

Deuteronomy 9:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And I fell down before the LORD, as at the first, forty days and forty nights: I did neither eat bread, nor drink water, because of all your sins which ye sinned, in doing wickedly in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.

Analysis

And I fell down before the LORD, as at the first, forty days and forty nights: I did neither eat bread, nor drink water, because of all your sins which ye sinned, in doing wickedly in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger. Moses' extended intercession demonstrates the costly nature of mediation - he fasts forty days and nights, placing his own body between God's wrath and the people's sin.

The phrase as at the first indicates this was Moses' second forty-day fast. The first brought blessing (receiving the law); the second seeks to avert curse (interceding for covenant-breakers). This doubled sacrifice illustrates the multiplication of effort required to remedy sin compared to establishing righteousness.

Moses' identification with the people's sin, though he personally remained faithful, prefigures Christ's substitutionary atonement. The mediator takes upon himself the burden of others' guilt, standing in the gap between holy God and guilty people.

The description doing wickedly in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger emphasizes that Israel's sin was not mere mistake but willful provocation of God. The Hebrew word for provoke (ka'as) implies deliberately causing grief or vexation - their idolatry was calculated rebellion.

Historical Context

Extended fasting accompanied serious intercession throughout Scripture. Moses' forty-day fast finds parallel in Elijah's forty-day journey to Horeb and Jesus' forty-day wilderness temptation. These periods marked crucial transitions in redemptive history.

Ancient Near Eastern culture recognized fasting as expression of grief, humility, and earnest petition before deity.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. What does Moses' costly intercession teach us about the price of mediating for sinners?
2. How does Moses' fast prefigure Christ's sacrificial intercession for guilty humanity?
3. Why does Moses identify with Israel's sin even though he personally remained faithful?
4. What role does fasting have in earnest prayer and intercession for others?
5. How should the concept of provoking God to anger shape our view of sin's seriousness?

Interlinear Text

וַאֲתַנַּפַּל	לִפְנֵי י	יְהוָה ה	כְּרִאשׁוֹ ה	וְאַרְבַּע ים	יוֹם
And I fell down	before	of the LORD	as at the first	and forty	days
H5307	H6440	H3068	H7223	H705	H3117
וְאַרְבַּע ים	לַיְלָה	לֶחֶם	לֹא א	אֲכָלְתִּי	וּמַיִם
and forty	nights	bread	I did neither eat	water	
H705	H3915	H3899	H3808	H398	H3808
				H4325	
שֶׁתִּי יִתִּי	עַל ל	כָּל	חַטֹּאתֵיכֶם	אֲשֶׁר ר	חַטֹּאתַיִם
nor drink			because of all your sins		which ye sinned
H8354	H5921	H3605	H2403	H834	H2398
לַעֲשׂוֹת	הָרַב ע	בְּעֵינֵי י	יְהוָה ה	לְהַכְעִיפוֹ:	
in doing	wickedly	in the sight	of the LORD	to provoke him to anger	
H6213	H7451	H5869	H3068	H3707	

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 34:28 (References Lord): And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.

Deuteronomy 9:9 (References Lord): When I was gone up into the mount to receive the tables of stone, even the tables of the covenant which the LORD made with you, then I abode in the mount forty days and forty nights, I neither did eat bread nor drink water:

Psalms 106:23 (Parallel theme): Therefore he said that he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them.

Deuteronomy 10:10 (References Lord): And I stayed in the mount, according to the first time, forty days and forty nights; and the LORD hearkened unto me at that time also, and the LORD would not destroy thee.

2 Samuel 12:16 (Parallel theme): David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth.

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