

Deuteronomy 32:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains.

Analysis

For a fire is kindled in mine anger—'ēsh qādēhāh bē'appî (אֵשׁ קָדֵה בְּאָפִי). The verb qādah means to kindle or ignite, depicting God's wrath as consuming fire, echoing Deuteronomy 4:24: 'the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God.' This is not petulant rage but judicial holy wrath against covenant violation.

Shall burn unto the lowest hell—she'ôl tahtîth (שָׁאֹול תַּחַתִּת), the deepest part of Sheol, the realm of the dead. The cosmic scope—**consume the earth...set on fire the foundations of the mountains**—depicts total judgment. Peter likely alludes to this in 2 Peter 3:10-12, describing eschatological fire dissolving creation's elements.

Historical Context

Moses describes God's wrath in cosmic terms that transcend any single historical judgment, pointing to ultimate eschatological judgment. While partially fulfilled in Israel's exiles (Assyrian, Babylonian), the language anticipates final judgment. Jesus's teaching on Gehenna (hell-fire, Matthew 5:22, 18:9) draws on this tradition of divine consuming wrath.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 – Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does the reality of God's wrath as 'consuming fire' challenge modern attempts to eliminate divine judgment from theology?
2. Why must proper fear of God's holiness precede appreciation of His grace and mercy?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	H3588	שָׁאַל	עַד	תִּתְּקַדֵּם	בְּאָפָּה	קָדְמָה	אִשְׁ	כִּי
	For a fire	is kindled	in mine anger	and shall burn			H5704	hell

מִזְרָחִים
H4146 of the mountains H2022

Additional Cross-References

Lamentations 4:11 (Parallel theme): The LORD hath accomplished his fury; he hath poured out his fierce anger, and hath kindled a fire in Zion, and it hath devoured the foundations thereof.

Jeremiah 15:14 (Parallel theme): And I will make thee to pass with thine enemies into a land which thou knowest not: for a fire is kindled in mine anger, which shall burn upon you.

Psalms 86:13 (Parallel theme): For great is thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.

Jeremiah 17:4 (Parallel theme): And thou, even thyself, shalt discontinue from thine heritage that I gave thee; and I will cause thee to serve thine enemies in the land which thou knowest not: for ye have kindled a fire in mine anger, which shall burn for ever.

Numbers 16:35 (Parallel theme): And there came out a fire from the LORD, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense.

Micah 1:4 (Parallel theme): And the mountains shall be molten under him, and the valleys shall be cleft, as wax before the fire, and as the waters that are poured down a steep place.

Zephaniah 3:8 (Parallel theme): Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy.

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