

Hebrews 9:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant;

Analysis

The second veil separated the Most Holy Place, containing the golden censer (or altar of incense), and the ark of the covenant overlaid with gold. Inside the ark were the golden pot with manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant. Each item signified covenant history - manna (God's provision), rod (God's chosen priesthood), tablets (God's law). All these find fulfillment in Christ.

Historical Context

Some details differ from Exodus (the altar of incense was outside the veil in Exodus 30:6, though smoke entered within on the Day of Atonement). The author focuses on the theological significance rather than precise architectural detail.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does each item in the ark point to some aspect of Christ's person or work?
2. What does the ark's contents reveal about the relationship between God's provision, His law, and His chosen mediators?

Interlinear Text

χρυσῇ	ἔχουσα	θυμιατήριον	καὶ	τὴν	κιβωτὸν	τῆς
the golden	Which had	censer	and	G3588	the ark	G3588
G5552	G2192	G2369	G2532		G2787	
διαθήκης	περικεκαλυμμένην	πάντοθεν	χρυσίῳ	ἐν	ᾗ	
of the covenant	overlaid	round about	with gold	wherein		G3739
G1242	G4028	G3840	G5553	G1722		
στάμνος	χρυσῇ	ἔχουσα	τὸ	μάννα	καὶ	ἡ
pot	the golden	Which had	G3588	manna	and	G3588
G4713	G5552	G2192		G3131	G2532	
						ῥάβδος
						rod
						G4464
Ἀαρὼν	ἡ	βλαστήσασα	καὶ	αἱ	πλάκες	τῆς
Aaron's	G3588	that budded	and	G3588	the tables	G3588
G2		G985	G2532		G4109	
						διαθήκης
						of the covenant
						G1242

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 17:10 (Parallel theme): And the LORD said unto Moses, Bring Aaron's rod again before the testimony, to be kept for a token against the rebels; and thou shalt quite take away their murmurings from me, that they die not.

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

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

Leviticus 16:12 (Parallel theme): And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the LORD, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the vail:

2 Chronicles 5:10 (Covenant): There was nothing in the ark save the two tables which Moses put therein at Horeb, when the LORD made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of Egypt.

Numbers 17:5 (Parallel theme): And it shall come to pass, that the man's rod, whom I shall choose, shall blossom: and I will make to cease from me the murmurings of the children of Israel, whereby they murmur against you.

Exodus 34:29 (Parallel theme): And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him.

Revelation 8:3 (Parallel theme): And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

1 Kings 8:21 (Covenant): And I have set there a place for the ark, wherein is the covenant of the LORD, which he made with our fathers, when he brought them out of the land of Egypt.

1 Kings 7:50 (Parallel theme): And the bowls, and the snuffers, and the basons, and the spoons, and the censers of pure gold; and the hinges of gold, both for the doors of the inner house, the most holy place, and for the doors of the house, to wit, of the temple.