

Deuteronomy 28:31

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thine ox shall be slain before thine eyes, and thou shalt not eat thereof: thine ass shall be violently taken away from before thy face, and shall not be restored to thee: thy sheep shall be given unto thine enemies, and thou shalt have none to rescue them.

Analysis

Thine ox shall be slain before thine eyes, and thou shalt not eat thereof. Ancient Israel's agricultural economy depended on oxen for plowing and threshing—watching your ox slaughtered without benefiting demonstrates absolute powerlessness. Shachat (שָׁחַת, slain) indicates ritual or violent slaughter, here by enemies who confiscate livestock as spoils of war.

Thine ass shall be violently taken away uses gazal (גָּזָל, seized by violence), emphasizing robbery with impunity. **Thy sheep shall be given unto thine enemies** means total economic devastation—livestock represented wealth, inheritance, and livelihood. **And thou shalt have none to rescue them** (ein moshia, עַיְשָׂה לֹא) indicates no deliverer—the ultimate abandonment under covenant curse when God Himself becomes Israel's enemy rather than defender.

Historical Context

Moses pronounced this circa 1406 BC. When Babylon besieged Jerusalem (586 BC), the invaders confiscated all livestock as Jeremiah 52:17-23 records. Earlier, during Assyrian invasions (8th century BC), Israel's northern kingdom suffered identical livestock confiscation, fulfilling this curse precisely.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. What does watching your ox slain without eating it reveal about powerlessness under divine judgment?
2. How does having "none to rescue" demonstrate that covenant judgment removes human deliverers?

Interlinear Text

מִתְאַכֵּל	תִּאַכֵּל	אַל	לְעֵינֶיךָ	בָּעֵינֶיךָ	אַל	שׁוֹרֵךְ	מִתְאַכֵּל	תִּאַכֵּל	אַל	לְעֵינֶיךָ	בָּעֵינֶיךָ	אַל	שׁוֹרֵךְ
Thine ox	shall be slain	before thine eyes			H3808	and thou shalt not eat			H4480				
H7794	H2873	H5869				H398							
thereof thine ass	shall be violently taken away	from before thy face			H3808								
H2543	H1497	H6440											
and shall not be restored		H0	to thee thy sheep	shall be given		unto thine enemies							
H7725		H6629		H5414		H341							
and thou shalt have none to rescue		H0	מִוְשִׁיעַ	לֹבֶן	H3467								
H369													

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