mention of cherubim, was hung on five pillars at the entrance to the tabernacle.

**B. *Observations on symbolic feature(s)***

The “veil,” meaning “that which shuts off,” and “screen”, like something which screens off sight, shut people out and kept them seeing in. Though there was an entrance, the people had to rely upon priests to represent them before God.

The veil receives special attention in the New Testament. When Jesus died on the cross, the veil in the Temple was torn from top to bottom (Matthew 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45). By the blood of Jesus Christ believers now have access to the Most Holy Place where beforehand only the priest could go (Hebrews 9:1–8; 10:19–22). With symbolic language the veil is compared with Christ's flesh. Jesus Christ, whose flesh concealed the glory of God, died in the flesh, vividly displayed in the tearing of the veil, opening the way into the Most Holy Place. Therefore, says the writer, having confidence to enter the Holy Place, let us draw near to God.

The tabernacle reminds of a holy God whose character and demand for holiness has not changed. In light of our own sinfulness, approach to a holy God should always be marked by awe. But the believer in Christ may now approach God with confidence, having been cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ. The need which the tabernacle implied has been answered in Jesus Christ. Therefore, having received Jesus Christ Savior and Lord “draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith”.