

Exod 24:17 to be distinguishing the *kābôd* from the fire. The “appearance” would thus refer to some separable visual phenomenon that cloaked the deity. This is similar to the notion that *melammu* is a covering for deity, rather than a visual phenomenon that is innate to the deity, though Aster (2012, 274) is adamant that parallels here to “Akk. *puluḫtu* and *melammu* are not consistent with the plain meaning of *kabod* YHWH in these passages.”

While Aster treats the final form of these passages, they may reflect chronologically disparate concepts. Mettinger (1982, 85–87) notes the convergence of some features in Exod 24 that suggest P is appropriating an earlier pre-P tradition about a tent of meeting that simply facilitated dialogue between humans and the deity, who arrived cloaked in a cloud (de Vries 2016, 120–24). An example of this earlier tradition is preserved in Exod 33:7–9, where Moses enters the “tent of meeting” (*’ōhel mô’ēd*) and the cloud descends (*yrd*) and sits at the entrance to speak with Moses inside. Verse 11 explains, “And YHWH spoke to Moses face to face [*pānīm ’el-pānīm*].” There is no mention of *kābôd*. The cloud seems to obscure the deity themselves, who descends—perhaps from the heavens or from the summit of the holy mountain—to meet with Moses.²⁶ The difference between this narrative and those involving the *kābôd* go beyond just the addition of the *kābôd*. The verb *yrd*, for instance, describes YHWH’s movement towards the place of meeting, but it never occurs in connection with the *kābôd*, which may or may not be incidental. The closest we get to that concept of descent is the use of *škn*, “to dwell, settle,” to describe the action of the *kābôd* upon the summit of Sinai in Exod 24:16.²⁷ The traditions that lack the concept of the *kābôd*, and likely predate it, also lack reference to the dwelling-place (*miškān*), instead preferring *’ōhel mô’ēd*, “tent of meeting.” The concept of the *miškān* and the description of the *kābôd* “settling” on the summit of Sinai were likely introduced in conjunction with each other.²⁸ It seems likely that the cloud—as a vehicle and attendant of the

²⁶ Note Exod 25:22: “And I will meet with you there [*wənô’adī lākā sām*].”

²⁷ Elsewhere, however, the cloud departs by ascending (*lh*; Exod 40:35–36). This may suggest the dogmatic avoidance of the term *yrd* more than any systematic restructuring of the entire conceptualization of the function of the cloud and the divine presence. See de Vries 2016, 124 and note 18. In Exod 29:43–45, YHWH connects their own dwelling with that of the *kābôd*. In verse 43, YHWH puts the *kābôd* parallel to themselves, stating in reference to the tabernacle, “I will meet with the children of Israel there, and it will be sanctified by my *kābôd*.” In verse 45, YHWH further states, “I will dwell among the children of Israel.”

²⁸ The close relationship of the *miškān* and the *kābôd* is reflected in the materials used to accent and adorn the former. According to Exod 25–27, the interior of the *miškān* was adorned with gold, silver, and brass—materials most naturally and frequently compared to the radiance of deity—and covered with linen curtains of blue, purple, and scarlet, reflecting darkness and heavy clouds (de Vries 2016, 122–23; Kline 1980, 40). Even the cherubim intended to adorn the interior curtains of the *miškān* materialize the beings and