

# Zechariah 5:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then said he unto me, This is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth: for every one that stealeth shall be cut off as on this side according to it; and every one that sweareth shall be cut off as on that side according to it.

## Analysis

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**Then said he unto me, This is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth**—The scroll's content revealed: *zō't hā'ālāh hayyōtsē't 'al-pənē kol-hā'āretz* (זאת אלה כיוצא על-פני כל- הארץ), 'this is the curse going forth over the face of all the earth/land'). The term 'ālāh (אלה) denotes a covenant curse—the penalties invoked for breaking covenant stipulations (Deuteronomy 27-28). The scroll contains not abstract law but active curses seeking violators.

**For every one that stealeth shall be cut off as on this side according to it; and every one that sweareth shall be cut off as on that side according to it**—Two representative sins: theft (8th commandment) and false swearing (3rd commandment, taking God's name in vain). The scroll has two sides, each side bearing curses for a category of sin—sins against neighbor (theft) and sins against God (false oaths). *Yinnāqeh* (נתקה, 'shall be cut off/purged') promises purifying judgment. Theft violates property rights and stewardship; false swearing misuses God's name for personal gain. Together they represent all covenant violations—vertical (toward God) and horizontal (toward others). The vision warns that moral laxity will face divine judgment.

## Historical Context

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Post-exilic economic hardship tempted theft (Nehemiah 5:1-5), and commercial dealings involved frequent oath-taking where perjury was common (Malachi 3:5). The curse targets sins that undermine community trust and God's honor. The scroll's two-sided curse encompasses the entire law, summarized by loving God and neighbor (Matthew 22:37-40). Violation brings 'cutting off'—exclusion from covenant community, possibly physical death, or ultimate separation from God.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

## Study Questions

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1. Why do theft and false swearing represent the full range of covenant violations?
2. How does recognizing God's law as containing active 'curses' change your view of sin's seriousness?
3. In what ways does Christ bear the covenant curse for us (Galatians 3:13)?

## Interlinear Text

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עַל	פִּיצָּא	אֶת	כָּל	הַ	זֶה	אֶת	אֵלֶּי	וְ	אֶתְרָה
Then said	H413	H2063	he unto me	This is the curse			that goeth forth	H5921	
	H559				H423			H3318	
over the face	H3605	H776	of the whole earth	H3588	H3605	for every one that stealeth		H1589	
	H6440								
מִזְהָה		כִּמְמָה	וְ	נִקְהָה	וְ	כִּל	וְ	נִקְהָה	
H2088		as on that side according				shall be cut off	H3605		
		H3644			H5352				
to it and every one that sweareth	H7650	H2088	מִזְהָה		כִּמְמָה	וְ	נִקְהָה		
			וְ	נִשְׁבָּע	וְ	כִּמְמָה	וְ	נִקְהָה	

## Additional Cross-References

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**Exodus 20:15** (Parallel theme): Thou shalt not steal.

**Isaiah 48:1** (Parallel theme): Hear ye this, O house of Jacob, which are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah, which swear by the name of the LORD, and make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth, nor in righteousness.

**Isaiah 24:6** (Curse): Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left.

**Isaiah 43:28** (Curse): Therefore I have profaned the princes of the sanctuary, and have given Jacob to the curse, and Israel to reproaches.

**Jeremiah 5:2** (Parallel theme): And though they say, The LORD liveth; surely they swear falsely.

**Jeremiah 26:6** (Curse): Then will I make this house like Shiloh, and will make this city a curse to all the nations of the earth.

**Zechariah 5:4** (Parallel theme): I will bring it forth, saith the LORD of hosts, and it shall enter into the house of the thief, and into the house of him that sweareth falsely by my name: and it shall remain in the midst of his house, and shall consume it with the timber thereof and the stones thereof.

**James 5:12** (Parallel theme): But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.

**Leviticus 19:12** (Parallel theme): And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the LORD.

**Malachi 4:6** (Curse): And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

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