

Exodus 33:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

For I will not go up in the midst of thee—The devastating announcement: God will fulfill His promise but withdraw His immediate presence. The reason is Israel's stubborn rebellion (עָזָב קָשָׁה, am qesheh oref, 'stiff-necked people'). The danger is real: 'lest I consume thee in the way'—God's holiness would destroy unholy people. This reveals the paradox of divine presence: Israel's greatest privilege (God dwelling among them) has become their greatest peril due to sin.

Historical Context

The term 'stiff-necked' comes from agricultural imagery of oxen that refuse the yoke. Leviticus 10:1-2 demonstrates the reality of being consumed by God's holiness when Nadab and Abihu died for unauthorized fire.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does understanding God's holiness deepen your appreciation for Christ's mediation?
2. What 'stiff-necked' areas in your life resist God's direction and endanger your fellowship with Him?

Interlinear Text

אָלָּא אֶלְּאָן אֶלְּאָן תַּיְבְּנֵת כָּל בָּשָׂר וְזָבֵב לֹא כִּי אָלָּה אָלָּה
H413 Unto a land flowing with milk and honey H3588 H3808 for I will not go up
H776 H2100 H2461 H1706 H5927

בְּקָרְבָּן כִּי עִם קָשָׁה אָתָּה עַל כִּי
in the midst people of thee for thou art a stiffnecked H6203 H859
H7130 H3588 H5971 H7186

אֲכַלְבָּנְדָּה אֲכַלְבָּנְדָּה
lest I consume thee in the way H1870
H6435 H3615

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 3:8 (Parallel theme): And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

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.

Jeremiah 11:5 (Parallel theme): That I may perform the oath which I have sworn unto your fathers, to give them a land flowing with milk and honey, as it is this day. Then answered I, and said, So be it, O LORD.

Joshua 5:6 (Parallel theme): For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the people that were men of war, which came out of Egypt, were consumed, because they obeyed not the voice of the LORD: unto whom the LORD sware that he would not shew them the land, which the LORD sware unto their fathers that he would give us, a land that floweth with milk and honey.

Numbers 16:45 (Parallel theme): Get you up from among this congregation, that I may consume them as in a moment. And they fell upon their faces.

Numbers 16:21 (Parallel theme): Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment.

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