

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 (בִּרְכַּיִם, knees) and shoqayim (שׁוֹקַיִם, legs) were essential for mobility, work, and worship (kneeling). The sh'chin ra (שֶׁחִין רָע, 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

וְעַל	הַבְּרָכִים	עַל	כָּעֵ	בְּשֹׁחַ יָן	יְהוָה	יִכָּךְ ה
H5921	H1290	H5921	H7451	H7822	H3068	H5221
thee	in the knees	with a sore	botch	The LORD	shall smite	
וְעַל	מִן הַ	לְהִרְפֹּא	תוֹכָ ל	אֲשֶׁר	הַשֶּׁקֶם	וְעַל
H7272	H3709	H7495	H3201	H834	H7785	H5704
of thy foot	from the sole	be healed	that cannot	and in the legs	unto the top of thy head	

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.

