

Numbers 4:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And shall put thereon the covering of badgers' skins, and shall spread over it a cloth wholly of blue, and shall put in the staves thereof.

Analysis

The detailed covering procedure for the ark—'put thereon the covering of badgers' skins, and shall spread over it a cloth wholly of blue'—demonstrates that the most holy object required multiple protective layers. The Hebrew tachash (often translated 'badgers' or 'seals') provided waterproof outer covering, while the blue cloth symbolized heavenly origin. The careful wrapping protected the ark during transport and prevented unauthorized viewing (verse 20). This teaches that holy things require protective reverence. Christ similarly veils divine glory in incarnation, allowing sinners to approach without being consumed.

Historical Context

The ark of the covenant contained the tablets of law, Aaron's rod, and a pot of manna (Hebrews 9:4). Its covering procedure was most elaborate, reflecting its supreme holiness. The blue cloth represented heaven/divinity, the badger skins provided practical protection. Later, when David improperly transported the ark on a cart instead of using Levite-carried poles, Uzzah's death resulted (2 Samuel 6:6-7), showing that God's prescribed methods matter.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does the careful covering of holy things inform our approach to sacred matters?
2. What does Christ's veiling of divine glory in human flesh teach about God's accommodation to our weakness?
3. Why does God care about methods of handling holy things, not just motives?

Interlinear Text

וּפָרֶשׂ וְ	בְּתַחֲשׁ	עוֹר	כָּסוּי	עַל יוֹ	וְנָתַן וְ
and shall spread	of badgers	skins	thereon the covering	H5921	And shall put
H6566	H8476	H5785	H3681		H5414
בַּדִּיּוֹ:	וְשָׂם וְ	מֵלַח עָלֶיהָ	תָּכָה לָת	כָּל יֵל	בְּגָד
in the staves	and shall put	over	of blue	wholly	it a cloth
H905	H7760	H4605	H8504	H3632	H899

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