

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' (אָנָן הָאָנָן, 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

אֵלַיךְ	בָּ א	אָנֹכִי	הִנֵּה	מֹשֶׁה	אֶל	יְהוָה:	וַיֹּאמֶר
H413	H935	H595	H2009	H4872	H413	H3068	H559
And I come	Lo I come	may hear	of the people	when I speak	cloud	unto thee in a thick	said
בְּדִבְרֵי	הָעָם	יִשְׁמַע	בְּעָב וֶרֶד	הָעָנָן	בְּךָ ב	וְגַם	עִמָּךְ
H1696	H5971	H8085	H5668	H6051	H5645	H1571	H5973
the words	of the people	And the LORD	with thee and believe	thee for ever	told	And Moses	H853
יְהוָה:	אֶל	הָעָם	דִּבְרֵי	וְגַם	עִמָּךְ	וְגַם	עִמָּךְ
H3068	H413	H5971	H1697	H1571	H5973	H1571	H5973
And the LORD	the words	of the people	the words	of the people	of the people	of the people	of the people

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 heardest 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.