

Deuteronomy 28:35

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The LORD shall smite thee in the knees, and in the legs, with a sore botch that cannot be healed, from the sole of thy foot unto the top of thy head.

Analysis

The LORD shall smite thee in the knees, and in the legs, with a sore botch that cannot be healed, from the sole of thy foot unto the top of thy head. This returns to physical afflictions (cf. v.27) with specific targeting: birkayim (ברקאים, knees) and shoqayim (שׁוֹקָעִים, legs) were essential for mobility, work, and worship (kneeling). The sh'chin ra (שׁחִין רָעָה, evil/malignant boil) **that cannot be healed** echoes verse 27.

From the sole of thy foot unto the top of thy head employs merism (naming extremes to indicate totality)—comprehensive affliction covering the entire body. Job's sufferings (Job 2:7) match this description, though Job was righteous, not under covenant curse. This demonstrates God's sovereignty to afflict even the righteous for His purposes, while covenant-breakers suffer as just judgment.

Historical Context

Moses delivered this warning circa 1406 BC. Throughout Israel's history, various diseases afflicted covenant-breakers as judgment—King Jehoram suffered incurable intestinal disease (2 Chronicles 21:18-19), and King Uzziah contracted leprosy for presumption (2 Chronicles 26:19-21), exemplifying this curse's fulfillment.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What does affliction from head to foot signify about the comprehensive nature of covenant judgment?
2. How does this curse being "incurable" emphasize human inability to remedy divine judgment?

Interlinear Text

יְאַכֵּל	בְּרִךְ	עַל	כִּי	בְּשַׁחַם	יְהִי	הָיָה	יְאַכֵּל
shall smite	The LORD	botch	with a sore	H5921	thee in the knees	H5921	
H5221	H3068	H7822	H7451		H1290		
בְּגַלְגָּל	מִן	אַפָּלָה	לֹא	תָּוֹכַן	אֲשֶׁר	בְּשַׁחַם	בְּגַלְגָּל
and in the legs	H834	H3808	that cannot	H3201	be healed	H7495	from the sole
H7785						H3709	H7272
עַל תִּעַל	בְּגַלְגָּל:						
H5704	unto the top of thy head						
	H6936						

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 28:27 (References Lord): The LORD will smite thee with the botch of Egypt, and with the emerods, and with the scab, and with the itch, whereof thou canst not be healed.

