

Deuteronomy 28:54

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

So that the man that is tender among you, and very delicate, his eye shall be evil toward his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the remnant of his children which he shall leave:

Analysis

The man that is tender among you, and very delicate—Hebrew *rāk* and *‘ānōḡ* (רַךְ וְעָנֹג) describe a refined, upper-class man unaccustomed to hardship. **His eye shall be evil** (תִּרְעַע עֵינָיו, *tēra‘ ‘ênô*) is an idiom meaning 'he will look grudgingly/greedily'—he will refuse to share even human flesh with **his brother... the wife of his bosom... his children**.

Siege conditions would so degrade humanity that the most refined gentleman would become a selfish cannibal, hoarding his own children's flesh. This describes moral collapse: family bonds dissolve, love dies, and survival instinct overrides all humanity. The phrase **because he hath nothing left him** shows that starvation reduces even the noble to beasts. This happened repeatedly in Israel's history.

Historical Context

During the 900-day Leningrad siege (WW2), similar moral collapse occurred—a modern parallel to ancient sieges. In 2 Kings 6:28-29, two women made a pact to eat their children. Josephus records cases during the Roman siege where families turned on each other for scraps of food.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does extreme suffering reveal what is truly in the human heart?
2. What does this passage teach about the necessity of divine grace even for 'good' people?
3. How should awareness of human depravity drive us to the cross of Christ?

Interlinear Text

הָאִישׁ So that the man H376	דָּבָר נָךְ that is tender H7390	בְּרֵךְ H0 דֵּלִיקָה delicate H6028	מֵאֲדָם among you and very H3966	יְתֵרָה H7489
עֵינָיו his eye H5869	בְּאַחִיו toward his brother H251	וּבְאִשְׁתּוֹ and toward the wife H802	חֵיקוֹ of his bosom H2436	
וּבְרֵיתוֹ and toward the remnant H3499	בְּנָיו of his children H1121	אֲשֶׁר H834	יֹתִירָהּ which he shall leave H3498	

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 20:15 (Evil): Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?

Deuteronomy 13:6 (Parallel theme): If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers;

Deuteronomy 15:9 (Evil): Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought; and he cry unto the LORD against thee, and it be sin unto thee.

From KJV Study • kjevstudy.org