

Leviticus 16:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Aaron shall come into the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall put off the linen garments, which he put on when he went into the holy place, and shall leave them there:

Analysis

And Aaron shall come into the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall put off the linen garments, which he put on when he went into the holy place, and shall leave them there:

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

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

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. What practical steps can you take this week to apply the principles taught in this verse?

Interlinear Text

וְבָא אֶעָרֹן אֶל אֶלְעָלָה אֶל כָּל מוֹעֵד
shall come And Aaron into the tabernacle of the congregation

וְפִשְׁתָּה אֶת בְּגָדָיו אֲשֶׁר לְבָשׂ שׁוֹבֵב וְבָא
and shall put off garments the linen which he put on shall come

אֶל כְּלֵי הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְשָׁמַן וְבָא
into the holy place and shall leave

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 44:19 (Holy): And when they go forth into the utter court, even into the utter court to the people, they shall put off their garments wherein they ministered, and lay them in the holy chambers, and they shall put on other garments; and they shall not sanctify the people with their garments.

Ezekiel 42:14 (Holy): When the priests enter therein, then shall they not go out of the holy place into the utter court, but there they shall lay their garments wherein they minister; for they are holy; and shall put on other garments, and shall approach to those things which are for the people.

Romans 8:3 (Parallel theme): For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

Leviticus 16:4 (Holy): He shall put on the holy linen coat, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with a linen girdle, and with the linen mitre shall he be attired: these are holy garments; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and so put them on.