

Numbers 16:42

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it came to pass, when the congregation was gathered against Moses and against Aaron, that they looked toward the tabernacle of the congregation: and, behold, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the LORD appeared.

Analysis

"The congregation was gathered against Moses and against Aaron"—incredibly, Israel rebounds from witnessing divine judgment to renewed rebellion. The Hebrew *qahal* (קָהָל, to assemble) suggests organized opposition, not spontaneous complaint. Their accusation (implied from context and v. 41) blamed Moses and Aaron for the deaths, revealing hearts that interpret God's righteous judgment as leadership's cruelty.

"The cloud covered it, and the glory of the LORD appeared"—the kabod Yahweh (כָּבֹד יְהָוָה, glory of the LORD) manifests at the precise moment of rebellion, showing God's vigilant presence. The cloud's covering suggests both God's protective presence for Moses/Aaron and His dangerous holiness toward rebels. Divine glory means judgment for the unrepentant, grace for the faithful.

Historical Context

This occurred the day after Korah's judgment (v. 41), demonstrating how quickly human hearts forget divine displays. The congregation's ability to organize opposition so quickly after witnessing earth opening and fire falling reveals the depth of human depravity and the hardness of unbelieving hearts. This episode would result in 14,700 additional deaths (v. 49).

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How can witnessing God's judgment fail to produce lasting repentance if hearts remain hardened?
2. What does Israel's blaming of Moses for God's judgment reveal about human nature's tendency to justify rebellion?
3. How should church leaders respond when congregations blame them for divine discipline they merely announced?

Interlinear Text

אֶל־אַבְרָהָם וְאֶל־יַעֲקֹב וְאֶל־יְהוָה
H5921 and against Aaron that they looked H413 toward the tabernacle
H175 H4127 H169

וְכָבֵד יְהוָה:
the glory of the LORD

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 16:19 (Glory): And Korah gathered all the congregation against them unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the congregation.

Leviticus 9:23 (Glory): And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation, and came out, and blessed the people: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the people.

Numbers 20:6 (Glory): And Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they fell upon their faces: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto them.

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