



Exodus 26:31-35
Hebrews 10:19-22

The Veil in the Tabernacle

The Tabernacle of Israel was divided into two rooms by a thick veil of blue, purple and scarlet material and fine twisted linen. On it was woven the cherubim. In the Holy Place was located the Altar of Incense, the lamp stand, and the table for the bread of Presence. In the second room, the Most Holy Place or Holy of Holies were the Ark of the Covenant and the Mercy Seat, which was a solid gold lid placed on top of the Ark. It was also the place of propitiation where sins were covered by the sprinkled blood of the innocent sacrifice.

Behind the Veil in the Holy of Holies was the Ark of the Covenant, the symbol of the divine presence, the Shekinah-glory shining above the Mercy Seat, and between the figures of the cherubim.

"You shall make a veil of blue and purple and scarlet material and fine twisted linen; it shall be made with cherubim, the work of a skillful workman. You shall hang it on four pillars of acacia overlaid with gold, their hooks also being of gold, on four sockets of silver. You shall hang up the veil under the clasps, and shall bring in the ark of the testimony there within the veil; and the veil shall serve for you as a partition between the holy place and the holy of holies" (Exodus 26:31-33, NASB 1995).

It was not the object of the Veil to give access to God; for it was that which prevented it. It shut the door and said, "No further."

The Jewish historian Josephus said the veil was four inches thick, and that horses tied to each side could not pull the veil apart.

THE PURPOSE OF THE VEIL

The purpose of the veil was to hide and to bar everyone from entering the symbolic presence of God except the High Priest on the Day of Atonement. The only way the High Priest could stand alive on the other side of the veil was by sprinkling on the veil the blood of his substitute. The purpose of the veil was to keep people out of the Holy of Holies. It told sinful man that he could not approach God except by His prescribed means. It stood in the way to God's presence. It was a closed door. The only person who could enter the Holy of Holies and remain alive was the High Priest with the blood of the

Holy of Holies and remain alive was the High Priest with the blood of the substitute sacrifice, and then only on the Day of Atonement (Exodus 26:31-35; Leviticus 16). But he could never enter without the blood. It was a constant reminder that sin separates the sinner from God.

The figure of the cherubim woven on the Veil taught the same lesson; sinful man can come no further. He cannot approach the ineffably holy God without the blood of the substitutionary sacrifice.

Sure, the Veil was beautiful, but it was not the beautiful Veil that made entrance into God's presence possible. The only way a guilty sinner could pass to the other side of the Veil into the Holy of Holies and live was by way of the sprinkling of the blood of the sacrifice. It was by the blood of atonement that the way into the throne room of God was opened.

There is only one way into God's holy presence; it is the blood of sacrifice.

Moreover, Aaron's sacrifice foreshadowed the perfect sacrifice of our Great High Priest in the Heavenly Sanctuary. As long as the veil in the Temple was unrent the true sacrifice had not yet been provided. However, when the veil in the Temple was torn from top to bottom it meant the true sacrifice had been offered up to the LORD God and accepted by Him as the perfect offering for sin.

The blood on the Veil changed the throne of God from a throne of judgment to a throne of grace.

THE BODY OF JESUS WAS A VEIL

The writer of Hebrews tells us the Veil in the Tabernacle represented the humanity of Jesus. "Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh" (Hebrews 10:19-20). The humanity of Christ is the standard humanity in which alone God can enthrone Himself.

The body of Jesus was a "veil" that hid the inner glory of His deity. With the exception of Jesus Christ all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Only in Christ dwelt the glory of God. Only that which was sinless and perfect could enter the presence of the LORD God. "In Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form" (Colossians 2:9). "For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness of Deity to dwell in Him" (Colossians 1:19). The Veil was a silent symbol of the Incarnation (1 Tim. 3:16). Jesus was "holy, harmless, and separate from sinners." No one can measure up to the perfect life of Jesus.

The life of Christ was the only life acceptable to God, but the life of Jesus can never save us. The sinless, perfect, holy, righteous life of Jesus had to be rent on the cross and His blood spilt if man is to be saved. The Veil is the perfect symbol and the absolute affirmation that "God was in Christ." But let us be very clear that we draw near to God in the secret place of communion and fellowship with Him, not by the perfect life of Christ, but by His atoning sacrificial death.

The apostle Peter referred to the day when he saw that inner glory burst through the veil on the Mt. of Transfiguration. Peter wrote: ". . . we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such

an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, 'This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased' –and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain" (2 Peter 1:16-18).

Matthew tells us on that occasion Jesus took with Him Peter, James and John up to a high mountain by themselves. "He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him . . ." Moses and Elijah appeared with Him talking about His coming death. Matthew then writes, ". . . a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, 'This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!'" (17:2-3, 5). Here was the *Shekinah* glory in the face of Jesus! The veil of His flesh could contain Him no longer. The glory of His deity burst forth. (Cf. Philippians 2:5-11).

The unrent Veil shut man out from a holy God. It declared the separation from God because of sin. "But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption" (Hebrews 9:11-12).

THE TEARING OF THE VEIL

The veil is symbolic of the incarnate life of Jesus, and the tearing of the veil was His death on the cross. The death of Christ opened a new and living way into the presence of God. At the same time, the purpose of the physical Temple in Jerusalem ended. Since Jesus had offered up to God the Father the perfect sacrifice for sin, it was no longer needed.

"Since *we have* a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled *clean* from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water" (Hebrews 10:21-22).

Something happened in the Temple in the very moment that Christ died on the cross. Mark 15:37-38 tells us when He died, "Jesus uttered a loud cry, and breathed His last. And the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom" (cf. Matthew 27:51). Luke says, "The veil of the temple was torn in two" (Lk. 23:45). The act was complete the moment Jesus died. The Veil was rent, telling out in symbolic way that the entrance into God was now open, and that it required nothing short of the death of Christ. The purpose of His incarnation is revealed. He did not come in the flesh to set an example, but to offer His body as a vicarious, substitutionary sacrifice for sin. The Veil was rent at the very hour of the evening sacrifice. At the very hour the Passover lambs were being slain the Veil was torn from top to bottom, and at that moment Jesus cried, "It is finished" (Jn. 19:30). "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. 5:7). Only God could do that because the top of the veil was beyond man's reach. A way was opened into the presence of God, who no longer occupied the Holy of Holies in the Temple, but heaven, itself. There was nothing behind the veil in the Holy of Holies in Herod's Temple! The Ark had been destroyed when the Babylonians destroyed Solomon's Temple. The death of Christ takes us into the presence of the LORD Himself. The shadows and types of the Tabernacle and Temple were turned into substance.

It is as if God the Father did, as any Jewish father would have done at the deathbed of his only son. It was customary for Jewish mourners to take hold of their outer garment with both hands and tear it. The "hands" of God tore the thick veil of the Temple from top to bottom.

But it also reminds us of Isaiah 53:10, "But the Lord was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief; If He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, and the good

would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, and the good pleasure of the Lord will prosper in His hand" (Isaiah 53:10, NASB 1995). The wrath of God fell on Him. The mighty hand of God cut Him off. "'Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, And against the man, My Associate,' declares the Lord of hosts. Strike the Shepherd that the sheep may be scattered; And I will turn My hand against the little ones" (Zechariah 13:7; cf. Matt. 26:31).

Jesus Christ is our all-sufficient propitiation. It was His blood on the Mercy Seat that turned away the wrath of God, and opened the way into the presence of God for all men who will believe on Him. We now have free full entrance into the presence of God the Father through His Son. The only way is through the blood of atonement. The rent veil changed at once from a barrier to an open way into the Holy of Holies. The writer of Hebrews explains: "By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time onward until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet. For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified" (Hebrews 10:10-14).

The precious blood of the perfect humanity of Jesus was shed and it alone is our permit to enter God's presence. Moreover, the blood of Jesus preserves us alive when we enter into God's presence. "The blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). He alone is our all-sufficient propitiation (1 Jn. 2:2). The session in Heaven at the right hand of God proclaims a finished sacrifice. He offered one sacrifice for sins forever.

Jesus said to His disciple Thomas, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me" (John 14:6). A few moments later Jesus said to another disciple, Philip: Have I been so long with you, and *yet* you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how *can* you say, "Show us the Father"? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves" (John 14:9-11).

The apostle Peter concluded a sermon saying, "There is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Peter can preach these words because the precious blood of the Lamb of God has been shed, the substitutionary sacrifice for sin has been offered, and the Veil has been rent once and for all by Jesus Christ.

We can now enter into the holiest presence of God because Jesus received the wages of sin on our behalf. However, in God's wondrous grace we have been dressed with the pure robes of His perfect righteousness. We can now boldly enter into God's presence for all eternity.

With outstretched arms, He invites us to come and join Him in the Holy of Holies in the eternal heavenly Sanctuary. Will you join me there? In God's sight we too have risen and ascended into Heaven and are seated there before Him at His right hand in Christ (cf. Eph. 2:4-6).

If you need help in becoming a Christian here is [A Free Gift for You](#).

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