

Deuteronomy 27:25

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Cursed be he that taketh reward to slay an innocent person.
And all the people shall say, Amen.

Analysis

Cursed be he that taketh reward to slay an innocent person—the Hebrew *shochad* (שֹׁחַד, bribe/reward) identifies corrupt judges, assassins-for-hire, or false witnesses paid to secure wrongful execution. The victim is *naki* (נָקִי, innocent/clean), legally blameless of capital crimes. This curse targets the corruption of justice for financial gain, echoing Exodus 23:7-8 and Deuteronomy 16:19.

The specificity—not just taking bribes generally, but specifically to kill the innocent—highlights bloodguilt as particularly abominable. Those who pervert justice to kill share guilt with the actual executioner. Jesus died as the ultimate innocent one killed through bribed false witnesses and corrupt religious/political theater (Matthew 26:59-66; John 19:6). Every Christian says 'Amen' to God's curse on those who crucified Christ, yet recognizes our own sin put Him there.

Historical Context

Ancient courts operated with fewer procedural safeguards than modern systems. Two or three witnesses could secure execution (Deuteronomy 17:6), making false testimony especially dangerous. Professional witnesses who testified for payment corrupted justice, as did judges who accepted bribes to condemn the innocent while acquitting the guilty. The prophets repeatedly condemned such perversion of justice (Isaiah 1:23; Micah 3:11; Amos 5:12), which provoked God's judgment on Israel.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does this curse apply to modern systems where legal outcomes can be 'purchased' through expensive lawyers or influence?
2. When you witness injustice against the innocent, do you say 'Amen' to God's curse by pursuing justice, or remain complicitly silent?

Interlinear Text

אָרוּר	לֵקֵחַ	שָׂחַד	לְהַכּוֹת	אֶת	פֶּשַׁע	אֶת	נֶפֶשׁ	יָדָיו
Cursed	be he that taketh	reward	to slay		person			an innocent
H779	H3947	H7810	H5221		H5315			H5355
וְאָמַר	כָּל	הָעָם	אָמֵן:					
shall say		And all the people	Amen					
H559	H3605	H5971	H543					

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 15:5 (Parallel theme): He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved.

Deuteronomy 10:17 (Parallel theme): For the LORD your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward:

Deuteronomy 16:19 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous.

