



The Veil Torn in Two -

The Significance of the Rent Parochet...

*And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit.
And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.
And the earth shook, and the rocks were split. (Matt 27:50)*

*"Forty years before the Temple was destroyed [i.e., 40 years before 70 A.D., or in 30 A.D.] . . .the gates of the Hekel [Temple] opened by themselves, until Rabbi Yohanan B. Zakkai rebuked them [the gates] saying, Hekel, Hekel, why alarmist thou us? We know that thou art destined to be destroyed..."
(Talmud: Soncino version, Yoma 39b).*



According to the three synoptic gospels (Matt 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45), when Jesus died on the cross, the פרוכת (parochet - veil) in the היכל (heichal - Temple) was torn in half, from top to bottom. This veil was used to separate Hakodesh (the holy place) from the Kodesh Hakodashim (Holy of Holies) - the most sacred part of the entire Temple. Only the Kohen Gadol (High Priest) was permitted to pass beyond the parochet once each year (during Yom Kippur) to make atonement for the sins of the people (Leviticus 16). The parochet was a constant reminder that sin separated people from the presence of God.

Solomon's Temple was 30 cubits high (1 Kings 6:2) but according to Josephus, Herod had increased the height to 40 cubits (somewhere near 60 feet high). (*War of the Jews*, Book V, Chapter 1, paragraph 5).

The tearing of the *parochet* at the moment of Yeshua's death dramatically symbolized that by His blood sacrifice as our *Kohen Gadol* after the order of *Malki-Tzedek*, the King of Righteousness (Hebrews 6-7), the way into the *Kodesh Hakodeshim* was now open to those who come to God through Him as mediator.

Hebrews 9:8-9 indicates that the way to the *kodesh hakodashim* was not yet open as long as the outer tent still (i.e., the Levitical priesthood as the ritualistic expression of the covenant made at Sinai), stood, being symbolic of the present age. The present age refers to the dispensation that was passing away even as the *Brit Chadashah* (new covenant) was being established (Hebrews 8:13).



The *paraochet* was symbolic of Mashiach Himself. Messiah is the only way to the Father. (John 14:6) This is symbolized in the fact that the *Kohen Gadol* had to enter the *Kodesh Hakodashim* **through** the parochet. Now Yeshua is our superior *Kohen Gadol*, and His is the better priesthood (Hebrews 7:11-28).

By means of Yeshua, we can now enter the true *Kodesh Hakodashim* made without human hands (Mark 14:58) by means of God's grace and love. Hebrews 10:19-20 says that we enter into the true sanctuary (of which the former was merely a "shadow") by the blood of Yeshua, by the new and living way which he opened for us through the parochet, that is, through **his flesh**.

The fact that Yom Kippur was observed annually and countless other sacrifices repeated daily was meant to be an object lesson to show that sin could not permanently be atoned for by mere animal sacrifices. But by trusting in Yeshua and His perfect sacrifice as our *Kohen Gadol*, the sin barrier between God and us is now removed, and we may now come before His Presence with confidence and boldness:

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:14-16).

The rending of the veil represents, then, two major things. First, it means that the way of access to the LORD God of Israel has been opened up by means of the all-sufficient sacrifice of Jesus for our sins (Romans 6:10). We no longer go through the "offices of Levi" (i.e., Judaism and its rituals) to approach the LORD (Hebrews 13:10). And second, the rent veil means that God Himself is no longer "hidden behind the curtain" in the Jewish Temple as the exclusive possession of Israel. Because of the Lord Jesus, the place where God would "put His Name" (Deut 12:5) has indeed become all the earth! God is "on the loose," so to speak, and His Spirit reaches to the uttermost of peoples who come to put their trust in Him. The LORD is *melekh kol-ha'arets*, King over of all the earth (Psalm 47:7, Isaiah 42:6).

Consequently, he is able to save *to the uttermost* those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. (Hebrews 7:25)

Baruch Hashem! Yeshua has made the way for those who trust in Him!