

## 2009 Deuteronomy Series

A Study of the Character of God as He has Revealed Himself vs.  
the Substitute Idols of our Neo-Pagan Culture

*Ceremony of Contractual Renewal – Part 2 (Blessings)*

Fellowship Chapel

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SESSION #61 (1 Nov 11)

Deut 28:1-14

### I. INTRODUCTION & REVIEW

1:1-5	Introduction to God's spokesman, the 1 <sup>st</sup> Prophet Moses
1:6-4:40	1 <sup>st</sup> Exposition of the Torah = <i>motivation</i> to obey from (1) <u>past gracious actions</u> of Yahweh and (2) sovereign <u>destiny</u> of the nation ( <u>future gracious actions</u> of Yahweh)
4:41-49	Editorial comment on context of 2 <sup>nd</sup> Exposition of the Torah
5:1-26:19	2 <sup>nd</sup> Exposition of the Torah = <i>proper response</i> to Yahweh in heart and soul
27:1-29:1	3 <sup>rd</sup> Exposition of the Torah = <i>inauguration of the covenant</i> in the land
27:1-26	Contract renewal commits everyone to obey privately as well as publicly (showing how the law condemns and doesn't save)
28:1-14	Contingent blessings social, economical, climate, and military

Chapter 27 protocols at Shechem:

1. Represents a "signing on" to the covenant at Shechem (**Joshua 8**) by the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation who will inherit the promises land = commitment.
2. Protocol shows the importance of every word in the contract—white-washed tablets for all to read and understand "the fine print" = universal [understanding].
3. Levitical administration of the cursings of malediction ("to hell with") by each person upon key areas of "private" sins *unenforceable by civil authority*. Cf. **Gal. 3:10, 13**.
  - a. Chapter 27 is one of the clearest OT passages on why the law cannot save because it reveals sin that lurks in the depths of our privacy.
  - b. Law is that part of revelation that reveals God's holy demands upon us. We need further revelation beyond law—revelation of God's gracious love and provision for us.
4. The nation could not prosper without heart allegiance to Yahweh

### II. CONTINGENT BLESSINGS—SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, CLIMATE, AND MILITARY (28:1-14)

Importance of this chapter:

1. Are the claims of the Bible true? Is there a God Who does publicly in history what He says He will do? Revelation is *historical*, not just feelings, or story themes.
2. A contract states specific stipulations that are to be evaluated for [compliance] or [violation].
3. OT follow-on prophets receive God's reports of compliance or violation and announce the enforcement sanctions. Deut. 28 reveals the sanctions so that the prophetic literature—while often poetic in literary form—must be interpreted within the meaning of this chapter. [Example:

if the prophets speak of climate changes, they aren't referring to the political "climate" using the physical climate as a mere metaphor.]

4. This 9-century period in human history—this period of the Israelite Theocracy—was a “laboratory demonstration” to the world that existence has *rationality*; it refuted the pagan notion that existence is ultimately unknowable; but this rationality isn't that of an impersonal machine—it is a *personal, ethically-based contract* of specific consequences for defined behavior. I suggest that Israel's experience with this Theocracy is what led after the Exile to the world-wide explosion of religion and philosophy all over the world.

5. Many ANE treaties have the cursings before the blessings; again, we see the heart of God more willing to bless than curse (cf. **Gen. 12:3**).

A. The contingency and extent of the blessings (28:1-6)

**28:1 diligently obey** [Heb. Absolute Infinitive construction]

**high above all the nations of the earth**

Cf **26:19** last verse of 2<sup>nd</sup> exhortation: consequence of loving Yahweh with all their heart, soul, and strength. This is a nation-wide blessing.

**28:2 overtake you**

Idiom for abundance—clearly observable.

**28:3 city. . .country**

Geographically universal—urban and rural

**28:4 your body. . .ground. . .herds**

Human health, botanical and zoological prosperity → economic efficiency

**28:5 basket. . .bowl**

Food abundant → no threat of survival battle

**28:6 go in. . .go out. . .**

Indoor and outdoor activity

Implications:

Entire biosphere cause-effect processes are modified according to national response to Yahweh  
→ universe's physics and chemistry are not impersonal processes.

Modus operandi of these blessings and cursings are seen in passages like **Deut. 32:1; Ps. 89:5-7; Heb. 2:1-3; Gal. 3:19; Acts 7:53**

B. Enumeration of the blessings (28:7-14)

Structure: a chiasm like that of chap 6,7

28:7 Foreign relations blessings

28:8 Domestic economic blessings

28:9-10 Quality relationship with Yahweh internationally visible

28:11-12a Domestic economic blessings

28:12b-13 Foreign relations blessings

1. Foreign relations blessings 28:7, 12b-13

**28:7 rise up. . .one way . . .seven ways**

Enemy attacks according to their plan (“one way”) but defeat in complete dispersion (“seven ways”) → impregnable defense

**cause to be defeated** [Heb: niphal participle]

Repulsing all attacks will be a way of life.

**28:12b-13 lend. . .not borrow. . .**

Economic theory—a “science” of sociological mechanics or an attempt to describe human behavior under God?

Gary North, Deuteronomy

“Adam Smith understood this; his disciples rarely have. Before he wrote *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776), he wrote *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759). His moderate Deism was a desiccated version of the covenantal Presbyterianism of his Scottish forbears. ... His orderly world of economic causation rested on moral cause and effect in history. The seeming autonomy of his economic theory from morality, and of his morality from theology, is an illusion. Smith’s epistemology moved in the direction of autonomy, no doubt, but his economic theory was not an exercise in value-free methodology. He recognized that an economy is grounded in moral causation. ... ‘Society may subsist, though not in the most comfortable state, without beneficence; but the prevalence of injustice must utterly destroy it. ... Vice is always capricious – virtue only is regular and orderly.’ ”

Economics of Israel’s eschatology are dependent upon the spiritual quality of its relationship with Yahweh.

**28:13 head. . .tail. . .**

Standing of Israel on the international scene.

Due to trusting that their Lord knew best, they did what He told them to do.

Integrity of character → less likelihood of default on loans, less manipulation of coinage, optimism about the future that stimulated savings and borrowing done for capitalizing to get future production rather than borrowing for present consumption.

//////SLIDE #9 = Slide #3 [God’s design of society]

Problem: the very blessing can become a temptation (**Deut 8**—Lesson 24)

**Deut 8:3** theme

God removed the normal agricultural and economic processes in order to demonstrate the ethical background behind them.

## 2. Domestic economic blessings 28:8, 11-12a

**28:8 Yahweh will command. . .storehouses. ...all set your hand**

Agricultural production and prospering business endeavors

**28:11-12a plenty of goods. . .fruit of body. . . livestock. . . ground. . .**

Plenty in every area: childbirth & population growth rate, animal and plant fruitfulness.

NOTE: population growth rate ~ environmental fruitfulness; a relation exists between the population density and economic production.

**land swore to the fathers.**

Abrahamic Covenant

**give rain. . .**

More evidence that this economic prosperity is not the result of [legalistic government policies]—here the geophysics of the atmospheric hydrologic cycle is involved!

## 3. Quality relationship with Yahweh internationally visible 28:9-10

**28:9 holy people to Himself**

Central point: God Himself will bring the nation into a close relationship with Him.

**28:10 shall see that you are called by the name of Yahweh** [Heb: name of Yahweh is called over you cf. **2 Sam 12:28; Jer 32:34**]

Emphasis here upon the close association with God = public glorification of Him.

**fear you**

This section **28:9-10** stresses Israel's role in world history as a counterculture to the paganized Noahic civilization.

4. Conclusion 28:14

**28:14 turn aside. . . words. . . I command. . .**

Inspiration of Scripture: Moses' words = God's words; none of Moses' speculations entered the text (this week's comment that ancient people believed the earth was flat so we can't trust the cosmology of the Bible)

**go after other gods and serve them**

Idolatry falsifies reality, rebels against God, and destroys a society.