

Deuteronomy 9:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Also in Horeb ye provoked the LORD to wrath, so that the LORD was angry with you to have destroyed you.

Analysis

The golden calf incident at Horeb (Sinai) was Israel's paradigmatic rebellion—creating idols while receiving covenant law. The phrase 'ye provoked the LORD to wrath' uses strong language: *hikhtastem* (provoked to anger). The severity is shown: 'the LORD was angry with you to have destroyed you'—complete annihilation was justified. Only Moses' intercession prevented it (vv. 18-20, 25-29). This demonstrates:

1. sin's seriousness—idolatry merits destruction
2. God's righteous anger against covenant violation
3. mediation's necessity—Moses stood between guilty Israel and holy God, prefiguring Christ's mediatorial work.

Believers owe their salvation to Christ's intercession (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25), not personal merit.

Historical Context

The golden calf incident (Exodus 32) occurred while Moses received law on Mount Sinai. Aaron led the people in making the calf, proclaiming 'these be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt' (Exodus 32:4). This violated the second commandment before the full law was even delivered. God threatened complete destruction (Exodus 32:10); Moses' intercession spared the nation, though 3,000 died in judgment (Exodus 32:28). This became Israel's defining

example of rebellion, referenced repeatedly in Scripture (Nehemiah 9:18; Psalm 106:19-23; Acts 7:41).

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What 'golden calves' (idols of comfort, success, control) do you create while professing to worship God?
2. How seriously do you take God's righteous anger against sin and idolatry in your life?
3. How does understanding Christ's mediation between you and God's just wrath deepen your gratitude and devotion?

Interlinear Text

וּבְחֹרֵב	אֶת הַקִּצְפֹּת	יְהוָה	וַיִּתְאַף	יְהוָה
Also in Horeb	to wrath	H853 so that the LORD	H599 was angry	H3068 so that the LORD
H2722	H7107	H3068	H599	H3068
בְּכֶם	לְהַשְׁמֵ יָד	אֶתְכֶם:		
H0	H8045 with you to have destroyed	H853		