

Numbers 4:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when the camp setteth forward, Aaron shall come, and his sons, and they shall take down the covering vail, and cover the ark of testimony with it:

Analysis

The command for Aaron and his sons to cover the ark before the Kohathites approached demonstrates the extreme holiness of God's presence. Even the Levites consecrated to tabernacle service could not look upon the ark uncovered without dying. The priests' mediatorial role in preparing the holy things for transport illustrates that approaching God requires proper mediation—a principle fulfilled in Christ who grants believers access to God's presence through His blood (Hebrews 10:19-22).

Historical Context

When Israel broke camp, the priests (not Levites) entered the Holy of Holies to carefully cover the ark and all sacred vessels before the Kohathites could carry them. This procedure prevented any inadvertent viewing of these holy objects. The detailed covering process emphasized that seeing God's glory without proper mediation meant death—a principle tragically demonstrated when Uzzah touched the ark and died (2 Samuel 6:6-7).

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does the requirement for priestly mediation before the ark point to our absolute need for Christ as mediator?
2. What does the danger of approaching God's holiness incorrectly teach about reverence in worship?

Interlinear Text

שָׁלֹךְ	אֶל	אַבְרָהָם	וּבְנֵי	בְּנֵסֶת	עַל	בְּמִקְדָּשָׁן	הַ
shall come	Aaron	and his sons	setteth forward	And when the camp			
H935	H175	H1121	H5265			H4264	
וְהַזְרֵךְ	דְּלֵן	אֶת	פְּרַכְתָּן	הַמִּסְבֵּךְ	וְיַעֲשֵׂה	אֶת	בְּהַ
and they shall take down			vail	the covering	and cover	H0	H853
H3381			H6532	H4539	H3680		
אַרְכָּתָן	אַרְךָתָן						
the ark	of testimony						
H727	H5715						

Additional Cross-References

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

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;