

Numbers 5:27

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when he hath made her to drink the water, then it shall come to pass, that, if she be defiled, and have done trespass against her husband, that the water that causeth the curse shall enter into her, and become bitter, and her belly shall swell, and her thigh shall rot: and the woman shall be a curse among her people.

Analysis

The divine judgment manifests physically—the bitter water enters her body, and if she has defiled herself, it causes her belly to swell and thigh to rot. The public nature of this judgment serves both as vindication or condemnation. If guilty, her sin is exposed; if innocent, her integrity is publicly confirmed. The curse makes the adulteress an object lesson among her people, demonstrating that sexual sin brings tangible consequences. This reflects the Reformed principle that while salvation is by grace, sin still produces temporal consequences even for believers.

Historical Context

The physical manifestation of guilt or innocence was immediate and supernatural. This was not a natural medical condition but a divine sign. The public nature of the results ensured that both justice was seen to be done and that the community learned from the outcome.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does the public manifestation of judgment serve both justice and communal instruction?
2. What does the physical consequence of spiritual sin teach about the holistic nature of God's judgment?
3. In what ways do temporal consequences of sin serve as warnings even under the gospel of grace?

Interlinear Text

אָמַן וְקִימָת הַמָּיְם אֲתָא אֶת הַמָּיְם
And when he hath made her to drink H853 that the water H1961 H518
H8248 H4325

וְנִתְמַמֵּה לְמַעַל וְנִתְמַעַל
then it shall come to pass that if she be defiled and have done trespass
H2930 H4603 H4604

בְּמִאָבָרִים בְּמִים יְמִינָה בְּאִישָׁה
against her husband shall enter H0 that the water that causeth the curse
H376 H935 H4325 H779

לִמְרֵם יְמִינָה בְּבָטָן הָרָקֶת הַרְקֶת הַרְקֶת
into her and become bitter shall swell and her belly shall rot and her thigh
H4751 H6638 H990 H5307 H3409

עַמְּמָה בְּקָרְבָּן הַאֲשֶׁר הַקִּימָת הַ
and the woman shall be a curse among her people
H1961 H802 H423 H7130 H5971

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 29:18 (Curse): And I will persecute them with the sword, with the famine, and with the pestilence, and will deliver them to be removed to all the kingdoms of the earth, to be a curse, and an astonishment, and an hissing, and a reproach, among all the nations whither I have driven them:

Jeremiah 42:18 (Curse): For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; As mine anger and my fury hath been poured forth upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem; so shall my fury be poured forth upon you, when ye shall enter into Egypt: and ye shall be an execration, and an astonishment, and a curse, and a reproach; and ye shall see this place no more.

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 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:

Jeremiah 29:22 (Curse): And of them shall be taken up a curse by all the captivity of Judah which are in Babylon, saying, The LORD make thee like Zedekiah and like Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire;

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.

Jeremiah 44:12 (Curse): And I will take the remnant of Judah, that have set their faces to go into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, and they shall all be consumed, and fall in the land of Egypt; they shall even be consumed by the sword and by the famine: they shall die, from the least even unto the greatest, by the sword and by the famine: and they shall be an execration, and an astonishment, and a curse, and a reproach.

Deuteronomy 28:37 (Parallel theme): And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all nations whither the LORD shall lead thee.