

# MOUNTAINS OF BLESSINGS AND CURSES

**BIBLE TEXT** : Deuteronomy 11:26-32 ; 27:11-26; 28:1-68

LESSON 136 Junior Course

**MEMORY VERSE: "Choose you this day whom ye will serve" (Joshua 24:15).**

## **BIBLE TEXT in King James Version**

### **Deuteronomy 11:26-32**

<sup>26</sup> Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse;

<sup>27</sup> A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day:

<sup>28</sup> And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known.

<sup>29</sup> And it shall come to pass, when the LORD thy God hath brought thee in unto the land whither thou goest to possess it, that thou shalt put the blessing upon mount Gerizim, and the curse upon mount Ebal.

<sup>30</sup> Are they not on the other side Jordan, by the way where the sun goeth down, in the land of the Canaanites, which dwell in the champaign over against Gilgal, beside the plains of Moreh?

<sup>31</sup> For ye shall pass over Jordan to go in to possess the land which the LORD your God giveth you, and ye shall possess it, and dwell therein.

<sup>32</sup> And ye shall observe to do all the statutes and judgments which I set before you this day.

### **Deuteronomy 27:11-26**

<sup>11</sup> And Moses charged the people the same day, saying,

<sup>12</sup> These shall stand upon mount Gerizim to bless the people, when ye are come over Jordan; Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Joseph, and Benjamin:

<sup>13</sup> And these shall stand upon mount Ebal to curse; Reuben, Gad, and Asher, and Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali.

<sup>14</sup> And the Levites shall speak, and say unto all the men of Israel with a loud voice,

<sup>15</sup> Cursed *be* the man that maketh *any* graven or molten image, an abomination unto the LORD, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and putteth *it* in a secret *place*. And all the people shall answer and say, Amen.

<sup>16</sup> Cursed *be* he that setteth light by his father or his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen.

<sup>17</sup> Cursed *be* he that removeth his neighbour's landmark. And all the people shall say, Amen.

<sup>18</sup> Cursed *be* he that maketh the blind to wander out of the way. And all the people shall say, Amen.

<sup>19</sup> Cursed *be* he that perverteth the judgment of the stranger, fatherless, and widow. And all the people shall say, Amen.

<sup>20</sup> Cursed *be* he that lieth with his father's wife; because he uncovereth his father's skirt. And all the people shall say, Amen.

<sup>21</sup> Cursed *be* he that lieth with any manner of beast. And all the people shall say, Amen.

<sup>22</sup> Cursed *be* he that lieth with his sister, the daughter of his father, or the daughter of his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen.

<sup>23</sup> Cursed *be* he that lieth with his mother in law.

## **BIBLE REFERENCES:**

### **NOTES:**

#### **The Memorial Altar**

The crossing of the Jordan River would mean the end of forty years of wandering for the Israelites. They would be in Canaan, where houses were already built for them, and orchards and vineyards already planted to give them fruit.

When they arrived in Canaan the Israelites were to build an altar, high on Mount Ebal, of unhewn stones. They were to offer sacrifices of praise and gratitude to God for bringing them into this good land. The altar was to remain as a memorial to God's love in caring for them as a father cares for his children. Upon the sides of the altar, on plaster, would be written the Ten Commandments.

Here on the top of this treeless hill would be the Law in the sight of all the people, so no one could say that he did not know the will of God. Perhaps children would see the monument from a distance, and on some pleasant day would take their lunch and climb Mount Ebal to read the inscriptions on its sides.

The Israelites had been instructed to write the Law upon the gates and the posts of their houses and upon arm bands and headbands; and they were to talk of it when they sat in their homes, and when they walked by the way. They were to talk about it the last thing at night and the first thing in the morning, so they would always know and do the will of God.

But what if the parents had become careless and had not told the children about the Law of God? What if the fathers and mothers did not pray with the children before they went to bed, or when they rose up in the morning? Would the children be excused from knowing the Law? No, because right out here on Mount Ebal, in the sight of everyone, would be the Law for all who could read. And they could read aloud so that the smaller children could hear and know, too, what God commanded. There was no excuse for not knowing the will of God.

#### **Bible Our Guide**

Today we have the will of God written in the Bible. Everything God wants us to do is in that Holy Book. It is written simple enough that much of it can be understood by children. Small children can many times pray with more faith and receive answers to their prayers sooner than grown people. They do not try to reason out God's promises, but they just believe them and say, "God, You said You would do it, and I know You will." Jesus loves that simplicity of faith, and He said of the children, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 19:14). "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3).

There are more copies of the Bible in the world today than of any other book. All of us can know the will of God. If parents will not read the Bible to their children, they will

And all the people shall say, Amen.

<sup>24</sup> Cursed *be* he that smiteth his neighbour secretly. And all the people shall say, Amen.

<sup>25</sup> Cursed *be* he that taketh reward to slay an innocent person. And all the people shall say, Amen.

<sup>26</sup> Cursed *be* he that confirmeth not *all* the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen.

### Deuteronomy 28:1-68

<sup>1</sup> And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe *and* to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth:

<sup>2</sup> And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God.

<sup>3</sup> Blessed *shalt* thou *be* in the city, and blessed *shalt* thou *be* in the field.

<sup>4</sup> Blessed *shall be* the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.

<sup>5</sup> Blessed *shall be* thy basket and thy store.

<sup>6</sup> Blessed *shalt* thou *be* when thou comest in, and blessed *shalt* thou *be* when thou goest out.

<sup>7</sup> The LORD shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face: they shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways.

<sup>8</sup> The LORD shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto; and he shall bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

<sup>9</sup> The LORD shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, and walk in his ways.

<sup>10</sup> And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the LORD; and they shall be afraid of thee.

<sup>11</sup> And the LORD shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the LORD swore unto thy fathers to give thee.

<sup>12</sup> The LORD shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow.

<sup>13</sup> And the LORD shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the LORD thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do *them*:

<sup>14</sup> And thou shalt not go aside from any of the words which I command thee this day, *to* the right hand, or *to* the left, to go after other gods to serve them.

<sup>15</sup> But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee:

<sup>16</sup> Cursed *shalt* thou *be* in the city, and cursed *shalt*

have to tell God sometime why they did not, and He will be very displeased with them. But children can read the Bible for themselves, as soon as they are old enough.

Some children who have lived where books were scarce have learned to read from the Bible. Abraham Lincoln, one of our greatest presidents, studied the Bible by the light from the fireplace. Even after he became a popular and very busy man he loved to quote the beautiful verses from the Bible.

### Distinction Between Good and Evil

There was a mountain near Mount Ebal, separated from it by a deep and narrow pass, called Mount Gerizim. These two mountains were called the mount of blessing and the mount of cursing. God gave object lessons for His people; and He wanted to show them the sharp contrast between good and evil, between obedience and disobedience. We cannot expect the blessing of God if we disobey Him even in one thing. We cannot be sinning Christians. We either obey God and do what He commands us, or we wilfully disobey with the condemnation of eternal punishment. In the Epistle of James we read: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10).

Mount Ebal was the mountain of curses, and on its sides were gathered all the people of the tribes of Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali. On Mount Gerizim, on the opposite side of the pass, the tribes of Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin found good places to listen to the words the Levites would speak. Everyone would be able to hear what would happen to the people who would disobey God; and also the blessings that would be showered upon those who obeyed.

### Temptation of Prosperity

The Children of Israel had been disciplined during the forty years in the wilderness by trials and great trouble, and they had had to look to God for help. Now they were going into the land of prosperity, with greater temptations to forget God. New warnings were to be given them to obey what "thus saith the LORD." A long list of blessings and curses were proclaimed aloud so they could hear; and the "Amens" with which the people answered showed that they understood the seriousness of disobedience to the will of God.

The first commandment was that they love the Lord God above everything else; and the first curse pronounced was upon the man who would serve other gods, the work of men's hands. God would see him even though he worshiped the strange god in secret. God sees every secret sin.

The second curse was upon the children who disobeyed their parents. God's commandment was, "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee" (Exodus 20:12).

We notice that for each blessing given in the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy, for obedience, there was a companion curse for disobedience. "Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field"; "Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field." If we obey God, His blessings will follow us wherever

thou *be* in the field.

<sup>17</sup> Cursed *shall be* thy basket and thy store.

<sup>18</sup> Cursed *shall be* the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.

<sup>19</sup> Cursed *shalt thou be* when thou comest in, and cursed *shalt thou be* when thou goest out.

<sup>20</sup> The LORD shall send upon thee cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all that thou settest thine hand unto for to do, until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly; because of the wickedness of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken me.

<sup>21</sup> The LORD shall make the pestilence cleave unto thee, until he have consumed thee from off the land, whither thou goest to possess it.

<sup>22</sup> The LORD shall smite thee with a consumption, and with a fever, and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning, and with the sword, and with blasting, and with mildew; and they shall pursue thee until thou perish.

<sup>23</sup> And thy heaven that *is* over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee *shall be* iron.

<sup>24</sup> The LORD shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust: from heaven shall it come down upon thee, until thou be destroyed.

<sup>25</sup> The LORD shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies: thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them: and shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.

<sup>26</sup> And thy carcase shall be meat unto all fowls of the air, and unto the beasts of the earth, and no man shall fray *them* away.

<sup>27</sup> The LORD will smite thee with the botch of Egypt, and with the emerods, and with the scab, and with the itch, whereof thou canst not be healed.

<sup>28</sup> The LORD shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart:

<sup>29</sup> And thou shalt grope at noonday, as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways: and thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no man shall save *thee*.

<sup>30</sup> Thou shalt betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her: thou shalt build an house, and thou shalt not dwell therein: thou shalt plant a vineyard, and shalt not gather the grapes thereof.

<sup>31</sup> Thine ox *shall be* slain before thine eyes, and thou shalt not eat thereof: thine ass *shall be* violently taken away from before thy face, and shall not be restored to thee: thy sheep *shall be* given unto thine enemies, and thou shalt have none to rescue *them*.

<sup>32</sup> Thy sons and thy daughters *shall be* given unto another people, and thine eyes shall look, and fail *with longing* for them all the day long: and *there shall be* no might in thine hand.

<sup>33</sup> The fruit of thy land, and all thy labours, shall a nation which thou knowest not eat up; and thou shalt be only oppressed and crushed alway:

<sup>34</sup> So that thou shalt be mad for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see.

<sup>35</sup> The LORD shall smite thee in the knees, and in the legs, with a sore botch that cannot be healed, from the sole of thy foot unto the top of thy head.

<sup>36</sup> The LORD shall bring thee, and thy king which thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation which neither thou nor thy fathers have known; and there

we go; but if we disobey, we will not be able to escape the curse. David said: "If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me" (Psalm 139:8-10).

## At the Head

God's reward for obedience would be that the Israelites would be the head, and the other nations would be the tail; but for disobedience they would be the tail and the other nations would be the head. Sometimes when children are ready to play a game, each one will say, "I want to be It"; or, "I want to be first." That was the honor God wanted to give His children in life — they were to be first. But if they disobeyed God the other nations would get that honor.

God wanted to make His people rich, too, so they could lend to other nations; but if they disobeyed they would be so poor they would have to borrow. Even their children would be taken away as slaves, and eventually all Israel would go into captivity.

## Judgment

God warned the Israelites of such horrible judgments that would come upon them that it makes our ears tingle to hear them. The time would come that a siege would be laid against their fenced cities, and the famine would be so severe that they would eat their own children. They would lose all love one for another, and the husband and wife would betray each other. Brothers would turn against each other. Terrible diseases and plagues, which they feared, would come upon them and many would die. The few remaining people would be scattered throughout the world and would no more be a nation until the latter days.

The Children of Israel had all these commandments read where they could hear. Did they obey God and enjoy all the blessings He offered? No. Not long after the death of Moses, they again became friends with the heathen who tempted them to go after other gods (**Judges 3:7** <sup>7</sup> And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and forgot the LORD their God, and served Baalim and the groves).

Did the judgments God had promised come to pass? Most certainly. Even to the point of cannibalism, both in the siege of Samaria (**2 Kings 6:28-29** <sup>28</sup> And the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, This woman said unto me, Give thy son, that we may eat him to day, and we will eat my son to morrow. <sup>29</sup> So we boiled my son, and did eat him: and I said unto her on the next day, Give thy son, that we may eat him: and she hath hid her son), and in the siege of Jerusalem in 70 A. D. When Titus marched against Jerusalem the suffering was as terrible as anything Moses prophesied. There was such bitterness and hatred among the people that they stole every bit of food from one another that they could steal. If someone got a little meal, he could not give the bread enough time to bake, lest someone would smell it and come and take it away. People ate their shoes and their leather belts. The quarreling and fighting within the city walls was as bad as that which the Romans brought against them from outside. The historian Josephus tells us that the abuses Herod put upon the Jews were such as even a beast would not put on them.



shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone.

<sup>37</sup> And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all nations whither the LORD shall lead thee.

<sup>38</sup> Thou shalt carry much seed out into the field, and shalt gather *but* little in; for the locust shall consume it.

<sup>39</sup> Thou shalt plant vineyards, and dress *them*, but shalt neither drink *of* the wine, nor gather *the grapes*; for the worms shall eat them.

<sup>40</sup> Thou shalt have olive trees throughout all thy coasts, but thou shalt not anoint *thyself* with the oil; for thine olive shall cast *his fruit*.

<sup>41</sup> Thou shalt beget sons and daughters, but thou shalt not enjoy them; for they shall go into captivity.

<sup>42</sup> All thy trees and fruit of thy land shall the locust consume.

<sup>43</sup> The stranger that *is* within thee shall get up above thee very high; and thou shalt come down very low.

<sup>44</sup> He shall lend to thee, and thou shalt not lend to him: he shall be the head, and thou shalt be the tail.

<sup>45</sup> Moreover all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed; because thou hearkenedst not unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded thee:

<sup>46</sup> And they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed for ever.

<sup>47</sup> Because thou servedst not the LORD thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all *things*;

<sup>48</sup> Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the LORD shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all *things*: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee.

<sup>49</sup> The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, *as swift* as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand;

<sup>50</sup> A nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favour to the young:

<sup>51</sup> And he shall eat the fruit of thy cattle, and the fruit of thy land, until thou be destroyed: which *also* shall not leave thee *either* corn, wine, or oil, *or* the increase of thy kine, or flocks of thy sheep, until he have destroyed thee.

<sup>52</sup> And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land: and he shall besiege thee in all thy gates throughout all thy land, which the LORD thy God hath given thee.

<sup>53</sup> And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which the LORD thy God hath given thee, in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee:

<sup>54</sup> *So that* the man *that is* tender among you, and very delicate, his eye shall be evil toward his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the remnant of his children which he shall leave:

<sup>55</sup> *So that* he will not give to any of them of the

## Beginning of Sorrows

That was only the beginning of the sufferings of the Jews. From that time on they have wandered over the globe, looking for a home. It is estimated that at least 6,000,000 lost their lives during the past great war. Terribly cruel and inhuman treatment was given them by the Axis nations, Jews being destroyed in wholesale murders. And all this is only the "beginning of sorrows." We cannot see how greater suffering could come during the Tribulation, but that is what God has promised to the nations (or individuals) that forget Him.

Today we have the opportunity to give our hearts to the Lord in love and willing service, and we have the promise of rich rewards here, and life eternal in Heaven. "There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting" (Luke 18:29, 30).

## QUESTIONS

- 1 Name the two mountains important in this lesson.
- 2 By what other titles were they called?
- 3 What object lesson do they reveal?
- 4 What is our guide to Heaven?
- 5 List Some of the blessings and curses.  
n did the judgments of God begin to come upon the Israelites? and how?
- 7 In what ways are those curses still being fulfilled?
- 8 When will be the time of greatest suffering?

flesh of his children whom he shall eat: because he hath nothing left him in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in all thy gates.

<sup>56</sup> The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil toward the husband of her bosom, and toward her son, and toward her daughter,

<sup>57</sup> And toward her young one that cometh out from between her feet, and toward her children which she shall bear: for she shall eat them for want of all *things* secretly in the siege and straitness, wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates.

<sup>58</sup> If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD;

<sup>59</sup> Then the LORD will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, *even* great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance.

<sup>60</sup> Moreover he will bring upon thee all the diseases of Egypt, which thou wast afraid of; and they shall cleave unto thee.

<sup>61</sup> Also every sickness, and every plague, which *is* not written in the book of this law, them will the LORD bring upon thee, until thou be destroyed.

<sup>62</sup> And ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude; because thou wouldest not obey the voice of the LORD thy God.

<sup>63</sup> And it shall come to pass, *that* as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the LORD will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it.

<sup>64</sup> And the LORD shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, *even* wood and stone.

<sup>65</sup> And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the LORD shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind:

<sup>66</sup> And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life:

<sup>67</sup> In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see.

<sup>68</sup> And the LORD shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships, by the way whereof I spake unto thee, Thou shalt see it no more again: and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy *you*.