

Deuteronomy 28:39

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thou shalt plant vineyards, and dress them, but shalt neither drink of the wine, nor gather the grapes; for the worms shall eat them.

Analysis

Thou shalt plant vineyards, and dress them, but shalt neither drink of the wine, nor gather the grapes; for the worms shall eat them. Vineyards required years of cultivation before bearing fruit—this curse meant long-term investment without any return. The Hebrew *tola'at* (worm/grub) would destroy vines before harvest, compounding frustration. Isaiah 5:1-7 later used failed vineyard as metaphor for Israel's spiritual fruitlessness despite God's careful cultivation.

Wine symbolized covenant blessing and joy (Psalm 104:15). To plant vineyards but never taste wine meant existing without joy, experiencing perpetual disappointment. This anticipates Jesus's vineyard parables where unfaithful tenants lose everything (Matthew 21:33-41).

Historical Context

Vineyards represented long-term economic stability in ancient Israel. Losing vineyard harvests year after year would create grinding poverty and hopelessness. Micah 6:15 echoes this curse: "Thou shalt tread the olives, but thou shalt not anoint thee with oil; and sweet wine, but shalt not drink wine."

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. What does planting but never harvesting teach about the frustration of life outside God's blessing?
2. How does the vineyard imagery connect Deuteronomy's curses to later prophetic warnings and Jesus's parables?

Interlinear Text

כְּרָמֵי יַם	תִּטֵּעַ ע	וְשָׂבַדְתָּ	וְיִין	לֹא
vineyards	Thou shalt plant	and dress	of the wine	H3808
H3754	H5193	H5647	H3196	
תִּשְׁתֶּה	וְלֹא	תִּגְדֹּג ר	כִּי	תֹאכְלֵנוּ
them but shalt neither drink	H3808	nor gather	H3588	shall eat
H8354		H103		H398
הַתְּלַעֲתִים:				
the grapes for the worms				
H8438				