

# The Tabernacle

## The Significance of The Materials and The Colours

### Readings:

2 Tim. 2:15

### Introduction

When it comes to teaching the truths from the types in the Old Testament, there are several dangers to be avoided.

- 1) That of failing to distinguish between interpretation and application. Evangelists can make applications but a teacher must give the interpretation. Never must the application become the interpretation.
- 2) Distorting the scriptures to suit what one wants to teach, thus finding a verse and making it “fit” as will be seen with the gold and badger skin.
- 3) Blindly accepting what is said without checking with the scriptures, an attitude the Bereans were commended for (Acts 17:11).
- 4) Another danger is an uncontrolled imagination and human rationalization, void of any Biblical guidelines. We are told of “four and twenty elders” (Rev. 4:4). There can be no doubt that there is a reason for there being twenty-four but the debate then wrestles over the number 24.
  - a) Is it to be divided in to 2 times 12, with their significances,
  - b) Or, 3 times 8 with their significances
  - c) Or, 4 times 6 and their significances?

Furthermore, would the interpreting be changed if we made it 12 times 2, or 8 times 3, or 6 times 4? Or what if we observe that is exactly the half of 48. The result is that we can get so much caught up in endless speculation and endless genealogies that the truth is missed, and then tragically the types come into dreadful disrepute.

- 5) Another danger is holding an interpretation for which, while sounding beautiful, nevertheless cannot be supported by Scripture. For many years it has been taught that gold was a type of deity and pure gold was essential deity. In the years since my conversion I have spoken to many who have ministered on the Tabernacle, and many who have studied its truths asking: “Where is the scriptural basis for gold indicating deity, for all the references I can find where gold is connected to a deity is a false god!”
  - a) None of my brethren have been able to give a reference but have said: “Well when the wise men came to the Lord they brought gold, frankincense, and myrrh, and the gold speaks of His deity. That passage is not dealing with types, and such an interpretation is taking very loose liberties with a possible application, and making it an interpretation. That is not rightly dividing the word of truth.
  - b) A second reference has been presented, which is in Ezek. 1:4, 27. The argument is that since The Lord is seen as Amber, and amber is golden color, therefore gold represents deity. A consideration of the word “amber” will show that this Hebrew word is uncertain in meaning, and if anything, suggests a shining metal, like brass! Furthermore, even if it was gold, then v. 28 gives the Divine commentary: “This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD”.
  - c) I have heard it taught and saw it written, “gold represents deity, and pure gold is essential deity”. Such is utter foolishness for deity is deity.
  - d) Then, since the boards represent the church and individual believers, does this then mean that we are deity? We are partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4), but that is vastly different.
  - e) Again, the branches of the candlestick which represent us were of pure gold. Does that then mean that we are essential deity? Such an interpretation is blasphemous.

Of course there is the argument that at this point the type fails, and then one must ask: “Is it possible that I allow a hallowed interpretation to be maintained even though the scriptures will not support its scrutiny?”

The Holy Spirit demands that we be such as “needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim.2:15). The wording means to “cut a straight line” when teaching the truth of God, and this requires letting the Spirit of God give His interpretation.

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Since the Tabernacle is a series of lessons based on types, it needs to be stressed that there is such a method of teaching as typology. The Greek word is “*typos*” which when Anglicized is “types”, although more precise words would be example, pattern. It is in this way that we read:

- a) The Tabernacle was an example, a pattern, a type. (Heb. 8:5)
- b) Israel was a type, an example, a pattern for us not to follow. (1 Cor. 10:11)
- c) The saints at Thessalonica were patterns, examples, types to other believers (1 Thess. 1:7). Thus, the Scriptures do teach types.

A further matter for observation is that not every significance is applicable to every aspect of that which the Tabernacle is a type of; i.e., the Lord, the believer, the local and corporate church. It must also be observed that the truth presented from the gold of the Ark is different from the gold mentioned with the boards, or the Altar of Incense.

### Our Approach

To set forth the Biblical, that is God’s Commentary on the items, and having compared spiritual things with spiritual, seek to learn the interpretation of these wonderful materials.

### THE MATERIALS

#### Gold

- a) Gold, as with other metals in the scriptures carries a number of significances, depending on the context.
- b) Preeminence: In Genesis the river (Gen. 2:10) is divided into four and at the end of one of them was gold. It is the first metal mentioned in the scriptures (Gen. 2:11), thus indicative of preeminence.
- c) Preciousness: When the Holy Spirit refers to the gold at the end of the river He says: “The gold of that land was good” (Gen. 2:12). The Hebrew word translated “good” is also translated:
  - i) Precious, as in ointment (Psa. 133:2); A name (Ecc. 7:1); Persons (Lam. 4:2).
  - ii) Beautiful, as with Abigail (1 Sam. 25:3); Esther (Est. 2:7); Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11:2), and the feet of those who spread the gospel (Isa. 52:7). Our Lord is picturesquely spoken of as the “altogether lovely” (Song of Sol. 5:16).
- d) Governmental Authority:
  - i) Joseph was arrayed in gold and fine linen (Gen. 41:42)
  - ii) Mordecai, the man whom the King delighteth to honor, was clothed in gold, fine linen, and purple. (Est. 8:15)
  - iii) The kings of Midian were clothed in purple and gold. (Jud. 8:26)
  - iv) David has a crown of pure gold set on his head. (1 Chron. 20:2)
  - v) Solomon sits on a throne of gold. (2 Chron. 9:17)
- e) Pledge:
  - i) Of future enrichment. When the servant came to the well and saw the young woman, at her home he gave her earrings and bracelets of gold which were an indicator of enrichment to come. (Gen. 24:22)
- f) Glory:
  - i) The cherubim of gold (Ex. 25:18), but in Hebrews it is the cherubim of glory. (Heb. 9:5)
  - ii) The New Jerusalem was pure gold, and she had the glory of God. (Rev. 21:11, 18)

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- g) Purity:
  - i) “He knoweth the way that I take: and when He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold” (Job 23:10)
  - ii) “The trial of your faith being made more precious than gold” (1 Pet. 1:7)
- h) Purchasing:
  - i) David bought the field from Ornan for 600 shekels of gold (1 Chron. 21:25)
  - ii) “Ye were not redeemed with silver or gold” (1 Pet. 1:18)
- i) Wisdom of Speech:
  - i) “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver. As an earring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold, so is a wise reprove upon an obedient ear” (Prov. 25:11-12)
- j) Clothing
  - i) “The Queen stands in gold of Ophir” (Psa. 45:9, 13)

#### Pure Gold

- a) “For thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness: thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head” (Psa. 21:3).
- b) “The city was pure gold, like unto pure glass” (Rev. 21:18); “And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.” (Rev. 21:21)
- c) The distinctions between the two verses in Revelation 21 are:
  - i) “Pure gold, like unto clear glass”, that is, absolutely free from any defect, distortion, falsehood (Rev. 21:18) and
  - ii) “Pure gold, as it were transparent glass”, that is resplendent (Rev. 21:21).

#### Silver

- a) Purchasing:
  - i) The word Hebrew word translated "silver" Strong's. No. 3701
    - 1. It is translated “money” 112 times
    - 2. It is translated “silver” 287 times
    - 3. It is translated “price” 3 times (Lev. 25:50; 1 Chron. 21:22, 24)
- b) It is called:
  - i) Redemption (Num. 3:48-50)
  - ii) A Ransom (Ex. 30:12)
  - iii) Atonement (Ex. 30:15-16)
- c) Therefore, since it is primarily the idea of purchasing and evaluation, it is used of:
  - i) Purchasing an individual
    - 1. Hosea’s wife (Hos. 3:2)
    - 2. Our Lord (Zech. 11:12-13)
    - 3. Joseph to the Ishmaelite’s (Gen. 37:28)
  - ii) It is used of purchasing property:
    - 1. The potter’s field (Matt. 27:9-10)
    - 2. Omni buying the hill of Samaria (1 Kgs. 16:24)
    - 3. Jeremiah buying the field from his cousin Anathoth (Jer. 32:9)
    - 4. Abraham buying the cave of Machpelah (Gen. 23:15)

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- iii) It is used of purchasing possessions:
  - 1. A horse from Egypt for 150 shekels (1 Kgs. 10:29)
- iv) It was related to the trespass offering (Lev. 5:15)
- v) It was the metal used for divine estimation, 25 times called the shekel of the sanctuary (Ex. 30:13, 24; 38:24, 25, 26). Being the shekel of the sanctuary, that which met with God's approval, it indicates that Christ satisfied the heart of God.
- vi) It was viewed as a pledge of love (Gen. 45:22). God commends His love toward us, to us who were undeserving and not interested in receiving it. (Rom. 5:5-11)
- vii) It was a manifestation of the devotion of the heads at the dedication of the altar. (Num. 7:12-13; 18-19)
- viii) It was used for the making of the silver trumpets. (Num. 10:2)
- ix) It symbolizes their purity and preciousness of speech.
  - 1. "The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times" (Psa. 12:6)
  - 2. "The tongue of the just is as choice silver: the heart of the wicked is little worth" (Prov. 10:20)
- x) It symbolizes purity, without dross.
  - 1. "For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried" (Psa. 66:10)
  - 2. "And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness" (Mal. 3:3)

#### Brass / Copper

- a) In reality this was copper. The building of the tabernacle was in the midst of the commonly called bronze age, and copper was plentiful. Copper is not an alloy, that is a mixture of metals as brass is. Furthermore, copper has a higher than brass melting temperature.
- b) Divine administration revealed in severity of judgment
  - i) Christ the Son of Man when He is standing in the midst, or when walking and inspecting the churches (Rev. 1:15; 2:1)
  - ii) Christ the Son of God, with feet like fine brass (copper) (Rev. 2:18)
- c) The strength of bindings:
  - i) The fetters of Zedekiah (2 Kgs. 25:7)
  - ii) The bindings of Samson (Jud. 16:21)
  - iii) The bindings of Christ:
    - 1. How am I straitened (bound in) (Lk. 12:50)
    - 2. The scribes and elders bound Jesus and brought Him to Pilate. (Matt. 27:2)
    - 3. Annas bound Jesus and sent Him to Caiaphas (Jn. 18:24)
    - 4. The One who came to set free (Jn. 8:36) was bound and yet was the only free man who ever lived.
- d) Strength for Protection:
  - i) Goliath of Gath (1 Sam. 17:5-6). Brass covered his body for armor.

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- ii) Jeremiah: “I will make thee . . . a fenced brazen wall, and they shall not fight against thee” (Jer. 15:20)
  - iii) Our protection by the judgment the Lord has borne. (1 Cor. 15:3)
  - iv) “A man shall be as an hiding place”. (Isa. 32:2)
  - v) We are God’s peculiar people, that is, surrounded and protected by Him. (Titus. 2:14; 1 Pet. 2:9)
- e) Unyieldingness:
- i) “And I will break the pride of your power; and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass.” (Lev. 26:19)
  - ii) Like the ram it suggests unyieldingness, but with the ram the emphasis is on relentless persistence, an onward going. The brass indicates the opposite, utterly no headway being gained. This is defensive, the ram indicates offensive. “I will make thee unto this people a fenced braze wall.” (Jer. 15:20)
  - iii) The Lord would not compromise holiness or His devotion to God as manifested in the temptations. (Matt. 4:1-11)

#### Acacia Wood

- a) It is called "shittim" with the "im" indicating plurality, i.e.; Cherubim, seraphim, and the word means tangled thickets into which the truck expands. It is a thorny wood, very hard and durable, and is called the uncorrupting, or undecaying wood in the Septuagint. It is a wood of the desert, and in this respect shadows the Lord as: “A Root out of a dry ground” (Isa. 53:2). If we consider it as a picture of ourselves, how wonderful that God can take people as twisted, as devious as we, filled with the sharpness of the evidence of sins (the thorns), and make us something beautiful for God.
- b) The word “shittim” comes from a root word which means to pierce, and the root word is translated "scourges" (Josh. 23:13). Thus, it foreshadows the Lord who was scourged and pierced. (Matt. 27:26; Mk.15:15; Jn. 19:1, 34; Zech. 12:10; Psa. 22:16; Rev. 1:7)
- c) While shittim wood does indicate humanity, “wood” indicates a particular category of humanity:
  - i) Nebuchadnezzar’s was viewed as a tree, that is wood (Dan. 4:10); Pharaoh (Ezek. 31:10); The Assyrian. (Ezek. 31:3-7)
  - ii) The interesting observation is that all three were mighty kings! That which we have here in this avenue of thought is that Christ the great King (Matt. 5:35; Rom. 15:12; Rev. 11:15), who lived as a King over temptation and sin. When applied to us, we reign in life, shall not reign over us, we are kings unto God. (Rom. 5:17; 6:12; 2 Tim. 2:12)

#### Linen

- a) Governmental administration on earth:
  - i) Joseph (Gen. 41:42)
  - ii) The palace of Ahasuerus (Est. 1:6)
  - iii) Mordecai (Est. 8:15)
  - iv) King David (1 Chron. 15:27)
- b) Moral direction on earth:
  - i) The priests were dressed in linen (Ex. 28:15), and to them was given the responsibility to teach the people of God His laws. (Mal. 2:7; Neh. 8:2; Deut. 24:8)
- c) Moral and governmental judgments from Heaven:
  - i) The man with the inkhorn (Ezek. 9:2)
  - ii) The seven angels with the seven vials filled with the wrath of God (Rev. 15:6)
  - iii) The armies of Heaven with the Lord (Rev. 19:14)

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- d) The righteousness of the saints in conformity with God:
  - i) The saints are dressed in linen, which is the righteousnesses (Rev. 19:8), that is righteous acts, and this was the main feature of Christ. (Heb. 1:9)
- e) The burial clothing of our Lord:
  - i) Our Lord, the morally clean man, how fitting that He be buried:
    1. In a clean linen cloth (Matt. 27:59)
    2. In a clean place (wherein was never man yet laid) (Lk. 23:53; Jn. 19:41)
    3. By clean men (he was a good man and just) (Lk. 23:50; Jn. 3:1; 7:50-51)

### Blue

- a) General:
  - i) This is the color in which we see the span of the Heavens during the day.
  - ii) Out of 49 references in the Bible, 34 of them are in Exodus.
- b) It is the color mentioned when God is revealed:
  - i) “And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone” (Ex. 24:10; Ezek. 1:26). It then indicates the Lord as the Revealer of God (Jn. 1:18) and the Father (Jn. 14:9).
- c) The root word means to roar and it is translated “lion” (Job 4:10). It is used of Jehovah (Hos. 5:14; 13:7); the Lord is described as such (Rev. 5:5). In these cases it is connected with judgment. If we put “b” and “c” together, the thought is God revealed in judgment executed by Christ. (Jn. 5:27)
- d) It indicated the Place where God dwells.
  - i) The first mention of “blue” is in connection with the Tabernacle. (Ex. 25:4)
- e) It is related to the Priest of God whose clothing include the blue robe of the ephod. (Ex. 28:31)
- f) It indicates the rule of God in life. In Numbers a man gathered sticks on the Sabbath and God gave a decree that there was to be a ribband of blue around the hem of the garment. (Num. 15:38)

### Purple

- a) General:
  - i) This is the color of earth, as is seen by its earthly associations, see below.
  - ii) It is mentioned 45 times in the Bible and 26 times in Exodus
- b) Earthly government
  - i) It was worn by earthly kings (Jud. 8:26)
  - ii) It was the color of earthly government officials (Est. 8:15)
  - iii) It was the color of earthly pomp. (Est. 1:6)
- c) It is interesting that, as far as I can determine, every reference to this color is by nations outside of Israel being connected with the Kings of Midian (Jud. 8:26); Tyre (2 Chron. 2:13-14); Persia (Est. 1:6); Syria (Ezek. 27:16); Babylon (Dan. 5:29). This being so it is indicative of the Lord in universal dominion.
- d) It was the color of the robe our Lord was dressed in Mark, the servant gospel (Mk. 15:17, 20; Jn. 19:2, 5). From this perspective it brings before us our Lord as the servant who will be the governor among the Nations. (Psa. 22:28)

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### Scarlet

- a) General
  - i) Out of the 52 references in the Bible, it is mentioned 25 times in Exodus
- b) It indicates the Firstborn
  - i) This is the first reference in the scriptures (Gen. 38:28)
- c) It is used as a pledge of Life and removal from condemnation for it was the pledge between the spies and Rahab. (Josh. 2:18)
- d) It indicated the sufferings of the Savior when He is viewed as a worm (Psa. 22:6). The Hebrew word for “worm” (towla) is translated “Scarlet” (Lev. 14:49); “worm” (Jon. 4:7); and “crimson (Isa. 1:18 “though your sins be as crimson”. The word scarlet in Isa. 1:18 is a different Hebrew word.
- e) It is related to the sacrifice of the red heifer. (Num. 19:1)
- f) It indicates a covering provided as a result of caring. (Prov. 31:21)
- g) It is closely related to sins reaching to total religious depravity (Rev. 17:4), and political depravity. (Rev. 17:3)
- h) In Matthew, the gospel of the King, our Lord is clothed in scarlet. (Matt. 27:28)

### Goats Hair

- a) General:
  - i) The word "hair" is always in italics, but the idea is that of the goats hair being woven, in the same way that folk knit sheep wool. It is not a hide as the Rams skins or badger skins.
  - ii) The goat is mentioned 32 times in Lev. 16, and is consistently related to the sin offering.
- b) The goat is mentioned in the following connections.
  - i) Covenant
    - 1. The first reference to a goat is connected with a one sided covenant. (Gen. 15:9)
  - ii) Sin offering.
    - 1. The goat is mentioned more often with a sin offering than any other animal. (Lev. 4:24; 9:15; 10:16; 16:9, 15; Num. 28:22, 29:28, 31, 34, 38; Ezek. 43:25)
  - iii) Beauty and dignity of movement. (Prov. 30:29-31)

### Rams Skins Dyed Red.

- a) Red skins of rams. (Ex. 35:23)
- b) The “ram” is connected with the following truths:
  - i) Substitution, for the ram caught by its horns was substituted for Isaac. (Gen. 22:13)
  - ii) Consecration of the Priests: “Also thou shalt take of the ram the fat and the rump, and the fat that covereth the inwards, and the caul above the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, and the right shoulder; for it is a ram of consecration” (Ex. 29:22)
  - iii) Trespass offering: “If a soul commit a trespass, and sin through ignorance, in the holy things of the LORD; then he shall bring for his trespass unto the LORD a ram without blemish out of the flocks, with thy estimation by shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for a trespass offering” (Lev. 5:15; Ezra 10:19)

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- iv) Burnt Offering: “And he said unto Aaron, Take thee a young calf for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering, without blemish, and offer them before the LORD” (Lev. 9:2; Num. 7:15, 21, 27, 33, 39, 41, 51).
  - v) Peace Offering: “And he shall offer of the sacrifice of the peace offering an offering made by fire unto the LORD; the fat thereof, and the whole rump, it shall he take off hard by the backbone; and the fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that is upon the inwards” (Lev. 3:9)
  - vi) Separation: “And the priest shall take the sodden shoulder of the ram, and one unleavened cake out of the basket, and one unleavened wafer, and shall put them upon the hands of the Nazarite, after the hair of his separation is shaven” (Num. 6:19)
  - vii) Persistence: “I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward; so that no beasts might stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will, and became great” (Dan. 8:4). This indicates the fullness of the devotion and unswerving character and characteristics of Christ. (Lk. 9:51)
- c) When it is “Dyed red” it indicates man under sin. The Hebrew word for “red” is the root word for “Adam”, and the word “red” is the same as Isa. 1:18: “Though they be red” when dealing with our sins.

#### Badger Skins

- a) There is a great deal of speculation on the matter of the badger skins. The normal teaching is that it was a covering that was drab to look at, nothing beautiful. However, there is nothing in the scriptures to warrant such an idea. Indeed, it is contrary to the scriptures! Since we have no idea what the animal looked like, with colors ranging from light blue to almost black, then it is bad exegesis to take a scripture and use it to support something we know nothing about. Consider how foolish it would be if someone talked about the unicorn, and without any evidence taught that it prefigured the Lord as a gentle baby. Such teaching would be scoffed at, yet when it comes to the Badger Skin, it is somehow acceptable. This is what I mean by distorting the scriptures to suit a man made idea.
  - i) The badger skins are mentioned 14 times in the scriptures, and in 10 of those times a single word is connected to them. It is the word “covering”.
- b) Covering:
  - i) “And thou shalt make a covering for the tent of rams' skins dyed red, and a covering above of badgers' skins” (Ex. 26:14; 36:19; 39:34; Num. 4:6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 25). Thus the badger skins, whatever sort of animal they came from, was a covering. The emphasis is not what it was like, but on its effectiveness as a covering.
    - 1. It was a beautiful covering.
      - (a) “I clothed thee also with broided work, and shod thee with badgers' skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk. And thou wast exceeding beautiful” (Ezek. 16:10, 13)
    - 2. Covering, the word is used in three ways:
      - (a) To be covered and concealed (Job 15:27; 22:14; 26:6; 31:33)
      - (b) To be covered for protection (Psa. 61:4; 91:4)
      - (c) Clothed in the armour of God (Eph. 6:11, 13); the armour of righteousness (2 Cor. 6:7).
      - (d) To be covered and so overwhelmed as our Lord poetically was described: “I sink in the deep mire where the floods overflow me” (Psa. 69:2)
      - (e) To be covered to be clothed: “Clothed in garments of salvation” (Isa. 61:10; Psa. 104:2).



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Water

- a) The Holy Spirit indicating the glorification of Christ and unification of the saints. (Jn. 7:37-39; Acts 11:16)
- b) The Word of God. (Eph. 5:26)

Oil

- a) The most direct interpretation is in Zech. 4:6 where again we can read of a golden lamp stand with seven branches, and it is fed with oil, which we are distinctly told is a symbol of the Holy Spirit.
  - i) Without the oil, the Holy Spirit, the lights could never give light.
- b) With its most mentioned relationship being anointing, it indicates that the ones who shine for God are those whom He has anointed, and with the anointing it relates to that which is devoted to the service of God, whether it is:
  - i) Furnishings (Ex. 40:9, 10, 11)
  - ii) People:
    - 1. Kings (1 Sam. 16:13)
    - 2. Priests (Ex. 28:41)
    - 3. Those who God distinguishes (Psa. 23:5; 45:7)
    - 4. I am aware of only one case where a prophet is anointed (1 Kgs. 19:16)

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**May God grant us good understanding as He, by His Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.  
John 16:13**

Rowan Jennings, Abbotsford, British Columbia