

Psalms 18:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it.

Analysis

The theophany intensifies: smoke from God's nostrils, devouring fire from His mouth, glowing coals. This anthropomorphic language portrays God's fierce response to injustice against His anointed. The Hebrew 'ashan' (smoke) and 'esh' (fire) recall Sinai's burning mountain and anticipate Revelation's throne room imagery. Reformed theology uses such language analogically—God's wrath is real though described in human terms.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern theophany descriptions often included fire, storm, and earthquake as signs of divine presence and power, adapted here for Yahweh's unique character.

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How do you balance God's tenderness with His fearsome power?

2. What does God's fierce response to injustice reveal about His care for His people?

Interlinear Text

עָלָה	עָשָׂן	בְּאַף	וְאֵשׁ	מִפִּי	תִּאָכַל
There went up	a smoke	out of his nostrils	and fire	out of his mouth	devoured
H5927	H6227	H639	H784	H6310	H398
גַּם הָיוּ	בְּעֵר וְ	מִמֶּנּוּ:			
coals	were kindled	H4480			
H1513	H1197				

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 21:9 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger: the LORD shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them.

Psalms 11:6 (Parallel theme): Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup.

Genesis 19:28 (Parallel theme): And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace.

Amos 4:11 (Parallel theme): I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD.

Leviticus 10:2 (Parallel theme): And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.

Numbers 16:35 (Parallel theme): And there came out a fire from the LORD, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense.

Daniel 7:10 (Parallel theme): A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.

