

DEUTERONOMY 28-30

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Deuteronomy chapter 28 as we continue our study through the Word of God.

In our last study we closed with Moses instructing the priests, the Levites that they are to obey the Words of the Lord and then he goes on to speak to the nation and we dealt with the cursings for disobedience to the Lord that would come upon their lives.

Remember what we read in Deuteronomy 27:9-14, **“Then Moses and the priests, the Levites, spoke to all Israel, saying, ‘Take heed and listen, O Israel: This day you have become the people of the Lord your God. Therefore you shall obey the voice of the Lord your God, and observe His commandments and His statutes which I command you today.’ And Moses commanded the people on the same day, saying, ‘These shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people, when you have crossed over the Jordan: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin; and these shall stand on Mount Ebal to curse: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali. ‘And the Levites shall speak with a loud voice and say to all the men of Israel.’”**

As we move into Deuteronomy chapter 28 this evening, we will see the blessings for obedience and then we will get to the curses for their disobedience to the Lord.

What is interesting to me is what Halley’s Bible Handbook has to say about this chapter. We are told, *“The 28th chapter of Deuteronomy placed alongside the history of the Hebrew nation, constitutes one of the most astounding and indisputable evidences of the Divine inspiration of the Bible.”*

And, as we will see, it’s like reading a history book before it happens!

With that as our introduction, let's begin reading in Deuteronomy chapter 28 beginning in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word.

DEUTERONOMY 28

VERSES 1-2

Here is the choice, to obey the Lord and be blessed and we just saw what happens if they disobeyed the Lord, the cursings.

What I like here is that God's blessings will overtake us. You can't outrun the blessings of God!

It is as Paul said in Ephesians 3:20-21, **"Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen."**

I think we miss out on the many blessings that God bestows upon us because we are not looking for them. We tend to focus on that which we don't have instead of seeing all that God is doing, even if it is during difficult situations we face.

Remember, God is still working, and He is still blessing!

Listen again to what the Lord said to them. **"... that the LORD your God will set you high above all nations of the earth."** Deuteronomy 28:1.

I want to show you something that proves this and it is beyond reason that these numbers are so, but it is the hand of God!

Have you ever thought about the number of Jewish people that have been elevated to positions of prominence. The numbers are staggering if you think about it.

Out of the 8 billion people in the world today, only 15 million are Jews. That's about 0.2% of the world's population are Jewish.

Of the 965 individual recipients of the Nobel Prize and the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences between 1901 and 2023, at least 214 have been Jews or people with at least one Jewish parent, representing 22% of all recipients.

That is just for the Economic Sciences.

But don't think it is less overall. If you look at all the Nobel Prize recipients 22% of them have been Jewish as well.

Think about that one. They comprise 0.2% of the world's population and yet, they are the recipients of 22% of the Nobel Prize awards!

Bud Selig was the commissioner of MLB - Jewish.

David Stern was the commissioner of the NBA – Jewish.

Adam Silver is the NBA commissioner – Jewish.

Paul Tagliabue was the commissioner of the NFL – Jewish.

Albert Einstein, Sigmund Freud, Karl Marx - even Groucho Marx - were Jewish.

Henry Kissinger, Paul Newman, Robert Zimmerman (aka Bob Dylan) are Jews.

Elvis Presley had a Jewish great grandma.

Sandy Koufax, the greatest baseball pitcher who ever lived, Jewish.

And I can go on, but I think you get the point. What God had promised here we see in these statistics! He has blessed them high above all the nations of the earth!

VERSES 3-14

Here are the blessings that God promised to Israel if they obeyed Him:

- *Blessings everywhere they went – Deuteronomy 28:3.*
- *Blessings for a fruitful life – Deuteronomy 28:4.*
- *Blessings upon their provisions, their necessities – Deuteronomy 28:5.*
- *Blessings upon their daily activities – Deuteronomy 28:6.*
- *Blessings against their enemies, the children of Israel will be victorious – Deuteronomy 28:7.*
- *Blessings in their work – Deuteronomy 28:8.*
- *And the key is found in Deuteronomy 28:9, they will be God's people, a holy people that He has set apart for His use.*

If you obey the voice of the Lord, we see starting in Deuteronomy 28:10, “**Then . . .**”

And once again we see what God will do for them if they are obedient to Him.

You see, these blessings were conditional, based upon their obedience.

But please understand that there are also those blessings that are unconditional, based upon the faithfulness of God alone and God will save His people, the Jews. They will receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior one day because God is faithful and what He has promised to Abraham, He will bring to pass!

The same is true for us. Our salvation is based upon the finished work of Jesus and not some standard we must attain to go to Heaven.

And I think the conclusion here is very important. In Deuteronomy 28:14 Moses said, **“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.”**

In other words, keep your eyes upon the Lord and don't let other things distract you from following Him!

But what if they don't obey the Lord, what then?

We don't have to guess because God will tell them, He will warn them what will happen if they do turn from Him as we read on.

VERSE 15

Here we see the curses for disobedience, and this continues through the rest of the chapter, verses 16-68, some 52 verses dealing with the curses that will come upon them if they do not follow what the Lord has said!

Not a very encouraging section, but God wanted His people to know what they would face if they disobeyed Him.

We are going to read through all these verses because I think they speak for themselves, and then I will expound some on them.

VERSE 16-68

Not a pretty picture nor is it intended to be. There are consequences to disobedience.

Now we have just read through all these verses and, like I have said, we don't need to expound much on them, they are pretty self-explanatory. But let me just make a few points.

First, in verses 49-57 we see this come to pass in both the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judea, in the life of the nation of Israel!

In II Kings 6:24-30 we see Syria come down against the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the famine became so bad that two women are fighting over which of their children they should eat!

Also, as the Babylonians came against the Southern Kingdom of Judah, once again we see starvation leading to cannibalism!

And in 70 A. D. the Romans came in and besieged Jerusalem, burning the Temple and 600,000 died from starvation and over 1 million Jews lost their lives and 97,000 were captured.

And most of those that were captured were shipped as slaves to Egypt just as God said.

In fact, there were so many Jewish slaves that they glutted the slave market, and no one could buy all the available slaves!

God says what He means and means what He says!

So in these curses we see:

- ***DESTRUCTION***
- ***DISEASES***
- ***DROUGHT***
- ***DEFEAT IN BATTLE***
- ***PHYSICAL AND MENTAL DISEASES***
- ***OPPRESSION***
- ***EXILE***
- ***CROP FAILURE***
- ***ECONOMIC RUIN***

And the reason for all this is their disobedience to what the Lord has said.

Now please understand that God did not want to destroy them with these things but to restore them back to Him.

Sadly folks, it often takes difficult times for us to go through before we return to Him! But God's desire for us is what is best for us and even in those difficult situations we have brought upon ourselves, He is there with His arms open wide for us to come to Him! That is our God, His love for us!

As we move into Deuteronomy chapter 29, we see the chapter give us a history lesson.

And we will go from the miracles in Egypt – to the covenant on Mount Horeb – to God's provision in the wilderness – to their initial victories east of the Jordan.

And what we will see is that God was faithful despite their hard heartedness.

DEUTERONOMY 29

VERSE 1

Back in Exodus 24:7-8, at Mount Sinai, some 40 years earlier, we are told, **“Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, ‘All that the Lord has said we will do, and be obedient.’ And Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, ‘This is the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you according to all these words.’”**

The people back then said they would keep the covenant and it was sealed with the blood being sprinkled upon them.

But that generation died in the wilderness because of their lack of faith and now, this next generation is called to keep this covenant, to walk by faith!

VERSES 2-4

Think about this for a minute. All the miracles they saw did not cause them to believe, why?

Because it truly is a matter of the heart and unless God's Spirit is allowed to soften your heart, all the miracles in the world won't matter!

I do realize that some would disagree with this but think about it. Jesus healed the sick, raised the dead, opened the mouth of the mute, opened the ears of the deaf, opened the eyes of the blind, delivered those possessed by demons and-so-on.

And what happened to those who witnessed this?

For most, Jesus became their meal ticket you might say; they were interested in their bodily appetites being fed instead of their spirit. *"What do you have for ME Jesus?"* mentality.

For many of the religious people, they could not deny the miracles, but they said the miracles were not from God but from the Devil!

You see, it truly is a matter of the heart as God's Spirit opens up His Word to people's lives.

I again understand that some would disagree; they feel that miracles are needed to have people come to Jesus.

The only problem with that line of reasoning is it is not Scriptural.

Peter reminds us in I Peter 1:22-25, **“Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, because ‘All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away, But the word of the Lord endures forever.’ Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.”**

Did you see that?

Not miracles or anything else, but the Word of God and the Spirit of God that brings people to saving faith!

VERSES 5-9

I have said this often in our study of Deuteronomy, but again, God wants them to –

REMEMBER!

What were they to remember?

They were to remember His love, how He provided for them, how He sustained them, how He gave them the victory.

And what were they to do with that?

They were to keep the Words that God has spoken to them because what God has done, He wants to continue to do in their lives.

That is a great lesson for us. Remember all that God has done so that as God speaks to you about something, you will obey Him knowing He has what is best for you!

VERSES 10-15

This covenant was not just for those that Moses was speaking to but also for future generations who would serve the Lord.

I like that because we see this in the New Testament as well.

Now some of you may be wondering what in the world I am speaking about but hear me out.

In John chapter 17 Jesus is praying for His men, the disciples of His day, those who walked with Him and then starting in verse 20 we are told, **“I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me. Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”** John 17:20-26.

Did you see that! Jesus is praying for us, those who have come to Him by faith, that we would be one with God!

That is our God, that is His love for us!

VERSES 16-20

They saw the things their pagan neighbors worshiped, their grotesque idols, and their immoral activity in the worship of these gods. And God is warning them not to go down that path.

And if you do, don't come to the faulty conclusion that you are at peace with God, you are not. In fact, you are at enmity, or you are warring against Him!

And Moses likens this false delusion to that of drunkenness or we can place in there worldly pleasures. In them we think we have peace, but we don't.

And please, don't ever use your feelings to measure your spiritual condition. Feelings are too fickle. They're dependent on too many variables.

It is only the Word of God that can show us where we stand, if what we are doing is right or wrong.

In fact, in Proverbs 14:12 we are told, **“There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.”**

You see, it is not what seems right to you, but what God has said that is true!

Again, if you really think you can have peace in your life apart from God, think again.

In Isaiah 48:22 we are told, **“There is no peace,’ says the Lord, ‘for the wicked.’”**

The reality is this. You can't forsake the Lord and escape the consequences of your actions!

VERSES 21-28

If this generation would turn from the Lord, then God would judge them, and it would be a warning to future generations to learn the lesson and don't go down that path.

God wants them to see, to understand that it is better to obey Him and be blessed than disobey and be cursed.

And we just finished reading what the cursings were like back in chapter 28, and it was not good!

And this was not just for future generations of the children of Israel, but for all nations. They would not only see the destruction that was from the Lord upon the children of Israel, but they would know that it was for their disobedience that this has come upon them.

That they turned from the Lord and turned to idols instead, worshiping false gods instead of the true and living God!

VERSE 29

Listen to what we are told in The Pulpit Commentary on this verse here in Deuteronomy. We are told,

“Secret things belong unto the Lord our God.” So says the great lawgiver. On a not dissimilar topic, Bishop Butler says, ‘We do not know the whole of anything.’ Is it not so? Who can tell all about a stone or about a blade of grass? Who can aver [declare] that the furthest star has been yet discovered, or tell us what lies beyond it? There are secrets among the minute; there are secrets among the vast.

- The Pulpit Commentary

Isn't it interesting how people try to seek out things of God that He has not revealed to them and yet they do not obey what God has clearly spoken to them!

What a warning this is to us, that God has given to us His Word, and we may not understand everything, but the things we do understand, we are responsible to keep them.

I am not saying we are not to study the Word of God, but if that is all we do, we are going to be in trouble. We need to apply those things to our lives and yes, there are many things we are not going to know about God.

And, if you think about it, there is no way we can know everything about an omniscient or all-knowing God!

Let me put this into perspective for you.

How well do you do when you watch Jeopardy?

I don't do too well, my wife does a lot better, but she too falls far short of knowing every answer as well as do the contestants.

And since that is true, how can we expect to know everything about an omniscient or all-knowing God? We can't!

In Isaiah 55:8-9 we are told, **“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” says the Lord. ‘For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.’”**

Thus, the call for us is to listen to the voice of God, be obedient to His Word, the things that He is showing us.

Jesus reminds us in Revelation 2:29, **“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”**

May we not only hear but, like I have said, may we also obey what the Lord is telling us, not out of the Law or compulsion but out of love for Him!

Again, in Revelation 1:3 we are told, **“Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.”**

The blessing is not only for hearing but also for keeping what is written in the Word of God. God has what is best for us, may we listen and obey!

I like what Mark Twain once said. He said, *“It ain’t those parts of the Bible I don’t understand that bother me – it’s the parts I do understand, and need to obey.”*

Exactly!

DEUTERONOMY 30

VERSES 1-5

Moses just tells it like it is. He does not try to sugar coat the message.

He just spoke forth the Words of God in truth and thus, the people were now accountable for their actions.

And Moses, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit tells the children of Israel that they will see the blessings of God upon their lives for obedience. We see that under the reign of King David and his son, King Solomon as the nation prospered!

But Moses also tells them that they will see the cursings of God upon their lives for their disobedience.

And we do see that in the Northern Kingdom of Israel who had no godly Kings, they all were wicked even though some were better than others and they went into captivity at the hands of the Assyrians.

And the Southern Kingdom of Judah, who had some godly Kings also turned from the Lord in disobedience and God brought the Babylonians down upon them and they too went into captivity.

Just as Moses spoke, these things did come to pass for the children of Israel, they did not heed the warnings of God and obey!

And we see in Nehemiah 1:8-9 that Nehemiah quotes these verses – then reminds God of His promise to bring back Israel. In his day, Israel returned from Babylon in three waves – under Zerubbabel, under Ezra, and under Nehemiah. That was a partial fulfillment.

What do I mean by that?

I believe what we see here is that Moses is speaking of the Jews turning back to God as a nation and the nation did not fully return from Babylon, only a small number returned, nor did they come from the farthest corners of the world.

We also see a partial fulfillment of this prophecy with the Jewish people returning to the land of Israel after almost 2,000 years of wondering throughout the world without a homeland.

And in all those years they remained a separate people, they were not assimilated into other cultures as should have been the case and is the case for any other people.

Back on May 14, 1948, in Tel Aviv, David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first Prime Minister, proclaimed the birth of the sovereign state of Israel and he called this land not Jerusalem or Palestine, but Israel as the prophet Ezekiel said it should be called.

In fact, he said it was in fulfillment of what the prophet Ezekiel had said! He saw this as the fulfillment of that prophecy.

And then, upon Israel's declaration of independence, of their statehood, they were immediately attacked by seven Arab armies and outmanned 50 to 1.

The goal was to drive Israel into the Sea, and to destroy them! Sound familiar? It should because that is what they still want to do!

In fact, long before this became a reality, back on March 1, 1944, Yasser Arafat's uncle, Najamin el-Husseini said on Radio Berlin regarding the increase numbers of Jews in the land: ***“Arabs, rise as one man and fight for your sacred rights. Kill the Jews wherever you find them. This pleases God [Allah] and religion [and] saves your honor. God is with you.”***

Before they even became a nation the call from their enemies was to destroy these Jewish people and that has not changed in the over 80 years since these words were spoken.

What took place when Israel became a nation? IDF General Shimon Erem said back in 1948: ***“Twenty thousand untrained civilians, many of them speaking languages which could not be understood took on armies represented by 100 million Arabs, and prevailed. It was a miracle of God; there is no other explanation. God was keeping His word. The key was faith. We believed God. We believed the prophets. And because of God, we prevailed. The difference is faith in God, the God of the Bible.”***

General Shimon Erem believed what God said and now, their existence in the land of Israel is a fulfillment of what God promised even though the enemy was bigger and stronger than they were.

Now, this is a partial fulfillment, and it is at the end of the Tribulation Period, when Israel returns to the Lord, that He will gather them from the four corners of the earth.

In Matthew 24:27-31 we are told, **“For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together. Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”**

It is then that they will be gathered from all over the world and come to Jerusalem and they will never be removed and the fulfillment of God’s promises to them will come to pass as the Lord sits on the throne to rule and reign!

Keep in mind that what we see in Israel today is a physical re-gathering, and they have not turned back to the Lord, there has not been that spiritual rebirth yet, and we will see that as we read on and look at the next verse in a minute.

Before we do, let me ask you this. How does this apply to us?

As Christians, if we turn from the Lord, disobey the Lord, we too can find ourselves in captivity to all kinds of things and be driven out of the work that God has called us to do. Thus, this lesson, this warning applies to us today!

VERSE 6

As much as God had miraculously birthed this nation once again and brought them into the land of Israel, most of the nation is secular today!

Yes, they respect God's Word as a historical book, a book that speaks of their identity, but they have not turned back to the God of the Book!

And this fits in perfectly with Ezekiel 37 as those dried bones, those lifeless bones came to life, speaking of Israel and then God breathed in them His Spirit.

Today they are in the land and one day, at the end of the Tribulation Period, they will turn back to God, they will receive Jesus as their Messiah!

We see this in Ezekiel 36:26-28 where we are told, **"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God."**

Israel as a nation will return to the Lord, they will receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior for Jesus said to them, **"for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!'"** Matthew 23:39.

And in Jeremiah 31:31-34 we are told of this spiritual rebirth, **"Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah - not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the**

Lord,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

Notice, this is not a covenant based in the Law and the outward rite of circumcision, but a covenant based upon the blood of Christ that is inward, the circumcision of the heart because that is the only way God can forgive sin, through the finished work of Christ applied to our lives!

VERSES 7-10

Again, we see a partial fulfillment with the Jewish people in the land today, but again, spiritually speaking, they have not returned to the Lord yet!

Thus, I see these blessings occurring during the Kingdom Age, not that individual Jews who turn to the Lord won't be blessed today, but this is speaking of the nation of Israel, and as I have said, Israel is mostly a secular nation today!

VERSES 11-14

How important these words were not only to the children of Israel, but they should be important to us.

Moses is saying that God's Word, His Law is not too difficult for them to follow, it is easy to understand, it is easy to reach, there is no need to make some kind of pilgrimage to Mecca or Medjugorje or wherever!

God had given it to them, and it should be in their hearts, they should treasure it to help them in their daily walk with Him and so should we!

Now, in reading this it seems like Moses is saying that as we keep the Law you can obtain salvation, that it is possible.

I don't believe that is what Moses is saying, it would be contrary to many other Scriptures dealing with this topic.

Moses is not speaking of salvation but of fellowship with God for the Law can't save us, it never could, but by breaking it we can break our fellowship with God!

Paul spoke of this in Romans 10:3-10, that we can't obtain the righteousness of God by our good works. In fact, Paul said that Jesus is the end of the law for righteousness because we could never obtain that kind of righteousness, perfection. It is the righteousness of Christ that has been imputed into our lives by faith! (II Corinthians 5:21)

Are we then to ignore the Law?

No, the Law is good, the Law is perfect!

Then what are we to do?

The outward actions just give the evidence for our faith, it shows that we are saved and if we are saved and yet we are disobedient to God, then our fellowship with Him will be broken, we can't lose our salvation.

Moses pointed to the Law for fellowship.

Paul shows us that Jesus fulfilled the Law, and it is only through Him we can be saved.

I don't see these two passages contradicting each other, but they truly complement each other!

VERSES 15-20

I hope you can see God's love for His people in these verses!

God gives them a choice to make, to disobey Him and receive the curses upon their lives or obey Him and receive the blessings upon their lives.

And God even tells them which one of these choices they are to choose, **“therefore choose life.”** God doesn’t leave it to chance. He leaves nothing to chance. He tells us the consequences of both choices and then He tells us, **“therefore choose life.”**

Why in the world would you choose death, and yet, many do!

Now what does that mean to **“therefore choose life”**?

Again, we don’t have to guess because Moses tells us in Deuteronomy 30:20, **“that you may love the Lord your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.”**

Jesus expounded on this in Matthew 22:35-40 where we are told, **“Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, ‘Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?’ Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”**

We are to love God and then, and only then can we love our fellow man with the love that God desires, with Godly love!

You see, we are to love Him with our whole being and yet we do fall short and in that we need to be careful. You see, if we disregard the Law of God, the Words of God, you are easily going to be drawn away from Him!

I think this is clear. Moses made the choice plain.

Then what is the problem?

The problem is that he provided no power to follow through.

And this is why Jesus is so much better than Moses.

Jesus doesn't just tell us what to do. He puts it in our hearts to do it. He creates within us the will to obey. And then, by His Spirit He gives to us the power to walk accordingly!

Jesus is a better deliverer than Moses because He empowers us to accomplish these things in our life!