

Deuteronomy 28:41

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thou shalt beget sons and daughters, but thou shalt not enjoy them; for they shall go into captivity.

Analysis

Thou shalt beget sons and daughters, but thou shalt not enjoy them; for they shall go into captivity. The most devastating curse yet—losing children to exile. The Hebrew shebi (captivity) meant forced deportation to foreign lands. Children represented covenant continuity, inheritance, and future hope; their loss meant the covenant promises dying out. Where blessing promised children filling the land (Deuteronomy 28:4, 11), curse brought childlessness through exile.

This precisely describes Babylonian captivity—Daniel, Ezekiel, and thousands deported to Babylon (2 Kings 24:14-16). Parents watched helplessly as children were marched to foreign lands, often never to return. Lamentations 1:5 mourns: "Her children are gone into captivity before the enemy."

Historical Context

Assyrian (722 BC) and Babylonian (586 BC) conquests fulfilled this curse. Nebuchadnezzar specifically took young nobles—"children in whom was no blemish" (Daniel 1:3-4)—to serve Babylon. Parents endured the grief of surviving their children's futures being consumed by foreign empires.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. Why would losing children to captivity be listed among the most severe covenant curses?
2. How does this curse reveal God's intention for families to experience covenant blessings together across generations?

Interlinear Text

וְלֹא תִּזְבְּחֵן בָּנֶיךָ בָּנֶם יְמֵינֶיךָ וְבָנֶם וָתֶת בָּנֶם יְמֵינֶיךָ

sons and daughters Thou shalt beget H3808 H1961 H0 H3588 H1980

H1121 H1323 H3205

בָּשָׁבֵךְ:

into captivity

H7628

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 28:32 (Parallel theme): Thy sons and thy daughters shall be given unto another people, and thine eyes shall look, and fail with longing for them all the day long: and there shall be no might in thine hand.

Lamentations 1:5 (Parallel theme): Her adversaries are the chief, her enemies prosper; for the LORD hath afflicted her for the multitude of her transgressions: her children are gone into captivity before the enemy.