

Isaiah 43:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Therefore I have profaned the princes of the sanctuary, and have given Jacob to the curse, and Israel to reproaches.

Analysis

Therefore I have profaned the princes of the sanctuary. This sobering conclusion to Isaiah 43 demonstrates God's covenant justice even toward His elect nation. The Hebrew chalal (profaned, polluted) indicates ceremonial defilement rendering priests unfit for sacred service. God Himself enacted judgment by removing the sanctity of Israel's religious leadership - a devastating reversal since priests mediated divine presence.

"Given Jacob to the curse, and Israel to reproaches" employs cherem (curse, devoted thing to destruction) - the same term used for Canaanite cities under divine ban. Israel's covenant violations warranted the same judgment God executed on pagan nations. This verse bridges Isaiah's promises of restoration (vv. 1-27) with the reality of deserved judgment. God's grace does not eliminate accountability; even the elect endure temporal judgment for covenant unfaithfulness.

Reformed theology finds here the doctrine of covenant chastisement - God disciplines His children precisely because they are His children (Hebrews 12:5-11). The Babylonian exile was not divine abandonment but paternal correction. Yet this judgment also points forward to Christ, the true Prince of the Sanctuary, who would be profaned (Mark 15:29) to bear the curse and reproaches His people deserved (Galatians 3:13).

Historical Context

This verse explains the Babylonian exile (586 BC) and the destruction of the First Temple. The 'princes of the sanctuary' were the chief priests and Levitical leaders who corrupted worship through syncretism and moral compromise (2 Kings 21-23, Ezekiel 8). God's profaning of these princes manifested through Nebuchadnezzar's execution of Judah's priests and nobility (2 Kings 25:18-21). The 'reproaches' refer to international mockery of defeated Israel - their God appeared weak compared to Babylonian deities, bringing shame to God's name among nations (Ezekiel 36:20-23).

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does this verse challenge the prosperity gospel's promise of uninterrupted blessing for believers?
2. What does God's willingness to profane even sacred leaders teach about His commitment to holiness over institutional preservation?
3. How does Christ's bearing of curse and reproach transform our understanding of suffering within God's redemptive plan?

Interlinear Text

לְכַפֵּר	וְאָתַן	הַנִּשְׁׁרָא	לְעַל	לְגַדּוֹפִים:	וְיִשְׂרָאֵל	לְעַל
Therefore I have profaned	the princes	of the sanctuary	and have given		to the curse	
H2490	H8269	H6944	H5414		H2764	
Jacob	and Israel	to reproaches				
H3290	H3478	H1421				

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 24:9 (Curse): And I will deliver them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth for their hurt, to be a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them.

Isaiah 65:15 (Curse): And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen: for the Lord GOD shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name:

Zechariah 8:13 (Curse): And it shall come to pass, that as ye were a curse among the heathen, O house of Judah, and house of Israel; so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing: fear not, but let your hands be strong.

Isaiah 47:6 (Parallel theme): I was wroth with my people, I have polluted mine inheritance, and given them into thine hand: thou didst shew them no mercy; upon the ancient hast thou very heavily laid thy yoke.

Psalms 79:4 (Parallel theme): We are become a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us.

1 Thessalonians 2:16 (Parallel theme): Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.

Lamentations 2:2 (Parallel theme): The Lord hath swallowed up all the habitations of Jacob, and hath not pitied: he hath thrown down in his wrath the strong holds of the daughter of Judah; he hath brought them down to the ground: he hath polluted the kingdom and the princes thereof.