

MOUNTAINS OF BLESSINGS AND CURSES

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

LESSON 136 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live" (Deuteronomy 30:19).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Deuteronomy 11:26-32

²⁶ Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse;

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

²⁸ 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.

²⁹ 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.

³⁰ 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?

³¹ 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.

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

Deuteronomy 27:11-26

¹¹ And Moses charged the people the same day, saying,

¹² 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:

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

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

¹⁵ 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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

²² 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.

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I Israel Divided Between Gerizim and Ebal

1 Mount Gerizim is used as the mountain of blessing, Deuteronomy 11:27, 29; 27:11, 12

2 The law is written and Mount Ebal is used as the mountain of curses, Deuteronomy 11:28-32; 27:13

Deuteronomy 27:4-8

⁴ Therefore it shall be when ye be gone over Jordan, *that* ye shall set up these stones, which I command you this day, in mount Ebal, and thou shalt plaster them with plaster.

⁵ And there shalt thou build an altar unto the LORD thy God, an altar of stones: thou shalt not lift up *any* iron *tool* upon them.

⁶ Thou shalt build the altar of the LORD thy God of whole stones: and thou shalt offer burnt offerings thereon unto the LORD thy God:

⁷ And thou shalt offer peace offerings, and shalt eat there, and rejoice before the LORD thy God.

⁸ And thou shalt write upon the stones all the words of this law very plainly.

II The Law and the Curses for Its Disobedience

1 "Thou shalt not make thee any graven image," Deuteronomy 27:15

Deuteronomy 5:8

⁸ Thou shalt not make thee *any* graven image, or any likeness of *any thing* that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters beneath the earth:

2 "Honour thy father and thy mother," Deuteronomy 27:16

Deuteronomy 5:16

¹⁶ Honour thy father and thy mother, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

3 "Neither shalt thou steal," Deuteronomy 27:17-19

Deuteronomy 5:19

¹⁹ Neither shalt thou steal.

4 "Neither shalt thou commit adultery," Deuteronomy 27:20-23

Deuteronomy 5:18

¹⁸ Neither shalt thou commit adultery.

5 "Thou shalt not kill," Deuteronomy 27:24, 25

Deuteronomy 5:17

¹⁷ Thou shalt not kill.

III Detailed Description of the Blessings for Obedience

1 Prosperity is promised, Deuteronomy 28:1-6, 8, 11-14

2 Military victories are assured, Deuteronomy 28:7

3 Religious distinction shall be theirs, Deuteronomy 28:9, 10

IV Detailed Description of the Curses for Disobedience

1 Poverty and famine are threatened, Deuteronomy 28:15-20, 23, 24, 38-40

2 Disease shall smite them, Deuteronomy 28:21, 22, 27-29, 35, 58-61

²³ Cursed *be* he that lieth with his mother in law.
And all the people shall say, Amen.

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

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

²⁶ 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

¹ 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:

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

³ Blessed *shalt* thou *be* in the city, and blessed *shalt*
thou *be* in the field.

⁴ 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.

⁵ Blessed *shall be* thy basket and thy store.

⁶ Blessed *shalt* thou *be* when thou comest in, and
blessed *shalt* thou *be* when thou goest out.

⁷ 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.

⁸ 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.

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ 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 sware unto thy fathers to give
thee.

¹² 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.

¹³ 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:

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵ 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:

3 Military defeat, despair, and dispersion shall overtake
them, Deuteronomy 28:25, 30-34, 36, 37, 41-57, 62-
68

NOTES:

In the Plain of Moreh

When Abraham first came into the Land of Canaan he
stopped by the plain of Moreh where the Lord appeared unto
him and promised the land to his seed. Abraham built an
altar and worshiped there. Beside this same plain of Moreh
rose Mount Ebal where Moses commanded Israel to build an
altar on which the Law was to be inscribed. Here Israel was
to offer peace offerings, and to eat, and to rejoice.

From the Biblical account, we can visualize this scene
as Joshua carries out the commandment of God. Half the
people are standing along the slope of Mount Ebal which
rises to a height of 800 feet behind them. These are here as
a reminder of the curses for disobedience to the Law. The
other half stand on the edge of Mount Gerizim, to sanction
the blessings of God for obedience. The Levites, standing
about the Ark in the valley between, look to Gerizim and
shout, Blessed is the man that maketh not any graven
image. Amen, echoes through the valley as it comes in
unison from the multitude upon Gerizim. Turning to Ebal, the
Levites can be heard repeating, Cursed is the man that
maketh any graven image. The Amens that follow from Ebal
reveal the responsibility placed upon all taking part in this
ceremony. The blessings and curses are alternated until all
the people have *said* Amen- to the whole Law.

Fulfilled Blessings

The history of Israel verifies in every detail the truth of
God's Word as set forth in the blessings and the curses. As
long as they obeyed the Law they prospered. During the
rule of David, Solomon, and others who led the people in the
worship of the true God, Israel became a powerful and rich
nation.

David gathered approximately three billion dollars in
gold alone for the building of the Temple. Solomon made
silver and gold at Jerusalem "as plenteous as stones." When
the Temple was dedicated the king offered a sacrifice of
22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep. God had said, "Blessed
shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the
field." All the kings of the earth sought an audience with
Solomon, to hear his wisdom. The promise was, "And the
LORD shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou
shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath."

When Gideon with 300 men stood round about the
camp of Midian, "all the host ran, and cried, and fled." The
Word of God was ever thus fulfilled: "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." The queen of Sheba realized that
the Lord was with Israel when she uttered these words,
"Blessed be the LORD thy God, which delighted in thee to
set thee on his throne, to be king for the **LORD** thy God:
because thy God loved Israel" (II Chronicles 9:8). The Lord
had declared, "All people of the earth shall see that thou art
called by the name of the LORD."

The blessings of God were conditional, and were
fulfilled whenever Israel met the conditions. The spiritual
blessings that God gives today also hinge upon obedience.

¹⁶ Cursed *shalt thou be* in the city, and cursed *shalt thou be* in the field.

¹⁷ Cursed *shall be* thy basket and thy store.

¹⁸ 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.

¹⁹ Cursed *shalt thou be* when thou comest in, and cursed *shalt thou be* when thou goest out.

²⁰ 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.

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

²² 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.

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

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

²⁵ 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.

²⁶ 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.

²⁷ 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.

²⁸ The LORD shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart:

²⁹ 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*.

³⁰ 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.

³¹ 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*.

³² 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.

³³ 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 away:

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

³⁵ 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.

³⁶ The LORD shall bring thee, and thy king which thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation which

"If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7).

Fulfilled Curses

The Lord knew that Israel would be prone to disobedience, and He went to great lengths to explain in detail just what would happen when they 'disobeyed Him. He set before them life and death. The way was very plain. They need not be under the curse; God did not want them to go that way. Ezekiel cried out, "Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" (Ezekiel 33:11). People today are not ignorant of the toll of sin, but thousands insist on continuing in the way that leads to hell. Jesus still offers the way of eternal life to all those who will come unto Him.

Disease

"If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, ... **I** will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians" (Exodus 15:26). If for no other reason than to enjoy good health, it would have abundantly repaid Israel to obey God. Many loathsome diseases are described with which the Lord would smite them if they disobeyed. The history of Israel records many such diseases. Jesus said that there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha.

Poverty

"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 away." This happened repeatedly when Israel sinned against God. The following is quoted from Judges 6:3-6 as an example: "And so it was, when Israel had sown, that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east, even they came up against them; and they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth, till thou come unto Gaza, and left no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass. . . . And Israel was greatly impoverished."

Drought

It was because of the sins of Israel that Elijah stood before Ahab and proclaimed, "As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word" (I Kings 17:1). Israel had been told that the rain of their land would be powder and dust. "And thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron."

Famine

"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." Thus was the complaint made by a woman of Israel to the king. God had warned Israel that if they disobeyed, the tender and delicate woman among them should eat her own offspring. Surely the Word of God is fulfilled!

Military Defeat and Dispersion

When Israel served God, God fought for them. He

neither thou nor thy fathers have known; and there shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone.

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

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

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

⁴⁰ 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*.

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

⁴² All thy trees and fruit of thy land shall the locust consume.

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

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

⁴⁵ 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:

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

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

⁴⁸ 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.

⁴⁹ 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;

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

⁵¹ 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.

⁵² 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.

⁵³ 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:

⁵⁴ *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:

brought the elements to play against their enemies. The prophetess, Deborah, could say, "The stars in their courses fought against Sisera." It was far different when Israel sinned — they fled when none pursued them. They were carried away captives to Egypt, to Assyria, to Babylon, and were scattered among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other. Even to this day they remain, "an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all nations." Israel has fallen; salvation is come unto the Gentiles. Israel is referred to as the natural olive branch, and the Gentiles as a wild olive branch that has been grafted in; but we are warned: "If God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off" (Romans 11:21, 22). The time of the "fulness of the Gentiles" is upon us and God is again turning to Israel according to His promise. "There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob" (Romans 11:26).

QUESTIONS

- 1 Was the charge that Moses gave in Deuteronomy 27:11-13 carried out?
- 2 Which of the Ten Commandments are covered by the curses in chapter 27?
- 3 Find examples where Israel reaped the material blessings promised them.
- 4 Name three military victories that God gave in accordance to His promise.
- 5 When was Israel considered the "head" and "above" other nations?
- 6 What portion of Scripture tells of a famine in Israel?
- 7 Was cannibalism ever practiced in Israel?
- 8 Name some of the countries into which Israel was scattered during Bible times.
- 9 Find a promise that refers to the final restoration of Israel.
- 10 Name some of the nations in modern history in which the Jews have found no ease, according to Deuteronomy 28:65.

⁵⁵ So that he will not give to any of them of the 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.

⁵⁶ 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,

⁵⁷ 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.

⁵⁸ 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;

⁵⁹ 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.

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

⁶¹ 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.

⁶² 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.

⁶³ 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.

⁶⁴ 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.

⁶⁵ 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:

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

⁶⁷ 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.

⁶⁸ 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*.