

Exodus 19:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount.

Analysis

And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount.

Moses 'brought forth' (וַיַּצֵּא, vayotze) the people—they wouldn't venture out on their own. The same verb used for God bringing Israel OUT of Egypt now describes Moses bringing them OUT to meet God. Redemption leads to revelation; salvation aims at relationship. They 'stood at the nether part' (בְּתַחְתֵּית הַהַר, betachtit hahar)—the mountain's base, the limit of approach. The positioning is pregnant with meaning: as close as possible without dying, near enough to receive yet far enough to survive. This is Old Covenant proximity—close but not intimate, audible but not embraceable. The New Covenant removes this distance: we approach the throne of grace with confidence (Hebrews 4:16).

Historical Context

The spatial arrangement—people at the base, Moses ascending, God at the summit—physically depicts covenant hierarchy. Ancient Near Eastern coronations and theophanies often involved mountains, but Sinai's accessibility-yet-distance is unique.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What does Israel's position at the mountain's base teach about Old Covenant access to God?
2. How does Christ's mediation remove the distance that separated Israel from God at Sinai?

Interlinear Text

וַיַּצְא	וְ	מֹשֶׁה	אֶת	מֵבָשָׁם	לִקְרָב	אֶת	פָּנָים	מִן	פָּאָלָה	יָמִים	בְּ
brought forth	And Moses	H853	the people	H5971	to meet	H7125	with God	H430			H4480
H3318	H4872										

בְּמִן הַ	וְ	לִקְרָב	וְ	בְּמִן הַ	וְ	בְּמִן הַ
out of the camp	and they stood	H320	at the nether	H8482	part of the mount	H2022
H4264						

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 4:10 (References God): Specially the day that thou stoodest before the LORD thy God in Horeb, when the LORD said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children.
