

Deuteronomy 33:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon,

Analysis

And for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon. Moses continues enumerating Joseph's blessings with cosmic imagery. Meged (מֶגֶד, "precious things") repeats, emphasizing excellence. Tevuoth shemesh (תְּבוּאוֹת שֶׁמֶשׁ, "fruits/produce of the sun") invokes solar blessing on crops—photosynthesis wasn't understood scientifically, but agricultural dependence on sunlight was obvious. Different crops required varying sun exposure; this blessing promises optimal growing conditions.

Precious things put forth by the moon (meged geresh yerachim, מֶגֶד גֶּרֶשׁ יֶרַחִים) is puzzling. Geresh can mean "produce" or "what is thrust forth." The moon's agricultural influence was recognized anciently—planting calendars followed lunar cycles, and some plants were thought to flourish under specific moon phases. The blessing may also reference seasonal cycles marked by lunar calendar, ensuring appropriate crops for each season.

The pairing of sun and moon echoes Genesis 1:14-18, where celestial bodies were appointed to govern seasons and times. Joseph's blessing thus invokes the created order's entire rhythm blessing his land. Spiritually, this comprehensive provision points to Christ, the "Sun of righteousness" (Malachi 4:2) and light of the world (John 8:12), under whose reign all kingdom fruitfulness grows. The church, reflecting His light like the moon, participates in producing spiritual harvest.

Historical Context

Ancient Israelite agriculture was deeply attuned to seasonal rhythms and celestial patterns. The agricultural calendar regulated by lunar months determined planting, harvesting, and festival cycles. The blessing of sun and moon invoked reliable seasonal progression—no disruptive climate anomalies, no missed growing seasons.

Joseph's territories experienced varied climatic zones from Jordan Valley (subtropical) to central highlands (Mediterranean climate) to trans-Jordan plateaus (semi-arid). This diversity enabled multiple crop types and extended growing seasons—barley, wheat, grapes, olives, figs, and dates all flourished in different sub-regions and seasons. The blessing's comprehensive nature suited this agricultural diversity.

The mention of sun and moon also contrasts with pagan worship. Deuteronomy 4:19 and 17:3 condemn worshiping celestial bodies, common in Canaanite and Mesopotamian religion. Moses's blessing affirms these are created servants of God's purposes, not deities. Their benefit comes through YHWH's sovereign ordering, not inherent divine power. This theological distinction became crucial during syncretistic periods when Israelites adopted astral worship (2 Kings 23:5, Jeremiah 8:2). True blessing flows from Creator, not creation.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does attributing agricultural blessing to God rather than natural forces shape our understanding of creation?
2. What modern equivalents exist to ancient tendencies toward 'worshipping' creation rather than Creator?
3. How should Christians understand the relationship between natural laws/processes and God's sovereign providence?
4. In what ways does seasonal rhythm and cyclical fruitfulness provide spiritual lessons about growth and rest?
5. How does Christ as the 'Sun of righteousness' fulfill and transcend Old Testament blessing imagery?

Interlinear Text

<p>וּמִן הַדָּג</p> <p>And for the precious</p> <p>H4022</p>	<p>תְּבוּאֹתָיִךְ</p> <p>fruits</p> <p>H8393</p>	<p>שֶׁשֶׁן הַשֶּׁשֶׁן</p> <p>brought forth by the sun</p> <p>H8121</p>	<p>וּמִן הַדָּג</p> <p>And for the precious</p> <p>H4022</p>
<p>וְהָרָשָׁה</p> <p>put forth</p> <p>H1645</p>	<p>בְּחֵדָּה:</p> <p>by the moon</p> <p>H3391</p>		