

The Court, Pillars & Gate

Scripture	Main Theme	Description/Notes
Exodus 27.9-15	The Court of the Tabernacle and its Pillars	
Exodus 27.16-17	The Hanging for the Gate of the Court	
Exodus 27.18-19	The Composition of the Vessels in the Court	

The Construction

Surrounding the tent proper of the Tabernacle was the Court. The boundaries of the Court were marked by hangings of fine twined linen which were 7.5 feet (2.3 m high). The court was 150 feet (46 m) long on the north and south sides, and 75 feet (23 m) long on the east and west sides.

The hangings were fixed to 20 pillars on the north and south sides, ten on the west, but only six on the east side (due to the presence of the Gate). The pillars (probably made of shittim wood, cf. Exodus 26.32, 37) were set on brass sockets with chapiters (or, crowns) of silver (Exodus 38.17). The hangings were attached to the pillars by silver hooks (Exodus 27.10). Exodus 35.18 indicates that the pillars were supported by chords fastened to pegs (pins) driven into the ground. Silver rods also connected the pillars together preventing them from leaning towards each other (27.17).



The Gate was on the east side and was 30 feet (9.1 m) wide. The curtains for the Gate were beautifully embroidered with blue, purple and scarlet. Four pillars held up the hanging of the Gate.

The Use

The Court was the appointed place of assembly where the people came together and worshipped God and where He met with them (Exodus 29.42-43).

The people brought their offerings to the Gate of the Tabernacle. Inside the Gate (by the door to the Holy Place) the sacrifices were slain and prepared for the Brazen Altar. All that took place in the Court was hidden from the people without as the hangings were 7.5 feet in height. It also meant that the priests could not be distracted from the work at hand by looking out!

The Significance

The Court: Entrance to the Court was only granted to the High Priest, priests and the offerers. In the Court was the Brazen Altar which speaks of the place where sin is dealt with, and it was the basis of the offerer's entrance into the Court. The Court was for a redeemed people (cf. Psalm 65.4, 100.4). Praise God, Gentiles could also enter this Court on the same basis of offering and sacrifice (Leviticus 17.8, Numbers 15.14-16).

Psalm 65.4: Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple.

The Court with its pillars and hangings separated the Tabernacle from all the surrounding tents. There was a clear distinction between the dwelling place of the Lord and the dwelling place of the people. It was to separate God's holy presence from the outside world. What formed this distinction/separation? A large, white, linen barrier!

The Tabernacle tent speaks of the hidden beauties of Christ. The Court speaks of that which the world saw of Christ. What did they see? The whiteness! They saw His purity and His sinless, attractive life (John 8.46). Likewise, we must display Christ to others by our holy lives!!

The Court Hangings: Fine-twined hangings of white surrounded the Tabernacle. This would have been in stark contrast to the tents of the Israelites which were most probably dark in colour (Song of Solomon 1.5). The whiteness speaks of the holiness and righteousness of God that marked everything that pertains to His house.

The hangings were too high for man to look over; they provided a barrier to the presence of God. So, God's standard of righteousness could never be attained, except by One. Our righteousnesses are but filthy rags, but God has given us a righteousness which we did not deserve (Romans 3.22). When outside the Court we were 'opposed' by God's righteousness. Now we are inside, we are surrounded by it!!

These curtains were a testimony to the onlooker. Today, God's House (the Assembly) should be marked by righteousness and holiness. In fact in the NT, the assembly was marked by holiness, cf. Ananias and Sapphira: *Acts 5.11: And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.*

The Gate: Man cannot approach God as he pleases; there was only one way of approach to God – the Gate! This signifies the fact that there is only one way to God through the Lord Jesus.

*1 Timothy 2.5: For there is one God, and **one mediator** between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*

*John 10.9: I am **the door**: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.*

The gate is particularly large and was held by four pillars. Four is the universal number signifying that God desires all to draw near and worship Him. The gate is not too small, the invitation is not restricted (2 Peter 3.9).

The Gate Curtains: These contained the colours of blue, purple and scarlet all speaking of the glory of the Lord Jesus. They stood in marked contrast to the fine twined linen of the hangings of the court. White speaks of the purity of Christ (Luke's Gospel), blue; the heavenly man (John's Gospel), purple; royal and kingly dignity (Matthew's Gospel) and the scarlet; humiliation and precious shed blood of the Servant obedient unto death (Mark's Gospel).

The Pillars: Pillars speak of strength, support, stability and security. As the pillars supported the linen hangings, so Christ upholds and displays the righteousness of God. The grace of God is seen in the Tabernacle, but this did not compromise His righteousness (cf. Romans 3.19-26)! Christ has upheld the righteousness of God in virtue of His sufferings at Calvary (the brass sockets) and the ransom price He paid (silver connecting rods). *"The strength of the structure is to be found in the work of the cross" (John Grant).*

Christ is also the firm foundation of this outward display of righteousness through the Church today:

1 Peter 2.6-7: Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner.

Christ is the chief corner stone of the household of God (the universal Church). The corner stone may have three ideas:

1. Cornerstone: a stone which supports the structure and joins walls together. This may suggest the fact that Christ has brought about the union of Gentile and Jew in Himself (Ephesians 2.14-16).
2. Keystone: the highest stone of an arch which provides support for all others. So Christ is the preeminent One, the Head of the church. He is indispensable and cannot be removed.
3. Capstone: the top and final stone of a pyramid. This stone is unique in size and shape, so Christ is unique in His Person and ministry. When He returns He will complete the structure.

Note. The Assembly is the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Timothy 3.15). James, Peter and John are spoken of as pillars (Galatians 2.9, see also Revelation 3.12). Therefore pillars would speak of believers (individual and corporate) standing for God and witnessing to His holiness and truth. We should be standing and displaying the righteousness of God in this world. We have a banner to uphold! How easy was the glaring 46m of white linen to see (cf. 2 Corinthians 4.3)?

Psalms 60.4: Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth.

The Pillars rested on sockets of brass. Brass speaks of endurance and suffering. The believer rests in the finished work of Christ who has suffered for sins and endured the wrath of God on our behalf. We are based on the solid foundation of Christ and in His strength we are able to stand for the truth of God against all foes. Brass also speaks of the fiery trial and endurance needed to witness for God.

Note that the pillars were held together by a coupling rod of silver. Silver speaks of redemption; as believers we are bound together by the common salvation we share in Christ. Not only this, but it reminds us of the ransom price that has been paid to secure our redemption. We belong to Him! It is our responsibility to serve!