

Deuteronomy 28:38

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thou shalt carry much seed out into the field, and shalt gather but little in; for the locust shall consume it.

Analysis

Thou shalt carry much seed out into the field, and shalt gather but little in; for the locust shall consume it. The futility curse begins—intense labor producing meager results. The Hebrew arbeh (locust) was one of the Exodus plagues against Egypt (Exodus 10:4-15); now God would turn this same judgment weapon against disobedient Israel. What once demonstrated Yahweh's power on Israel's behalf would demonstrate His power against them.

Agricultural frustration reverses the promised land's flowing with milk and honey. Where covenant obedience brought thirty, sixty, hundredfold harvests (Mark 4:8), covenant violation brought decimation. Joel 1:4 later described locust devastation as divine judgment requiring national repentance.

Historical Context

Locust plagues were periodic devastations in ancient Near East agriculture, but Moses presents them here as covenant curses, not random natural disasters. Israel's agrarian economy made crop failure catastrophic—leading to famine, debt, and vulnerability to invasion.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. Why would God use the same plague (locusts) that once freed Israel to now judge Israel?
2. How does futile labor without harvest fruit illustrate spiritual barrenness under judgment?

Interlinear Text

כִּי־בְּרֹעַל תֹּאכַל הַשָּׂדֶה וְעַמְּלֵט תְּמַאַס־רַגְלָיו
seed much Thou shalt carry into the field but little and shalt gather H3588
H2233 H7227 H3318 H7704 H4592 H622

בְּאֶרְבָּה: יְחִסֵּל אֹתָהּ
shall consume for the locust
H2628 H697

Additional Cross-References

Joel 1:4 (Parallel theme): That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath left hath the caterpiller eaten.

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.

Haggai 1:6 (Parallel theme): Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes.

Amos 4:9 (Parallel theme): I have smitten you with blasting and mildew: when your gardens and your vineyards and your fig trees and your olive trees increased,

the palmerworm devoured them: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD.

Joel 2:25 (Parallel theme): And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org