

Deuteronomy 9:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Lest the land whence thou broughtest us out say, Because the LORD was not able to bring them into the land which he promised them, and because he hated them, he hath brought them out to slay them in the wilderness.

Analysis

Lest the land whence thou broughtest us out say, Because the LORD was not able to bring them into the land which he promised them, and because he hated them, he hath brought them out to slay them in the wilderness. Moses appeals to God's reputation among the nations - Israel's destruction would cause pagans to blaspheme God's name and question His power and character.

The argument is brilliant - Moses shows that Israel's destruction would create two false impressions among observers:

1. God was not able to fulfill His promises, suggesting weakness
2. God hated them, suggesting malicious intent.

Both would misrepresent God's true character and power.

This appeal to God's glory demonstrates proper priority in prayer - concern for God's reputation outweighs even concern for human preservation. Moses argues not primarily from Israel's need but from God's honor. The glory of God's name must be upheld among the nations.

Reformed theology emphasizes God's zeal for His own glory as highest good. God

acts to magnify His name, and believers rightly appeal to this in prayer. All God's works ultimately serve to display His character and perfections to creation.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern peoples closely identified deities with their nations. A nation's defeat implied its god's weakness. Israel's destruction in the wilderness would appear to Egyptians and Canaanites as Yahweh's failure, not as judgment on Israel's sin.

This concern for God's reputation among nations recurs throughout Scripture (Ezekiel 36:22-23; Psalm 79:10). God acts to vindicate His name before watching world.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. Why is concern for God's glory the highest motivation in prayer?
2. How does sin by God's people damage His reputation before watching world?
3. What false impressions about God do unbelievers form when observing believers' failures?
4. How should desire for God's name to be honored shape our behavior and prayers?
5. Why is God's zeal for His own glory not selfish but perfectly right?

Interlinear Text

אָשָׁר	רְאֵץ	וְאֶתְרֵץ	וְאֶתְרֵץ	מִשְׁמָרָה
H6435	say	Lest the land	H834	them he hath brought them out
H559		H776		H8033
אָשָׁר	רְאֵץ	וְאֶתְרֵץ	וְאֶתְרֵץ	מִשְׁמָרָה
H1097	was not able	Because the LORD	H935	to bring
H3201		H3068	H413	Lest the land
			H776	H834
אֲוֹתָם	וְמִשְׁנָאתָם	לְבִבְיאָם	אֲלֹא	מִשְׁמָרָה
which he promised	H0	them and because he hated	H853	
H1696		H8135		
בְּמִדְבָּרְנָה	לְבִמְתָּהָם	הַזְּכִיאָם		
them he hath brought them out	H4191	to slay		
H3318			H4057	them in the wilderness

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 14:16 (References Lord): Because the LORD was not able to bring this people into the land which he sware unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness.

Exodus 32:12 (Parallel theme): Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people.