

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 (וְנִשְׁתָּהֵן, '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 (וְחִשְׁקָהֵת, '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, לְהַקְעִיסּוֹ).

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

בָּנִים בָּנִים בָּנִים בָּנִים
When thou shalt beget and children's and children's and children's
H3588 H3205 H1121 H1121 H1121

וְנִשְׁתַּחַת מִן־בָּאָרֶץ וְהַשְׁחַתָּת מִן־
and ye shall have remained long in the land and shall corrupt
H3462 H776 H7843

כָּל תִּמְצָא בְּעֵשֵׂת מִן־עֵשֵׂת מִן־
of any thing and shall do a graven image or the likeness H3605
H6213 H6459 H8544

אֱלֹהִים יְהֹוָה בְּעֵינֵי קָרְבָּן עֵשֵׂת מִן־
of any thing and shall do evil in the sight of the LORD thy God
H6213 H7451 H5869 H3068 H430

לְהַכְּעִיסָן:
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,