

Exodus 38:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the hanging for the gate of the court was needlework, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen: and twenty cubits was the length, and the height in the breadth was five cubits, answerable to the hangings of the court.

Analysis

The courtyard's total dimensions—hundred cubits by fifty cubits (approximately 150' × 75'), enclosed by five-cubit-high hangings (7.5 feet) of fine linen with bronze sockets—creates substantial but not overwhelming boundaries. The relatively low height (five cubits) allows seeing over curtains, teaching that holiness boundaries separate without completely isolating God's dwelling from the world. The visibility of tabernacle top and smoke from sacrifices maintained witness to surrounding peoples while protecting sacred space from intrusion. The size (larger than most ancient temples' courtyards) demonstrates God's generous provision of access space.

Historical Context

The 7,500 square-foot courtyard provided ample room for the bronze altar, laver, and worshiper traffic. The five-cubit height protected privacy for sacrificial rituals while allowing tabernacle visibility above curtains. Bronze sockets throughout (versus silver in tabernacle proper) demonstrated the courtyard's intermediate holiness—separated from common space but not equal to tabernacle interior.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 – Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. What does the relatively low curtain height (allowing visibility above) teach about separation without isolation in God's witness?
2. How does the generous courtyard size illustrate God's desire for accessible worship space?

Interlinear Text

וְמִסְבֵּת	שְׁעָר	בַּקְבָּצָר	מִשְׁעָשָׁה	רְקָם	תְּכִילָת
And the hanging	for the gate	of the court	H4639	was needlework	of blue
H4529	H8170	H2601		H7551	H8504

וְשָׁרֶם יְמִינָה	H8438	וְשָׁרֶם שְׁמִינִי	H8144	וְשָׁרֶם עֲתִיל	H8226	וְשָׁרֶם אַרְגָּמָן	H7806	וְשָׁרֶם מְשִׁיר	H8142
and purple		and scarlet		linen		and fine twined		and twenty	

אֵם וְתַּקְמִישׁ בֶּרֶתֶב הַקּוֹמֶת אֵין כָּךְ אֵם וְתַּקְמִישׁ בֶּרֶתֶב הַקּוֹמֶת אֵין כָּךְ

cubits was the length and the height in the breadth was five cubits

H520 H753 H6067 H7341 H2568 H520

לעַמְתָּה קְלָעִים בְּמִצָּרָה answerable to the hangings of the court