

Luke 23:45

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst.

Analysis

The veil torn: 'And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst.' Parallel to v. 44, Luke notes 'the sun was darkened' (έσκοτίσθη ὁ ἥλιος, eskotisthē ho hēlios). Then a second supernatural event: 'the veil of the temple was rent in the midst' (έσχίσθη... τὸ καταπέτασμα τοῦ ναοῦ μέσον, eschisthē... to katapetasma tou naou meson). This veil separated the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place, representing separation between God and humanity caused by sin. Only the high priest could enter annually on Yom Kippur. The veil's tearing 'from top to bottom' (Matthew 27:51) indicates God, not humans, ripped it. Christ's death opened access to God's presence for all believers. The way into the holiest is now open (Hebrews 10:19-22).

Historical Context

The temple veil was massive—60 feet high, 30 feet wide, handspan thick—requiring hundreds of men to manipulate. That it tore 'from top to bottom' proves divine action. Its destruction at Christ's death was profoundly symbolic: the Old Covenant system requiring animal sacrifices, priestly mediation, and annual atonement was obsolete. Christ's once-for-all sacrifice provided permanent access to God. Hebrews 10:19-20 explains: 'we have boldness to enter the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh.' Christ's torn flesh is the torn veil—His death opens the way to God.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. What did the temple veil symbolize, and what does its tearing signify?
2. How does Christ's death provide access to God that the Old Covenant couldn't?
3. What does Hebrews mean by calling Jesus' flesh 'the veil'?

Interlinear Text

καί	ἐσκοτίσθη	ό	ἡλιος,	καί	ἐσχίσθη	τὸ	καταπέτασμα
And	was darkened	G3588	the sun	And	was rent	G3588	the veil
G2532	G4654		G2246	G2532	G4977		G2665
τοῦ	ναοῦ	μέσον					
G3588	of the temple	in the midst					
	G3485	G3319					

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 27:51 (Temple): 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;

Mark 15:38 (Temple): And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.

2 Chronicles 3:14 (Parallel theme): And he made the vail of blue, and purple, and crimson, and fine linen, and wrought cherubims thereon.