

Moses Lesson 10 Article Meeting With God

Vers. 9.—**I came unto thee in a thick cloud.** Literally, “in the thickness of a cloud.” God must always veil himself when he speaks with man, for man could not bear “the brightness of his presence.” If he takes a human form that form is a veil; if he appears in a burning bush, the very fire is a shroud. On the present occasion it was the more needful that he should cover himself up, as he was about to draw near to the whole congregation, among whom were many who were impure and impenitent. It was necessary, in order that all might be convinced of the Divine mission of Moses, for all to be so near as to hear him speak out of the cloud; but sinners cannot abide the near presence of God, unless he is carefully hidden away from them. Probably the cloud out of which he now spoke was that which had accompanied the Israelites out of Egypt, and directed their march (ch. 13:21, 22), though this is not distinctly stated **That the people may believe thee for ever** In “the people” are included their descendants; and they are to “believe Moses *for ever*, because the law is in some sense of eternal obligation on all men” (Matt. 5:18).¹

All of the OT Law is but an amplification and application of the Ten Commandments. Nine of the Ten Commandments are repeated in the NT for believers today: *Remember the Sabbath Day*. This is not repeated anywhere in the NT for the church to obey today. Keeping the Sabbath is mentioned in Matt. 12, Mark 2, Luke 6, and John 5; but these all refer to the people of Israel and not to the church. Colossians 2 and Rom. 14–15 teach that believers should not judge one another with reference to holy days or Sabbaths. To say that a person is lost or unspiritual for not keeping the Sabbath is to go beyond the bounds of Scripture.²

Fear of the Lord. The events at Sinai now take on a striking appearance. The God who brought vast judgments on Egypt now thundered at Israel! Boundaries were set around the mountain, and no living thing was permitted to approach its slopes. A thick cloud covered the mountaintop; thunder and lightning constantly played above the camp. Then, dramatically, a voice that stunned Israel’s senses spoke. The Bible tells us that the people “trembled with fear. They stayed at a distance and said to Moses, ‘Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die’ ” (Ex 20:18–19).

Awed and fearful, the willful people of Israel, for a time at least, were cowed. Psalm 111:10 says it: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” And Proverbs 1:7 echoes the thought: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.” The child must learn respect for the parent before he will respond to love.³

He must *set bounds about the mountain*, v. 12, 13. Probably he drew a line, or ditch, round at the foot of the hill, which none were to pass upon pain of death. This was to intimate, (1.) That humble awful reverence which ought to possess the minds of all those that worship God. We are mean creatures before a great Creator, vile sinners before a holy righteous Judge; and therefore a godly fear and shame well become us, Heb. 12:28; Ps. 2:11. (2.) The distance at which worshippers were kept, under that dispensation, which we ought to take notice of, that we may the more value our privilege under the gospel, having *boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus*, Heb. 10:19.⁴

¹ *Exodus Vol. II*. 1909 (H. D. M. Spence-Jones, Ed.). The Pulpit Commentary (107). London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company.

² Wiersbe, W. W. (1993). *Wiersbe’s Expository Outlines on the Old Testament* (Ex 19–20). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

³ Richards, L., & Richards, L. O. (1987). *The teacher’s commentary* (92). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

⁴ Henry, M. (1994). *Matthew Henry’s commentary on the whole Bible: Complete and unabridged in one volume* (123). Peabody: Hendrickson.