

Deuteronomy 27:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Cursed be he that maketh the blind to wander out of the way.
And all the people shall say, Amen.

Analysis

Cursed be he that maketh the blind to wander out of the way—This curse prohibits exploiting disability or vulnerability. The Hebrew *mash'geh* (מַשְׁגֵּה) means to lead astray, cause to err, or mislead. While literal blindness is in view, the principle extends to any exploitation of those lacking knowledge, power, or ability to defend themselves.

Leviticus 19:14 similarly commands, "Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumblingblock before the blind." Both texts reveal God's protective concern for the vulnerable and His judgment on those who abuse power disparities. The way (דֶּרֶךְ) can be physical path or metaphorical life-path—misleading the blind encompasses both causing physical harm and giving false counsel.

Jesus applied this imagery to religious leaders who were "blind guides" (Matthew 15:14, 23:16-24), leading people astray spiritually. The curse thus extends to false teachers who exploit the spiritually vulnerable through deceptive doctrine.

Historical Context

Ancient cultures often viewed disabilities as divine punishment or signs of disfavor, leading to social marginalization. Israel's law uniquely protected the disabled and vulnerable, reflecting God's character as defender of the weak (Psalm 146:8-9). The curse's placement among serious sins like idolatry and sexual immorality

elevates care for the vulnerable to fundamental covenant obligation, not optional charity.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How might you be 'making the blind wander'—taking advantage of those with less knowledge, power, or resources than yourself?
2. What responsibility do Christians have to protect the vulnerable from exploitation by unjust systems and misleading teaching?

Interlinear Text

אָר ור	מְשֶׁנָּה ה	עוֹר	בֶּדֶךָ	וְאָמַר	כָּל
Cursed	to wander	be he that maketh the blind	out of the way	shall say	H3605
H779	H7686	H5787	H1870	H559	
וְכָל הָעָם	אָמֵן:				
And all the people	Amen				
H5971	H543				

Additional Cross-References

Leviticus 19:14 (Curse): Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumblingblock before the blind, but shalt fear thy God: I am the LORD.

Proverbs 28:10 (Parallel theme): Whoso causeth the righteous to go astray in an evil way, he shall fall himself into his own pit: but the upright shall have good things in possession.

Matthew 15:14 (Parallel theme): Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

Isaiah 56:10 (Parallel theme): His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber.

Job 29:15 (Parallel theme): I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame.

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