

Exodus 19:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.

Analysis

And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.

Sinai becomes a furnace—'altogether smoke' (עַשְׂן קָלוּ, ashan kullo) means totally enveloped. God 'descended in fire' (יָרַד עַלְיוֹ בְּאֵשׁ, yarad alav ba'esh)—fire manifests consuming holiness. The imagery recalls Egypt's plagues (hail and fire, Exodus 9:24) but now God's fire establishes covenant rather than judgment. The smoke ascends 'like a furnace' (כְּעַשְׂן הַכְּבָשָׁן, ke'eshen hakivshan)—perhaps recalling Abraham's covenant vision (Genesis 15:17). The mountain 'quaked greatly' (יָתַחֲרָד, vayecherad)—creation itself trembles before Creator. This isn't gentle Jesus meek and mild; this is the consuming fire (Hebrews 12:29) whose holiness terrifies.

Historical Context

Some scholars propose volcanic activity at Sinai, but the description exceeds natural phenomena—this is supernatural theophany. The furnace imagery would powerfully speak to Israelites fresh from Egyptian brick kilns—God's refining fire versus Pharaoh's enslaving fire.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. What does fire as God's mode of manifestation teach about His nature?
2. How does Sinai's smoking mountain connect to the pillar of cloud/fire that led Israel?

Interlinear Text

רַבָּה	רַבָּה	סִינַי	עַל	אֲשֶׁר	מִפְנִי	כָּל	וְ
And mount	Sinai	was altogether on a smoke		H3605	because	H834	
H2022	H5514	H6225			H6440		
descended	H5921	the LORD	בְּאֹשֶׁר עַל הַר יְהוָה	וְעַל	כַּעַשְׂן	and the smoke	
H3381		H3068	H784	H5927	H6227		
and the smoke	H3536	of a furnace	תִּחְזַב דְּבָרְכָבְשׁ	כָּל	רַבָּה	מְאֹד:	
H6227		H2729	H3605	H2022	H3966	greatly	

Additional Cross-References

Judges 5:5 (Sin): The mountains melted from before the LORD, even that Sinai from before the LORD God of Israel.

Psalms 144:5 (References Lord): Bow thy heavens, O LORD, and come down: touch the mountains, and they shall smoke.

Revelation 15:8 (Parallel theme): And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

Exodus 3:2 (References Lord): And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.

Jeremiah 4:24 (Parallel theme): I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly.

Genesis 19:28 (Parallel theme): And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace.

Psalms 104:32 (Parallel theme): He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth: he toucheth the hills, and they smoke.

Exodus 24:17 (References Lord): And the sight of the glory of the LORD was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel.

Deuteronomy 33:2 (Sin): And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them.

Deuteronomy 5:22 (References Lord): These words the LORD spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice: and he added no more. And he wrote them in two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me.