

Isaiah 65:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them.

Analysis

The promise extends to labor and offspring: "They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble." Labor won't be futile (riq—empty/vain), and children won't be born for behalah (sudden terror/calamity). This reverses the curse where labor is toilsome and uncertain (Genesis 3:17-19) and children face premature death or disaster. The reason: "for they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them." Being zera berukhei Adonai (seed of the blessed of the LORD) guarantees covenant protection and blessing. The phrase "and their offspring with them" extends blessing generationally—covenant promises encompass descendants. From a Reformed perspective, this illustrates the covenant of grace extending to believers and their children (Acts 2:39, 1 Corinthians 7:14). While salvation requires individual regeneration, God's covenant mercies typically flow through family lines. Believers' labor has eternal significance (1 Corinthians 15:58), and their children are set apart as holy, recipients of covenant promises and means of grace.

Historical Context

The exile brought the horror of laboring in vain—all efforts destroyed—and children born into captivity or death (Lamentations 2:11-12, 20). Even after return, insecurity persisted. The prophecy looked beyond temporal circumstances to covenant security. The early church experienced fruitful labor (Acts 6:7, 1 Corinthians 15:10, Philippians 2:16) and saw generational blessing as children

were included in the covenant (Acts 2:39, 1 Corinthians 7:14). Complete fulfillment awaits the consummated kingdom where all labor produces lasting fruit and all covenant children enjoy perfect security.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does union with Christ ensure our labor is 'not in vain' (1 Corinthians 15:58)?
2. What does it mean that believers and their offspring are 'the seed of the blessed of the LORD'?
3. How should covenant promises to our children shape our parenting and discipleship?

Interlinear Text

ל	א	לֹא	לְקַיֵּם	לֹא	לִלְדָן	לִלְדָן	לְבָבֶל	ה
H3808	They shall not labour	H3021	in vain	H7385	H3808	H3205	nor bring forth	H3588

בָּעֵם	בָּרָךְ	יְהִי	מִתְּהִלָּה	מִצְאָתָיו
for they are the seed	of the blessed	of the LORD	H1992	and their offspring
H2233	H1288	H3068		H6631

אָתָּה

H854

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 61:9 (Blessing): And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the LORD hath blessed.

Acts 2:39 (References Lord): For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

Isaiah 55:2 (Parallel theme): Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.

Isaiah 49:4 (References Lord): Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain: yet surely my judgment is with the LORD, and my work with my God.

Genesis 12:2 (Blessing): And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

Genesis 17:7 (Parallel theme): And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.

Haggai 2:19 (Blessing): Is the seed yet in the barn? yea, as yet the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree, hath not brought forth: from this day will I bless you.