

Deuteronomy 11:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known.

Analysis

The curse is the alternative: 'a curse, if ye will not obey...but turn aside out of the way...to go after other gods, which ye have not known.' The condition inverts verse 27: disobedience, specifically idolatry, triggers curse. The phrase 'turn aside out of the way' (sur min-haderek, סוּר מִן־הַדֶּרֶךְ) means departing from God's path. The Hebrew derek (דֶּרֶךְ, 'way') represents lifestyle and conduct (see Psalm 1:6). Following 'other gods' constitutes covenant violation deserving curse. The phrase 'which ye have not known' emphasizes these gods' foreign, alien character—Israel had experienced Yahweh's faithfulness; abandoning Him for unknown gods is ultimate folly and ingratitude.

Historical Context

This warning proved prescient. Judges records repeated apostasy: 'they forsook the LORD, and served Baal and Ashtaroth' (Judges 2:13). Both kingdoms eventually fell to idolatry: Northern Kingdom's golden calves and Baalism led to Assyrian exile (722 BC); Judah's high places and foreign gods led to Babylonian exile (586 BC). The covenant curses of Deuteronomy 28:15-68 were literally fulfilled in exile horrors. Apostasy's consequences validate God's warning.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What modern 'other gods' (money, pleasure, success, ideology) tempt believers away from exclusive devotion to Christ?
2. How does ingratitude (abandoning the God who saved you for unknown alternatives) characterize apostasy?
3. What warning signs indicate we're 'turning aside out of the way' before complete apostasy occurs?

Interlinear Text

וְהִקְלָלָה	אֵם	לֹא	תִשְׁמָעוּ	אֶל	מִצְוֹת	יְהוָה
And a curse	H518	H3808	if ye will not obey	H413	the commandments	of the LORD
H7045			H8085		H4687	H3068
אֱלֹהִים	וְסָרְתָם	מִן	הַדֶּרֶךְ	אֲשֶׁר	אֲנִי	מִצְוֶה
gods	but turn aside	H4480	out of the way	H834	H595	which I command
H430	H5493		H1870			H6680
אֲתֶכֶם	הַיּוֹם	לְכַת	אַחֲרַי	אֱלֹהִים	אַחֲרֵים	אֲשֶׁר
H853	you this day	H1980	after	gods	other	H834
	H3117		H310	H430	H312	H3808
וְלֹא יָדְעָתֶם:						
which ye have not known						
H3045						

Additional Cross-References

Galatians 3:10 (Word): For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

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