

Deuteronomy 4:25

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

When thou shalt beget children, and children's children, and ye shall have remained long in the land, and shall corrupt yourselves, and make a graven image, or the likeness of any thing, and shall do evil in the sight of the LORD thy God, to provoke him to anger:

Analysis

When thou shalt beget children, and children's children, and ye shall have remained long in the land...

Moses prophetically identifies the danger point: not the conquest generation but their comfortable descendants. The Hebrew *venoshantem* (וְנִשְׁאַנְתֶּם, 'remained long' or 'grown old') suggests settled complacency—prosperity breeding spiritual amnesia. First-generation faith often weakens in subsequent generations who inherit blessings without experiencing the struggles that produced them.

The verb *vehishkhatem* (וְהִשְׁחַתְתֶּם, 'corrupt yourselves') indicates self-inflicted ruin. Israel's apostasy would not be forced upon them by external enemies but chosen from within. The sequence is telling: comfort leads to corruption, corruption to idolatry (*pesel temunat kol*, 'graven image, likeness of any thing'), and idolatry to provoking God's anger (*lehak'iso*, לְהַכְעִיסוֹ).

This pattern—blessing, complacency, apostasy, judgment—recurs throughout Scripture and church history. Each generation must personally embrace covenant faith; inherited religion without personal commitment eventually collapses into

cultural nominalism. Moses sees clearly what his people cannot: their greatest spiritual danger lies not in wilderness hardship but in Canaan's prosperity.

Historical Context

Moses prophetically warns about future generations becoming comfortable in Canaan and turning to idolatry. This prophecy proved accurate; during the period of the Judges and later the divided monarchy, Israel repeatedly fell into idolatry, leading eventually to Assyrian exile (722 BC) and Babylonian captivity (586 BC).

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does prosperity and comfort in your own life create spiritual vulnerability that hardship would not?
2. What intentional practices can help ensure that faith is personally embraced rather than merely inherited by the next generation?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	תוֹלֵד יָד	בְּנֵי יָם	בְּנֵי יָם	בְּנֵי יָם
H3588	When thou shalt beget	and children's	and children's	and children's
	H3205	H1121	H1121	H1121
	וְנִשְׁחָתוּ עִם	בְּאֶרֶץ רָץ	וְהִשְׁחָתוּ עִם	
	and ye shall have remained long	in the land	and shall corrupt	
	H3462	H776	H7843	
	וְעָשִׂיתָ עִם	כָּפֹס לְ	תָמַ וְנֹת	כֹּל
	of any thing and shall do	a graven image	or the likeness	H3605
	H6213	H6459	H8544	
	וְעָשִׂיתָ עִם	רָעָב ע	בְּעֵינֵי י	יְהוָה
	of any thing and shall do	evil	in the sight	of the LORD
	H6213	H7451	H5869	H3068
				אֱלֹהֶיךָ
				thy God
				H430
	לְהַכְעִיסוֹ:			
	to provoke him to anger			
	H3707			

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 4:16 (Parallel theme): Lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female,