



Deuteronomy 28:1-14

The Blessings and the Curses, Part I

November 7, 2021

"Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the LORD your God will set you high above all nations of the earth. ² And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the LORD your God: ³ "Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the country. ⁴ "Blessed shall be the fruit of your body, the produce of your ground and the increase of your herds, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks. ⁵ "Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. ⁶ "Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out. 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. ⁸ "The LORD will command the blessing on you in your storehouses and in all to which you set your hand, and He will bless you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you. ⁹ "The LORD will establish you as a holy people to Himself, just as He has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of the LORD your God and walk in His ways. ¹⁰ Then all peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the LORD, and they shall be afraid of you. ¹¹ And the LORD will grant you plenty of goods, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your ground, in the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers to give you. ¹² The LORD will open to you His good treasure, the heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season, and to bless all the work of your hand. You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow. ¹³ And the LORD will make you the head and not the tail; you shall be above only, and not be beneath, if you heed the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you today, and are careful to observe them. ¹⁴ So you shall not turn aside from any of the words which I command you this day, to the right or the left, to go after other gods to serve them.

Deuteronomy 28 is one long chapter, but it is only divided into two major sections, that of blessings and that of curses. As far as the blessings, they are detailed in today's passage. After this, it is all downhill concerning what will come upon Israel if they fail to do as instructed.

Of the chapter, Albert Barnes notes the following –

"The language rises in this chapter to the sublimest strains, especially in the latter part of it; and the prophecies respecting the dispersion and degradation of the Jewish nation in its later days are among the most remarkable in scripture. They are plain, precise, and circumstantial; and the fulfillment of them has been literal, complete, and undeniable." Albert Barnes

It is the curses that truly highlight both the chapter and the history of Israel. As such, it is a part of the tutoring that we are given concerning the law and our desperate need for Christ. If it were not so, the Old Testament, and even the gospels would be vastly different than they are.

And more, the state of Israel for the past two millennia would have been vastly different as well. For now, we can see that by putting the blessings first, it is an indication that there is an ideal set forth, even if it is actually unattainable by us.

If there is an ideal set forth, however, it means that attaining it is a possibility, nonetheless. It would make no sense for God to set forth an ideal and then never allow it to be seen in its fully realized state. So, even if it has never come about as promised here in Deuteronomy, it does not mean that it never will.

Text Verse: *"I will make a covenant of peace with them, and cause wild beasts to cease from the land; and they will dwell safely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods. ²⁶ I will make them and the places all around My hill a blessing; and I will cause showers to come down in their season; there shall be showers of blessing. ²⁷ Then the trees of the field shall yield their fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase. They shall be safe in their land; and they shall know that I am the LORD, when I have broken the bands of their yoke and delivered them from the hand of those who enslaved them." Ezekiel 34:25-27*

The problem with replacement theology, well one of many with it, is that such theologians hold quite fast to all of the promised blessings, but they overlook anything negative that may arise in regard to what is put forth.

For example, in Romans 11, it clearly says that Israel is blinded. If that is so, and if those who hold to replacement theology are Israel (as they claim), then they must be blinded. So why would anyone want to discuss theology with a spiritually blinded theologian?

And if they are Israel as they claim to be, and yet the curses which are detailed in the next passage (starting next week) are actually curses that belong to Israel, which has been ongoing now for two thousand years, then how do you say that Israel has been replaced by the church? Is God still punishing people that aren't even His people in the manner that he promised to punish His people?

That would demonstrate a rather confused and vindictive God, wouldn't it? The problem with what Jews believe, and the problem with what the world at large believes, and which is a problem that is found in replacement theology as well, will be discussed in our sermon today.

So, if you are still confused about who Israel is, and who the church is, and what the responsibilities and warnings to Israel actually mean, pay attention. We'll go over that, along with the verses in this passage today.

Great things, such as, "Israel is Israel, and the church is the church" 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. Blessed Shall You Be (verses 1-8)

¹"Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God,

There is an emphasis given to start out the chapter: *v'hayah im shamoa tishma b'qol Yehovah elohekha* – "And it shall be if hearing, you hear in voice Yehovah your God." As has been seen

repeatedly, “to hear” signifies more than just listening to the audible sounds, but to hearken to what is said.

The people could go to the synagogue every Saturday and sit and listen to the rabbi read out the words of the Lord, but unless they actually hear what is said, let it sink in, and then hearken to the words by applying them to their lives, they have not obeyed the precept of these words right now.

This is obviously dealing with Israel under the law, but before proceeding on, it should be at least noted that the same is true today within the church. A person can show up at church, listen to whatever is said, and go home no different than when he arrived.

James speaks of this, and his words are based on his life under the law and then discovering his new life in Christ –

“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. ²³ For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; ²⁴ for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. ²⁵ But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.”

-James 1:22-25

The precept of Deuteronomy under the law is applied by James to those who have now found life in the perfect law of liberty which is found in Christ – “if hearing, you hear” the voice of the Lord God as is found in His word. For Israel, once the word is heard and hearkened to, they were...

¹ (con’t) **to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today,**

The Hebrew is more expressive: *lishmor laasoth* – “to observe, to do.” One can observe without doing. Israel is to pay heed and to conduct their lives in a manner that is in accord with the word they have heard as commanded by Moses.

All of the words have been in the singular – “you, Israel.” Thus, this is speaking of the obedience of the nation. At the time of Elijah, there were only seven thousand people in the nation that could be considered as being referred to here. Thus, it cannot be said that Israel the nation was observing and doing. Rather, only a remnant of the people was. But it is the nation as a whole that will either receive the blessing or the curse.

For now, Moses notes that if the nation hearkens to the word, observes the word, and does what the word instructs...

¹ (con't) **that the LORD your God will set you high above all nations of the earth.**

This is a general repeat of what was stated just two chapters ago –

“Also today the LORD has proclaimed you to be His special people, just as He promised you, that you should keep all His commandments, ¹⁹and that He will set you high above all nations which He has made, in praise, in name, and in honor, and that you may be a holy people to the LORD your God, just as He has spoken.” Deuteronomy 26:18, 19

There, as here, the word *elyon*, or “most high,” is used. Although the greatness of Israel was seen especially exalted at the time of Solomon, that cannot be said to have been a fulfillment of this promise. Nor can it be said of them at any other time.

To hearken, to observe, and to do all of the commandments takes more than fallen men are capable of. This will be carefully revealed and recorded over the next fourteen hundred years of their history. Only in Christ can this truly come to pass. Only in the messianic age will Israel truly find itself in this exalted position.

In coming to Christ, who is the fulfillment of Moses’ words, Israel will someday be so exalted...

² **And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you,**

The two thoughts are separated in the Hebrew, probably for effect. It reads, “And shall come upon you all the blessings, these, and overtake you.” It isn’t just that they will be evident, but that they will actively come to them.

Moses personifies the blessings, equating them to beings that actively come upon Israel and then pursue the nation, reaching out their hands to it. Of this, John Lange says, they “are personified, because God Himself is, as it were, in them.”

He is the Giver of all good things, and the words are again reflective of the words of James –

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.” James 1:17

The words, still in the singular, speak of a prosperity that extends to the entire nation. Some translations use the word “abundance” which certainly gives a good sense of the intent. And there is a reason for this...

² (con't) **because you obey the voice of the LORD your God:**

The Hebrew reads “because” (or when), not “if.” This is not a conditional statement like verse 1. Rather, it is an absolute surety that it will come about: “Because you do this, then this is the result.” Now, to explain what “all these blessings” means, Moses continues...

³“Blessed *shall you be* in the city, and blessed *shall you be* in the country.

This begins a six-fold repetition of the word “blessed.” However, the number of blessings is more than six as will be evident in the next verse. For now, Moses begins with the entire sphere of existence in the land by noting both the city and the country – literally, the field.

Thus, this covers domestic employment, that of industry inside the walls of the city, and that which is agricultural, or outside of them. Moses indicates that in all areas where Israel puts its hands to work, the work of their hands will be blessed.

⁴“Blessed *shall be* the fruit of your body, the produce of your ground and the increase of your herds, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks.

Here are listed five blessings of one type, that of reproduction. However, in the Hebrew, the first three are termed “fruit” while the last two are termed “increase,” and explain the term fruit: “Blessed fruit your womb; and fruit your ground; and fruit your beasts – increase your herd, and offspring your flocks.”

These words follow closely after Deuteronomy 7:13 –

“And He will love you and bless you and multiply you; He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your land, your grain and your new wine and your oil, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flock, in the land of which He swore to your fathers to give you.”

The idea is that everything will increase abundantly, and that there will be many people, but there will also be much to support the many people. Even with a large population, there will be no lack at all. With that stated, Moses next says...

⁵“Blessed *shall be* your basket and your kneading bowl.

The words here are rare. The first, *tene*, was introduced in Deuteronomy 26, being seen twice there. The first time, it said –

“And it shall be, when you come into the land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance, and you possess it and dwell in it, ²that you shall take some of the first of all the produce of the ground, which you shall bring from your land that the

LORD your God is giving you, and put it in a **basket** and go to the place where the LORD your God chooses to make His name abide.” Deuteronomy 26:1, 2

The other word, *mishereth*, or “kneading bowl,” is found only twice in Exodus and then twice in this chapter –

“So the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly, which shall go up and come into your house, into your bedroom, on your bed, into the houses of your servants, on your people, into your ovens, and into your **kneading bowls**.” Exodus 8:3

“So the people took their dough before it was leavened, having their **kneading bowls** bound up in their clothes on their shoulders.” Exodus 12:34

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 overflowing, so is the entire harvest. And 2) the bowl that is used for making bread (the staff of life) will never fail to be overflowing. In other words, there will always be people sated with the abundance of food set before them.

⁶ “**Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out.**

The Hebrew reads, “in your coming in,” and “in your going out.” There are two separate views on this. The first is explained by the Jewish scholar Rashi, saying that it refers to the entrance into life and the departure from life. He says, “So that thy departure from the world shall be like thine entrance into it, sinless.”

That is wrong on the surface. Jewish scholars generally don’t accept the premise of original sin, which is so clearly painted in Scripture that it removes almost any reason to listen to them on any other doctrine. Everything else will be tainted with this heretical thought. If one is born without sin, and he departs without sin, then he wouldn’t need a Savior from sin. But the word says otherwise.

The other general meaning is exactly what Moses is referring to here and in each precept of the blessings, that of daily health and vigor. Moses uses the term in this way in a few more chapters –

“Then Moses went and spoke these words to all Israel. ² And he said to them: ‘I am one hundred and twenty years old today. I can no longer go out and come in.’”

-Deuteronomy 31:1, 2

Joshua repeats the idea as well –

“As yet I am as strong this day as on the day that Moses sent me; just as my strength was then, so now is my strength for war, both for going out and for coming in.”
-Joshua 14:11

The meaning is that in one’s coming in, there will be strength and vitality within the walls of one’s home. There will be joy, health for the family, contentment, peace, and so on. And in one’s going out, there will be health and vigor, and there will be strength for the day’s labors

⁷ “The LORD will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before your face;

The words are active and alive: *yiten Yehovah eth oyevekha ha’qamim alekha nigapim l’phanekha* – “He shall give, Yehovah, your enemies – the risers against you – they are struck before your face.”

This would explain the “going out” for those in battle. Israel is blessed in their going out by having the Lord give their enemies into their hands so that they will be struck. So great will be the confusion that...

^{7 (con’t)} they shall come out against you one way and flee before you seven ways.

b’derek ekhad yeseu elekha u-b’shivah derakim yanasu l’phanekha – “In way one they shall come out against you, and in seven ways they shall flee before your face.” The idea is that they will come against Israel as a united fighting force, but they shall be broken, confused, and with their tails between their legs as they flee away.

This explains the “coming in.” The enemy will be scattered before Israel, and Israel’s return to the camp will be victorious, joyous, and peaceful. Next...

⁸ “The LORD will command the blessing

yesav Yehovah itekha eth ha’berakhah – “May command Yehovah on you the blessing.” The first word is a jussive. It is a sort of indirect command. Moses is calling for the Lord to bless Israel in their obedience. This call out is for it to be...

^{8 (con’t)} on you in your storehouses and in all to which you set your hand,

A new word found just twice, is introduced here, *asam*. It refers to a barn. It comes from a root meaning “to heap together.” Solomon says –

“Honor the LORD with your possessions, And with the firstfruits of all your increase; ¹⁰ So your **barns** will be filled with plenty, And your vats will overflow with new wine.”

-Proverbs 3:9, 10

The words of this clause are again set as a contrast. The blessing is to come for Israel, as it says, “in your barns, and in all stretch your hand.” In other words, it is referring to “the income and the expenditure” (Ellicott).

That which comes into the barn will be blessed. It will be plenty, of good quality, and so on. And that which is purchased will be of good quality, useful, and so on. In this state, Moses says...

⁸ (con't) **and He will bless you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you.**

The meaning of this is a personal blessing upon the individual. It speaks of permanence in one's abode, possessions, life, and health. Rather than uncertainty and constant unease, there will be stability and a life that is happy and carefree. And more...

*With blessing I shall bless you
And you shall be blessed by Me
When you are careful to observe and to do
You shall be blessed by Me abundantly*

*Follow that path that will lead you to Me
And do not turn left nor right
Be persistent in following this path diligently
Keep Me in the center of your sight*

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

II. To Right or Left (verses 9-14)

⁹ **“The LORD will establish you as a holy people to Himself,**

yeqimekha Yehovah lo, l'am qadosh – “Will raise up you Yehovah to Himself, to people holy.” The word *qum* means to raise up or to stand. It can convey two different thoughts. One is that of permanence. That is how the Jewish writers take this. “We have been established as holy and it is a permanent state.”

The other is that of being raised up into a particular position whether it is permanent or not. Another word, *kun*, will certainly indicate the latter, and it is used along with *qum* when speaking of the permanent establishment of the setting up of Christ's kingdom.

“And it shall be, when your days are fulfilled, when you must go to be with your fathers, that **I will set up (qum)** your seed after you, who will be of your sons; and **I will establish (kun)** his kingdom.” 1 Chronicles 17:11

The latter meaning, not necessarily indicating permanence, must be referred to here. The reason for this is that Moses has already declared Israel holy –

“For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth.” Deuteronomy 7:6

And yet the Lord has also said that they would be holy and special to Him based upon obedience –

“Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. ⁶And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.” Exodus 19:5, 6

This was discussed in detail in Deuteronomy 7:6, explaining how Israel is set apart (holy) to the Lord even if they are disobedient (unholy) before Him.

In the case of the words here, the blessings, and the promise of being raised up as a holy people to Himself will not be realized if they are disobedient to the law. That is made perfectly clear in verse 1 where it is conditional –

“Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the LORD your God will set you high above all nations of the earth.”

The Jewish scholars and rabbis unfortunately take what is conditional, meaning being a holy people to the Lord (being in a right standing before the Lord), and incorrectly apply it to themselves as a people, meaning being holy before the Lord, regardless as to how they conduct their lives.

This attitude is then accepted by the people at large. I have a Jewish friend that believes heaven is guaranteed for Jews regardless as to how they live their lives. This is the error that

has permeated their thinking all along. To understand this, we can look at the various positions in which they might stand –

- 1) Holy to the Lord as a people because of the covenant promises (positional), but unholy to the Lord because of disobedience to His commands (moral).
- 2) Holy to the Lord as a people because of the covenant promises, regardless as to whether they are obedient to the His commands or not (positional only).
- 3) Holy to the Lord as a people because of the covenant promises (positional), and holy to the Lord because of obedience to His commands (moral).
- 4) Unholy to the Lord because of disobedience to His commands (moral only).

The first is how Israel has been for most of their history. The Lord set them apart as holy, regardless as to whether they are right with Him or not. It is the state in which they now (as a people) exist. They are set apart to God (positional) despite their unfaithfulness (moral) –

“Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers. ²⁹ For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.” Romans 11:28, 29

The second option is how Israel see themselves. They are holy to the Lord because of the covenant (positional), and so they don’t need to worry about the commands – all is good in the end. Amos shows the end of such people –

“I overthrew some of you, As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, And you were like a firebrand plucked from the burning;
Yet you have not returned to Me,” Says the LORD. ¹² “Therefore thus will I do to you, O Israel; Because I will do this to you,
Prepare to meet your God, O Israel!” Amos 4:11, 12

When the Lord says, “Prepare to meet your God,” He is not speaking about a Sunday picnic. To be fair, and just so no one thinks I’m picking on the Jews, this idea permeates various bodies, and in varying degrees, within Christianity as well.

Many Roman Catholics, for example, think they are going to heaven because they were baptized into the Roman Catholic Church. They should probably reconsider or... prepare to meet their God on rather unfriendly terms. There will be no fist bumping on that day.

The third option, holy in both a positional and moral sense, has almost never been Israel’s condition. There are times recorded in the Old Testament that it could be argued this was the case, but those are tenuous at best and few and far between.

This state will finally and forever be realized, however, when they call out to receive Christ Jesus during the tribulation period, and then as they serve Him during the millennial kingdom. This is seen in the words of Isaiah –

Indeed the LORD has proclaimed To the end of the world: “Say to the daughter of Zion, ‘Surely your salvation is coming; Behold, His reward is with Him, And His work before Him.’” ¹² And they shall call them The Holy People, The Redeemed of the LORD; And you shall be called Sought Out, A City Not Forsaken. Isaiah 62:11, 12

Those who hold to the fourth option are as unscholarly as those who hold to the second, but unfortunately governments, religions, and even churches around the world are filled with such people.

They reject Israel of today as being set apart to God (position), they reject that there is any future role for them in the world or in God’s economy and dispensations, and they believe that either Israel must be eradicated, or that they (meaning replacement theology) have – instead – replaced Israel. Micah speaks of such –

“Now also many nations have gathered against you, Who say, ‘Let her be defiled, And let our eye look upon Zion.’

¹² But they do not know the thoughts of the LORD, Nor do they understand His counsel; For He will gather them like sheaves to the threshing floor.” Micah 4:11, 12

As you can see, the status of Israel is complicated. And their position before the Lord is both conditional and it is unconditional, depending on what is being evaluated. For this verse in Deuteronomy, it is a conditional raising up of Israel based on their obedience to the commands of the Lord. He will do this...

⁹ (con’t) **just as He has sworn to you,**

The Lord will raise up Israel and uphold the surety of pouring out these promised blessings upon them. This is a certainty because the Lord has sworn. However, it is only...

⁹ (con’t) **if you keep the commandments of the LORD your God and walk in His ways.**

Again, the Hebrew reads “when” not “if.” And saying “when” is simply a shortened way of saying “according to.” In other words, these things will be a response to the keeping of His commandments, and of walking in His ways.

“How much prosperity and blessing can you handle? It will come forth according to how you first respond to Me. With each step forward, there will be blessing. With each step back, there will be a diminishing of it.” Again, to Amos 4 –

“I also withheld rain from you, When there were still three months to the harvest. I made it rain on one city, I withheld rain from another city. One part was rained upon, And where it did not rain the part withered. ⁸ So two or three cities wandered to another city to drink water, But they were not satisfied; Yet you have not returned to Me,” Says the LORD. Amos 4:7, 8

However, if the commandments are obeyed, and if the people walk in the ways of the Lord...

¹⁰ Then all peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the LORD,

The Hebrew is more personal, saying: *ki shem Yehovah niqra alekha* – “that the name of Yehovah is called upon you.” It is as if the name of Yehovah has alighted upon them. Or as if a husband has cast his name upon his bride.

In the pouring out of the blessings, and in the raising up of the people, it would be evident to all peoples that He is their Master, and they are His people. Of this having the name of the Lord called upon them, the Pulpit Commentary incorrectly (see option 4 mentioned above) states –

“Theirs was the adoption and the glory” (Romans 9:4) - but it was theirs only in symbol and in shadow (Hebrews 10:1); the reality belongs only to the spiritual Israel, and this came to men in all its fullness when he who is “the image of the invisible God” appeared and set up his tent among men, full of grace and truth (John 1:12, 14).” Pulpit Commentary

This is the logic of replacement theology, that Israel is out because of their moral failings, and regardless as to the covenant faithfulness of the Lord. In misciting Hebrews 10, they show the error of the thinking.

It says there that “the law” is a shadow of things to come. Even Israel, under the law, could be equated to that, but not Israel the people to whom the promises were made. That is actually seen when evaluating the next words...

¹⁰ (con’t) and they shall be afraid of you.

The promise is to Israel, and Jeremiah speaks of the fulfillment of it when referring not to the church, but to Israel –

“I will cleanse them from all their iniquity by which they have sinned against Me, and I will pardon all their iniquities by which they have sinned and by which they have transgressed against Me. ⁹Then it shall be to Me a name of joy, a praise, and an honor before all nations of the earth, who shall hear all the good that I do to them; they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and all the prosperity that I provide for it.”

-Jeremiah 33:8, 9

Based on the surrounding context in Jeremiah, this promise could only be considered as pertaining to the church by either the poorest of scholars, or by someone who is completely blinded by replacement theology – but I repeat myself.

¹¹ And the LORD will grant you plenty of goods,

It is singular – “And the Lord will make you abound for good.” That is then defined by...

¹¹ (con’t) in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your ground,

The words are similar to verse 4 where the Hebrew repeats the words “fruit” three times, “in the fruit of your womb, in the fruit of your livestock, and in the fruit of your ground.” This abundance is the “good” that was just mentioned. And it will be...

¹¹ (con’t) in the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers to give you.

The same word just used (your ground) is repeated in this clause. It reads, “upon the ground.” Rather than speaking of the land in which the people live, this is speaking of that which is blessed from the ground, and which results in the good. It is that ground which is produced in the land next described...

¹² The LORD will open to you His good treasure, the heavens,

yiphtakh Yehovah lekha eth otsaro ha’tov eth ha’shemayim – “Will open Yehovah to you treasury the good – the heavens.” There is a new word, *otsar* which refers to a cellar, armory, treasure house, storehouse, etc. Here, the Lord equates the heavens, with their clouds which drop the rains from above, to a treasury.

There is great value when the skies open and the rains come forth. Not only is water needed for life to continue, but as it rains, wealth literally comes forth from the ground. Hence, the term “treasury” is appropriate. All man has to do is to pick or cut that which comes forth, and he can easily increase his own wealth. Having that on a national scale would be the prosperity of Israel. As it next says...

12 (con't) to give the rain to your land in its season, and to bless all the work of your hand.

Here, the word “land” is correct. It is speaking not just of the ground, but the land in which Israel lives. There will be rain in its due season, and from it, Israel will prosper. The hand of Israel, its agricultural effort, will be fruitful and abundant. In such a state, there will be no lack. Rather, there will only be abundance leading to even greater wealth...

12 (con't) You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow.

The word is *lavah*. It signifies “to join,” coming from a root meaning to twine. Hence, it is signifying the joining of Israel to the nations as lenders. Because of the rich abundance that issues from the ground, there will be so much surplus that they will be able to lend to others without worrying about borrowing.

The idea here is exaltation above those who must submit to them for their livelihood and necessities.

13 And the LORD will make you the head and not the tail;

The meaning is obvious. In their obedience, Israel will be the head of the nations, leading the way and ever ready to consume the best of what comes its way. The tail, on the other hand, is that which lags behind. Abundance, innovation, prosperity, and so on, is all lacking when one is the tail.

Rather than that, Israel is promised to be the chief in privileges, dignity, and might. Next is another, similar, metaphor...

13 (con't) you shall be above only, and not be beneath,

It is emphatic: *v'hayita raq la'malah v'lo tiyeh l'mattah* – “and you shall be only [nothing but] to above and no shall you be to beneath.” The words convey the same idea as the previous clause. The emphasis is given to show that it is a certainty that it will be the case. Nothing can stop it from occurring...

13 (con't) if you heed the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you today, and are careful to observe *them*.

Rather than “if” it again says “when.” Moses promises that when they act in accord with the commandments of the Lord, being careful to do them, then the Lord will certainly perform as he states.

What Moses says here, and the way the words are put forth does not necessarily confirm the doctrine of divine inspiration as other passages do, but they do present the idea of divine surety.

The Lord could have simply told Moses what He would do for the people, and Moses could just be giving the general sense of it to them, but he would be an utter fool to say, “The Lord will” unless he knew it was to be absolutely so.

Hence, Israel would have every reason to accept that it is so. Even at this point in their history, they had the manna provided to them every day, six days a week, and they also had the cloud by day and the fire by night with them the entire time they traveled.

The evidences of the Lord’s hand upon them, even to the recent plagues that came upon them for the matter of Peor where the people transgressed, demonstrated to them that the Lord was there, and also that Moses was authorized to speak on His behalf.

As such, there is the absolute sense of divine surety that what Moses conveys will come to pass. Therefore...

¹⁴ So you shall not turn aside from any of the words which I command you this day,

The words go to the plural for just one word out of the entire passage today, “which I command you (plural).” Either Moses has changed the address here to ensure that all of Israel understands that they must be obedient, even as one people, or the text is in error because several other manuscripts keep this in the singular.

Either way, however, the charge to Israel is to keep on the straight path. The one way is obedience and resulting blessing, while any other way will withhold the blessings from them. As such...

¹⁴ (con’t) to the right or the left,

The Hebrew is simpler – right or left. There wasn’t to be any deviation at all. All eyes forward, and keep the feet in step, one after the other. The law belongs to the Lord. It is the one path to a right relationship with Him. To turn off that path is...

***¹⁴ (fin) to go after other gods to serve them.**

It reads, “to walk after other gods.” Obedience to the law is equated to a walk with the Lord. Thus, to deviate from the law is to then walk with another. One must actively choose who he will follow and whom he will serve.

To break the law, in any point, is to break the entire law. That is why the promised blessings end with this warning which is a violation of the First Commandment. Whether a god of wood or stone, or simply the god of self, to deviate from the law is immediately equated to going after other gods.

There are great, plentiful, and sure blessings that are promised for obedience to the Lord. But what is coming in the next verses of this chapter will be considered, in minute and mournful detail, as to what will come upon the people if they turn away from this right path.

This law, a seeming friend with its wondrous promises of blessing and abundance, is shown to also be an enemy in the sense that it works against the inner nature of man. There is a corruption in us that keeps us from being able to do those things that are expected of us in the law. As such, the law itself – even with such wonderful promises – inevitably brings a curse upon us.

Paul, in particular, discusses this. He was a teacher of the law. He was trained in what it said. And yet, he failed to see this until his eyes were opened to what it means to be truly obedient to God. When he came to the realization that the Messiah had to come and take the penalty of the law upon Himself, it changed him wholly and forever.

He no longer looked at the law as a way of showing how good he was before God. Rather, he found that the law demonstrates how utterly sinful our sin is to God. This is the lesson of the many years of Israel under the law, and this is the enormity of the grace of God that not only forgives our transgressions, but who does so through the work of His own perfect Son.

What are the blessings of the law? Without God's provision in Christ, they are nothing. The inability of Israel to receive them for more than even a fleeting moment in all of their history demonstrates that without Christ Jesus, all blessing is temporary and short-lived, and we are only left with God's curse.

But in the cross of Calvary, we see God's curse, in its highest sense, in the dead body of Christ. All of the sin of mankind was placed upon Him to absolve us of our wrongdoing. And in His burial, all of that sin is placed in the grave – once and forever.

In His coming forth in triumph over the grave, He also came forth in triumph – for us – over sin. Thanks be to God for Jesus Christ our Lord who has removed the curse so that there is only blessing left. Yes. Thank God for Jesus Christ our Lord. Hallelujah and Amen.

Closing Verse: *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, ⁴just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, ⁵having*

predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, ⁶ to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.”
Ephesians 1:3-6

Next Week: Deuteronomy 28:15-29 *It's like being on the good or bad side of nurses, yes... it is true!* (The Blessings and the Curses, **Part II**) (78th 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 I

“Now it shall come to pass
If you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God
-----He of infinite worth
To observe carefully all His commandments which I
-----command you today
That the LORD your God will set you high above all nations
-----of the earth

And all these blessings
Shall come upon you and overtake you
Because you obey the voice of the LORD your God
And all of these commandments you do

“Blessed shall you be in the city, it is true
And blessed shall you be in the country too

“Blessed shall be the fruit of your body
The produce of your ground and the increase of your herds
The increase of your cattle
And the offspring of your flocks; none of your kids shall
-----turn out nerds

“Blessed shall be your basket
And your kneading bowl, no doubt
“Blessed shall you be when you come in
And blessed shall you be when you go out

“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 from that place

“The LORD will command the blessing on you
In your storehouses and in all to which you set your hand
And He will bless you in the land
Which the LORD your God is giving you, things will be grand

“The LORD will establish you as a holy people to Himself
Just as He has sworn to you
If you keep the commandments of the LORD your God
And walk in His ways as instructed to do

Then all peoples of the earth shall see
That you are called – yes, it is true
By the name of the LORD
And they shall be afraid of you

And the LORD will grant you plenty of goods
In the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock too
And in the produce of your ground
In the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers to give you

The LORD will open to you His good treasure
The heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season
-----lots of joy and no sorrow
And to bless all the work of your hand
You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow

And the LORD will make you the head and not the tail
You shall be above only, and not be beneath – no haw or hem
If you heed the commandments of the LORD your God
Which I command you today, and are careful to observe them

So you shall not turn aside from any of the words
Which I command you this day, from them you shall not swerve
To the right or the left
To go after other gods, them to serve

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...