

Deuteronomy 5:25

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now therefore why should we die? for this great fire will consume us: if we hear the voice of the LORD our God any more, then we shall die.

Analysis

The people's fear—"Now therefore why should we die? for this great fire will consume us"—reveals appropriate terror before holy God. The Hebrew 'akal' (consume/devour) acknowledges that God's holiness destroys sin. The warning 'if we hear the voice of the LORD our God any more, then we shall die' demonstrates human inability to endure prolonged divine presence. This validates the need for mediatorial priesthood and ultimately Christ's mediating work. Sinners require a go-between who can approach God safely and represent them. This Old Testament pattern prefigures the gospel's central truth: access to God requires a Mediator.

Historical Context

Israel's terror at Sinai (Exodus 20:18-21) led them to request Moses serve as mediator for all further divine communication. This established the pattern of prophetic mediation continuing throughout Old Testament history. The people's fear was justified—approaching God's holiness improperly resulted in death (Nadab and Abihu, Leviticus 10:1-2; Uzzah, 2 Samuel 6:6-7). Only the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies once yearly with blood sacrifice (Leviticus 16).

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does Israel's fear of God's consuming holiness validate the necessity of mediation for sinners to approach God?
2. In what ways does this passage prefigure Christ as the superior Mediator who enables believers to approach God's throne with confidence (Hebrews 4:16)?

Interlinear Text

ל	פָּה	וְעַתָּה	זֶמַתֵּנוּ	כִּי	כִּי	תִּאְכַּל	נוּ	בָּאָשָׁ
H6258	H4100		Now therefore why should we die	H3588		will consume		fire
			H4191			H398		H784
הִגְדַּל	הַז	אַת	הַגְּדָלָה	לְשָׁמֹעַ	אַת	לְשָׁמֹעַ	אַת	לְ
for this great	H2063	H518	any more	H587	us if we hear	H8085	H853	the voice
H1419			H3254					H6963
עַד	אֱלֹהָיִם	יְהִי	זֶמַתֵּנוּ					
of the LORD	our God	H5750	Now therefore why should we die	H4191				
H3068	H430							

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 18:16 (References God): 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.