

Deuteronomy 28:43

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The stranger that is within thee shall get up above thee very high; and thou shalt come down very low.

Analysis

The stranger that is within thee shall get up above thee very high; and thou shalt come down very low. Complete reversal of promised social order—the ger (sojourner/alien) who should have dwelt under Israel's blessing would instead rise above them. The contrast very high/very low emphasizes extreme status reversal. Where Deuteronomy 28:1 promised Israel would be "set on high above all nations," now foreigners within their own land would dominate them.

This curse reverses Genesis 12:3's promise that nations would be blessed through Abraham's seed. Instead, the stranger prospers while covenant people languish. Nehemiah witnessed this in post-exilic Jerusalem—Gentile governors ruled while Jews struggled. It ultimately pictures the church (wild olive branches) being grafted in while natural branches were broken off (Romans 11:17-24).

Historical Context

This was fulfilled during Babylonian and Persian rule when foreign-appointed governors (like Tattenai, Ezra 5:3) held power over Judah. In the intertestamental period, Greek and Roman overlords ruled the promised land. Even today, modern Israel navigates complex relationships with resident populations—echoes of ancient covenant curses.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. What does status reversal with resident aliens teach about covenant blessings being conditional, not automatic?
2. How does Paul's olive tree metaphor (Romans 11) connect to this Deuteronomistic curse?

Interlinear Text

הַגֵּר	אֲשֶׁר	בְּקִרְבְּךָ	יַעַלְהָ	עַל יָדְךָ	מִן עֲלֵהָ
The stranger	H834	that is within	thee shall get up	H5921	above thee very
H1616		H7130	H5927		H4605
מִן עֲלֵהָ	וְאַתָּה	תֵּרֵד	מִטָּה:	מִטָּה:	
above thee very	H859	and thou shalt come down	low	low	
H4605		H3381	H4295	H4295	

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 28:13 (Parallel theme): And the LORD shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the LORD thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them: