

Sermon outline and notes prepared by:

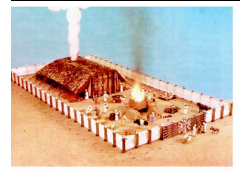
Dr. Stephen Felker, Pastor

[Swift Creek Baptist Church.com](http://SwiftCreekBaptistChurch.com), 18510 Branders Bridge Rd., Colonial Heights, VA 23834

12/16/07

## Exodus 26:31-35      “The Message of the Veil”

Intro. The Old Testament points ahead to truths more fully revealed in the New Testament. Of all the types in the Old Testament, none is more rich in its symbolism than the Tabernacle. From one end to the other, the Tabernacle is a picture of the Lord Jesus and of the redemption believers enjoy in Him. So this Sunday we are going to continue our tour of God’s house, the Tabernacle, which represented His heavenly dwelling.

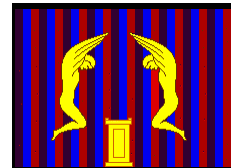


Last Sunday I shared with you about 4 of the furnishings of the tabernacle: the Ark of the Covenant, the Mercy Seat, the Golden Lampstand, and the Table of Showbread. This morning I would like to focus our attention on just one item, the veil inside the Tabernacle. It was similar to a curtain, but “veil” is a better term. It hung between the holy place of the tabernacle, and the holy of holies. The dimensions of the veiling curtain are not given. It must have been at least twelve feet high and fifteen feet wide to isolate the most holy place from the rest of the tabernacle. This object contains a great message for those who are willing to see it.



So let’s look more closely into this text and some other Scriptures to discover together the message of the veil. I am going to follow a similar outline to last Sunday’s message, so today’s message will reinforce some of the truths we talked about last week. But we will also see some additional truths in this message. Now let’s see first of all:

### I. WHAT THE VEIL TEACHES US ABOUT GOD

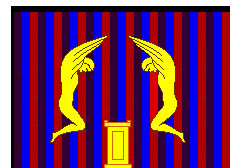


I have discovered 3 important truths about God from the veil of the tabernacle. For example, the veil shows us that:

A. He Rules from Heaven – I believe that two of the 3 colors of the veil are symbolic of this truth. Notice that God specifically commanded that blue & purple were to be used. Blue is the color of the sky and it reminds us of heaven. Purple is the color of royalty. [I plan to talk about the scarlet color later]. Furthermore, notice in the last of v.31 that cherubim were embroidered on the veil. That also pictures a heavenly scene. The light from the lampstand would illuminate the veil, revealing its colors and the cherubim. Now look at v.33, where God says, “You shall bring the ark of the Testimony in there, behind the veil.” As we saw last week, the Mercy Seat on the ark served as an earthly throne, a representation of His heavenly throne. Put all this together and the veil reminds us that God rules from heaven. Are you living in obedience to the Lord of the Universe? Or are you on the throne of your life? Well, the veil, and what’s behind the veil, reminds us that God is the One who is on the throne.



Since Jesus is the Son of God, this certainly points to Him as well. The blue color of the veil reminds us that He came from heaven. John 1:14 says, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us....” 1 Timothy 3:16 says, “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh....”



The purple color reminds us of the fact that He came as a king. Isa. 9:6-7 says, “For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice....” Likewise, in John 18:37 we read that Pilate asked Jesus, “Are You a king then?” Jesus answered, “You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world....” Once Jesus ascended back to heaven, He was exalted as Lord and seated at the right hand of God. He rules His Church from heaven. And some day, He is coming again as King of kings, and Lord of lords, and He shall reign over all the earth.

In v.32 we read about the four pillars that supported the veil. They illustrate these truths about our Lord’s incarnation. They were made of acacia wood, overlaid with gold. They illustrate the two natures of Jesus. Gold represents His royal deity & and the imperishable acacia wood represents His perfect humanity.

So what was on the veil reminds us of the fact that God rules from heaven. And in light of New Testament revelation, we can see how it points to Jesus Christ as well. He is Lord. He will be our judge some day. We need to repent of our sin, and live in obedience to Christ. Have you surrendered your life to the Lordship of Jesus Christ?

Furthermore, the veil shows us that:

B. God Is Holy – One primary purpose of the veil was the separate the Holy God from sinful man. This veil was hung between the holy place, where the priests ministered everyday, and the Holy of Holies, where the presence of God dwelt above the Mercy Seat. It served as a barrier between holy God and sinful man. It shut man out of the presence of God. It was one long, single curtain, not a divided curtain that could be opened easily. Even the High Priest could not enter God’s presence beyond the veil just any time. In Lev. 16:2 the LORD said to Moses, “Tell Aaron your brother not to come at just any time into the Holy Place inside the veil, before the mercy seat which is on the ark, lest he die; for I will appear in the cloud above the mercy seat.” To get past it, one would have to go around it because it was not designed to be gotten past under normal conditions; rather, it provided a barrier past which people could not normally go.



Again, in v.31 they were told to prepare the veil with “cherubim” on it. The cherubim are angelic creatures that serve as the guardians of the holiness of God. They are first seen in Gen. 3:24, when they were positioned at the entrance of Eden with flaming swords to prevent man from gaining access to the tree of life. The presence of the cherubim on the veil seems to serve the purpose of telling those who entered the Tabernacle that they could come no farther! They were a constant reminder that access to God was forbidden. God is holy and man is a sinner. Therefore, the cherubim were placed there to warn all who approached the veil that to continue beyond the veil was to invite judgment and death! They reminded all that a holy God dwelled just behind the veil.

If you can live in sin, and yet feel close to God, you do not have any concept of the holiness of God. You need to grasp the message of the veil.

The veil teaches us something else about God, and how we relate to Him, and that is:

C. We Must Relate to God by Faith – I mentioned last week that the ark was beautiful, made of gold. Yet it remained hidden behind the veil. And when it was to be transported, it was

to be covered up. Israel was not permitted to look upon the ark. Most Israelites, including most Levites, never, ever saw the ark. Moreover, the contents of the ark were never put on public display. Why would God have his people go to such lengths to manufacture the most holy symbol of his presence among them, and then not allow any of it to be seen by almost anyone ever again? A partial answer would be that he did not want them to treat any of these objects as an idol. The fuller answer comes in many places in Scripture but especially in Heb. 11:6, “without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.” In the Old Covenant just as in the New, God entered into a relationship with people on the basis of their faith, not their sight. He has always asked for people to trust in Him. He has always limited His exposure to people. By faith they believed that there was an ark behind that curtain in the tabernacle. None could touch it, only a few had ever seen it. They *believed* that it contained the Ten Commandment tablets, the manna, and Aaron’s rod, but few had ever seen them. This just reinforces the truth that God will not force you to believe; you must believe by faith. God is Spirit. He is invisible to the eye unless He chooses to manifest His presence in some way. But normally we must rely upon faith in the Word of God.

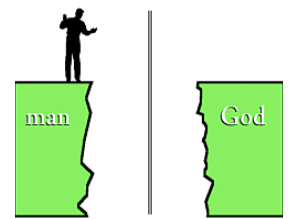
We must walk by faith today as well. The New Covenant believer knows by faith that Jesus lived among us, died on the cross for the remission of our sins, and was resurrected to glory thereafter. But no modern person saw any of it, and no pictures exist. All we have is the gospel accounts. Do you believe in God, even though you cannot see Him? Do you believe in Jesus, though you can’t see Him? The veil reinforces the truth that we must relate to God on the basis of faith, and not by sight.

Now let’s move on from what the veil teaches us about God, to:

## II. WHAT THE VEIL TEACHES US ABOUT MAN

There are two main truths about mankind that the veil teaches us:

A. The Veil Shows that Man Is Sinful - While the high priest could only enter the Holy of Holies one each year, the priests ministered in the holy place every day. As they did, they came within inches of the veil, but were never allowed to go past it. It was a constant reminder to them that even the priests were sinners and that they were separated from God. We read about the veil or screen for the doorway into the holy place in v.36. So between the ordinary worshipper in the outer court and the Lord was a double partition, for he had no access into the holy place. Furthermore, if you were outside the court of the tabernacle, there was a threefold barrier between you and the Lord! The whole ritual of Israel’s worship emphasized the distance between God and sinful man. It was constant reminder of man’s moral failure.



Heb. 10:20 says that the veil points to the flesh of Jesus. There are a lot of people who try to copy the life Jesus lived in an effort to secure their salvation. However, what men fail to realize is that the life of Christ just condemns us. You see, He lived a perfect life and never once sinned against His Father or the Law. When you compare yourself to Jesus, you realized how far you fall short of His glory (Rom. 3:23; John 1:14). Man is a sinner by nature.

Before you can come to God, you must first acknowledge that you are a sinner.

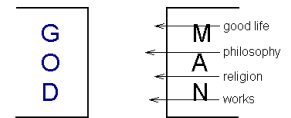
B. We Cannot Enter God's Presence with Our Sin - Between the sinner and God, there is a great wall standing. The message of the veil is, "Do not enter." That's because Isa. 59:2 says, "your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you..." And remember, God instructed that cherubim should be embroidered on the veil. They also served to warn man not to pass into God's presence. What grace that God would warn men not to come into His presence in their sinful condition! The cherubim were there to warn man, but they also served to protect men and to preserve life. So before man can enter into the presence of God, sin must first be dealt with.



In the final analysis, the veil serves to remind man that he is a sinner in need of Savior and that he will never be able to approach God on his own merits. So this leads to our last point:

### III. WHAT THE VEIL TEACHES US ABOUT SALVATION

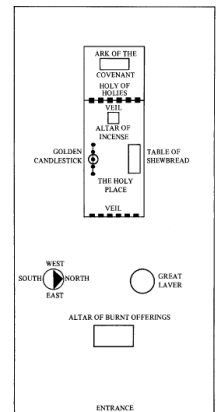
It is not by any imitation of Christ that we can pass beyond that veil. It is not by the observance of any Rules for Daily Living, not by leading a religious and devout life. Some people believe that you can come to God if you are sincere and belong to some church. Many believe there are many ways to God. In fact, according to a 2005 Newsweek/Beliefnet poll, 79% of Americans believe that someone of another faith can attain salvation and go to heaven.<sup>1</sup> Yet what does the Bible say?



A. There Is Only One Way to God – There was only one way into God's presence. There was only one entrance into the Tabernacle. There was only one entrance into the Holy Place. And there was only one entrance into the Holy of Holies. This idea of there being many ways to heaven is not supported in Scripture. That is just wishful thinking.

According to a fairly reliable anecdote, W. C. Fields, who had been a life-long agnostic was still concerned as his health deteriorated and death approached. He was concerned about not making it into heaven, if indeed there was one. Thomas Mitchell, a fellow actor discovered Fields reading a Bible on his death bed. Mitchell asked, "What are you doing?" Fields responded quickly, "I'm looking for a loophole." There are no loopholes, but the way to heaven is given in the Bible.<sup>2</sup>

So the veil teaches us that there is but one way into the presence of God? But what is the right way? Well, the veil also teaches us that:



B. An Acceptable Sacrifice Is the Way to God - While this veil served to keep men out, there was one day during the year when one man could enter. On the Day of Atonement, the high priest could enter into the Holy of Holies, but only with the blood of a sacrificial lamb. Lev. 16:15-16 says, "Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering, which is for the people, bring its blood inside the veil, do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat and before the mercy seat. So he shall make atonement...." On that day, the high priest was allowed to go around the side of the veil and minister in the Holy of Holies, sprinkling the blood of the sacrifice on the altar and atoning for the sins of the people. It was the only time any one was allowed behind the veil. This blood told



<sup>1</sup> *Readers' Digest*, Dec. '05, p.95.

<sup>2</sup> *Preaching*, May-June '05, p.73.

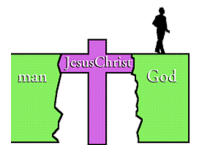
of substitution, and acknowledged that he who entered did so as a sinner, but a substitute had died, and suffered the wages of sin.

I believe this truth was reinforced by the scarlet color that was included in the veil. This is the color of blood.

I just want to remind you that the blood of an acceptable sacrifice is the only way anyone has access into the presence of God. Heb. 9:22 says, “without shedding of blood there is no remission.”

Yet the tabernacle did not seem to offer the way to God in a final and complete sense. After all, only the High Priest could enter, and the ritual of sacrifice had to be repeated every year. So Hebrews 9:8-9 says that the Holy Spirit was indicating “that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing. It was symbolic for the present time....” Also keep in mind that the tabernacle was just a copy of the true tabernacle or temple in heaven.

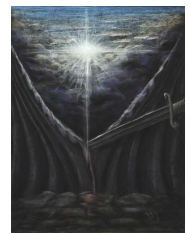
C. Jesus Is the One, Acceptable Sacrifice – The sacrifice by which Aaron went in once a year foreshadowed the perfect Sacrifice in Jesus Christ. Hebrews 9:11-12 says, “But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.” Rev. 1:5 says that Christ “loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood.” The Sacrifice of Christ is the true ground of approach to God.



One reason why Christ was an acceptable sacrifice is because he fulfilled the requirement that the sacrifice be without blemish. 1 Pet. 1:18-19 says, “knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”

This truth was visualized in the base material of the veil. According to v.31, it was made of “fine woven linen.” This was pure, white linen. This speaks of the purity of the Lord Jesus. It reminds us that He was sinless. In fact, Peter testified in 1 Pet. 2:22 that Jesus Christ “committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth.” Likewise, Paul said in 2 Cor. 5:21 that Christ “knew no sin.” Probably the colors were used so freely that little of the white linen would be visible. Nevertheless, white linen was the first material used for the veil.

The fact that Jesus was the only acceptable sacrifice that grants access to God was powerfully illustrated when Jesus died. In Mark 15:38 we read that just as soon as Jesus died, “the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom” (also Matthew 27:51; Luke 23:45). As soon as the veil was rent it was changed from a barrier to a gateway. That significant event happened only at the exact time that Jesus died as a sacrifice for our sin. Clearly, He is the only way to God. Jesus said in John 14:6, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” Furthermore, notice that it was God and not man that parted the veil. Man had nothing to do with it, it was the work of God alone! When Jesus died on the cross, the veil in the Temple was 60 feet high and 30 feet wide. It was said to have been 4 fingers’ breadth thick. It was so heavy that Josephus says that 300 priests were required to move it. He also says that 2 teams of oxen would not have been able to rend the veil. What man could never do, God did by His power!



The same is true with the salvation we enjoy! We had nothing to do with it at all. It originated with God in Heaven before the world was formed (Rev. 13:8; 1 Pet. 1:20). It was carried out at Calvary without our help. Isa. 53:6 says, “And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” And v.10 of that prophecy says, “Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin....” Salvation was and is the work of a sovereign God!

The sacrifices of the Old Testament merely pointed to the ultimate & true sacrifice that Jesus Christ made on the cross of Calvary. Because of what Jesus did, and by faith in Him, we now have access into the Presence of God. We now have a sure hope of entering heaven. Heb. 10:19-20 says, “Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh.” Those who try to get to God without the blood of Jesus will find themselves in Hell, because there is no other method God will accept. To enter into His presence, you must be born again (John 3:3, 7). And, the only way to be born again is through the blood of the Lamb. Thank God, Jesus made the way for us to enter into the presence of God by going to the cross for our sins!

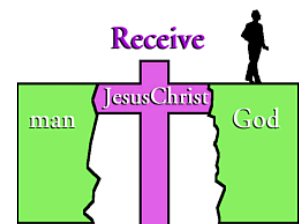
The fact that the sacrifice of Christ opens the way to heaven is also brought out by the fact that as soon as Christ died & the veil was torn, Matthew reports that “the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised” (27:52). This hope we have of eternal life in heaven is not a myth or fairy tale, but have been verified. Hebrews 6:19 says, “This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil.”

The message of the rent veil is crystal clear, it tells us all that the way to God is now open. I can imagine the priests in the temple sewing the parted veil back together and continuing on in their vain religion, not realizing that now, the way to God was opened to all. Not just one day per year, but all the time! Because the way has been opened into the presence of God, “whosoever will” can come into His presence and have access to God Himself (Rev. 22:17; John 3:16)! I praise the Lord that the way to God has been forever opened for you and me!

When Jesus came in the flesh and gave His life for you and me, He forever tore down all the barriers that stood between us and free access to the Father. Now, in Jesus, we can come before OUR Father in prayer at anytime! What a glorious privilege is ours!

D. You May Enter God’s Presence Only if You Accept His Blood Covenant – Just because Jesus died for the whole world does not mean that everyone is automatically saved. You must enter into a covenant relationship with God by faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ. You must receive Him as your Savior.

We see an illustration of this in marriage. In ancient Judaism a virgin bride was covered with a veil. It was only after the covenant of marriage was entered into that the bride’s veil was lifted. Then, and only then, was the groom invited into the holy consummation of marriage.



Conclusion: If you were to die today, and God meets you at the gate of heaven and asks, “Why should I let you into heaven,” what would you say? Would you say, “I’ve tried to live a good life. I’ve tried to keep the 10 Commandments. I’m a member of Swift Creek Baptist Church and Steve Felker is my pastor.” Do you think that is going to get you into heaven, and into the holy presence of God? No way. You won’t get past the gate. There is only one way into heaven, and

that's by faith in Jesus Christ. Trust in Him today! Put Jesus on the throne of your life and be saved!

Sources: Alan Carr, [www.sermonnotebook.org](http://www.sermonnotebook.org); Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Bible Commentary* (accessed from *Online Bible*), completed by 1832; J. Vernon McGee, *Thru The Bible*, Vol. 1 (Pasadena, CA: Thru The Bible Radio, 1981); Larry Pierce, *Online Bible* [CD-ROM] (Ontario: Timnathserah Inc., 1996); Arthur W. Pink, *Gleanings in Exodus* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1972); Douglas K. Stuart, *New American Commentary: Exodus* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2006). Other sources listed in the footnotes. Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from *The New King James Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1982).