

Psalm 128:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house:
thy children like olive plants round about thy table.

Analysis

Domestic blessing is described: 'Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house; thy children like olive plants round about thy table.' The imagery draws from agriculture - vine and olive plants were crucial to Israelite economy and symbolized abundance. Comparing wife to 'fruitful vine' emphasizes fertility, productivity, and life-giving qualities. Vines require care but produce abundantly. The location 'by the sides of thine house' suggests close intimacy - the wife is central to household life and flourishing. The phrase 'thy children like olive plants' continues agricultural imagery. Olive trees were long-lived, valuable, and productive - symbolizing children who bring lasting benefit. The phrase 'round about thy table' pictures family meals with multiple children gathered - a sign of blessing and covenant continuity. This verse celebrates family life as component of comprehensive blessing for the God-fearer.

Historical Context

In ancient agrarian society, family was the basic economic and social unit. Children provided labor, continuity, and care in old age. Fertility was highly valued and seen as divine blessing (Genesis 1:28; Psalm 127:3-5). The imagery of vine and olive would resonate powerfully with people dependent on these crops. The verse reflects Israelite family values where multi-generational households gathered for meals.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How do the agricultural images (vine, olive plants) communicate blessing more effectively than abstract descriptions?
2. What does comparing wife to a 'fruitful vine' suggest about her role and value in the household?
3. How should modern readers apply this verse's celebration of family in contexts of singleness, infertility, or small families?
4. What is the relationship between fearing God (v. 1) and experiencing family blessing (v. 3)?
5. How does the image of children 'round about thy table' picture covenant continuity across generations?

Interlinear Text

אֲשֶׁתֶךְ	פָּרָיָה	בִּירְכַּת	בְּיַתְּכֶם	בְּנֵיכֶם
Thy wife	vine	shall be as a fruitful	by the sides	of thine house
H802	H1612	H6509	H3411	H1004
				H1121

כַּשְׂתַּל	לְשָׁלֹמָנוּ:	בְּיַבְּרֵךְ	יְמֵינוּ:	כַּשְׂתַּל
plants	like olive	round about	thy table	
H8363	H2132	H5439	H7979	

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 19:10 (Parallel theme): Thy mother is like a vine in thy blood, planted by the waters: she was fruitful and full of branches by reason of many waters.

Psalms 52:8 (Parallel theme): But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.

Romans 11:24 (Parallel theme): For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert graffed contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be graffed into their own olive tree?

Genesis 49:22 (Parallel theme): Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall:

Jeremiah 11:16 (Parallel theme): The LORD called thy name, A green olive tree, fair, and of goodly fruit: with the noise of a great tumult he hath kindled fire upon it, and the branches of it are broken.

Psalms 144:12 (Parallel theme): That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace:

Psalms 127:5 (Parallel theme): Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.