

# Deuteronomy 29:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the LORD shall separate him unto evil out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this book of the law:

## Analysis

**And the LORD shall separate him unto evil out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant** (וְהִבְדִּילֹהוּ יְהוָה לְרָעָה)—The verb *hivdil* ("separate") typically describes holy separation unto God (Leviticus 20:26, "I have separated you from the peoples"). Here it's perverted—separation *le-ra'ah* ("unto evil/calamity") rather than unto blessing. The apostate experiences anti-election, marked out for judgment rather than redemption.

**According to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this book of the law** (כָּל אֲלוֹת הַבְּרִית הַכְּתוּבָה בְּסֵפֶר הַתּוֹכָה)—The phrase emphasizes comprehensiveness (*ke-khol*, "according to all") and documentary authority (*ha-ketuvah*, "the written"). These aren't arbitrary punishments but covenant stipulations agreed upon. The *sefer ha-torah* ("book of the law") serves as legal evidence—a written treaty document both parties acknowledged (Deuteronomy 31:26).

This judicial separation recalls Korah's rebellion (Numbers 16), where God literally separated rebels from the congregation before earth swallowed them. It foreshadows Israel's exile—the northern kingdom's ten tribes "separated unto evil" through Assyrian conquest (722 BCE), Judah through Babylonian exile (586 BCE). Matthew 25:32-33 uses similar separation language for final judgment.

## Historical Context

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Ancient Near Eastern treaties often specified separation or exile as covenant violation consequences. Vassal kings who rebelled faced deportation, their territories absorbed by the suzerain. Israel's later exile represents this curse's fulfillment—physical removal from covenant land. The phrase "book of the law" indicates Deuteronomy's written status by Moses' time. Ancient treaty documents were deposited in temples under divine witness; Israel's covenant was placed beside the ark (Deuteronomy 31:26).

## Related Passages

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**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

## Study Questions

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1. How does judicial separation unto evil inform our understanding of reprobation in Reformed theology?
2. In what sense did Israel's exile represent this curse's historical fulfillment?

## Interlinear Text

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וְהִבְדִּיל וְ	יְהוָה	לְרָעָה	מִכָּל ל	שְׁבֵט י	יִשְׂרָאֵל ל
shall separate	And the LORD	him unto evil	H3605	out of all the tribes	of Israel
H914	H3068	H7451		H7626	H3478
כָּל	אֶל וְ	הַבְּרִית	הַכְּתוּבָה	בְּסֵפֶר	
H3605	according to all the curses	of the covenant	that are written	in this book	
	H423	H1285	H3789	H5612	
הַתּוֹכָה	הַזֶּה:				
of the law	H2088				
H8451					

