

Deuteronomy 28:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The LORD shall smite thee with a consumption, and with a fever, and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning, and with the sword, and with blasting, and with mildew; and they shall pursue thee until thou perish.

Analysis

The LORD shall smite thee with a consumption, and with a fever, and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning—This verse catalogs seven plagues, showing comprehensive physical affliction. The Hebrew terms describe various diseases: shakhefet (שָׁחַף, consumption/tuberculosis, literally 'wasting disease'), qaddakhat (קָדַח, fever), dalleqet (דָּלַעַת, inflammation/burning), and kharkur (חָרַק, extreme burning/scorching heat, possibly severe fever or sunstroke). These internal afflictions parallel the external agricultural curses that follow: kherev (חֶרֶב, sword/warfare), shiddafon (שִׁדְדָּפוֹן, blight/scorching wind that destroys crops), and yerakon (יֵרָקוֹן, mildew/plant disease causing yellowing).

The comprehensiveness is deliberate—body and land, internal health and external security, personal suffering and agricultural failure all converge. The verb radaph (רָדַף, pursue) means these afflictions actively hunt covenant violators: uradfukha ad avodekha (וּרְדִּיכָּהָ אֶדְוֹדֶיכָּהָ, and they shall pursue you until you perish). This personification of disease and disaster as pursuing enemies echoes ancient Near Eastern curse formulae but intensifies them—these aren't impersonal natural disasters but divinely-directed judgments that relentlessly track down covenant violators. The list anticipates Revelation's apocalyptic plagues, showing continuity in biblical judgment patterns.

Historical Context

Ancient Israel lacked modern medicine, making these diseases often fatal. Consumption (tuberculosis) caused wasting death; fevers from malaria, typhoid, or other infections killed thousands; inflammation could indicate various internal diseases; extreme heat/sunstroke threatened agricultural workers. The agricultural curses (blight and mildew) devastated grain crops, causing famine. Sword indicates military invasion. The combination—disease, crop failure, and warfare—characterized judgment periods: Assyrian/Babylonian invasions brought all three simultaneously. Jeremiah repeatedly warned of 'sword, famine, and pestilence' as covenant curses (Jeremiah 14:12; 21:7, 9; 24:10; 27:8, 13). Archaeological evidence shows destruction layers in 8th-6th century BC Israeli cities, validating these warnings.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does the 'pursuing' nature of covenant curses demonstrate that judgment isn't passive consequence but active divine opposition?
2. What does the combination of physical disease, agricultural failure, and military defeat reveal about comprehensive judgment affecting every dimension of life?

Interlinear Text

יִכָּךְ הַ	! הָיָה	בְּשֹׁחַ פֶּת	וּבִקְדַח חֵת
shall smite	The LORD	thee with a consumption	and with a fever
H5221	H3068	H7829	H6920
וּבִדְלָ קָת	וּבְחִיחִיחַ	וּבִיחַ רֶב	
and with an inflammation	and with an extreme burning	and with the sword	
H1816	H2746	H2719	
וּבְשָׂדֵף וְ	וּבִצֵּק וְ	וְיִדָּפּ וְ	עַד
and with blasting	and with mildew	and they shall pursue	
H7711	H3420	H7291	H5704
אַבְדָּךְ:			
thee until thou perish			
H6			

Additional Cross-References

Amos 4:9 (References Lord): I have smitten you with blasting and mildew: when your gardens and your vineyards and your fig trees and your olive trees increased, the palmerworm devoured them: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD.

Leviticus 26:16 (Parallel theme): I also will do this unto you; I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart: and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it.

1 Kings 8:37 (Parallel theme): If there be in the land famine, if there be pestilence, blasting, mildew, locust, or if there be caterpillar; if their enemy besiege them in the land of their cities; whatsoever plague, whatsoever sickness there be;

Haggai 2:17 (References Lord): I smote you with blasting and with mildew and with hail in all the labours of your hands; yet ye turned not to me, saith the LORD.

Jeremiah 14:12 (Word): When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and when they offer burnt offering and an oblation, I will not accept them: but I will consume them by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence.

2 Chronicles 6:28 (Parallel theme): If there be dearth in the land, if there be pestilence, if there be blasting, or mildew, locusts, or caterpillers; if their enemies besiege them in the cities of their land; whatsoever sore or whatsoever sickness there be:

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