

Deuteronomy 33:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Bless, LORD, his substance, and accept the work of his hands: smite through the loins of them that rise against him, and of them that hate him, that they rise not again.

Analysis

Bless, LORD, his substance, and accept the work of his hands: smite through the loins of them that rise against him, and of them that hate him, that they rise not again. Moses petitions divine blessing on Levi's chayil (חַיִל, "substance/wealth/strength")—the tribe's material provision and ministerial effectiveness. Since Levites owned no land (Numbers 18:20), their "substance" came from tithes, offerings, and God's direct provision.

The phrase "accept the work of his hands" (pa'al yadayv, פָּעַל יָדָיו) requests divine approval of priestly ministry. This was never guaranteed—God rejected Nadab and Abihu's unauthorized fire (Leviticus 10:1-2) and later Eli's corrupt sons (1 Samuel 2:12-36). Acceptable ministry required both proper procedure and pure heart. The petition recognizes that ministry effectiveness depends on divine acceptance, not mere technical correctness.

The prayer for protection against enemies acknowledges spiritual warfare inherent in priestly service. Mechatz (מַחְצֵץ, "smite through") is violent imagery—crushing enemy strength at its source ("loins"). Throughout Israel's history, authentic spiritual leadership attracted opposition from compromisers and apostates. The New Testament parallel appears in Ephesians 6:12—warfare against spiritual powers, not flesh and blood. True ministry always provokes demonic resistance and human hostility from those whose sin the truth exposes.

Historical Context

This petition proved necessary throughout Levitical history. The tribe faced opposition from Korah's rebellion (Numbers 16), which challenged Aaron's exclusive priesthood. God vindicated Aaron by causing earth to swallow the rebels and fire to consume 250 incense-offering insurgents. Korah's judgment validated the principle that priestly service requires divine appointment, not democratic selection.

Later threats came from corrupt kings who opposed faithful priests. King Asa removed his grandmother Maacah for idolatry, supported by faithful Levites (2 Chronicles 15:16). King Joash murdered Zechariah son of Jehoiada, a priest who rebuked the king's apostasy (2 Chronicles 24:20-22). Jeremiah, from a priestly family, faced repeated assassination attempts for prophesying judgment (Jeremiah 11:21, 20:1-6).

The prayer for provision was also crucial. During apostasy, faithful Levites suffered material deprivation when tithes ceased (Nehemiah 13:10-13). Malachi 3:8-10 condemns Israel for robbing God through neglecting tithes, directly impacting Levitical support. The principle transfers to New Testament church: "They which preach the gospel should live of the gospel" (1 Corinthians 9:14). Congregations supporting faithful teaching honor God's order; neglecting teachers' provision invites judgment.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How should modern churches balance pastoral compensation with the principle that ministers depend on God's provision through His people?

2. What forms of opposition do faithful ministers face today that parallel ancient attacks on Levitical priests?
3. Why does authentic biblical ministry inevitably provoke resistance from both worldly powers and compromised religion?
4. How can believers support spiritual leaders in prayer when they face opposition for faithfulness?
5. What's the relationship between a minister's dependence on God's acceptance and the church's responsibility to support ministry?

Interlinear Text

בָּרוּךְ	יְהוָה	חַיְלָן	וְעַל	אֶת	יְהוָה	תְּרִצְתָּה	מִמֶּנּוּ
Bless	LORD	his substance	the work	of his hands	and accept	smite	
H1288	H3068	H2428	H6467	H3027	H7521	H4272	
מִתְּרֻמָּה	וְעַל	מִתְּרֻמָּה	וְעַל	מִתְּרֻמָּה	וְעַל	מִתְּרֻמָּה	
through the loins	again	against him and of them that hate	not	again			
H4975	H6965	H8130	H4480	H6965			

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 43:27 (References Lord): And when these days are expired, it shall be, that upon the eighth day, and so forward, the priests shall make your burnt offerings upon the altar, and your peace offerings; and I will accept you, saith the Lord GOD.

2 Samuel 24:23 (References Lord): All these things did Araunah, as a king, give unto the king. And Araunah said unto the king, The LORD thy God accept thee.