

Exodus 40:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he brought the ark into the tabernacle, and set up the vail of the covering, and covered the ark of the testimony; as the LORD commanded Moses.

Analysis

The veil (פָּרָכַת, parokhet) screening the ark creates the Most Holy Place (קָדְשָׁים, qodesh haQodashim, Holy of Holies), separating God's immediate presence from sinful humanity. The verb סָכַךְ (sakhakh, covered/screened) emphasizes protective barrier—sin cannot approach holiness without mediation. Only the high priest entered, once yearly with blood (Leviticus 16), prefiguring Christ's entry 'once for all' (Hebrews 9:12, ἐφάπαξ). The veil's tearing at Christ's death (Matthew 27:51) opened permanent access through His torn body (Hebrews 10:19-20).

Historical Context

The veil, elaborately woven with cherubim (Exodus 26:31), was thick enough to prevent accidental viewing of the ark. Its durability meant the high priest's body torn when dragged through if God struck him dead—hence Rabbinic tradition (unbiblical) of a rope tied to his ankle. The veil's function taught that casual approach to God meant death.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does the veil's thick barrier teach the gravity of sin separating humanity from God?
2. What does Christ's torn veil-body providing permanent access reveal about His sufficient sacrifice?

Interlinear Text

וְיִבְאַת	אֶת	אָרֶן	וְאֶל	בְּמִשְׁכָּן	בְּאֹתָם	אֵת
And he brought	H935	the ark	H853	into the tabernacle	H4908	and set up
	H935		H727		H7760	H853
פָּרֶכֶת	בְּמִשְׁכָּן	וְעַל	אָרֶן	בְּעַד	וְתַ	בְּאֹשֶׁר
the veil	of the covering	and covered	H5921	the ark	of the testimony	H834
H6532	H4539	H5526	H727	H5715		
צְדָקָה:	אָתָה	מֹשֶׁה:				
commanded	as the LORD	Moses				
H6680	H3068	H4872				

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 26:33 (Witness): And thou shalt hang up the veil under the taches, that thou mayest bring in thither within the veil the ark of the testimony: and the veil shall divide unto you between the holy place and the most holy.

Exodus 40:3 (Witness): And thou shalt put therein the ark of the testimony, and cover the ark with the veil.

Exodus 35:12 (Parallel theme): The ark, and the staves thereof, with the mercy seat, and the veil of the covering,

