

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

כֶּרֶם יְמִינְךָ תַּטְעֵב וְעַבְדָּתְךָ לֹא
vineyards Thou shalt plant and dress of the wine H3808
H3754 H5193 H5647 H3196

תַּשְׁתַּחַתְּךָ אַל תִּשְׁתַּחַתְּךָ כִּי תַּאֲגַרְךָ וְאַל
them but shalt neither drink H3808 nor gather H3588 shall eat H398
H8354 H103

הַתְּלַעַתְּ
the grapes for the worms
H8438

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