

Psalm 97:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.

Analysis

The imagery of clouds and darkness surrounding God echoes Exodus 19-20 (Sinai theophany) and emphasizes divine mystery and transcendence. Yet this obscurity doesn't indicate capriciousness—rather, 'righteousness and judgment' (tsedeq u-mishpat) are His throne's foundation. This paradox teaches that while God's ways may be beyond our comprehension, His character is absolutely trustworthy. Reformed theology emphasizes both God's incomprehensibility (we cannot fully know Him) and His revelation (He has made Himself known truly, if not exhaustively).

Historical Context

The Sinai theophany where God descended in cloud and darkness provided Israel with a foundational experience of God's majestic otherness combined with His covenant faithfulness.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How do you respond when God's ways seem shrouded in mystery and you cannot understand His purposes?
2. What does it mean practically that righteousness and justice are the foundation of God's reign?

Interlinear Text

מִשְׁפָּט וְנִשְׁפָּט לְעֵדָה יְמִינָה וְעֵדָה

Clouds and darkness are round about him righteousness and judgment

H6051

H6205

H5439

H6664

H4941

מִכְּלֵי כְּדָמָיו

are the habitation of his throne

H4349

H3678

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 89:14 (Righteousness): Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face.

Exodus 19:9 (Parallel theme): 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.

Proverbs 16:12 (Righteousness): It is an abomination to kings to commit wickedness: for the throne is established by righteousness.

Psalms 99:4 (Righteousness): The king's strength also loveth judgment; thou dost establish equity, thou executest judgment and righteousness in Jacob.

Romans 11:33 (Judgment): O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

Genesis 18:25 (Righteousness): That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?

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