

Leviticus 16:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel.

Analysis

And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel.

This verse falls within the section on **Day of Atonement**. The most sacred day in Israel's calendar, when the high priest entered the Holy of Holies to make atonement for all Israel's sins.

The central theme of Leviticus is God's holiness and the call for His people to be holy. The Hebrew word *qadosh* (קָדוֹשׁ) means 'set apart' or 'sacred,' emphasizing both separation from sin and consecration to God's purposes. The Hebrew word *kaphar* (כָּפַר) means 'to cover' or 'to make atonement.' The sacrificial system provided temporary covering for sin, pointing forward to Christ's perfect, once-for-all sacrifice.

Every sacrifice and ritual in Leviticus points forward to Jesus Christ, who fulfills the entire sacrificial system as both perfect sacrifice and eternal high priest.

Historical Context

The most sacred day in Israel's calendar, when the high priest entered the Holy of Holies to make atonement for all Israel's sins. The Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) described in chapter 16 became Israel's most sacred day. Only on this annual day could the high priest enter the Holy of Holies, making atonement for the entire nation. This ceremony, still observed in Judaism, found ultimate fulfillment in Christ's entrance into heaven itself (Hebrews 9:11-12). Israel received these laws while encamped at Sinai, before entering Canaan. The laws prepared them for life in the promised land, distinguishing them from Canaanite practices and establishing their identity as God's holy nation. The portable tabernacle, central to Levitical worship, accompanied them through wilderness wanderings and eventually found permanent form in Solomon's temple. The tabernacle's design parallels ancient Near Eastern temple architecture, yet its portable nature and absence of divine images distinguished it from pagan temples.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does God's holiness, as revealed in this verse, shape your understanding of worship, obedience, and daily living?
2. In what ways does this verse deepen your appreciation for Christ's atoning sacrifice and the seriousness of sin?
3. How does this verse help you understand both God's justice and His mercy in salvation?

Interlinear Text

וְכָל	אֶדָם	לֹא	יְהִי הֵן	בְּאֹהֶל	
H3605	And there shall be no man	H3808	H1961	in the tabernacle	
	H120			H168	
מִזֶּדֶד	בְּבֹא וְ	וְכָפַר	בְּקֹדֶשׁ	עַד	
of the congregation	when he goeth	and have made an atonement	in the holy	H5704	
H4150	H935	H3722	H6944		
צֵאת וְ	וְכָפַר	בְּעֵדוֹ	וְכָפַר		
place until he come out	and have made an atonement	H1157	H1157		
H3318	H3722				
בֵּית וְ	וְכָפַר	כָּל	לְקֹהֶל		
for himself and for his household	H1157	H3605	and for all the congregation		
H1004			H6951		
יִשְׂרָאֵל:					
of Israel					
H3478					

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 53:6 (Parallel theme): All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Exodus 34:3 (Parallel theme): And no man shall come up with thee, neither let any man be seen throughout all the mount; neither let the flocks nor herds feed before that mount.

Luke 1:10 (Parallel theme): And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense.