

Exodus 32:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people:

Analysis

God's statement רִאֵיתִי אֶת-הָעָם הַזֶּה (ra'iti et-ha'am hazeh, I have seen this people) echoes His words about their oppression in Egypt (Ex 3:7), but now He sees their rebellion. The description עַמּ-קָשֶׁה-עֲרָף (am-qsheh-oref, stiff-necked people) uses agricultural imagery of an ox that won't bow its neck to the yoke—they were obstinate, resistant to God's guidance. This phrase becomes a repeated characterization of Israel throughout Scripture (Ex 33:3, 34:9; Deut 9:6; Acts 7:51), showing persistent rebellion despite covenant privileges.

Historical Context

Stephen used this phrase in his speech before martyrdom (Acts 7:51), connecting Israel's rejection of Moses with their rejection of Jesus, showing the pattern of resisting God's appointed mediators.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. In what areas of life do you exhibit a 'stiff neck' toward God's guidance?

2. How does persistent exposure to truth without obedience harden the heart?

Interlinear Text

יְאָמַר	יְהִי הָאֵל	מֵשֶׁה אֶל	בָּאִתִּי	אֶת	עַם	בָּאִתִּי
said	And the LORD	H413	unto Moses	I have seen	H853	people
H559	H3068		H4872	H7200		H5971
עַם	וְהִנֵּה הָעָם	בְּשָׁה	בָּאִתִּי	עַנְצָמָה	בָּאִתִּי	בָּאִתִּי
H2009	people	and behold it is a stiffnecked	H6203	H1931		
H5971		H7186				

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 48:4 (Parallel theme): Because I knew that thou art obstinate, and thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass;

Acts 7:51 (Parallel theme): Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.

Exodus 34:9 (References Lord): And he said, If now I have found grace in thy sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray thee, go among us; for it is a stiffnecked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for thine inheritance.

Exodus 33:5 (References Lord): For the LORD had said unto Moses, Say unto the children of Israel, Ye are a stiffnecked people: I will come up into the midst of thee in a moment, and consume thee: therefore now put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee.

Exodus 33:3 (Parallel theme): Unto a land flowing with milk and honey: for I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiffnecked people: lest I consume thee in the way.

Deuteronomy 9:13 (References Lord): Furthermore the LORD spake unto me, saying, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people:

Deuteronomy 31:27 (References Lord): For I know thy rebellion, and thy stiff neck: behold, while I am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious against the LORD; and how much more after my death?

Deuteronomy 9:6 (References Lord): Understand therefore, that the LORD thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiffnecked people.

2 Chronicles 30:8 (References Lord): Now be ye not stiffnecked, as your fathers were, but yield yourselves unto the LORD, and enter into his sanctuary, which he hath sanctified for ever: and serve the LORD your God, that the fierceness of his wrath may turn away from you.

Psalms 78:8 (Parallel theme): And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not stedfast with God.

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