

Job 26:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He holdeth back the face of his throne, and spreadeth his cloud upon it.

Analysis

He holdeth back the face of his throne—The verb achaz (אָחַז) means to grasp, seize, or restrain, while pene kise (פְּנֵי כִּסֵּא) literally means 'the face of [his] throne.' Job describes God veiling His throne's glory from human sight. **And spreadeth his cloud upon it** uses parshez (פָּרַשֵּׁז, spreading) with anan (אֲנָן, cloud), the divine covering that both reveals and conceals God's presence (Exodus 19:9, 1 Kings 8:10-11).

This poetic image captures God's transcendence—His glory is too overwhelming for creatures to behold directly. The cloud represents both God's presence and the necessary mediation between holy God and sinful humanity. Moses couldn't see God's face and live (Exodus 33:20), yet Christ is 'the brightness of his glory' (Hebrews 1:3), making the invisible God visible (John 1:18, Colossians 1:15). Job's theology anticipates incarnation: God veils His glory to enable relationship with His creatures.

Historical Context

The cloud imagery pervades Israel's exodus experience—the pillar of cloud by day (Exodus 13:21), the cloud covering Sinai (Exodus 19:16), and the cloud filling the tabernacle (Exodus 40:34-35). For Job, living before these events, to speak of God's self-veiling throne demonstrates remarkable theological insight, possibly from patriarchal revelation or direct divine inspiration.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. Why does God veil His glory rather than revealing it fully to His creatures?
2. How does Christ as the visible image of the invisible God fulfill Job's theology of divine self-veiling?
3. What does God's transcendence teach about proper reverence and worship?

Interlinear Text

עֲנָתָה: עַל יְהֹוָה מִאֵחֶז זָהָב פָּנִים כְּפָנָה פָּרָשׁ זָהָב
He holdeth back the face of his throne and spreadeth his cloud
H270 H6440 H3678 H6576 H5921 H6051

Additional Cross-References

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

Job 22:14 (Parallel theme): Thick clouds are a covering to him, that he seeth not; and he walketh in the circuit of heaven.