

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 (פָּרֹכֶת, parokhet) screening the ark creates the Most Holy Place (שִׁדְרֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ, qodesh haQodashim, Holy of Holies), separating God's immediate presence from sinful humanity. The verb סָכַח (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, ἑφάπαξ). 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

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|------------------|-------------|-----------|---------------------|-----------------|----------|
| וַיָּבֹא | אֶת | אֲרוֹן | אֶל | הַמִּשְׁכָּן | וַיָּשֶׂם | אֶת |
| And he brought | | the ark | | into the tabernacle | and set up | |
| H935 | H853 | H727 | H413 | H4908 | H7760 | H853 |
| כַּאֲשֶׁר | הָעֵדוּת | אֲרוֹן | עַל | וַיִּסֹּךְ | הַמִּסְכָּה | פָּרֹכֶת |
| | of the testimony | the ark | | and covered | of the covering | the veil |
| H834 | H5715 | H727 | H5921 | H5526 | H4539 | H6532 |
| מֹשֶׁה: | אֶת | יְהוָה | צִוָּה | | | |
| Moses | | as the LORD | commanded | | | |
| H4872 | H853 | H3068 | H6680 | | | |

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,

