

Exodus 19:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the LORD said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever. And Moses told the words of the people unto the LORD.

Analysis

And the LORD said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever. And Moses told the words of the people unto the LORD.

The 'thick cloud' (עֲנָן עֲנָן, anan he'anan) serves dual purposes: veiling God's consuming holiness while revealing His presence. God accommodates human weakness—His glory would annihilate them, so He shrouds Himself. The purpose: 'that the people may hear'—public validation of Moses' prophetic authority. They'll hear God speak TO Moses, establishing Moses' credentials beyond dispute. This public authentication becomes crucial when Moses' authority is later challenged (Numbers 16). The cloud imagery recurs throughout Scripture: Sinai, the tabernacle, the temple, the transfiguration—each time marking divine presence veiled for human protection.

Historical Context

Theophanic clouds appear throughout the Bible as manifestations of God's glory (kavod). In the ancient Near East, clouds often symbolized deity, but Israel's cloud is unique—it's not a god but the veil of the one true God.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. Why does God veil His glory in a cloud rather than revealing Himself directly?
2. How does the Sinai cloud compare to the cloud of God's glory that filled the temple (1 Kings 8:10-11)?

Interlinear Text

אָמַר	יְהִי	אֶל	מֵשֶׁה	הִנֵּה	אֵנֶכִּי	בְּאַלְכָּבָד
said	And the LORD	H413	And Moses	H2009	H595	Lo I come
H559	H3068		H4872		H935	H413
בְּעֵבֶד	יִשְׁמַע	בְּעֵבֶר וְרַקְעֵת	כִּי	בְּדִבָּרִי		
unto thee in a thick	cloud	H5668	may hear	of the people	when I speak	
H5645	H6051		H8085	H5971	H1696	
אֶת	מֵשֶׁה	בְּאַתְּ	לְעוֹלָם	בְּאַתְּ	בְּאַתְּ	
H5973	H1571	H0	H539	H5769	H5046	H853
the words	of the people	H413	And the LORD		told	And Moses
H1697	H5971		H3068			H4872

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 4:36 (Word): Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might instruct thee: and upon earth he shewed thee his great fire; and thou hearest his words out of the midst of the fire.

Exodus 19:16 (Parallel theme): And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled.

Psalms 97:2 (Parallel theme): Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.

Exodus 20:21 (References Moses): And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was.

Exodus 14:31 (Faith): And Israel saw that great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD, and his servant Moses.

Matthew 17:5 (Parallel theme): While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.