

Deuteronomy 28:30

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thou shalt betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her:
thou shalt build an house, and thou shalt not dwell therein:
thou shalt plant a vineyard, and shalt not gather the grapes
thereof.

Analysis

Thou shalt betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her—the Hebrew *arash* (אָרַשׁ, betroth) indicates formal engagement, making this violation especially heinous: covenant-breakers would lose their betrothed to enemy rapists. **Thou shalt build an house, and thou shalt not dwell therein** fulfills the curse of Amos 5:11 and Micah 6:15—labor without enjoyment of its fruit.

Thou shalt plant a vineyard, and shalt not gather the grapes inverts the blessing of verse 8. The triple repetition (wife, house, vineyard) emphasizes complete futility in life's fundamental endeavors: family, security, sustenance. This is measure-for-measure justice: Israel enjoyed Canaan's vineyards they didn't plant (Deuteronomy 6:10-11); now others would enjoy theirs.

Historical Context

Written circa 1406 BC, this curse found literal fulfillment during the Babylonian conquest (586 BC) when Nebuchadnezzar's armies raped Israelite women (Lamentations 5:11), destroyed houses (2 Kings 25:9), and foreigners consumed Israel's agricultural produce while Jews went into exile.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does covenant judgment reverse the conquest blessings Israel initially received in Canaan?
2. What principle of divine justice appears in experiencing the same treatment Israel inflicted on Canaan?

Interlinear Text

אִשָּׁה ה	תֵּאֲרֶה ש	וְאִישׁ	אַחֵר	יִשְׁגְּלֶנָּה	בַּיִת
a wife	Thou shalt betroth	man	and another	H7693	an house
H802	H781	H376	H312		H1004
וְבָנֶיהָ	וְלֹא	תֵשֵׁב ב	בַּיִת	וְכַרְמֵם	
with her thou shalt build	H3808	and thou shalt not dwell	H0	a vineyard	
H1129		H3427		H3754	
וְתַטְּעָם	וְלֹא	תִּחַלְלֵנָּה:			
therein thou shalt plant	H3808	and shalt not gather the grapes			
H5193		H2490			

Additional Cross-References

Amos 5:11 (Parallel theme): Forasmuch therefore as your treading is upon the poor, and ye take from him burdens of wheat: ye have built houses of hewn stone, but ye shall not dwell in them; ye have planted pleasant vineyards, but ye shall not drink wine of them.

Jeremiah 8:10 (Parallel theme): Therefore will I give their wives unto others, and their fields to them that shall inherit them: for every one from the least even unto

the greatest is given to covetousness, from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely.

Job 31:10 (Parallel theme): Then let my wife grind unto another, and let others bow down upon her.

Jeremiah 12:13 (Parallel theme): They have sown wheat, but shall reap thorns: they have put themselves to pain, but shall not profit: and they shall be ashamed of your revenues because of the fierce anger of the LORD.

Hosea 4:2 (Parallel theme): By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood.

Lamentations 5:2 (Parallel theme): Our inheritance is turned to strangers, our houses to aliens.

Micah 6:15 (Parallel theme): Thou shalt sow, but thou shalt not reap; thou shalt tread the olives, but thou shalt not anoint thee with oil; and sweet wine, but shalt not drink wine.

Zephaniah 1:13 (Parallel theme): Therefore their goods shall become a booty, and their houses a desolation: they shall also build houses, but not inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, but not drink the wine thereof.