

Exodus 32:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

Moses appeals to God's reputation among the Egyptians who would say לְנַעֲשֵׂה הַזְּבִיאָם (lera'ah hotzi'am, He brought them out for evil purposes). The argument addresses God's missionary concern—His name's honor among nations. Moses suggests Israel's destruction would vindicate Egypt's gods and slander Yahweh's character, making Him appear malicious or impotent. The plea שׁׁוב מִמְּרֹעַן אֶפְךָ (shuv meicharon apecha, turn from Your fierce wrath) uses anthropomorphic language, and שׁׁוב וְהַנְּחֵם (vehinnachem, repent) means 'relent' or 'change course'—not that God sinned, but that He responds to intercession.

Historical Context

God's concern for His name among nations is a major biblical theme (Ezekiel 36:22-23). Moses understood that God's ultimate purpose was global testimony, not merely Israel's prosperity.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does concern for God's reputation shape your prayers and decisions?
2. What does God's willingness to 'repent' teach about prayer's effectiveness?

Interlinear Text

לֹא מְרַאַתְּ לְמֹתָה	H4100	וְאָמַרְתָּ	H559	מִצְבֵּחַ יְמִינְךָ	H4714	לֹא מְרַאַתְּ בְּשָׁעָה הַזָּרָה	H559	וְאָמַרְתָּ	H7451	בְּשָׁעָה הַזָּרָה	H7451
and say		Wherefore should the Egyptians		and say		and say		For mischief			
did he bring	H3318	them out to slay	H2026		H853		them in the mountains	H2022	and to consume	H3615	
מִעַל	H5921	מִן־	H6440	בְּאָדָם הָ	H127	שׁׁ וּ	H7725	מִמְּרֵר וְלִ	H2740	אָפָּה	H639
and repent	H5162	and say	H5921	For mischief	H7451	לְעַמּוֹבָן	H5971	against thy people		wrath	

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 9:28 (Parallel theme): 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.

Exodus 32:14 (Repentance): And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.

Joshua 7:9 (Parallel theme): For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?

Psalms 85:3 (Judgment): Thou hast taken away all thy wrath: thou hast turned thyself from the fierceness of thine anger.

Psalms 74:18 (Parallel theme): Remember this, that the enemy hath reproached, O LORD, and that the foolish people have blasphemed thy name.

Psalms 78:38 (Judgment): But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath.

Psalms 90:13 (Repentance): Return, O LORD, how long? and let it repent thee concerning thy servants.

Psalms 106:45 (Repentance): And he remembered for them his covenant, and repented according to the multitude of his mercies.

Zechariah 8:14 (Judgment): For thus saith the LORD of hosts; As I thought to punish you, when your fathers provoked me to wrath, saith the LORD of hosts, and I repented not:

Genesis 6:6 (Repentance): And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.