

Deuteronomy 28:53

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which the LORD thy God hath given thee, in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee:

Analysis

And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters—this is the most horrifying curse in the entire chapter. The Hebrew phrase *pərî bîṭnēkā* (פְּרִי בִּתְנֶקָּה) 'fruit of your womb') uses tender language for pregnancy to describe unspeakable horror: cannibalism of one's own children. This prophesied the most extreme degradation possible under siege conditions.

This literally occurred during the Babylonian siege (Lamentations 2:20, 4:10) and again under Rome. Josephus records a woman named Mary eating her own infant during the AD 70 siege—a fulfillment so precise it defies coincidence. The phrase **in the siege, and in the straitness** (בְּמִצְור וּבְמִצְרָה, bəmāṣōr ūbəmāṣōq) means 'in the distress and in the anguish' of military encirclement. Leviticus 26:29 had warned of the same curse.

Historical Context

This happened multiple times in Israel's history: during the Aramean siege of Samaria (2 Kings 6:28-29), the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem (Lamentations 4:10), and the Roman siege (Josephus, Wars 6.3.4). These fulfillments demonstrate that God's word of judgment is as reliable as His word of promise.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 – Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does the horror of this curse reveal the depth of human depravity apart from God's grace?
2. What does it mean that God's covenant curses are as certain as His covenant blessings?
3. How does the sacrifice of God's own Son reverse the curse that we deserved?

Interlinear Text

אֶת־יְהֹוָה אֲכַלְתָּךְ בְּשֶׁר בְּתִיתְךָ פְּרִי
And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body the flesh of thy sons
H398 H6529 H990 H1320 H1121

אֱלֹהִים יְהוָה הַיְהוָה לְבָנָתֶךָ רָאשֶׁךָ וְבָנָתֶךָ יְהוָה
thy God which the LORD hath given thee a head and of thy daughters and of thy daughters

אַיִלָּה:

wherewith thine enemies

Additional Cross-References

Lamentations 4:10 (Parallel theme): The hands of the pitiful women have sodden their own children: they were their meat in the destruction of the daughter of my people.

Jeremiah 19:9 (Parallel theme): And I will cause them to eat the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters, and they shall eat every one the flesh of his friend in the siege and straitness, wherewith their enemies, and they that seek their lives, shall straiten them.

Leviticus 26:29 (Parallel theme): And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat.

Lamentations 2:20 (References Lord): Behold, O LORD, and consider to whom thou hast done this. Shall the women eat their fruit, and children of a span long? shall the priest and the prophet be slain in the sanctuary of the Lord?

Deuteronomy 28:57 (Parallel theme): And toward her young one that cometh out from between her feet, and toward her children which she shall bear: for she shall eat them for want of all things secretly in the siege and straitness, wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates.

Ezekiel 5:10 (Parallel theme): Therefore the fathers shall eat the sons in the midst of thee, and the sons shall eat their fathers; and I will execute judgments in thee, and the whole remnant of thee will I scatter into all the winds.

Deuteronomy 28:55 (Parallel theme): So that he will not give to any of them of the flesh of his children whom he shall eat: because he hath nothing left him in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in all thy gates.