

Deuteronomy 31:29

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For I know that after my death ye will utterly corrupt yourselves, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter days; because ye will do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger through the work of your hands.

Analysis

For I know that after my death ye will utterly corrupt yourselves—Moses predicted complete moral collapse. The Hebrew hashchet tashchitun (הַשְׁחִית תְּשִׁחַת) uses emphatic construction: 'surely you will utterly corrupt.' **And turn aside from the way which I have commanded you**—deviation from covenant path. **And evil will befall you in the latter days**—judgment in future generations. **Because ye will do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger through the work of your hands**—idolatry (handmade gods) would trigger divine wrath.

This prophecy, tragic in its certainty, framed Israel's entire subsequent history. Moses knew that despite miracles, teaching, warnings, and covenant renewal, Israel would fail catastrophically. Yet he persisted in instruction, established Joshua's leadership, wrote the law-book, and composed the witness-song. His example models faithfulness despite predicted failure—obey God's calling regardless of anticipated results. God's purposes transcend immediate success; often faithful ministry plants seeds harvested generations later, or provides testimony that condemns to prepare for grace.

Historical Context

Prophesied circa 1406 BC, fulfilled progressively through Israel's history. The 'latter days' encompassed both near-term apostasy (during Judges and the monarchy) and eschatological implications (exile, return, Messiah's coming). Within one generation after Joshua's death, Israel served Baals and Asherahs (Judges 2:11-13). The northern kingdom's complete idolatry led to Assyrian conquest (722 BC). Judah's repeated rebellions despite prophetic warnings resulted in Babylonian exile (586 BC). Only Christ's coming and the new covenant addressed Israel's fundamental inability to keep the old covenant.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How should believers persevere in ministry when failure seems inevitable or results are discouraging?
2. What's the relationship between human responsibility (Israel's guilt) and inability (they will corrupt themselves)?
3. How does Moses's prophecy prepare for Christ's necessity—the perfect Israelite who kept covenant perfectly?

Interlinear Text

תְּשַׁחַת וְ	תְּשַׁחַת וְ	מָوتִי	אַחֲרִי	דַּעַת עַתִּי	כִּי
H3588	For I know	that after	my death	H3588	corrupt
H3045		H310	H4194	H7843	corrupt
				H7843	
צְדָקָתְּךָ מִן	אֲשֶׁר בְּדַבָּר	מִן	וְסַרְתָּם	צְדָקָתְּךָ מִן	צְדָקָתְּךָ מִן
yourselvess and turn aside	from the way	H4480	H1870	H834	which I have commanded
H5493				H6680	
בְּאַחֲרֵי יְמִים	בְּאַחֲרֵי יְמִים	בְּרִעָה	אַתְּךָ מִן	וְקַבֵּל אַתְּךָ מִן	בְּאַחֲרֵי יְמִים
H853	will befall	H853	H7451	H319	days
H7122				H3117	H3588
לְפָכָעֵיס וְ	יְהִי הַ	בְּעֵינֵי	בְּרִעָה	אַתְּךָ מִן	לְפָכָעֵיס וְ
because ye will do	of the LORD	H5869	H7451	H6213	H3707
בְּמַעַשׂ הַ	יְהִי הַ	בְּעֵינֵי	בְּרִעָה	אַתְּךָ מִן	לְפָכָעֵיס וְ
through the work of your hands					
H4639	H3027				

Additional Cross-References

Judges 2:19 (Parallel theme): And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned, and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way.

Deuteronomy 32:5 (Parallel theme): They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of his children: they are a perverse and crooked generation.

Genesis 49:1 (Parallel theme): And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you what shall befall you in the last days.

Hosea 9:9 (Parallel theme): They have deeply corrupted themselves, as in the days of Gibeah; therefore he will remember their iniquity, he will visit their sins.

