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This is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and the One You have sent - Jesus Christ. John 17:3 (HCSB)

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Linen

The Fabric of the Tabernacle in the Wilderness

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Linen is mentioned many times in both the Old and the New Testaments. It is the material of the Tabernacle. It is the material of the High Priest garments. Messiah was wrapped in linen for His burial. Linen is mentioned in the Book of Revelations. Is there a significance to this material and can we know what it is?



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In the New Testament, when ever a Christian is referred to as the temple of God, the Greek word *naos* is used. According to Thayer's Revised Greek English Lexicon, this word "temple," Strong's Greek Dictionary number 3485, is used of the sacred edifice (or sanctuary) itself, consisting of the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. God gave the instructions for the first Holy Place and Holy of Holies in the Old Testament book of Exodus. This is the first physical Tabernacle or Holy Place and it was to be made of linen. The question then becomes: "Why linen?"

When studying the subject of linen, many analogies to the lives of those within the Body of Christ become apparent. Not only to the individuals, but to the Body as a whole. The growing, processing and weaving, as well as the natural properties of linen are analogous to the life of the individual within the Body of Christ.

In the Old Testament the word "linen" appears 74 times, having been translated from eight different Hebrew words. It is also in the New Testament 16 times as translated from five different Greek words. The subject of linen is fascinating, but why is linen so prominent in the Bible? Why not wool? After all, the Israelites were shepherds. Didn't they have plenty of wool from both the sheep and the goats? The production of linen requires water, so where did the linen come from? Wool shows up just 14 times in the Bible, but linen a total of 90 times. Also, the word flax, the plant that linen comes from, appears ten times. With all of their flocks, why isn't wool the main fabric mentioned in the Bible? What is there about this fiber,

linen, that it would have such an important role in God's word?

It turns out that linen played a very important economic role during biblical times. But, is that all there is to the story? When looking at flax and linen, one begins to discover interesting characteristics that have implications relating to the Church, and to individual Christians. It really is a fascinating story.

This study will look at linen, especially as it relates to the Tabernacle in the Wilderness. It will show some analogies to God's called out ones, as well as considering the growing, harvesting, and processing of flax into linen. The characteristics of the final product, linen, will be compared to the life of a Christian.

Flax

The discussion of linen must begin with flax, because that is the plant from which linen is processed. Linen is a bast (phloem) fiber found in the stem of the flax plant. They are the vascular cells of the plant, carrying the nutrients up and down the stem of the plant, from the roots to the leaves and back down again.

Structure of Flax

There are two types of flax; one is raised for its seeds from which linseed oil is produced and the other is raised for its fiber. This paper will focus on the fiber plant. When densely planted for fiber, the plants average 3-4 feet tall, and will be about 1/8 of an inch in diameter. The branches are concentrated at the top because of the cultivation practices and the varieties used.

A cross section of the flax stalk reveals, six roughly concentric rings. (See Figure 1, page 2).

- 1) The outermost ring consists of a layer of thick walled cells, covered with the cuticle, a delicate waxy layer over the

outer surface of the plant. There are openings in the cuticle called stomata, which are microscopic opening used by the plant for gaseous exchange or respiration. These are large enough to permit the entry of bacteria during the retting process. This ring is known as the epidermis or simply the outer layer.

2) Inside the epidermis is a region of one or two layers of circular cells known as the cortex, or bark. These cells contain pectin, which is a somewhat gummy substance that adheres to the fiber bundles.

3) Proceeding inward, the next layer contains the bundles of bast fibers, which are the linen fibers that will be extracted from the stake. There are approximately 1,000 flax fibers per stem, arranged in up to 40 bundles. Each fiber is about 1/2500 of an inch, which means it takes 2500 fibers to make one inch. That is a little bit bigger than a quarter. As small as the individual fibers are, they are hollow. (See Figure 2, page 2).

4) The fiber bundles are separated from the woody cells by a ring of thin-walled cells called the cambium.

5) Inside the cambium is a ring of short, thick woody cells that give the stalk its strength.

6) Thin-walled cells called pith surround the hollow center of the stalk.

This complex structure means, that to harvest the usable fibers from the raw flax, requires the removal of a considerable amount of waste material. It is time consuming, it is difficult and it requires great skill.

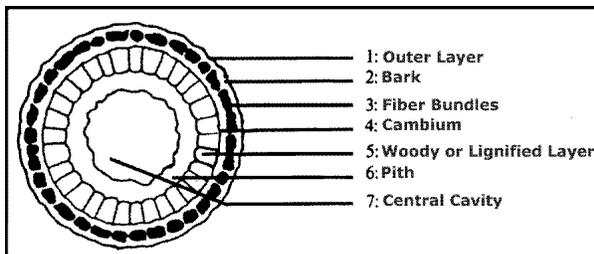


Figure 1

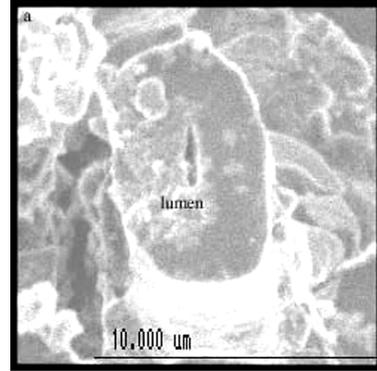


Figure 2

Cultivation of Flax

The plants are grown very close together, in well-drained sandy loam and in temperate climates. The plant produces the best fibers in a cool, moist growing season. Most flax matures in 90 to 120 days. A late summer harvesting will produce the best linen.

Harvesting Flax

There are three degrees of ripening the flax grown for linen: green, yellow and brown. The yellow produces the long, supple fibers that are ideal for processing. The brown flax is brittle and the green is not very strong. Flax needs to be harvested at just the right time in order to produce the best fiber.

Most harvesting of similar plants would be a cutting process, but with flax, they very carefully pull the plants up with the roots. The fibers grow down into the roots and the longer fibers are better for spinning.

This typifies God pulling Christians out of this world. He doesn't just cut them off at ground level leaving part of who they are still in the world. He pulls the whole person out. He will then process them into the final product.

After being pulled out of the ground, the stems are tied into bundles and stacked in the field to dry. It is interesting that

even as the processing begins, the flax, like Christians, will be put into groups.

Once properly dried, the stems are combed to remove the seeds, and then they will be retted or allowed to rot. The retting process loosens and removes the gums and resins holding the bundles of fibers together.

During the retting process the stalks are left to lie in the field between two and eight weeks depending upon the weather. Another common way of retting was to soak the stems in nearby rivers or streams, which produces a higher quality and lighter colored fiber. Timing is everything. If you leave the process go on too long or not long enough, you will have inferior fibers.

One of the interesting things about the process of making fine linen from flax is that it is as much an art as a science. Eloah is the perfect artist and has perfect timing as He works with Christians to produce the best fiber for His Tabernacle or Holy Place.

Processing the Fiber

After the retting is finished, the flax is rinsed and the water squeezed out. The stems are then allowed to dry before taking the next step, scutching. This involved beating the stems with a stick or tool, crushing the inner woody core of the stem, leaving the desired bundles of long fibers intact. The process produces about 60% linen fibers (the longer fibers) and 40% tow fibers (the shorter fibers).

After scutching, the fibers are scrapped with an iron knife and then the fibers are drawn through a heckling comb to remove remnants of the fibrous core and outer bark, as well as aligning the bundles of fibers for spinning. The processed bundles of fibers are now ready for the spinners.

Does this process, in anyway, reflect on a Christian's life as God, through His Son, works with them? Weren't they just living their lives, minding their own business, when they were pulled up out of this world and everything was turned upside down? Maybe they even felt like they have been left in a field to rot. Maybe their trials felt like the juices were being squeezed out of them and they were being left to dry. What about scutching? Haven't Christians been through trials that have them feeling like they were being crushed, as God removes this world from them? Or, how about the less violent process of being dragged through a comb to remove the last little bits of this world from their character?

Spinning

The earliest techniques for spinning were very simple and required no other equipment than the human body. The flax fibers were spread on the ground. Then the spinner took one or two fibers in her hand, pulling and twisting them between hand and thigh, progressively incorporating other fibers, twisting all the while and as the thread lengthened it was wrapped around their fingers until the ball of yarn became too large. Then, they started all over again. Later in history spindles were added and then the spinning whorl. Spinning wheels weren't invented until quite late in history.

Wet spinning of the fibers produces the finest yarn. Dry spinning produces an inferior product. The yarn, which must contain between forty and fifty fibers at all points, is classified by fineness, strength and wear.

History of Linen

At this point a little history of linen might be helpful. Linen has been used for thousands of years. The claim is that flax or linen is one of the oldest textile fibers,

and it is also claimed that linen may have been used for weaving in the Nile Valley as early as 4000 BC. We do know from archeology that the bodies of early Egyptian kings and nobles were wrapped in yards of delicate linen. Pieces of linen cloth have been found in Egyptian tombs dating as far back as 2500 BC. Some of it contained 540 threads to the inch, is 60 inches wide and 6 or more yards long. Today, we cannot produce linen of this quality, even with our finest machinery. Today's linen is much coarser, with only about 280 threads per inch.

Evidence supports the theory that, until the 18th century, linen was the most important textile in the world. Egyptian slaves were responsible for the spinning and weaving of linen, which was a big part of their economy. This is supported by the book of Exodus, where the Israelites had linen fibers which were spun by the women (Ex 35:25) and woven by the men for the Tabernacle and the priestly garments (Ex 36:6).

When they opened the tomb of King Tut (Tutankamen), the linen curtains were found intact. All of the other fabrics had crumbled into dust. Why? Because bacteria will not attack linen.

When the tomb of the Pharaoh of Rameses II was opened in 1881, the linen wrappings were perfectly preserved.

Sewing needles have been discovered dating from around 10,000 BC with eyes so small that only carefully processed fibers could go through them.

Linen was a versatile fabric that could be made coarse and thick, or very fine and delicate. The Egyptians had a reputation for their fine linen, which was nearly transparent. (*Illustrated Encyclopedia of Bible Facts* by J.I. Parker, Merrill C. Tenny and William White, Jr. pg. 479). Contrary to

those cultures around them the Egyptian men stayed home and did the weaving, while the women went to the market place.

The wealthy people both men and women wore long see-through robes that were pleated. Noblemen would sometimes wear a long robe over his kilt, while the women wore long pleated dresses with a shawl. www.kingtutshop.com/freeinfo/Ancient-Egyptian-Clothes

Qualities of Linen

Linen is a subtle mixture of firmness and suppleness giving it an unadorned, unembellished rather harsh softness that feels wonderful whether smoothed or crumpled.

Linen is available in different qualities varying from almost silk-like to sack linen. (*Wikipedia Encyclopedia*)

A characteristic often associated with linen yarn is the presence of "slubs", or small knots that occur randomly along its length. These are actually defects associated with poor quality. The finest linen has a very consistent diameter with no slubs. (*Wikipedia Encyclopedia*)

The fibers are somewhat polygonal in shape and they can vary greatly in size. Their length is variable; some fibers can be up to 40 inches long, but 10-15 inches are more common. Individual fibers are not all the same thickness, so the fineness also varies. The width of the fibers is also inconsistent along their length. How the fibers are processed has an effect on their fineness. Only our Father through Messiah knows just how to process each individual to make the finest of fibers for His use.

Processed flax fibers have a high natural luster with an attractive sheen; in other words, they reflect light.

Flax is one of the stronger, as well as heavier, plant fibers in nature. A very interesting thing about linen, is that it is about 20% stronger **when it is wet**. Isn't a Christian strongest when wet with the Holy Spirit from God?

Because linen absorbs and releases moisture quickly and is a good conductor of heat it has a cooling effect on the wearer. It actually feels cool to the touch. Bedding is cooler to sleep on for this reason.

Flax is hollow causing it to absorb moisture readily. Because of this, it has very good wicking properties; in other words, it soaks up liquids.

Linen makes great washcloths and dishtowels, which will last up to 20 years, and they don't leave lint on the dishes.

The wicking properties of linen make it an ideal material for oil lamp wicks.

Mat 5:15-16 Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16) Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. (RSV)

It will absorb sound because it is hollow and, for this reason, it makes a good wall covering.

Linen does not have the electrostatic properties of other fibers, so it does not attract lint, hair or **other foreign particles**, as many textiles do. Also its smooth surface repels soil. Bacteria leave it alone, so it is a very hygienic material

Linen is soft, and the more it is washed the softer it becomes without weakening it.

After processing, linen won't shrink because it becomes stable. In other words, it will not shrink after processing.

The fabric becomes softer, whiter and more luminous with each washing, **BUT, linen becomes brittle when dried out completely**. Linen can recover its natural flexibility by absorbing moisture. Linen quality is still judged by its whiteness.

Rev 6:11 And **white** robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they *were*, should be fulfilled. (All scriptural references are from the KJV unless otherwise noted).

Rev 7:9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with **white** robes, and palms in their hands;

Some complain how wrinkled linen becomes and how hard it is to iron. The answer to the problem is that the linen must be damp. In other words, it must have moisture in it and then you must use a very hot iron. Neither a heavy iron nor a steam iron, but a **very hot iron**. Only with the moisture of the Holy Spirit can we stand up to a very hot trial and have our wrinkles removed.

New Testament Temple

The word "temple" appears 107 times in the New Testament. There are four Greek words used in the New Testament for temple. SGD #2411 is used 67 times and it is always used of the whole temple compound except, for once where it is used of the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus.

Thayer

SGD #2411 hieron (*hee-er-on'*)
KJV - temple 67; 67

1) a sacred place, temple

1a) used of the temple of Artemis at Ephesus

1b) used of the temple at Jerusalem

The temple of Jerusalem consisted of the whole of the sacred enclosure, embracing the entire aggregate of buildings, balconies, porticos, courts, belonging to the temple; the latter designates the sacred edifice properly so called, consisting of two parts, the "sanctuary" or "Holy Place", and the "Holy of Holies" or "the most holy place". Also there were the courts where Jesus or the apostles taught or encountered adversaries, and the like, "in the temple".

The other main word for "temple" in the New Testament is SGD #3485. This is the sanctuary consisting of the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies.

Thayer

SGD #3485 naos (*nah-os'*)

KJV - temple 45, a shrine 1; 46

1) used of the temple at Jerusalem, but only of the sacred edifice (or sanctuary) itself, consisting of the Holy place and the Holy of Holies

2) any heathen temple or shrine

3) metaph. the spiritual temple consisting of the saints of all ages joined together by and in Christ

There are a couple of other words for "temple," but they're not pertinent to this study. The interesting thing about these two words is that every time a Christian is referred to as "the temple" the Greek word naos *nah-os'* SGD #3485 is used. In other words, if they have God's Spirit abiding in them, they are the Holy Place.

1Cor 3:16-17 16 Know ye not that ye are the **temple** (SGD #3485) of God, and *that* the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? 17) If any man defile the **temple** (SGD #3485) of God, him shall God destroy; for the **temple** (SGD #3485) of God is holy, which *temple* ye are.

1Cor 6:19 What? know ye not that your body is the **temple** (SGD #3485) of the Holy Ghost *which is* in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

2Cor 6:16 And what agreement hath the **temple** (SGD #3485) of God with idols? for ye are the **temple** (SGD #3485) of the living God; as (the) God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Eph 2:20-22 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*; 21) In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy **temple** (SGD #3485) in the Lord: 22) In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

Note verse 22 of Eph. 2. Was not the Tabernacle in the Wilderness where God was to meet with and dwell with the children of Israel?

Ex 29:42-45 *This shall be* a continual burnt offering throughout your generations *at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD: where I will **meet** you, to speak there unto thee. 43) And there I will **meet** with the children of Israel, and *the tabernacle* shall be sanctified by my glory. 44) And I will sanctify the tabernacle (tent SHD #168) of the congregation, and the altar: I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister to me in the priest's office. 45) And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God.

Also, when Jesus talked about destroying and rebuilding the Temple, he used the Greek word SGD #3485 (naos) or Holy Place.

John 2:19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this **temple** (naos), and in three days I will raise it up. 20) Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this **temple** (Naos) in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? 21) But he spake of the **temple** (naos) of his body.

As he was being crucified, the Jews threw it back at him. They also used the Greek word for Holy Place. They didn't even realize what they had just said.

Mt. 27:40 And saying, Thou that destroyest the **temple** (naos), and buildest *it* in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.

The Temple Holy Place was based on the Holy Place or Tabernacle in the Wilderness. So now let's go back to the Old Testament.

Tabernacle in the Wilderness

In Ex 26:1-30, there are a couple of words used for "tabernacle;" the first is SHD #168 which really means *tent*.

Brown-Driver-Briggs

SHD #168 `ohel (*o'-hel*)

from 0166; TWOT - 32a; n m

KJV - tabernacle(s) 198, tent(s) 141, dwelling 2, place(s) 2, covering 1, home 1; 345

1) tent

1a) nomad's tent, and thus symbolic of wilderness life, transience

1b) dwelling, home, habitation

1c) the sacred tent of Jehovah (the tabernacle)

The second is SHD #4908 which means *dwelling place*.

Brown-Driver-Briggs

4908 mishkan (*mish-kawn'*)

KJV - tabernacle 119, dwelling 9, habitation 5, dwellingplaces 3, place 1, dwelleth 1, tents 1; 139

1) dwelling place, tabernacle

1a) dwelling-place

1b) dwellings

Exodus 26:1-30, 35:10-19 and 36:8-13 shows that the Tabernacle (SHD #4908) consists of the ten curtains of fine twined linen.

Ex 26:1-30 Moreover thou shalt make the **tabernacle** (SHD #4908) *with* ten curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet: *with* cherubims of cunning work shalt thou make them. 2) The length of one curtain *shall be* eight and twenty cubits, and the breadth of one curtain four cubits:

and every one of the curtains shall have one measure. 3) The five curtains shall be coupled together one to another; *and* other five curtains shall be coupled one to another. 4) And thou shalt make loops of blue upon the edge of the one curtain from the selvedge in the coupling; and likewise shalt thou make in the uttermost edge of *another* curtain, in the coupling of the second. 5) Fifty loops shalt thou make in the one curtain, and fifty loops shalt thou make in the edge of the curtain that *is* in the coupling of the second; that the loops may take hold one of another. 6) And thou shalt make fifty taches of gold, and couple the curtains together with the taches: and it shall be one **tabernacle** (SHD #4908)

Verses 5 and 6 clearly show that it is one Tabernacle or *Mishkan* made of ten curtains. Biblically the number ten is "the perfection of divine order" and the number five "is the number of grace" (*Numbers in Scripture* by E.W. Bullinger). In the same book, the number four "is the number of creation" and seven represents "spiritual perfection." Each curtain is four cubits wide by twenty-eight cubits long (4x7). Do we see a pattern in the construction of the Tabernacle?

Ex 26:7-11 And thou shalt make curtains of goats' *hair* to **be a covering** (SHD #168) upon the **tabernacle**: (SHD #4908) eleven curtains shalt thou make. 8) The length of one curtain *shall be* thirty cubits, and the breadth of one curtain four cubits: and the eleven curtains *shall be* all of one measure. 9) And thou shalt couple five curtains by themselves, and six curtains by themselves, and shalt double the sixth curtain in the forefront of the **tabernacle** (SHD #168). 10) And thou shalt make fifty loops on the edge of the one curtain *that is* outmost in the coupling, and fifty loops in the edge of the curtain which coupleth the second. 11) And thou shalt make fifty taches of brass, and put the taches into the loops, and couple the tent together, that it may be one.

Verse 7 clearly shows that the covering over the Tabernacle is called the tent.

Exodus 26:12-13 clearly shows that the curtains of the tent were two cubits longer than the curtains of the Tabernacle, and they hung one cubit lower on each side of the Tabernacle.

Ex. 26:12-13 And the remnant that remaineth of the curtains of the **tent** (SHD 0168), the half curtain that remaineth, shall hang over the backside of the **tabernacle** (SHD 4908). 13 And a cubit on the one side, and a cubit on the other side of that which remaineth in the length of the curtains of the **tent**, (SHD 0168) it shall hang over the sides of the **tabernacle** (SHD 4908) on this side and on that side, to cover it.

The Tabernacle (SHD #4908) is composed of the ten curtains of fine twined linen in blue and purple and scarlet, and the tent (SHD #168) covers it. Exodus 35:10 ff. verifies this.

Ex 35:10-19 And every wise hearted among you shall come, and make all that the LORD hath commanded; 11) The **tabernacle** (SHD #4908), **his tent** (SHD #168), and **his** covering, his taches, and **his** boards, **his** bars, **his** pillars, and **his** sockets, 12) The ark, and the staves thereof, *with* the mercy seat, and the vail of the covering, 13) The table, and his staves, and all his vessels, and the shewbread, 14) The candlestick also for the light, and his furniture, and his lamps, with the oil for the light, 15) And the incense altar, and his staves, and the anointing oil, and the sweet incense, and the hanging for the door at the entering in of **the tabernacle** (SHD #4908, 16) The altar of burnt offering, with his brasen grate, his staves, and all his vessels, the laver and his foot, 17) The hangings of the court, his pillars, and their sockets, and the hanging for the door of the court, 18) The pins of the **tabernacle** (SHD #4908), and the pins of the court, and their cords, 19) The cloths of service, to do service in the holy *place*, the holy garments for Aaron

the priest, and the garments of his sons, to minister in the priest's office.

And again in Ex 36:8-13

Ex 36:8-13 And every wise hearted man among them that wrought the work of the **tabernacle** (SHD #4908), made ten curtains *of* fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet: *with* cherubims of cunning work made he them. 9) The length of one curtain was twenty and eight cubits, and the breadth of one curtain four cubits: the curtains *were* all of one size. 10) And he coupled the five curtains one unto another: and *the other* five curtains he coupled one unto another. 11) And he made loops of blue on the edge of one curtain from the selvedge in the coupling: likewise he made in the uttermost side of *another* curtain, in the coupling of the second. 12) Fifty loops made he in one curtain, and fifty loops made he in the edge of the curtain *which was* in the coupling of the second: the loops held one *curtain* to another. 13) And he made fifty taches of gold, and coupled the curtains one unto another with the taches: so it became one **tabernacle** (SHD #4908),

In these verses the Tabernacle is always the ten curtains of fine twined linen, blue, purple and scarlet, not the whole enclosure.

Why the Different Colors?

If the white linen is for righteousness as seen in Revelations 19:8,

Rev 19:8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and **white**: for the fine **linen is the righteousness** of saints.

and blue is for the Law from Numbers 15:38-39;

Num 15:38-39 Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of **blue**: 39) And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may

look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the LORD, and do them; and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring.

What are represented by the scarlet and the purple? The scarlet is a type of the red blood of Christ that was shed for mans redemption (Rev 1:5-6, 5:9).

Rev 1:5-6 And from Jesus Christ, *who* is the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and **washed us from our sins in his own blood**, 6) And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Rom 5:9 Much more then, being now justified by his **blood**, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

But, Christians are also justified by keeping the Law.

Rom 2:13 For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.

The color purple results from combining blue (for the Law) and red (for Christ's blood). Could it be that purple is the color of grace?

The Tabernacle, a type of the Church, (Eph 2:21) was fully covered by the goat hair tent, even extending beyond it (Ex 26:12-13), just as Christians are covered by grace. It appears that this goat hair tent is a type of the covering grace of God. Although the Bible is silent on the subject, could the goat hair tent have been purple?

Purple is also the color of royalty, and Christians are the Royal Priesthood,

1Pet 2:9 But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called

you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

as well as kings and priests as seen in Revelations 1:6, 5:10.

Rev 1:6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Rev 5:10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

Cherubims

The white linen and the three colors have been explained, but why the cherubims? It does not say how many, it is just plural. Could it be that God is weaving the fabric of His family with the heavenly and the physical? When Christians are given eternal life, will they not be as the angels (Luke 20:35-36)?

Where Did the Linen Come From?

The Israelites had the linen for making the Tabernacle. Where did it come from?

If linen requires a temperate moist climate for growing, then the desert can be ruled out as being the source of the flax. They had to have brought the fibers with them because they did not have time to grow and process the flax. And, if they began to do the spinning (Ex 35:25), it means the fibers had already been prepared. Just like with Christians, when God calls individuals and gives them to Christ, they are the raw material. Pulled up out of Egypt no less. He then must begin the process of removing the extraneous material, so that the woman (the Church) can spin the fine fibers. Once the fibers have been spun into yarn, they will be woven into the fabric of the Tabernacle.

Remember, as mentioned earlier:

A characteristic often associated with linen yarn is the presence of "slubs", or small knots that occur randomly along its length. These are actually defects associated with poor quality. The finest linen has a very consistent diameter with no slubs.

Christians will have the defects of sin removed, or they will not be in the Tabernacle.

Who made the curtains? It turns out that the women did the spinning and the men did the weaving. Remember, in Egypt it was the men who stayed home and did the weaving; and seeing as the slaves were the ones used for the weaving, we see that the Israelite men already knew how to weave.

Eloah selects individuals and places them under His Son, Christ, who works with them at his Father's direction. Christ is weaving them into the fabric of the Father's family. That's his job. God laid out the plan and Christ does the work.

John 6:44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

Exodus 35:25 shows that the women did the spinning:

Ex 35:25 And all the women that were wise hearted did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun, both of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine linen.

and the men did the weaving and embroidering.

Ex 36:8 And every wise hearted man among them that wrought the work of the tabernacle made ten curtains of fine twined **linen**, and blue, and purple, and scarlet: *with* cherubims of cunning work made he them.

Ex 38:23 And *with* him was Aholiab, son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, an engraver, and a cunning workman, and an **embroiderer** in blue, and in purple, and in scarlet, and fine linen.

Even to the making of the Tabernacle, the Israelite's had been trained in Egypt for their jobs. Just as many Christians have been trained, by their experiences, for responsibilities within the Body of Christ.

The following three points have already been mentioned:

1. That the Egyptians had a reputation for their fine linen, which was nearly transparent.
2. That linen quality is still judged by its shade of white.
3. That processed flax fibers have a high natural luster with an attractive sheen; in other words, it reflects light.

These qualities are reflected in Revelations 19:7-8.

Rev 19:7-8 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. 8) And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: (SGD #2986) for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

Thayer's shows that the word "white" has a much broader sense than merely being white. It means *shining, brilliant, or transparent*, and noted above these are also some of the qualities of linen.

Thayers

SGD #2986 lamprov, lampros (*lam-pros'*)
KJV - bright 2, goodly 2, white 2, gorgeous 1, gay 1, clear 1; 9

- 1) shining
 - 1a) brilliant
 - 1b) clear, transparent
- 2) splendid, magnificent
 - 2a) splendid things i.e. luxuries or elegancies in dress or style.

It is possible, that the High Priest could see the Ark of the Covenant through the veil. That the veil had been woven of linen so sheer it was translucent. The Egyptians were renowned for the fine quality of their linen and that it was so sheer it could be seen through. Remember they saw the Ark at other times. In the book of Joshua they carried it around Jericho in plain sight of the people.

Ex 26:31 And thou shalt make a vail of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen of cunning work: with cherubims shall it be made:

Notice that the order has been changed. Blue is first, so, even if it were nearly transparent, it would still be harder to see through.

In Conclusion

Following is a reiteration of a few of the attributes of linen which are types of characteristics found in a Christian's life.

When wet flax fibers are about 20% stronger.

Flax is hollow causing it to absorb moisture readily. Because of this it has very good wicking properties; in other words, it soaks up liquids.

Its wicking properties make it an ideal material for oil lamp wicks.

The fabric becomes softer, whiter and more luminous with each washing, BUT, linen becomes brittle when dried out completely. Linen can recover its natural flexibility by absorbing moisture, from the air if need be, it doesn't need to be wet, just moist.

One of the things about linen is how much water is involved with the growing, harvesting, processing and maintenance of linen. Not only that, but it's affinity for liquids.

As it soaks up water, it becomes stronger. When it dries out, it becomes weaker and

brittle - easily broken. Yet, if it becomes wet once again before it breaks, it is strong and supple once more. Being as water is a type of the Holy Spirit, the analogy seems apparent.

The wicking attributes can be tied to Matthew 5:14-16

Mat 5:14-16 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. 15) Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16) Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. (RSV)

The linen of righteousness is the wick through which the oil (Holy Spirit) flows to produce the light.

Another type or analogy is that the Tabernacle is a type of the Church, and Christians are the individual fibers spun and woven into that Tabernacle. Think of it as our God weaving the fabric of His family as He becomes all in all.

1Cor 15:28 And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

According to Scripture, the Tabernacle was of fine linen, but was it sheer to the point of being at least translucent? Was the tent covering it visible through the linen? Was the Ark visible through the veil as through a glass darkly (1Cor 13:12)? The Bible is silent on these questions, although a case has been made that the answer to these could be: "Yes." The Tabernacle was a type of God's family - the Body of Christ, woven of individual strands of white linen yarn. And might each strand of yarn represent a member in the body of Christ?

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