

Deuteronomy 28:36

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The LORD shall bring thee, and thy king which thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation which neither thou nor thy fathers have known; and there shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone.

Analysis

The LORD shall bring thee, and thy king which thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation which neither thou nor thy fathers have known. The exile curse reaches its climax—not just military defeat but deportation to goy asher lo-yada'ta (גוי אשר לא ידעת, a nation you have not known). **And thy king** means the monarchy instituted later (1 Samuel 8) would fail to prevent exile—human kingship cannot protect from divine judgment.

And there shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone. Ultimate irony: Israel's idolatry in the land would result in forced worship of idols in exile. The phrase etz va-eben (עץ ובן, wood and stone) mocks idols' lifeless materiality (Psalm 115:4-8). What they chose voluntarily would become their slavery. Jeremiah 16:13 and Ezekiel 20:32-38 depict this forced idolatry during Babylonian exile when Jewish captives lived among pagan temple worship.

Historical Context

Written circa 1406 BC, this prophecy precisely predicted the Babylonian exile (586 BC) when King Zedekiah was captured, blinded, and taken to Babylon along with Judah's population (2 Kings 25:7-11). In Babylon, Jews were surrounded by idol worship and pressure to conform, fulfilling "serve other gods, wood and stone."

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does the exile of the king demonstrate that human monarchy cannot substitute for covenant faithfulness?
2. What irony exists in being forced to serve the idols one formerly chose to worship?

Interlinear Text

תְּקַנֵּ יְמֵ אֲשֶׁר מֶלֶךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה יְלֹּוּךְ
H1980 The LORD H853 H853 thee and thy king H834 which thou shalt set
H3068 H1471 H4428 H6965

אֲפָתָה יְדֵ שָׁפָתָה לֹא אֲשֶׁר גַּדְעָן אֶל עַל יְהֹוָה
H5921 H413 over thee unto a nation H1471 H834 H3808 H3045 have known H859

אֱלֹהִים שְׁמֵךְ יְהֹוָה תִּאֱבֹתָת יְהֹוָה
which neither thou nor thy fathers and there shalt thou serve H8033 gods H430
H1 H5647

אֶתְנָן עַז אַחֲרֵי יְמֵי אֶתְנָן
other wood and stone H312 H6086 H68

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 16:13 (References God): Therefore will I cast you out of this land into a land that ye know not, neither ye nor your fathers; and there shall ye serve other gods day and night; where I will not shew you favour.

Deuteronomy 4:28 (References God): And there ye shall serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell.

2 Kings 25:11 (Kingdom): Now the rest of the people that were left in the city, and the fugitives that fell away to the king of Babylon, with the remnant of the multitude, did Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard carry away.

2 Chronicles 36:6 (Kingdom): Against him came up Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and bound him in fetters, to carry him to Babylon.

2 Chronicles 36:20 (Kingdom): And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia:

Deuteronomy 28:64 (References God): And the LORD shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone.

2 Chronicles 36:17 (Kingdom): Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age: he gave them all into his hand.

2 Chronicles 33:11 (Kingdom): Wherefore the LORD brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, which took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon.