

Deuteronomy 18:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

According to all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not.

Analysis

According to all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Horeb—This recalls the theophany at Sinai (Exodus 19-20; Deuteronomy 5:23-27) when Israel, terrified by the direct divine presence, begged Moses to serve as mediator. **Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not**—The people's fear was appropriate reverence (Hebrews 12:18-21), recognizing that sinful humanity cannot directly encounter God's holiness and survive.

This verse establishes the theological rationale for prophetic mediation. God accommodates human weakness by speaking through prophets rather than overwhelming direct revelation. This foreshadows the ultimate Prophet-Mediator, Jesus Christ, through whom God speaks His final word (Hebrews 1:1-2; John 1:18). The incarnation is God's supreme accommodation—the Word made flesh, God's presence mediated through humanity, making the unapproachable approachable.

Historical Context

The Horeb/Sinai theophany (circa 1446 BC, traditional dating) was Israel's defining covenant moment—thunder, lightning, thick darkness, earthquake, trumpet blast, and the audible voice of God (Exodus 19:16-19; 20:18-21). The

terror was so overwhelming that even Moses trembled (Hebrews 12:21). This experience shaped Israel's understanding that encountering the holy God required mediation. Moses functioned as the archetypal mediator, prefiguring the greater mediation of Christ who brings believers into God's presence without terror (Hebrews 10:19-22).

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does the terror of Sinai help you appreciate the grace of approaching God through Christ's mediation?
2. What does Israel's request for a mediator teach about the necessity of Jesus as the one mediator between God and humanity (1 Timothy 2:5)?

Interlinear Text

אָלָּה יְהִי הַמָּעֵד אֲשֶׁר כִּכְלָה שָׁא לְפָנֶיךָ
H3605 H834 According to all that thou desiredst H7592 H5973 H3068 H430

לְשֵׁם עַד אַסְרֵל לֹא לְאִמְמָר בְּקָרְבָּן בְּחַרְבָּן
in Horeb in the day of the assembly saying H3808 H3254 H8085
H2722 H3117 H6951 H559 H3808 H3254 H8085

הַזֶּאת בְּגָדְלָה בְּאֵשׁ וְאַתָּה אֲלָה יְהִי הַקּוֹל
the voice of the LORD my God this great H2063 H1419
H853 H6963 H3068 H430 H853 fire H784 H2063

לֹא אֵרָא הַמְּמוּת: וְלֹא עַד אָרַא הַמְּמוּת:
neither let me see any more that I die
H3808 H7200 H5750 H3808 H4191

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 20:19 (References God): And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.

Deuteronomy 9:10 (References God): And the LORD delivered unto me two tables of stone written with the finger of God; and on them was written according to all the words, which the LORD spake with you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly.

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