

Deuteronomy 29:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the LORD rooted them out of their land in anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as it is this day.

Analysis

And the LORD rooted them out of their land in anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as it is this day. This sobering verse warns of covenant judgment—specifically the threat of exile that would befall Israel for persistent disobedience. The Hebrew verb natash (נָתַשׁ, "rooted out") conveys violent uprooting, like a plant torn from the soil, emphasizing the totality and trauma of exile. This imagery powerfully contrasts with Israel being "planted" in the Promised Land (Exodus 15:17), showing how covenant violation reverses covenant blessing.

The threefold intensification—"anger," "wrath," and "great indignation"—underscores the severity of God's righteous response to covenant violation. This is not capricious fury but judicial indignation against persistent rebellion and idolatry. The phrase "cast them into another land" prophetically anticipates the Assyrian exile of the northern kingdom (722 BC) and the Babylonian captivity of Judah (586 BC). The concluding phrase "as it is this day" likely reflects later editorial awareness that this prophecy had been fulfilled, serving as historical testimony to God's faithfulness to both promises and warnings.

Theologically, this verse affirms several critical truths:

1. God's covenant includes both blessings and curses, rewards and consequences

2. divine patience has limits—persistent rebellion eventually meets judgment
3. sin has communal and generational consequences, affecting an entire nation
4. God's warnings are merciful—they provide opportunity for repentance before judgment falls.

Yet even in judgment, God's redemptive purposes continue, as exile ultimately served to purify Israel from idolatry and prepare the way for Messiah's coming.

Historical Context

Deuteronomy 29 records Moses' third address to Israel on the plains of Moab, just before entering Canaan. This covenant renewal ceremony occurred approximately 1406 BC, forty years after the exodus. Moses, knowing he would not enter the Promised Land, urgently warned the new generation about the consequences of covenant unfaithfulness.

The historical context includes recent memory of God's judgment on the wilderness generation for unbelief, the destruction of rebellious Israelites (Numbers 16), and the visible warning of nations God had already judged (the Amorites, Moabites, etc.). Moses' prophecy of exile must have seemed unthinkable to a people about to possess their inheritance, yet it proved tragically accurate.

Ancient Near Eastern treaties (suzerainty covenants) regularly concluded with curses against treaty violators, often invoking the gods to enforce these sanctions. Israel's covenant followed this pattern structurally but differed theologically—Yahweh Himself would execute judgment, not capricious deities. The phrase 'as it is this day' suggests later Israelites, experiencing exile, read these words with profound recognition. Archaeological evidence of Judah's destruction in 586 BC—burned cities, broken walls, destroyed temple—confirms the historical fulfillment of this warning. Yet even in exile, prophets like Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel sustained hope of restoration, proving that God's judgment, though severe, was not final abandonment but redemptive discipline.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does God's willingness to judge His own covenant people challenge contemporary assumptions about divine love and grace?
2. What patterns of persistent disobedience in our own lives or church might we be ignoring, despite God's clear warnings?
3. How can we balance confidence in God's promises with appropriate fear of the consequences of unfaithfulness?
4. In what ways did exile serve redemptive purposes in Israel's history, and how might God use discipline redemptively in our lives today?
5. How does the historical fulfillment of this prophecy strengthen our trust in unfulfilled biblical prophecies about Christ's return and final judgment?

Interlinear Text

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בָּזָה: יְמִינָה

Additional Cross-References

2 Chronicles 7:20 (Parallel theme): Then will I pluck them up by the roots out of my land which I have given them; and this house, which I have sanctified for my name, will I cast out of my sight, and will make it to be a proverb and a byword among all nations.

Psalms 52:5 (Parallel theme): God shall likewise destroy thee for ever, he shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of thy dwelling place, and root thee out of the land of the living. Selah.

Proverbs 2:22 (Parallel theme): But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it.

1 Kings 14:15 (References Lord): For the LORD shall smite Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water, and he shall root up Israel out of this good land, which he gave to their fathers, and shall scatter them beyond the river, because they have made their groves, provoking the LORD to anger.

Jeremiah 42:10 (Parallel theme): If ye will still abide in this land, then will I build you, and not pull you down, and I will plant you, and not pluck you up: for I repent me of the evil that I have done unto you.

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