

Leviticus 16:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the vail before the mercy seat, which is upon the ark; that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat.

Analysis

And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the vail before the mercy seat, which is upon the ark; that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat.

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 Aaronic priesthood mediated between God and Israel, offering sacrifices and maintaining the tabernacle. This prefigured Christ's superior priesthood after the order of Melchizedek.

Hebrews 9-10 explains how Christ's once-for-all sacrifice supersedes the repeated Levitical offerings, providing permanent cleansing from sin.

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

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does God's holiness, as revealed in this verse, shape your understanding of worship, obedience, and daily living?
2. How does Christ's superior priesthood, prefigured in this verse, assure you of access to God and effective intercession?
3. In what practical ways should this verse influence your church life, family relationships, or personal integrity?

Interlinear Text

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| אָמַר | אָבָר | אָחִיך |
| said H559 | And the LORD H3068 | H413 |
| | | unto Moses H4872 |
| | | Speak H1696 |
| | | H413 |
| | | unto Aaron H175 |
| | | thy brother H251 |
| אָל | אָל | אָל |
| אָל H408 | בְּכָל H3605 | עַת H6256 |
| that he come H935 | not at all times H6256 | אָל H413 |
| | | into the holy H6944 |
| | | place within H1004 |
| אָל | אָל | אָל |
| לְפָרַת the veil H6532 | פָּנִים before H6440 | בְּכֶפֶרְתָּה the mercy seat H3727 |
| | | עַל H834 |
| | | אֲשֶׁר H5921 |
| | | which is upon the ark H727 |
| אָל | אָל | אָל |
| אָל H3808 | בְּעֵנֶת in the cloud H3588 | אֶרְאָה not for I will appear H7200 |
| that he die H4191 | | הַכֶּפֶרְתָּה: the mercy seat H3727 |

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 30:10 (Holy): And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonements: once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations: it is most holy unto the LORD.

Hebrews 9:25 (Holy): Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others;

Matthew 27:51 (Parallel theme): And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;

1 Kings 8:6 (Holy): And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD unto his place, into the oracle of the house, to the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubims.

2 Chronicles 5:14 (References Lord): So that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God.

Hebrews 9:3 (Parallel theme): And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all;

Leviticus 16:13 (Grace): And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not:

Leviticus 23:27 (Holy): Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD.

Leviticus 8:35 (References Lord): Therefore shall ye abide at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation day and night seven days, and keep the charge of the LORD, that ye die not: for so I am commanded.

Numbers 17:10 (References Lord): 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.