

Which veil has been torn when Jesus died?

When we look at the instructions HaShem gave to Moshe about the construction of the Tabernacle, the Scriptures speak of a veil and a curtain.

The veil (פֶּאֶרֶקֶת *parokhet* Strong #6532) separates the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies (Ex. 26:31-33).

The curtain (מָסַךְ *masakh* Strong #4536) is the entrance to the Holy Place (Ex. 26:36).

In the Septuagint (the earliest Greek translation of the Tanakh) those words are rendered by καταπετασμα (veil) and επισπαστρον (curtain).

(Strange enough, in verse 37, the Septuagint uses καταπετασμα to translate the Hebrew מָסַךְ. Why didn't they use επισπαστρον as they did in verse 36?)

I thought it would be interesting to know these translations before we went to the New Testament.

"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;" (Matthew 27:51).

The Greek word translated by veil is καταπετασμα.

Just looking at the Greek, we would be inclined to think the veil was rent and not the curtain.

The word translated by temple is ναος. According to Strong (#3485) it is "used of the temple at Jerusalem, but only of the sacred edifice (or sanctuary) itself, consisting of the Holy place and the Holy of Holies (in classical Greek it is used of the sanctuary or cell of the temple, where the image of gold was placed which is distinguished from the whole enclosure)".

Once again, I think this information would support the traditional interpretation that the veil was rent.

I have one question though. Was the veil from the Holy of Holies visible from outside the Temple? Or could people only see the outer curtain?

The following pictures from the second Temple make me think one could see the veil from the Holy of Holies when looking at it from a height (a mountain).



(Picture from Wikipedia)



(Picture found at http://www.templenashville.org/new_site/3_beit_tefillah/jewholidays/images/2nd-temple-jerusalem-f.jpg)

If the veil was not visible from the outside, then it was definitely the curtain that was torn.

Let's have a look at the Epistle to the Hebrews.

"²For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the showbread; which is called the sanctuary. ³And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all;" (Hebrews 9:2-3)

The word *sanctuary* translates the Greek *αγια* (literally *holy things*, the Holy Place).

"Holiest of all" is a translation of *αγια Αγιων* (literally *holy things of the holy things*, the Holy of Holies).

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus," (Hebrews 10:19)

The word *holiest* translates the Greek *των αγιων* (genitive plural of *αγια*).

So, we have two translations for a same Greek word.

Why is it translated sanctuary in one place (Heb. 9:2) and Holy of Holies in another place (Heb. 10:19)?

How is *των αγιων* rendered in different Bible translations?

<i>Sanctuary</i>	Dutch Statenvertaling French Louis Segond Spanish Reina Valera
<i>Holy place(s)</i>	Young French Darby Geneva Bible Tyndale American Standard Version Bishops Bible Luther German Bible
<i>Holiest</i>	King James Version Webster

Of the 12 versions examined, only 2 explicitly translate τῶν ἁγίων as the "Holiest", meaning the Holy of Holies.

To be consistent, we should translate τῶν ἁγίων with "the Holy Place" or "Sanctuary" as it is in Hebrews 9:2. Especially since the Holy of Holies is rendered in a different way in Greek.

(Let me take a risk and give my own translation of Hebrews 10:19.

ἔχοντες οὖν, ἀδελφοί, παρρησίαν εἰς τὴν εἴσοδον τῶν ἁγίων ἐν τῷ αἵματι Ἰησοῦ,

Let us have therefore, brothers, boldness in the blood of Jesus concerning the way leading into the Holy Place.)

From the Greek it doesn't seem easy to indicate beyond any doubt which veil was torn.

Another thing we might consider is our status and Yeshua's status.

According to Peter we are a nation of priests.

"But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:" (1 Peter 2:9).

Yeshua however is our High Priest and only the high priest can enter into the Holy of Holies.

So, as we are not allowed to enter into the Holy of Holies, it could indeed have been the first veil that was torn allowing all people who believe in Yeshua to act as priests in the order of Melchizedek.