Deuteronomy 5:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

> The LORD made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day.

Analysis

Moses declares that the Horeb covenant was made 'not with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day.' This seems paradoxical since most of the Horeb generation had died in the wilderness. The meaning is that covenant obligations transcend individual generations—each generation stands in covenant relationship with God, responsible for the commitments made by their forebears. The covenant is both historical (made at Sinai) and present (binding on current hearers). This establishes the principle that God's covenant is perpetual, not limited to those physically present at its inauguration.

Historical Context

At Horeb/Sinai, the exodus generation (except Caleb and Joshua) received the law but later died in the wilderness due to unbelief (Numbers 14). Moses now addresses their children and grandchildren, emphasizing that covenant responsibility passes to each generation. This pattern continues in Scripture—Josiah's reformation (2 Kings 23), Ezra's renewal (Nehemiah 8-10), and the New Covenant in Christ (Hebrews 8:6-13) all involve present generations embracing historical covenants.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does your relationship with God connect to the covenant faithfulness (or unfaithfulness) of previous generations?
2. What responsibilities do you bear for maintaining covenant commitments in your generation?

Interlinear Text

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א ל אֶת אֶבֹתֵ ינו כָּרַ ת יְהוָ ה אֵת הַבְּרִ ית

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H3808   H854   **with our fathers**   **made**   **The LORD**   H853   **not this covenant**
           H1   H3772   H3068   H1285

<div dir="rtl">

הַזֹ את כִּ י אִתָ נו אֲנַ חְנו אֵ לֶה הַי ֹום פֹ ה

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H2063   H3588   H854   **but with us**   **even us who are all of us**   H6311   **this day**
                H587   H428   H3117

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נו כֻּלָ חַיְּים:

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H3605   **here alive**
      H2416