

# Exodus 20:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.

## Analysis

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**And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.**

Israel requests mediation—'speak thou...let not God speak' (דַּבֵּר־אַתָּה...וְאַל־יְדַבֵּר, dabber-attah ve'al-yedabber). They cannot endure direct divine speech; Moses must intermediate. This establishes mediation's necessity—people need a go-between to approach holy God. Moses mediates the old covenant; Christ the new (1 Timothy 2:5). The phrase 'lest we die' (וְלֹא נָמוּת, velo namut) acknowledges their danger—God's voice kills unholy hearers. Deuteronomy 5:24-27 expands this: they rightly fear death from God's consuming glory. Hebrews contrasts Sinai's 'unbearable command' with Zion's gracious access (Hebrews 12:18-24). Christ endures God's wrath so we can hear God's voice without dying.

## Historical Context

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Israel's request for mediation pleased God (Deuteronomy 5:28)—they rightly assessed their need. The mediatorial principle structures all subsequent revelation—prophets, priests, finally Christ, the perfect Mediator.

## Related Passages

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**James 2:17** — Faith and works

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

## Study Questions

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1. Why is mediation necessary—why can't people approach God directly on their own terms?
2. How does Christ's mediation improve upon Moses' mediation (Hebrews 8:6, 9:15)?

## Interlinear Text

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וַיֹּאמְרוּ	אֶל	מֹשֶׁה	יְדַבֵּר	אֵת	הָ	עַמּוֹ
And they said	H413	unto Moses	Speak	H859		H5973
H559		H4872	H1696			
וְנִשְׁמָעָה		וְאֵל	יְדַבֵּר	הָ	עַמּוֹ	אֱלֹהֵי יִם
thou with us and we will hear	H408	Speak	H5973		but let not God	H6435
H8085		H1696			H430	
נָמוּת:						
with us lest we die						
H4191						

## Additional Cross-References

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**Deuteronomy 18:16** (References God): According to all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not.

**Acts 7:38** (Parallel theme): This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us:

**Exodus 33:20** (Parallel theme): And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.

**Galatians 3:19** (Parallel theme): Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.

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