

Numbers 9:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And so it was, when the cloud abode from even unto the morning, and that the cloud was taken up in the morning, then they journeyed: whether it was by day or by night that the cloud was taken up, they journeyed.

Analysis

When the cloud abode from even unto the morning (וְיָשָׁבָה אֲשֶׁר־יְהִי הַבָּבָן מִעָרָב עַד־בָּקָר, veyesh asher-yihyeh he'anan me'erev ad-boqer)—A single night's rest before moving again. **Whether it was by day or by night that the cloud was taken up, they journeyed** (וְיָמָם או־לַיְלָה וּנְצָלָה הַבָּבָן וּבָבָעָר, yomam o-laylah vena'alah he'anan venasa'u)—no exemption for inconvenient hours. Obedience doesn't wait for daylight or convenience.

This anticipates Jesus's teaching: 'I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work' (John 9:4). The cloud's movement wasn't subject to human schedules or preferences. Likewise, the Spirit's promptings may come at midnight (Acts 16:9, Paul's Macedonian vision) or dawn (Mark 1:35, Jesus's prayer)—immediate obedience required.

Historical Context

Breaking camp at night required significant organization and faith. Families with children, elderly members, and livestock couldn't simply pack up like a modern camping trip. Yet Israel obeyed, demonstrating that God's timing superseded human convenience—a lesson Jesus reinforced when calling disciples to leave nets immediately (Matthew 4:20).

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does the day-or-night obedience challenge our tendency to negotiate with God about timing and convenience?
2. When has God's timing seemed unreasonable to you, and what did obedience in that moment reveal about faith?

Interlinear Text

And so it was	H3426	H834	H1961	and that the cloud	H6051	בְּנִמְשָׁךְ	בְּנִמְשָׁךְ	עַד	מִשְׁרָב	מִשְׁרָב	עַד
											H5704
in the morning	H1242		H5927	was taken up	H6051	and that the cloud	בְּבֹאָה	בְּבֹאָה	תְּמֻסָּה	תְּמֻסָּה	
											H5265
whether it was by day	H176		H3119	or by night	H3915	was taken up	בְּלִילָה	בְּלִילָה	תְּמֻסָּה	תְּמֻסָּה	
											H6051
then they journeyed											
											H5265

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