

Numbers 4:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they shall take away the ashes from the altar, and spread a purple cloth thereon:

Analysis

The blue cloth covering speaks of the heavenly origin and divine nature of the tabernacle furnishings. Blue, derived from expensive dyes, consistently represents the celestial and holy throughout Scripture. Covering the sacred objects before transport protected both the objects and the carriers—the holiness of God's presence required proper mediation. This reflects the Reformed understanding that sinful humanity cannot approach God's holiness directly but requires divine provision and protection.

Historical Context

The Kohathites, though privileged to carry the most sacred objects, could not even look upon them under penalty of death. Aaron and his sons alone could cover the furniture. This strict separation maintained the holiness necessary for God's presence to dwell among a sinful people.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. What does the blue cloth teach us about the heavenly nature of true worship?
2. How does the prohibition against viewing the holy objects illustrate humanity's inability to approach God apart from mediation?
3. In what ways does Christ fulfill the protective covering that the blue cloth represented?

Interlinear Text

וְיַדְשָׁכּוּ	אֶת	הַמִּזְבֵּחַ	וְפִרְשָׁוּ	בְּגִדֵּן
And they shall take away the ashes	H853	from the altar	H6566	cloth
H1878	H4196		H5921	H899
: אַרְבָּתָן				
a purple				
H713				

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