

Deuteronomy 11:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And then the LORD'S wrath be kindled against you, and he shut up the heaven, that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit; and lest ye perish quickly from off the good land which the LORD giveth you.

Analysis

The consequence of apostasy: 'the LORD'S wrath be kindled against you' uses the Hebrew charah aph (חרה אַף, literally 'burn nose/anger'), vivid imagery for divine fury. The judgment is environmental: 'he shut up the heaven, that there be no rain.' The Hebrew atsar (אַצָּר, 'restrain, close') indicates deliberate divine action withholding blessing. The result: agricultural catastrophe—'the land yield not her fruit'—leading to death: 'ye perish quickly from off the good land.' Covenant curses (Deuteronomy 28:23-24) would be enforced. This establishes the prophetic pattern: apostasy → drought → famine → death/exile.

Historical Context

This judgment materialized repeatedly in Israel's history. Elijah's drought (1 Kings 17-18) punished Ahab's Baalism. Jeremiah warned Judah of coming judgment through drought and exile (Jeremiah 14). The seventy-year exile fulfilled covenant curses. Post-exilic Haggai explained poor harvests as divine discipline (Haggai 1:9-11). Weather became theological barometer of covenant status.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does this passage challenge modern assumptions that natural disasters are religiously neutral events?
2. What does God's jealousy (willingness to judge apostasy severely) reveal about His love and holiness?
3. How should Christians understand divine discipline and consequences in the New Covenant age?

Interlinear Text

אַתָּה	וְעָצָם	רַבָּתָה	בְּכָה	וְיִתְּהַנֵּה	וְיִתְּהַנֵּה	אַתָּה
be kindled	wrath	And then the LORD'S			against you and he shut up	H853
H2734	H639	H3068	H0		H6113	
the heaven	H3808	H1961	that there be no rain	and that the land	H3808	giveth
H8064			H4306	H127		H5414
אַתָּה	וְיִבּוֹלְתָה	וְיִאָבֹדְתָה	מִהְרָבָה	לְפָנָי	מִעַל	לֹא
H853	not her fruit	and lest ye perish	quickly	H5921	land	נָתַת
	H2981	H6	H4120		H776	
לְכָמָה	נָתַת	וְיִתְּהַנֵּה				
from off the good	H834	And then the LORD'S	giveth	H0		
H2896		H3068	H5414			

Additional Cross-References

1 Kings 8:35 (Parallel theme): When heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee; if they pray toward this place, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin, when thou afflictest them:

Deuteronomy 4:26 (Parallel theme): I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it; ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed.

Deuteronomy 6:15 (References Lord): (For the LORD thy God is a jealous God among you) lest the anger of the LORD thy God be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth.

Amos 4:7 (Parallel theme): And also I have withholden the rain from you, when there were yet three months to the harvest: and I caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city: one piece was rained upon, and the piece whereupon it rained not withered.

2 Chronicles 6:26 (Parallel theme): When the heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee; yet if they pray toward this place, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin, when thou dost afflict them;

1 Kings 17:1 (References Lord): And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

2 Chronicles 7:13 (Parallel theme): If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people;