

Exodus 5:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the LORD our God; lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword.

Analysis

The request explicitly mentions 'the God of the Hebrews' (אלֹהִים קָעָרִים), using Israel's ethnic designation. The warning that God might 'fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword' appeals to Egyptian fears of divine judgment. The three-day journey motif emphasizes proper worship requires separation from Egypt.

Historical Context

The term 'Hebrews' (Ivrim) appears primarily in contexts involving Egyptians, suggesting it was Egypt's designation for these Semitic foreigners. Ancient cultures understood that gods could strike with plagues—Egypt had experienced natural disasters before.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. Why does genuine worship sometimes require separation from worldly systems?
2. How do you balance cultural engagement with spiritual distinctiveness?

Interlinear Text

וְאַתֶּן לְכָה עַל יְנֻן וַיֹּאמֶר וְ	וְאַתֶּן לְכָה עַל יְנֻן וַיֹּאמֶר וְ	אֱלֹהִים עַל יְנֻן וַיֹּאמֶר וְ	פָּעַב יְמִינְךָ אֶתְנָה בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְ	נִתְּנָה אֶתְנָה בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְ	נִתְּנָה אֶתְנָה בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְ
And they said	The God	of the Hebrews	hath met	H5921	H1980
H559	H430	H5680	H7122		H4994
דְּרָרָה	שְׁלֵשָׁת	יְמִינָה	בְּמִדְבָּר	וְנִזְבְּחָה	לְיהוָה
journey	we pray thee three	days	into the desert	and sacrifice	unto the LORD
H1870	H7969	H3117	H4057	H2076	H3068
בְּקָרְבָּן	אֲוֹ	בְּקָרָב	יִפְגַּע נָנוּ פְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים עַל יְנֻן		
The God	H6435	lest he fall	upon us with pestilence	H176	or with the sword
H430		H6293	H1698		H2719

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 3:18 (Sacrifice): And they shall hearken to thy voice: and thou shalt come, thou and the elders of Israel, unto the king of Egypt, and ye shall say unto him, The LORD God of the Hebrews hath met with us: and now let us go, we beseech thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.