

Exodus 40:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And thou shalt put therein the ark of the testimony, and cover the ark with the vail.

Analysis

Moses must place the ark of testimony (אֲרוֹן הָעֵדוּת, aron ha'edut) and 'cover the ark with the vail' (וְסָכַתָּ עַל-הָאָרוֹן, vesakota al-ha'aron). The ark's primacy—mentioned first despite being placed last/deepest—teaches that God's law (testimony inside) stands central to covenant. The veil 'covering' (סָכַח, sakhakh, to screen/protect) the ark separates God's holy presence from sinful people, teaching that sin blocks access. Only the high priest, once yearly with atoning blood, could pass the veil (Leviticus 16). Christ's torn veil-body (Hebrews 10:19-20) opens permanent access.

Historical Context

The ark, containing the Ten Commandments, Aaron's rod, and manna pot (Hebrews 9:4), represented God's throne on earth. Its placement behind the veil in the Most Holy Place emphasized that sinful humans cannot casually approach the holy God—only through prescribed mediation.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. What does the ark's centrality (mentioned first) teach about God's law standing at the covenant's heart?
2. How does Christ's torn veil-body providing permanent access contrast with the old covenant's yearly entry?

Interlinear Text

וְשָׂמָתָּ	שָׁם	אֵת	הָאֹרֶן	וְהָעֵדוּת	וְסִכָּתָּ	עַל
And thou shalt put	therein	H853	the ark	of the testimony	and cover	H5921
H7760	H8033		H727	H5715	H5526	
אֶת	הָאֹרֶן	וְהַפָּרֹכֶת:				
the ark	H854	with the veil				
H727		H6532				

Additional Cross-References

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

Numbers 4:5 (Witness): And when the camp setteth forward, Aaron shall come, and his sons, and they shall take down the covering veil, and cover the ark of testimony with it:

Revelation 11:19 (Parallel theme): And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

Exodus 25:22 (Witness): And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.

Leviticus 16:14 (Parallel theme): And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times.

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