

Isaiah 61:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers.

Analysis

The role reversal continues: "And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers." In the ancient world, conquered peoples performed agricultural labor for their conquerors. Here the pattern reverses—foreigners willingly serve Israel, performing necessary but humble work. The Hebrew *zarim* (strangers) and *nekar* (aliens/foreigners) emphasize their outsider status. From a Reformed perspective, this doesn't teach ethnic superiority but prophesies Gentile believers gladly serving Christ's kingdom. Those formerly alienated from God's covenants (Ephesians 2:12-13) become willing servants in the household of faith. The imagery of feeding flocks, plowing, and dressing vines represents essential kingdom work—pastoral care, preparation of hearts for gospel seed, and cultivating spiritual fruit. Gentile believers don't merely receive blessing but actively participate in building God's kingdom, performing vital service alongside Jewish believers in the one body of Christ (Ephesians 2:14-22).

Historical Context

Under foreign domination (Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome), Israelites served alien masters. The prophecy promised reversal—not through military conquest but through the gospel's power. Gentiles would voluntarily join in serving God's purposes. The early church saw dramatic fulfillment as Gentile converts outnumbered Jewish believers and took up gospel work—Paul, the apostle to Gentiles, exemplifying this (Acts 9:15, Romans 11:13, Galatians 2:7-9). Gentile

churches supported Jewish believers materially (Romans 15:27, 2 Corinthians 8-9), demonstrating mutual service in Christ.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How do Gentile believers today participate as willing servants in God's kingdom work?
2. What does humble service in God's kingdom reveal about our transformed hearts?
3. How does mutual service between Jewish and Gentile believers demonstrate gospel unity?

Interlinear Text

נַּכְרִים יְהִי רְבָנָיו וְעִמָּדָיו
shall stand And strangers and feed your flocks and the sons of the alien
H5975 H2114 H7462 H6629 H1121 H5236

אַפְרִיכָּם וְכַרְמִיכָּם:
shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers
H406 H3755

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