

Blessings and Curses

Deuteronomy 27:1-28:68

Study Guide

Large stone monuments are a very common site wherever you go. These memorials to important people, events, wars, and treaties dot the landscape of our country, and the rest of the world. They stand as important reminders to future generations of the sacrifices made by their forefathers.

In our passage this week, Moses commands that such a monument be erected when Israel comes into the land. This monument is not to memorialize any individual, but the Law of God. It is to stand as a constant reminder that God's Law is to be obeyed.

This passage begins the final section of the book of Deuteronomy. In the first address, Moses explains how Israel must learn what to do in the future based upon past History (1:1-4:40). Then Moses reiterates the law of God in His second address to remind Israel of their responsibilities to God and their neighbors (4:44-28:68). Now Moses begins to give instructions on how they are to memorialize the Law of God. This section spells out the contrasting consequences of obedience and disobedience. Whether or not Israel will live blessed lives, or lives under a curse is dependant upon their response to God's law.

Day 1

Read Deuteronomy 27:1-10

1. What was Israel to set up when the came into the Promised Land? What were the specific instructions given as to how to prepare its surface for writing and what was to be written on it?

2. On what mountain was this monument to be placed?

27:4 Mount Ebal. This mountain stood in a central location in the Land of Israel so as to be accessible to the entire nation. This mountain was not only the place where the monuments and altar was to be placed, but it was also the mountain where the curses for disobedience (beginning in verse 16) were to be read out loud from (v. 13).

3. Besides the monuments, Israel was to set up an altar in order to offer up burnt offerings to the Lord. What were the special instructions for building such an altar? Why do you think that this was so important?

4. Right beside the monument with the carved law of God was an altar for the worship of God. Can you see a reason for this? Write out any connection that you see between God's law and worship.

5. You need God's help to obey His commands. You also need God's grace and mercy when you break them. Pray that God will extend to you this help, grace, and mercy. Pray that He will enable you to approach His commands with an attitude of worship. This week, read the Word of God prayerfully that you may understand it and apply it.

Day 2

Read Deuteronomy 27:11-26

1. Mount Ebal was to be the mountain that the curses were read from, what was the name of the mountain the blessings were to be read from? Who was to read the blessings and cursings? How many tribes were to stand on the mountain of blessing? How many on the mountains of cursing?

2. After the curses were read, what was to be the people's response? What would they be indicating by such a response?

3. The first of these 12 curses is upon those who would treat their father or mother with contempt. What does this mean? Give an example of how someone could treat a parent in this fashion.

4. These 12 offences are sins that could be committed secretly and therefore escape the notice of the authorities. However, God is very clear that people cannot sin and get away with it. Is there any secret sin in your life? You may be able to fool those closest to you, but you cannot fool God. What steps do you need to take to rid these sins from your life before you suffer its consequences?

5. Thank God that He places stop signs along the road of life for they will keep you from sins that will ultimately destroy you. Commit to following God's guide book which will lead you to the place of promised blessing.

Day 3

Read Deuteronomy 28:1-14

1. What two adjectives are used in verse 1 to describe the intensity which Israel should obey God? Would you say that this kind of intense obedience is in your life? How can you improve?

2. From verse 1, what did God promise to do to Israel if they diligently obeyed His voice and carefully observed His commandments? What is the vivid language used to describe this in verse 13?

3. Write out some of the blessings which will be given to Israel, should they chose to obey God.

4. Read Joshua 21:45, Joshua 23:14, 15, and 1 Kings 8:56. Did Israel ever receive these blessings? What percentage of God's promises did He keep?

5. If Israel truly seeks after God, they will lead blessed lives. Read Matthew 5:3-10. What qualities does God require of you so that you can live a life of blessing?

6. Pray that God will help you to recognize His promises and trust in Him to keep them. While many of His blessings are eternal and will be given to you because of your position in Christ, also realize that day by day blessings are bestowed upon those who live lives devoted to following His will.

Day 4

Read Deuteronomy 28:15-44

1. If disaster ever came upon Israel, what would be the reason (from verse 20)?

2. What does the picturesque language in verse 23 symbolize?

3. When we think of the promises of God, we often think of blessings. However, it is also important to understand that God has promised judgment on those who live according to their own rules. Read Galatians 6:7-8. What is the promise here? Give an example from your own life of how you have reaped that which you have sown.

4. Worship God as a God who is a just God and who must punish those who disobey Him. Thank Him for His warnings in Scripture which keep you on the right path.

Day 5

Read Deuteronomy 28:45-68

1. What was the attitude that Israel was to have in obeying God (from verse 47)? How can you do better in this area?

2. Just as God kept His promise of blessing, He also kept His promise of cursing. Starting in verse 49, He promises that an invading nation would devastate the land. Read 2 Kings 25:1-21. What nation did God rise up to bring about His promised Judgment?

3. In verses 52-57, Moses gives a terrible prediction about how the nation will be reduced to cannibalism during a siege. Did this promise ever come true? Look in your study Bible, concordance, or a Bible Dictionary. If so, give the reference and describe the situation.

4. Of all of these curses, what do you think is the worst and most humiliating? Do you think that these warnings are motivation enough to stay true to the Lord?
5. The Israelite who would continue in their sin after hearing these terrible curses reveals one thing about their heart; they did not believe God would keep His Word. Your faith, or lack of faith, will manifest itself in your actions. Do you live a life that reveals that you believe God’s Word? Look back over your actions from the last several weeks. Remember, you can say you believe in God all you want, but true saving faith manifests itself in works of righteousness. Ask God to forgive you of your unbelieving actions and commit to having actions that match your words.