

Deuteronomy 8:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein;

Analysis

The warning 'Lest when thou hast eaten and art full' begins a crucial section (vv. 12-14) describing prosperity's spiritual danger. The list—full stomach, good houses, multiplied herds/flocks/wealth—describes successful establishment in Canaan. These are legitimate blessings, not sinful pursuits. The danger isn't prosperity itself but its effect: 'thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD' (v. 14). Material success tempts self-reliance, pride, and forgetfulness of God. The 'lest' warns that blessing can become a curse if it leads away from God. This is the 'deceitfulness of riches' Jesus warned about (Matthew 13:22)—prosperity chokes spiritual life more effectively than persecution.

Historical Context

Israel's subsequent history validated this warning completely. Solomon's reign brought unprecedented prosperity (1 Kings 4:20-25, 10:14-29), but also sowed seeds of apostasy through foreign alliances and marriages. The divided kingdom's prosperous periods (Jeroboam II in Israel, Uzziah in Judah) coincided with moral decline and prophetic indictment (Amos, Isaiah). Prosperity enabled Israel to pursue idolatry more extensively. As warned, material success led to forgetting God. Church history shows the same pattern—persecution produces purity; prosperity produces compromise.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How has prosperity or comfort in your life created spiritual complacency or self-reliance?
2. What practices help you maintain God-dependence in times of plenty and success?
3. In what ways might legitimate blessings (home, career, family) compete with God for your heart's affection?

Interlinear Text

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|---------------|---------------------------|----------------|-----------|---------|----------------|
| פָּן | תֹּאכַל ל | וְשָׂבַ עֵתָּה | וּבֵת יָם | טֹב יָם | תִּבְנֶה ה |
| H6435 | Lest when thou hast eaten | and art full | houses | goodly | and hast built |
| | H398 | H7646 | H1004 | H2896 | H1129 |
| וַיֵּשְׁבּוּ: | | | | | |
| and dwelt | | | | | |
| H3427 | | | | | |

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 30:9 (Parallel theme): Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the LORD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.

Deuteronomy 28:47 (Parallel theme): Because thou servedst not the LORD thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things;

Deuteronomy 32:15 (Parallel theme): But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation.

Ecclesiastes 2:4 (Parallel theme): I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards:

Deuteronomy 31:20 (Parallel theme): For when I shall have brought them into the land which I swear unto their fathers, that floweth with milk and honey; and they shall have eaten and filled themselves, and waxen fat; then will they turn unto other gods, and serve them, and provoke me, and break my covenant.

Luke 17:28 (Parallel theme): Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded;

Amos 5:11 (Parallel theme): Forasmuch therefore as your treading is upon the poor, and ye take from him burdens of wheat: ye have built houses of hewn stone, but ye shall not dwell in them; ye have planted pleasant vineyards, but ye shall not drink wine of them.

Haggai 1:4 (Parallel theme): Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste?