



Deuteronomy 28:15

וְהָיָה אִם-לֹא תִשְׁמַע בְּקוֹל יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשָׁמֵר לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת-כָּל-
מִצְוֹתַי וְחֻקֹּתַי אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מְצַוֶּךָ
הַיּוֹם--יָבֹאוּ עָלֶיךָ כָּל-הַקְּלָלוֹת
הָאֵלֶּה וְהִשְׁיִגְוֶךָ.

But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the **LORD** your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these **curses** will come upon you and overtake you.

14th Nov 2011 KALLERSON

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Deuteronomy 28:15-29
The Blessings and the Curses, Part II
November 14, 2021

¹⁵ *“But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you:*

¹⁶ *“Cursed shall you be in the city, and cursed shall you be in the country.*

¹⁷ *“Cursed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl.*

¹⁸ *“Cursed shall be the fruit of your body and the produce of your land, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks.*

¹⁹ *“Cursed shall you be when you come in, and cursed shall you be when you go out.*

²⁰ *“The LORD will send on you cursing, confusion, and rebuke in all that you set your hand to do, until you are destroyed and until you perish quickly, because of the wickedness of your doings in which you have forsaken Me. ²¹ The LORD will make the plague cling to you until He has consumed you from the land which you are going to possess. ²² The LORD will strike you with consumption, with fever, with inflammation, with severe burning fever, with the sword, with scorching, and with mildew; they shall pursue you until you perish. ²³ And your heavens which are over your head shall be bronze, and the earth which is under you shall be iron. ²⁴ The LORD will change the rain of your land to powder and dust; from the heaven it shall come down on you until you are destroyed.*

²⁵ *“The LORD will cause you to be defeated before your enemies; you shall go out one way against them and flee seven ways before them; and you shall become troublesome to all the kingdoms of the earth. ²⁶ Your carcasses shall be food for all the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and no one shall frighten them away. ²⁷ The LORD will strike you with the boils of Egypt, with tumors, with the scab, and with the itch, from which you cannot be healed. ²⁸ The LORD will strike you with madness and blindness and confusion of heart. ²⁹ And you shall grope at noonday, as a blind man gropes in darkness; you shall not prosper in your ways; you shall be only oppressed and plundered continually, and no one shall save you.*

Last week, we saw the promised blessings that Moses said would come upon the people if they simply paid heed to his words and obeyed the Lord. He gave the sure and great promises that they would be exalted, prosperous, and filled.

And in their history, this did come upon them at times. But the main thing to consider is that even when they strayed, they still remained. He brought judgments upon them, but he never allowed them to be utterly swept away.

This demonstrates the amazing patience, longsuffering, and indeed the mercy of the Lord. But there is more to it than that. It also displays the covenant-keeping nature of the Lord. We know this is true because the Lord got so tired of man’s rebellion in Genesis that He destroyed all but eight of the entire race.

Through them, He started anew, and through a continued select line of people He slowly revealed His plans and purposes for man. Eventually, He established His covenant with Israel, and He set forth the blessings and the curses noted in our ongoing evaluation of Chapter 28.

Text Verse: *“Yet behold, there shall be left in it a remnant who will be brought out, both sons and daughters; surely they will come out to you, and you will see their ways and their doings. Then you will be comforted concerning the disaster that I have brought upon Jerusalem, all that I have brought upon it. ²³ And they will comfort you, when you see their ways and their doings; and you shall know that I have done nothing without cause that I have done in it,’ says the Lord GOD.” Ezekiel 14:22, 23*

We are only beginning a long series of curses in the words we will look at today. But one thing is for sure, Israel failed to do what Moses exhorted them to do. And the curses came following hard after them. And yet, Ezekiel – a priest in exile – notes that the Lord kept a remnant who would be brought out. A remnant signifies continuance.

Paul writes of the remnant of Israel that exists in the church age in Romans 11, and he also notes that a remnant will be saved in Romans 9. The implication is that despite their continued failings, and despite their continued rejection of Christ, Israel continues.

Think it through, if a remnant of Israel will be saved, that means that there will be a much larger Israel for them to be saved from. In other words, Israel continues – whether in obedience or disobedience – to this day. A “remnant” implies a larger whole.

This is what we have in the world today – a people preserved by God, even though they are not right with their God, so that He can keep His covenant promises to them. This is the lesson of the Bible. God is faithful even when we are not.

Great truths such as this are to be found in His superior word. And so, let us turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Cursed Shall You Be (verses 15-19)

¹⁵ “But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God,

After all the words of blessing in the first fourteen verses, these words now carry their own highly ominous tone, even before the rest of the verse is uttered. Notice the immediate contrast to what it says in verse 1 –

1. “And it shall be if hearing, you hear in voice Yehovah your God.”

15. “And it shall be if not you hear in voice Yehovah your God.”

In verse 1, there was an emphasis, “if hearing you hear.” Now, it only says, “if not you hear.” One can sense that there is a disregard of the emphasis, and there is instead not even a lackadaisical hearing of what the Lord says. If they so fail...

^{15 (con’t)} to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today,

The words are identical to the corresponding clause, but with one addition –

1. "to observe carefully all His commandments"

15. "to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes"

Moses adds in *v'khuqotav*, or "and His statutes." This is an enactment, or something prescribed." One might say, "an ordinance." For example, the Passover is called such in Exodus 12:14. All commands are to be obeyed, and all ordinances are to be adhered to. If Israel fails in this, then it shall be...

15 (con't) **that all these curses**

The word translated as "curse," *qelalah*, is the same as that used in the previous chapter when the blessings and the curses were to be proclaimed upon Mt. Ebal. It signifies "vilification." However, this is not referring to the curses mentioned there. Rather, it speaks of what is to be stated in the coming verses. Moses says that it is these that...

15 (con't) **will come upon you and overtake you:**

The words are identical to the corresponding words of verse 2 with two exceptions. The word "blessings" is substituted with the word "curses," and the word translated as "and overtake you" is spelled with an additional letter, a *vav*, in this verse now.

Vav is the sixth letter. It is the number of man, especially fallen man. In picture, a *vav* is a tent peg. The meaning of *vav* is "add," "secure," or "hook." One can only speculate here, but with the total number of curses set forth in contrast to the number of blessings, it appears that what will "overtake" Israel will be added to greatly.

It is probably not coincidence that the judgment for Israel's (and our) sins is especially highlighted in the darkness that covered the earth beginning with the sixth hour when Jesus was on the cross. In Matthew 27:45, it says, "*Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land.*"

The innocent Man, took the judgment of the curses which fell upon fallen man. This additional *vav* may be an anticipatory hint of what was coming in the ministry of Christ.

As far as the sins overtaking Israel, exactly that is what is spoken of towards the end of the Old Testament, as testified to by Zechariah –

"Do not be like your fathers, to whom the former prophets preached, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Turn now from your evil ways and your evil deeds.'" But they did not hear nor heed Me," says the LORD.

⁵“Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live forever? ⁶Yet surely My words and My statutes, Which I commanded My servants the prophets, Did they not **overtake** your fathers? “So they returned and said: ‘Just as the LORD of hosts determined to do to us, According to our ways and according to our deeds, So He has dealt with us.’”” Zechariah 1:4-6

It is not as if Moses didn't warn the people. They just failed to pay heed. For now, Moses begins with the curses...

¹⁶ **“Cursed *shall you be* in the city, and cursed *shall you be* in the country.**

The words of verses 16-19 are the antitheses of what was stated in verses 3-6. It is a six-fold repetition of the word “cursed.” Like the blessings, the number of curses is more than six. These are a short summary that will be expanded upon afterwards.

Here, Moses uses the word *arar*. It is a verb that signifies to bitterly curse. Using this word, Moses says they will be cursed in both the city and the country – literally, the field. As such, this covers domestic employment, that of industry inside the walls of the city, and that which is agricultural, or outside of them.

They are warned that all areas where Israel puts its hands to work, the work of their hands will be cursed. The words here are identical, letter to letter, to verse 3, except “blessed” is changed to “cursed.” Next...

¹⁷ **“Cursed *shall be* your basket and your kneading bowl.**

Moses now swaps the blessings of verses 4 and 5. Verse 5 corresponds to this verse now. If you remember from the previous sermon, probably what is meant by Moses is that –

- 1) the basket that carries the first of the produce is emblematic of all of the harvest. As the firsts are be cursed, so will be the entire harvest. It will fail miserably.
- 2) the bowl that is used for making bread (the staff of life) will fail to be filled, implying famine. In other words, there will always be people hungry and malnourished by the lack of food as only empty containers sit before them.

Other than the substituted words “blessed” and “cursed,” the verses are identical, letter for letter. Next...

¹⁸ **“Cursed *shall be* the fruit of your body and the produce of your land, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks.**

In this verse, it is letter for letter identical to verse 4, but with two exceptions. The word “blessed” is substituted with “cursed,” and Moses now leaves off “and the increase of your herds.”

“Blessed shall be the fruit of your body, the produce of your ground and the increase [lit: fruit] of your herds, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks.

“Cursed shall be the fruit of your body and the produce of your land, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks.

As such, these are five curses detailing one category, that of reproduction. However, in the Hebrew, the first three are termed “fruit, while the fourth is termed “increase,” and the fifth is termed “offspring.”

The idea is that nothing will bear fruit or increase so that even the few people who may be left to occupy the land will face lack. The land will become wholly unproductive. With that stated, Moses next says...

¹⁹ **“Cursed *shall you be* when you come in, and cursed *shall you be* when you go out.**

Again, the words are identical, letter for letter, to verse 6, only with the exception of replacing “blessed” with “cursed.” As in verse 6, the Hebrew reads, “in your coming in,” and “in your going out.”

The meaning is that in one’s coming in, there will be no strength. There will be the desire to lay down and curl up from the frustrations of life. There will be no joy, no health for the family, no contentment, no peace, and so on.

And in one’s going out, there won’t be enough strength to put one’s hand to the plow (if there is even an animal to pull it). There will be tiredness, deprivation, and want as the eyes look to desolate fields with nothing springing forth.

With cursing I shall curse you
And you shall be cursed by Me
When you fail to observe and to do
You shall be cursed by Me abundantly

You follow a path that doesn’t lead you to Me
Instead, you constantly turn either left or right
You fail to follow My ways diligently
And to keep Me in the center of your sight

Oh Israel, the blessing is waiting for you
If you would just heed the word that I have spoken
If only you would follow the path that leads to life anew
And I would heal the hearts, desolate and broken

II. With Madness and Blindness and Confusion (verses 20-29)

²⁰ **“The LORD will send on you cursing, confusion, and rebuke**

The translation is sloppy. Definite articles precede nouns, and there is a striking alliteration used by Moses: *Yeshalakh Yehovah bekha eth ha’meerah eth ha’mehumah v’eth ha’migeret* – “Will send Yehovah in you the curse, the confusion, and the criticism.”

I translated it that way to maintain the alliteration which provides a heightened sense of the disaster set to come upon the people. The use of the articles also provides its own marked emphasis. The individual words Moses chose are –

Meerah. It is the noun form of the word *arar* that has been repeatedly used in the past few verses. It will be seen just five times. The next time is in Proverbs 3:33, and which perfectly describes what will come upon Israel –

“The curse of the LORD is on the house of the wicked,
But He blesses the home of the just.” Proverbs 3:33

The last two times it will be seen are in Malachi 2:2 and 3:9, and which also beautifully fit with the theme which Moses puts forth from his lips at this time.

Mehumah. This is its second use. It comes from *hum*, an onomatopoetic word signifying to murmur or roar. The first was in Deuteronomy 7:23, where it speaks of just the opposite. Instead of this being inflicted on Israel when they are disobedient, it will come upon their enemies –

“But the LORD your God will deliver them over to you, and will inflict defeat upon them until they are destroyed.” Deuteronomy 7:23

Migereth. This is its only use in the Bible. It comes from the verb *gaar*, meaning to rebuke. Thus, I translated it as “the criticism.” In the use of these three words, Moses is bringing to the highest sense the commotion of life, mind, and attitude that will come upon Israel, and he notes that it will be...

20 (con't) in all that you set your hand to do,

The words literally state, “in all outstretching your hand which you do.” One can imagine stretching out the hand for grain and bringing back a viper, stretching out the hand for something cold and burning it instead, and stretching out the hand for a bite to eat and having it come back filled with thorns. No matter what is done, only the curse, the confusion, and the criticism responds...

20 (con't) until you are destroyed and until you perish quickly,

The words are exactly translated here. Moses repeats the word “until” for emphasis, and then he adds in “quickly” to acknowledge that the terror will be sudden and abrupt. And all of this will be, as Moses astonishingly says...

20 (con't) because of the wickedness of your doings in which you have forsaken Me.

mipene roa maalalekha asher azavtani – “from face evil your doings which you have forsaken Me.” Moses places His words into the position of the Lord – “you have forsaken Me.” To forsake Moses is to forsake the Lord, and in that, there will be only a curse left behind. The thought is repeated in the Old Testament, where the word of Moses is directly equated to the word of the Lord, such as in 2 Kings –

“In this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put My name forever; ⁸ and I will not make the feet of Israel wander anymore from the land which I gave their fathers—only if they are careful to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that My servant Moses commanded them.” 2 Kings 21:7, 8

The idea of forsaking Moses is found in the New Testament when Paul went to Jerusalem to meet with James and the elders. This is found in Acts 21 –

“And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord. And they said to him, ‘You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law; ²¹ but they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs.’” Acts 21:20, 21

The word there in Acts means “apostasy from Moses.” It is quite clear that there was a misunderstanding by these men of the significance of what Christ had done.

It was evident even from Chapter 10 when Peter went into the house of Cornelius that things had changed, but the leadership was still unable to fully grasp that in coming to Christ, one doesn't forsake Moses (meaning the Law of Moses), but instead finds the fulfillment and end of Moses.

It is this that the author of Hebrews, most probably Paul, clearly sets down in his epistle. As Moses wrote of Christ (John 5:46), and as he commanded that when Christ came (meaning the Prophet of Chapter 18), the people were to listen to Him. Those who failed to do so would be so judged.

As Christ established a New Covenant in His blood, He rendered the Old (meaning the Law of Moses) obsolete. He annulled it and it is now set aside. As you can see then, to reject Christ is to reject Moses. He is the fulfillment of all that Moses taught.

However, until that time came, the people were to adhere to the law as laid down here. To fail to do so would bring upon them the curses now being set forth. They did fail, and the curses came upon them, exactly as spoken forth by Moses. But their failure to do so also became the lesson for God's people, the tutor, which is intended to lead us to Christ.

The coming verses further explain the content of verse 20, giving examples of how the Lord world accomplish what is said there. That begins with...

²¹ The LORD will make the plague cling to you

yadbeq Yehovah bekha eth ha'daver – “May He cause to cling Yehovah in you the pestilence.” Like in verse 8, the first word of the verse is a jussive. It is basically an indirect command. Moses is thus essentially calling out for the Lord to do this in response to Israel's rebellion.

Moses calls for them to be overtaken by *ha'daver*, or “the pestilence.” It is a noun, *dever*, coming from the word *davar*, meaning to speak. It is as if the spoken word of the Lord will cling to them and consume them, as is next noted...

^{21 (con't)} until He has consumed you from the land which you are going to possess.

Here the word is “ground” not “land.” This is not referring to exile, but to death where Israel lives. The connection seems to be that the word of the Lord is as a destroyer. It drives together what it purposes and thus when He speaks, the pestilence issues forth when the people are so driven together. As a contagion, it moves quickly from person to person.

What this pestilence is cannot be known for sure. The Greek rendering of the verse translates it with the generic word “death.” As such, it is something terminal once it affects a person.

That becomes evident through the word translated as “cling,” which signifies to stick like glue. It is a horrifying thought that nothing will remove it and no suitable remedy for it will be found. This is what the Lord specifies as one of His four severe judgments in Ezekiel 14. There it says –

“For thus says the Lord GOD: “How much more it shall be when I send My four severe judgments on Jerusalem—the sword and famine and wild beasts and pestilence—to cut off man and beast from it?” Ezekiel 14:21

Jeremiah, in particular, uses this word time and again – more than any other prophet – when referring to the judgment of the Lord upon the people. Such a plague is the expected outcome of high crowding, low nutrition, and unsanitary conditions that would normally be expected during the siege of cities within the land. Next, Moses says...

²² The LORD will strike you with consumption, with fever, with inflammation, with severe burning fever, with the sword, with scorching, and with mildew;

Here, Moses lists seven horrifying maladies that would come upon the people. Each is prefixed by an article, revealing the specific nature of the calamity. The first is *ba’shakhepheth*, or “in the consumption.” This is the second and final time the word is used. It comes from the word *shakhaph* which is a type of gull. As the gull is a thin bird, the picture is clear – emaciation. The person just wastes away from the disease.

The next is *ba’qadakhath*, or “in the *burning* fever.” This is also the second and final time the word is seen. It is derived from *qadakh*, to kindle.” Thus, it is a febrile disease such as burning a gull. The fever will simply burn the person up.

The next is *ba’daleqet* or “in the inflammation.” The word is found only here in the Bible. It comes from the word *dalaq* meaning to burn or to holy pursue. It is another burning disease, probably more intense than the first, and maybe directed in a different way than the previous, such as the entire body instead of the head. It could also be a type of rapidly consuming cancer.

The next is *ba’kharkhur*, or “in the *violent* burning.” This is also found only this once in Scripture. It comes from the word *kharar*, to be hot or scorched. Thus, if a burning in the body, it is the most extreme of the three categories. In such a state, the vital organs of the person would simply melt from the heated stress on the body.

However, it could also be referring to the burning of the mind. In other words, insanity coming upon a person because of the terrible times that have come upon the people. Thus, it is as if the mind is hotly enraged.

Next, Moses notes *ba'kherev*, or “in the sword.” The sword is another of the four severe judgments noted by Ezekiel. It is worthy of note that the three letters that spell this word can also be translated as “drought,” and that is how the Latin Vulgate, the Arabic, and Samaritan Pentateuch translate this.

As that implies heat, it is a reasonable possibility for what is described here, and it would fit the overall theme of heat well. Further, it is also something that would be attributed as a plague from the Lord directly, rather than indirectly as the sword of an enemy would.

However, as this would be the only time that the sword is mentioned in this chapter, and as it is such a common judgment upon Israel throughout the prophets, “sword” may be the correct rendering.

The next two words are plagues that target the food of the people. The first is *ba'shidaphon*, or “in the scorching.” This is a new word in Scripture, *sh'dephah*. It will be seen six times. It comes from *shadaph*, meaning to scorch or blight. Ye olde King Jimmy Version translates this as “blasting.”

This probably refers to the scorching east winds that are known to come upon the land. Rather than naming the wind itself, it would then refer to the result of what the wind causes. This seems likely based on the use of the word in 2 Kings 19 –

“Therefore their inhabitants had little power; They were dismayed and confounded; They were as the grass of the field And the green herb, As the grass on the housetops And grain **blighted** before it is grown.” 2 Kings 19:26

Next listed is *ba'yeraqon*, or “in the mildew.” This word is new also, and it will also be seen just six times. All but one time, it will be translated along with the previous word. It signifies mildew or paleness, coming from *yereg*, meaning green, greenish, or yellow.

One can get the idea of unhealthy sickliness. It is a paleness whether of people or of plants that indicates the onset of death. Of these, Moses next says...

^{22 (con't)} **they shall pursue you until you perish.**

The Lord will send these plagues upon the people, coming hard after them, so that they will be consumed. It may be that He would send them in rapid succession as well, which would certainly bring madness to the minds of the people as they faced the rushing onslaught. And all because they failed to acknowledge the Lord who established them and blessed them.

23 And your heavens which are over your head shall be bronze, and the earth which is under you shall be iron.

Here, it should say “land” rather than “earth.” It speaks of the state of the entire land given to Israel. It will be under a curse, and it will be unproductive. This is a close repeat of Leviticus 26:19 –

“I will break the pride of your power;
I will make your heavens like iron and your earth [land] like bronze.”

Moses reverses the metals to show that the punishment will be universal in nature. Of these two metals, bronze represents judgment while iron represents strength, be it in binding together, in government, in hard service, or in bondage.

In this, we see judgment in the sky, meaning barren skies with no clouds or rain, scorching heat radiating down on the people, and so on. This, in turn, will lead to an unyielding earth that is caked and dead. Digging through it to find new sources of water will be like digging through rock itself.

Times of drought are recorded in the Bible, testifying to judgment upon the people, but this was also the state of the land after the Roman exile. In the destruction of the cities, which included Jerusalem and the sanctuary there, the Romans built siege works.

In doing so, they cut down the trees of the land. In this, the natural rain cycles of the land were disrupted. If any rains fell, they were not enough to support crops and produce. This continued on until the return of Israel to the land. In their return, they began planting trees, and the cycle of former and latter rains returned to the land.

Mark Twain spoke of the nature of the land as he passed through it, penning a confirmation of the prophecies uttered forth by Moses. Further, the Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary of 1871 says –

“This want of regular and seasonable rain is allowed by the most intelligent observers to be one great cause of the present sterility of Palestine.”

The Lord spoke directly in Leviticus, and through Moses in Deuteronomy, about these things. As such, the famines of Israel must be ascribed to the deliberate action of the Lord in fulfillment of His word. In continued reference to the state of the land, Moses speaks on...

24 The LORD will change the rain of your land to powder and dust;

With the heavens shut up in judgment, and with the ground without any moisture, any loose soil would turn into powder, and the dust below the topsoil would be exposed. Everything is in a state of complete desiccation. And because of that...

²⁴ (con't) **from the heaven it shall come down on you until you are destroyed.**

The Hebrew says, “the heavens.” It is an indication that the sky in all directions would be filled with the powder and dust. This is not specifically speaking of the *sharav*, or *khamsin*, winds that often rage over the middle east. Such is a normal occurrence that simply arises and overwhelms the land from time to time. What Moses refers to here is a consequence of the state of the land.

The result of even a normal breeze would be that of constant debris flying about. The desiccated topsoil would be picked up and tossed around, and the dust below it would do as well. One would always be covered in a layer of grime as it stuck to the sweat of the body, and there would be no comfort from the grinding of the debris into the skin. A French traveler in the 1600s is cited by Adam Clarke –

“Thevenot, a French traveler, who had observed these showers of dust, etc., says, ‘They grievously annoy all they fall on, filling their eyes, ears, nostrils, etc.’” Adam Clarke

Existence in such a land would be dirty, difficult, and demanding. And it could be avoided if the people would simply pay heed. But the warnings continue to come for those who fail to do so...

²⁵ **“The LORD will cause you to be defeated before your enemies; you shall go out one way against them and flee seven ways before them;**

This is the antithesis of verse 7 –

“The LORD will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before your face; they shall come out against you one way and flee before you seven ways.”

Instead of victory, there will be a total routing of Israel. They will head in every direction, utterly defeated by their enemies. Already in Deuteronomy, the Lord has promised to go out with Israel, and to destroy their enemies –

“When you go out to battle against your enemies, and see horses and chariots and people more numerous than you, do not be afraid of them; for the LORD your God is with you, who brought you up from the land of Egypt.”

-Deuteronomy 20:1

This is now explicitly qualified. The Lord will be with Israel, if Israel is with the Lord, obeying His commands and observing his statutes. To fail means destruction before the foe, and more...

²⁵ (con't) **and you shall become troublesome to all the kingdoms of the earth.**

Here is a rare word, *zaavah*, it is found only here and in Ezekiel 23:46. It is a transposition of the word *zevaah*, meaning a trembling, or an object of terror. The KJV translates it as “shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.”

This is unlikely. The idea of exile is the highest disgrace and the greatest curse to come upon the people. It will be noted later toward the end of the curses. This now is referring to the state of Israel among the kingdoms.

They will be defeated in battle, and they will then be treated like a football that gets punted between all the kingdoms who oppress them. This is recorded as occurring during their history prior to exile where they were subject to paying tribute to Moab, Assyria, Egypt, and so on. And more...

²⁶ **Your carcasses shall be food for all the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth,**

The words are singular, and instead of “air” it says, “the heavens” – “And it shall be your carcass to food to every bird *in* the heavens and to *the* beast *of* the earth.” Moses is speaking to Israel in the singular, as a united body that will be subject to the prey of the bird and the beast. The use of the singular draws this out in a notable way. And of these creatures, it says...

²⁶ (con't) **and no one shall frighten *them* away.**

Being devoured by animals was considered one of the most ignoble ways to die. So much so that we read this account at the time of King David when the sons of a woman were put to death before the Lord –

“Now Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth and spread it for herself on the rock, from the beginning of harvest until the late rains poured on them from heaven. And she did not allow the birds of the air to rest on them by day nor the beasts of the field by night.” 2 Samuel 21:10

This woman would not allow the beasts to eat her sons, because she understood the significance of the curse Moses speaks of now. On the other hand, Israel was promised again by Jeremiah that this fate would befall them as he repeated the same words that Moses uses in this verse –

“And the carcase of this people hath been for food To a fowl of the heavens, and to a beast of the earth, And there is none troubling.” Jeremiah 7:33 YLT

Because of their unfaithfulness to the Lord, the curse of Moses was set to come upon them. Along with this, Moses next says...

27 The LORD will strike you with the boils of Egypt, with tumors, with the scab, and with the itch,

Moses now speaks of four separate afflictions. The first is the *shekhin*, or boil. It is singular in the Hebrew, thus designating a class of boil – the “boil of Egypt.” It is an eruption of the skin. It is what Job had all over his body, and it is what Hezekiah had, but which was cured by applying a poultice of figs.

The next is the *ophel*, or tumor. The word *ophel* means “a mound,” or “a hill.” Thus, it is that which mounds up on the body. The KJV takes it as a specific type of mound using the archaic word *emerod*, or a hemorrhoid.

After that, is noted the *garav*, or scab. This is its third and last use in the Bible. It comes from a root meaning “to scratch” as from itching, and so it is a painful affliction of the skin.

Finally, is the *kheres*, or itch. This is a new word that will only be seen four times. The other three times, it will be translated as the “sun.” James Strong thinks the connection may be that of scraping oneself with a potsherd which is round, resembling the sun. I would think it is an affliction of the skin, like prurigo, that resembles the sun, being bright red, or orange, and round.

Of these four terrible afflictions, Moses says...

27 (con’t) from which you cannot be healed.

When the affliction sets in, it will be because the hand of the Lord sent it. It will occur at a time when the land is devoid of proper medicines due to scarcity, and it will be an affliction that so many people have that it will become endemic in the society. Along with these terrors...

28 The LORD will strike you with madness and blindness and confusion of heart.

In addition to the physical just mentioned, come more afflictions of the body and the mind. The first is *shigaon*. It is a new word signifying madness or furiousness. It will be seen in 2 Kings 9:20, where a person drives his chariot in furiousness, and again in Zechariah 12 where the

Lord promises to strike every horse with confusion and every rider with madness during a future battle –

“‘In that day,’ says the LORD, ‘I will strike every horse with confusion, and its rider with **madness**; I will open My eyes on the house of Judah, and will strike every horse of the peoples with blindness.’” Zechariah 12:4

The next word Moses uses is *ivaron*. It signifies blindness, and it will be seen only one more time, also in Zechariah 12:4 –

“‘In that day,’ says the LORD, ‘I will strike every horse with confusion, and its rider with madness; I will open My eyes on the house of Judah, and will strike every horse of the peoples with **blindness**.’” Zechariah 12:4

This is probably Moses’ way of referring to blindness of the mind, thus matching the other two afflictions which are mental, rather than physical torments.

The third affliction is *timahon* – it is also a new word signifying astonishment or consternation, coming from *tamah*, meaning to be astounded or dumbfounded.

In this, it will be *l’vav*, or “to heart.” Thus, it signifies a confusion of the mind’s ability to reason out what is happening. This word will also be seen only one more time, and it will also be in Zechariah 12:4 –

“‘In that day,’ says the LORD, ‘I will strike every horse with **confusion**, and its rider with madness; I will open My eyes on the house of Judah, and will strike every horse of the peoples with blindness.’” Zechariah 12:4

One can see that in the great battle in the end of days, the Lord will take the same vengeance against His enemies that Moses now promises will be brought against Israel. The Lord is perfectly fair and just in how He executes His judgments upon or for Israel, depending on how they respond to His word. Finally, we read...

²⁹ And you shall grope at noonday, as a blind man gropes in darkness;

As the previous verse referred to mental impairment, this follows along with that. The sun at noonday is when everything is the clearest. The shadows are almost nonexistent. But just as a blind man gropes in the darkness of his eyes, Israel would grope for clarity and a remedy for the trouble they faced.

And yet, no remedy will be found. There will only be an inability to rise above the helpless state in which they find themselves...

^{29 (con't)} **you shall not prosper in your ways;**

One could think of a country with spiraling debt, hyperinflation, and facing a total economic meltdown. They would grope for an answer to the situation, but no matter what they did, the result was always that things got worse, not better.

This is the state that Moses promises Israel will face when they reject the Lord. No matter what way they take, and no matter what option they choose, they will only face a worsening of their crisis. In such a state...

^{29 (con't)} **you shall be only oppressed and plundered continually,**

Without the ability to correctly evaluate a situation, there is no way to correctly perform in order to alleviate it. Therefore, those who take prey in such a situation will do so to Israel. It is reflective of the words of Judges 6 –

“Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD. So the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian for seven years, ²and the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel. Because of the Midianites, the children of Israel made for themselves the dens, the caves, and the strongholds which are in the mountains. ³So it was, whenever Israel had sown, Midianites would come up; also Amalekites and the people of the East would come up against them. ⁴Then they would encamp against them and destroy the produce of the earth as far as Gaza, and leave no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep nor ox nor donkey. ⁵For they would come up with their livestock and their tents, coming in as numerous as locusts; both they and their camels were without number; and they would enter the land to destroy it. ⁶So Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites, and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD.” Judges 6:1-6

Until Israel is hemmed in and plundered enough, they would keep their necks stiff and their hearts unyielding, but when things would get bad enough, they would cry out to the Lord for deliverance. This is the way it has been, and this is the way it will continue to be. Until they come to Him, Moses warns...

^{*29 (fin)} **and no one shall save you.**

The Hebrew reads: *v'ain movoshia* – “And no savior for you.” Apart from the Lord, Israel has no savior. Moses promises them that if they depart from Him, salvation will not be found. Only in seeking Him out will deliverance be possible.

But this is the lesson that permeates Scripture concerning all humanity. Adam rejected the word of the Lord. In this, woe and affliction came upon him. That has continued unabated in human history. Israel was given as a lesson for humanity, and that lesson is ongoing today.

Their rejection of Christ has brought people from all over the world to the place where salvation is found. Until Israel wises up and seeks the Lord they once crucified, their troubles will continue unabated. The fact that they are back in the land and seemingly doing ok does not in any way mean that things are ok for them.

They are being brought to the point where they will, as a nation, face the possibility of utter destruction. And that is written in their own Scriptures. That would not happen if they were right with the Lord, and so the curse for them is ongoing.

Until they acknowledge what they have done, and until they make it right by calling out to Christ for deliverance, they will not prosper as a people. In seeing this, and in understanding it, this should clue each of us in all the more to the fact that we each, just as Israel as a nation, need Jesus.

If the blessing and curses toward Israel are true, and if Jesus Christ is the focus of them coming, and because Jesus has been presented to the world as its one and only Messiah, then we must pay heed. This is the story of Israel. It is a story for each of us to learn from. And so may you learn it today – to the glory of the Lord who is the Giver of every good blessing, or of the finality of man through the curse.

Closing Verse: *“This is the ‘stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.’¹² Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” Acts 4:11, 12*

Next Week: Deuteronomy 28:30-37 *When they open their purses, they will be empty...* (The Blessings and the Curses, **Part III**) (79th Deuteronomy Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. But He also has expectations of you as He prepares you for entrance into His Land of Promise. So, follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

The Blessings and the Curses, Part II

“But it shall come to pass

If you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God

-----pay heed, my words are true

To observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes

-----which I command you today
That all these curses will come upon you and overtake you

“Cursed shall you be in the city
And cursed shall you in the country be

“Cursed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl
“Cursed shall be the fruit of your body
-----and the produce of your land
The increase of your cattle
And the offspring of your flocks as well, please understand

“Cursed shall you be when you come in, without a doubt
And cursed shall you be when you go out

“The LORD will send on you cursing, confusion, and rebuke
In all that you set your hand to do, so shall it be
Until you are destroyed and until you perish quickly
Because of the wickedness of your doings in which
-----you have forsaken Me

The LORD will make the plague cling to you
So to you I address
Until He has consumed you from the land
Which you are going to possess

The LORD will strike you with consumption
With fever, with inflammation, with severe burning fever too
With the sword, with scorching, and with mildew
They shall pursue you until you perish – even you

And your heavens which are over your head shall be bronze
And the earth which is under you shall be iron
-----such a state will be employed
The LORD will change the rain of your land to powder and dust
From the heaven it shall come down on you until you are destroyed

“The LORD will cause you to be defeated before your enemies
You shall go out one way against them, hightailing it off to Perth
And flee seven ways before them
And you shall become troublesome to all the kingdoms of the earth

Your carcasses shall be
Food for all the birds of the air, so to you I say
And the beasts of the earth
And no one shall frighten them away

The LORD will strike you
With the boils of Egypt, that plague will be unsealed
With tumors, with the scab, and with the itch
From which you cannot be healed

The LORD will strike you with madness
----- (and that is just the start)
And blindness and confusion of heart

And you shall grope at noonday, as a blind man
-----gropes in darkness
You shall not prosper in your ways, this much is true
You shall be only oppressed and plundered continually
And no one shall save you

Lord God, turn our hearts to be obedient to Your word
Give us wisdom to be ever faithful to You
May we carefully heed each thing we have heard
Yes, Lord God may our hearts be faithful and true

And we shall be content and satisfied in You alone
We will follow You as we sing our songs of praise
Hallelujah to You; to us Your path You have shown
Hallelujah we shall sing to You for all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...