

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 3 (Cursings)

Fellowship Chapel

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SESSION #62 (8 Nov 11)

Deut 28:15-37

I. INTRODUCTION & REVIEW

1:1-5	Introduction to God's spokesman, the 1 st Prophet Moses
1:6-4:40	1 st 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 nd Exposition of the Torah
5:1-26:19	2 nd Exposition of the Torah = <i>proper response</i> to Yahweh in heart and soul
27:1-29:1	3 rd 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
28:15-29:1	Contingent cursings social, economic, climate, and military

Chapter 27 protocols at Shechem (Josh. 8):

Chapter 38 blessings/cursings stipulations of the contract

Suzerainty-vassal treaties invoked enforcement sanctions—military & economic threats from the Suzerain and his gods.

This contract between God and Israel will be publicly enforced for the glory of God in history.

Implied view of history

1. This nine-century period was a “laboratory demonstration” to the world that:

a. existence has *rationality* vs. the pagan notion that existence is ultimately [chaotic] and [unknowable];

b. this rationality is revealed in a *personal, ethically-based, written contract* of specific consequences for defined behavior—an ethically-based cause-effect, not an environmentally-based or economically-based or politically-based cause-effect;

c. profoundly offends depraved man as Rushdoony has written, “History shows movement in terms of forces beyond man and in judgment over man; history rides heavily over man, is inescapably ethical, shows a continuing conflict between good and evil, and clearly shows man to be the actor, not the playwright and director. And this man hates.”

2. It challenged pagan culture to rework its mythological, irrational reconstructions of history to render existence safe from God's judgments upon human responsibility. Thus by the 6th century, BC, the old cosmological myths and magical priesthoods had to be reworked such that man is exalted above self-contradictory priestly traditions and becomes his own religious thinker and authority

3. This biblical record continues to challenge modern man with its “offensive interference” into human existence.

George Bernard Shaw: “If you can realize how insufferably the world was oppressed by the notion that everything that happened was an arbitrary personal act of an arbitrary personal God of dangerous, jealous and cruel personal character, you will understand how the world jumped at Darwin.”

II. THE CONTINGENCY AND EXTENT OF CURSINGS (28:15-19)

Parallel to 28:1-6

28:15 statutes I am giving you this day

Inspiration of Scripture → Moses’ words = God’s words

if you do not obey

Contingency rests upon their response to God’s revelational initiatives. God’s Word → always causes consequent responses (**Heb 4:12**)

28:16 city. . .country

horizontal suffering across the community

28:17 basket. . .bowl. . .

food scarcity

28:18 body. . .land. . .cattle. . .

Cursings effective zoologically, botanically, and physiologically → tremendous economic effects (lowered population growth rate, scarcity of production leads to rising costs)

28:19 go in. . .go out. . .

indoor and outdoor activity

Modus operandi in the theocracy affected every sphere of existence *according to human choices*.

III. ENUMERATION OF THE CURSINGS (28:20-68)

Instead of a chiasm in this section, there seems to be a gradual progression from initial decay all the way to exile from the land.

A. Destruction from the physical environment (28:20-24)

28:20 cursing, confusion and rebuke

Some translate this: “cursing, causing confusion and frustration”

Mal. 2:2 curse

NOTE: Deuteronomy establishes the framework for the prophets that write the rest of the OT. Liberal scholars who build upon an unbelieving “reconstructed” OT exalt the OT prophets as their models of “social justice”. OT prophets are not radicals, or social progressives; they are reactionaries that point backwards to the Mosaic law as God is applying the sanctions in their day. It is the Word of God over group behavior; not arbitrary social innovation.

28:21-22 plague. . .till cease from the land. . .till you perish

Destruction due to chronically recurring diseases that no medical measures can stop before they devastate the nation (Yahweh controls public health threats from viruses, bacteria, compromised immune systems, etc.)

28:23-24 heavens. . .earth. . .till you are destroyed

Climate under control of Yahweh according to human responses to Him. See **1 Kings 8:35-40**.

B. Destruction from foreign nations in a “reverse Exodus” (28:25-37)

Notice the many different historical processes involved that reveals God’s sovereign power.

28:25-26 one way. . .seven ways. . .

defeat in complete dispersion; military disaster
become a terror to the kingdoms of the earth. . .

foreign nations will start wars with you
carcasses

defeat in retreat not able to care for their dead soldiers

28:27-29 boils of Egypt. . .confusion. . .

analogous to their exodus from Egypt. . . **Jer 4:9** national leaders deceived regarding their foreign policy as Pharaoh was deceived regarding Israel and Moses.

28:30 wife. . .house. . .vineyard. . .

Cf. **20:5-7** complete opposite! Basic structures of society—marriage, family property, and business capital

28:31-33 given to your enemies. . .

Capital assets for business gone; children gone; labor production confiscated.

28:34 driven mad. . .

Psychological breakdown.

28:35 boils. . .cannot be healed. . .

Analogy to exodus plagues on Egypt because Pharaoh resisted Moses.

28:36 king you set over you. . .serve other gods. . .

Cf. **Jer. 39:1-9**

“serve other gods” = live outside God’s “sacred space” where pagan culture’s values and myths dominate all of life.

Cf. **1 Sam 26:19** (David living in Philistia); **Jer. 16:13** (Israel in exile without the theocratic blessings)

wood and stone. . .imagined nature deities that create the great cultural myths to pervert true history and blunt God’s historical cause-effect.

28:37 a proverb. . .among all nations. . .

CONCLUSION

The prophets cajoled the nation with threats of sanctions, announcement that the sanctions had begun, and finally that they were irrevocable.

Cf. **Amos 4:6-13**

Here is the fearsome rationality of God in keeping His Word—He meant what He said.

Application to the Church:

Rev. 2-3 letters to the churches

Heb 12:5-13 personal discipline