

Exodus 19:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death:

Analysis

And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death:

Boundaries (הִגְבַּלְתָּ, higgbalta) protect God's holiness and human life—approaching holy God presumptuously brings death. The doubled verb 'shall surely die' (מוֹת יָמוּת, mot yumat) emphasizes certainty. This isn't divine capriciousness but ontological reality: unholy flesh cannot survive contact with holy fire. The barriers teach reverence—God is not their buddy but their sovereign LORD. Hebrews 12:18-24 contrasts Sinai's 'do not touch' with Zion's accessibility through Christ's blood. What was forbidden at Sinai (approach to God) becomes invitation in Christ—yet even Christian access requires consecration through the Mediator.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern holy sites often had restricted zones, but Sinai's boundaries are uniquely severe—death for violation. This reflects God's transcendent holiness surpassing all earthly sanctuaries.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. What do the Sinai boundaries teach about the nature of God's holiness?
2. How does Hebrews 12:18-24 contrast Sinai's 'do not touch' with Mount Zion's invitation?

Interlinear Text

וְהִגַּדְתָּ	אֶת	הָעָם	סָבִיב	יֵאמֹר	וְ
And thou shalt set bounds	H853	unto the people	round about	saying	Take heed
H1379		H5971	H5439	H559	H8104
לָכֶם	עַל	וְ	הַנִּגַּח		
H0	to yourselves that ye go not up	into the mount	of it whosoever toucheth		
	H5927	H2022	H5060		
כָּל	הַנִּגַּח	וְ	יָמוּת:		
the border	H3605	of it whosoever toucheth	into the mount	put to death	
H7097		H5060	H2022	H4191	
יָמוּת:					
put to death					
H4191					

Additional Cross-References

Joshua 3:4 (Parallel theme): Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure: come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go: for ye have not passed this way heretofore.

