

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

מִשָּׁם	הוֹצִיָאָם	אֲשֶׁר	הָאָרֶץ	יֹאמַר וְ	פֶּן
H8033	H3318	H834	H776	H559	H6435
	them he hath brought them out		Lest the land	say	
אֲשֶׁר	הָאָרֶץ	אֶל	לְהַבִּיֵא	יְהוָה	יָכֹל לֵאמֹר
H834	H776	H413	H935	H3068	H1097
	Lest the land		to bring	Because the LORD	was not able
אוֹתָם	וּמִשְׁנֹאֶת וְ	לָהֶם	דָּבָר		
H853	H8135	H0	H1696		
	them and because he hated		which he promised		
בַּמִּדְבָּר:	לְהַמָּת	הוֹצִיָאָם			
H4057	H4191	H3318			
	them in the wilderness	them he hath brought them out			

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 14:16 (References Lord): Because the LORD was not able to bring this people into the land which he swore 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.