

# Deuteronomy 27:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's landmark. And all the people shall say, Amen.

## Analysis

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**Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's landmark**—The Hebrew *massig ge'vul* (מַסִּיג גְּבוּל) means moving boundary markers to steal land by fraud. Ancient landmarks were stone markers defining property inheritance, making their removal equivalent to theft, false witness, and covenant violation simultaneously. Proverbs 22:28 and 23:10 explicitly forbid this practice.

In Israel's theology, land was ultimately God's possession, distributed by divine allotment (Numbers 26:52-56). Each tribe's and family's inheritance was sacred trust, not mere real estate. Removing landmarks didn't just rob neighbors—it challenged God's sovereign land distribution. The curse falls on secrecy again: landmark removal happened covertly, under cover of night or during boundary disputes when witnesses were scarce.

This principle extends beyond literal landmarks to protecting rightful ownership, inheritance rights, and established boundaries. Hosea 5:10 condemns Judah's princes as "them that remove the bound," using this imagery for covenant violations and territorial aggression.

## Historical Context

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Archaeological evidence shows that ancient boundary markers were indeed moved in land disputes. The Egyptian Instructions of Amenemope (similar to Proverbs) also prohibits moving boundary stones, showing this was a widespread ancient

concern. However, Israel's prohibition had theological grounding—the land was Canaan inheritance promised to Abraham's seed, making boundaries sacred. The Jubilee laws (Leviticus 25) further protected ancestral land from permanent alienation.

## Related Passages

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**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

## Study Questions

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1. What modern equivalents to 'removing landmarks' might you be guilty of—shifting ethical boundaries, encroaching on others' rights, or stealing through legal but immoral means?
2. How does understanding land as God's gift (not earned possession) shape Christian stewardship of property and resources?

## Interlinear Text

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אָר וּר	מַסֵּ יג	גִּבּ וּל	רֵיעַ הוּ	וְאָמַר	כָּל
<b>Cursed</b>	<b>be he that removeth</b>	<b>landmark</b>	<b>his neighbour's</b>	<b>shall say</b>	
H779	H5253	H1366	H7453	H559	H3605
וְכָל הָעָם	אָמֵן:				
<b>And all the people</b>	<b>Amen</b>				
H5971	H543				

## Additional Cross-References

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**Deuteronomy 19:14** (Parallel theme): Thou shalt not remove thy neighbour's landmark, which they of old time have set in thine inheritance, which thou shalt inherit in the land that the LORD thy God giveth thee to possess it.

**Proverbs 22:28** (Parallel theme): Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set.

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