

# Deuteronomy 27 Commentary

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Moses on Mt Nebo (Deuteronomy 34:1+)  
Listen to Mt Nebo as you Ponder How Moses' May Have Felt

Deuteronomy by Irving Jensen- used by permission

deut

Source: Ryrie Study Bible

Deuteronomy			
Dt 1:1-4:43	Dt 4:44-26:19		Dt 27:1-34:12
Moses' First Discourse	Moses' Second Discourse		Moses' Third Discourse
Historical Review	Legal Exposition		Prophetical Promises
Looking Back 40 Years	Looking Up What God Expected of Israel		Looking Ahead What God Will Do for Israel
Recapitulation of Wanderings	Rehearsal of Israel's Law		Ratification of Israel's Covenant
			Historical Appendices

Remembrance of the past	Commandments for the Present				Dt 27:1-30:20 Blessing and Cursing		Dt 31:1-34:12 Death of Moses
Take Heed Don't forget	Ten Commands	Related Commands			Two Choices Affecting the Future		Moses' Parting Words
Dt 1:1-4:43 Looking Back	Dt 4:44-11:32 Exposition of Decalogue	Dt 12:1-16:17 Ceremonial Laws	Dt 16:18-20:20 Civil Laws	Dt 21:1-26:19 Social Laws	Dt 27:1-28:68 Ratification of Covenant	Dt 29:1-30:20 Terms of Covenant	Dt 31:1-34:12 Moses' Song, Blessing, Death
Plains of Moab							
ca. 2 Months Moses: Author (Except Dt 34)							

**Deuteronomy 27:1** Then Moses and the elders of Israel charged the people, saying, "Keep all the commandments which I command you today.

- **Keep all:** De 4:1-3 Dt 11:32 Dt 26:16 Lu 11:28 Joh 15:14 1Th 4:1,2 Jas 2:10

#### Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 4:1-3 "Now, O Israel, **listen** to the statutes and the judgments which I am teaching you to perform, so that you may **live** and **go in and take possession of the land which the LORD** the God of your fathers, is giving you. 2 "You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you. 3 "Your eyes have seen what the LORD has done in the case of [Baal-peor](#), for all the men who followed Baal-peor, the LORD your God has destroyed them from among you.

Deuteronomy 11:32 and you shall **be careful to do all the statutes and the judgments** which I am setting before you today.

Deuteronomy 26:16 "This day the LORD your God commands you **todo these statutes and ordinances**. **You shall therefore be careful to do them** with all your heart and with all your soul.

John 15:14 "You are My friends if you **do** what I command you.

[John Hannah's Outline](#): (excellent resource)

#### III. The third discourse: ratification of the covenant (Deut 27:1-30:20)

##### A. The establishment of the law (Deut 27:1-26)

1. The setting up of the law in the land (Deut 27:1-8)
2. The benefit of covenant relationship (Deut 27:9-10)
3. The declaration of Israel's commitment (Deut 27:11-26)

##### B. The responsibility of keeping the law (Deut 28:1-68)

1. The blessings for obedience (Deut 28:1-14)
2. The curses for disobedience (Deut 28:15-68)

##### C. The renewal of the covenant (Deut 29:1-30:20)

1. Introduction (Deut 29:1-9)
2. The summons to enter into the covenant (Deut 29:10-13)
3. The seriousness of adherence to the covenant (Deut 29:14-29)
4. The ultimate fulfillment of the covenant (Deut 30:1-10)
  - a. The promise of dispersion (Deut 30:1)
  - b. The promise of national repentance (Deut 30:2)
  - c. The promise of return to the land (Deut 30:3-5)
  - d. The promise of conversion (Deut 30:6)
  - e. The promise of judgment on Israel's enemies (Deut 30:7)

- f. The promise of blessing (Deut 30:8-10)
  - 5. The appeal of commitment to the covenant (Deut 30:11-20)
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#### Outline:

- The Law Inscribed on Stone (Shechem Ceremony) Dt 27:1-8
- Curses on Disobedience Pronounced from Mt Ebal Dt 27:11-26

## COVENANT RENEWAL CHAPTER 27

This chapter could be summed up curses for disobedience! Recall this is Moses' third major declaration and goes from chapter 27-30.

**J Vernon McGee** says "Now this particular section is prophetic and has to do with their future in the land which they are about to enter. We find here some of the most remarkable prophecies in the entire Word of God." ([Deuteronomy 27](#))

**Meredith Kline** entitles this chapter "Ratification Ceremony in Canaan. Dt 27:1-26. Moses prescribed the ceremony for the second stage of the covenant renewal, to be conducted in Canaan (Dt 27:1-8). The re-establishment of the covenant was proclaimed (Dt 27:9, 10). A charge was given concerning the recital of blessings and curses in the later ceremony (Dt 27:11-26). For the historical performance of what is here prescribed, see Josh 8:30-35. For an anticipation of these instructions among the Deuteronomic stipulations, see Deut 11:26-30."

**Craigie** has an interesting introduction to this section - The main section of specific stipulations (Deut. 12–26) is sandwiched between two sections in which the future renewal of the covenant is anticipated: Dt 11:26–32 and Dt 27:1–26. The structure at this point is significant for understanding the nature of the covenant relationship and the renewing of that relationship on the plains of Moab. The renewal of the covenant in Moab has two focal points: (1) the remembrance of the past, specifically the forming of the covenant at Horeb (Sinai); (2) the anticipation of the future, when again the covenant would be renewed. This perspective is a part of the Hebrew understanding of history; it is not simply that the Hebrews had a linear concept of time. Rather, they believed that there was a close relationship between the present moment, the events leading up to that moment, and those events still lying in the future, when the essence of God's ancient promise to the patriarchs would be fulfilled. Thus, throughout the renewal of the covenant in Moab, which had its roots in the past, the focal point and indeed the purpose of the renewal lay in the anticipation of the future. The specific details concerning the continuity of leadership in the covenant community are stated in chs. 29–30, but in ch. 27 the general principle is given, namely, that in the future there would have to be a further renewal of obedience and commitment to God's law, which had just been declared and expounded (chs. 12–26). ([New International Commentary of Old Testament - Deuteronomy](#))

**Block** adds an interesting thought - EVEN TO CASUAL READERS chapter 27 seems intrusive. It interrupts the otherwise smooth flow from Deuteronomy 26:16–19 to Dt 28:1–14—which are linked by common vocabulary and motifs—and introduces a distinctive genre and content. The present chapter consists of three distinct speeches, each with its own narrative introduction and speaker(s) (Dt 27:1, 9, 11); it seems ill-connected with the preceding or what follows and might have made more sense after Dt 31:29. (NIVAC-Dt)

**Utley** - This chapter describes a royal land-grant treaty following the pattern of Hittite treaties (i.e., Deuteronomy as a whole and Joshua 24). Ebal, the highest point in the center of the land of Canaan symbolically shows the transfer of land to the Israelites. However, to maintain the rights and privileges of occupation, covenant obedience and loyalty to YHWH is demanded. Israel's stormy history can be seen through the lens of Deuteronomy 27–29. Her repeated covenant disobedience reaped the judgment of YHWH. She was to be a beacon of a happy and prosperous society (righteous brotherhood), but she reaped the whirlwind of YHWH's curses! YHWH's promises are only applicable to a repentant, believing, obedient, covenant people. Election does not replace obedience (cf. Galatians 3). ([Deuteronomy 27 Commentary](#))

**Then Moses and the elders of Israel charged the people, saying, "Keep all the commandments ([mitsvah](#)) which I command you today** - It is interesting to note that this is the only time in Deuteronomy that the elders join Moses in teaching (probably because he would not be on the other side of the Jordan and they would be!) "The people weren't committing themselves to Moses; they were committing themselves to the Lord to "keep all the commandments" (Dt 26:18)." (Wiersbe) Moses was well aware that this was his last opportunity to charge Israel before they entered the Promised Land for he was prohibited from entering with them (Nu 20:12; Nu 27:12–14; Dt. 3:26–27). And so while Moses usually spoke directly to the people but here includes the elders in the covenant renewal for they will be allowed to take his instructions into the Promised Land. In short, they would be responsible for seeing that the commandments were carried out. **Commandments** is literally keep ""**the whole commandment.**" **Keep** means to put a hedge around the commandment, keep watch over it so as to observe it and follow it and ultimately to conform one's actions

and practice to it. This same thought of obedience and doing the commandments is repeated in Dt 27:10 for it was crucial for Israel to obey the commandments in order to stay in the Promised Land. Moses' point is that Israel must not just hear the word but do the word in order to receive God's blessings. Note the word **today** is a key word (time phrase) in Dt 27-34 occurring **24x in 23v!** (Deut. 27:1; Deut. 27:4; Deut. 27:10; Deut. 28:1; Deut. 28:13; Deut. 28:14; Deut. 28:15; Deut. 29:10; Deut. 29:12; Deut. 29:13; Deut. 29:15; Deut. 29:18; Deut. 30:2; Deut. 30:8; Deut. 30:11; Deut. 30:15; Deut. 30:16; Deut. 30:18; Deut. 30:19; Deut. 31:2; Deut. 31:21; Deut. 31:27; Deut. 32:46)

**Today** they hear this exhortation, but tomorrow they are to keep it (actually they should begin "today!")

**THOUGHT** - James has a similar thought for NT believer writing **"prove (present imperative** see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves." (Jas 1:22+). Jesus adds "But He said, "On the contrary, blessed are those who **hear** the word of God and **observe** it." (Luke 11:28+) How are you doing beloved? Are you hearing and heeding, putting to death the sin that so easily entangles you that you might be enabled by the Spirit (not grieved or quenched) to run the race set before you? (Ro 8:13+, Heb 12:1+).

**Maxwell** on the importance of **the elders** - We are reminded of the importance of great leaders' surrounding themselves with good men. The elders surrounded and supported Moses at the close of his days of leading the children of Israel...Great works of God are built by the relay race principle, not by a single runner (**ED**: cf this important principle in discipleship - 2 Ti 2:2+). Here Moses, the leader, is passing the baton of leadership on to the elders before the entire congregation of Israel. The leaders will change, but not the covenant. ([Preacher's Commentary - Deut](#))

**Block** - "All these commands" to which Moses refers are not the prescribed rituals that follow, but the "the entire covenantal charge" embodied in "this Torah, this body of instruction" (Dt 27:3, 8, 26), that is, the speeches of Deuteronomy.

**NET NOTE** - Heb "**commandment**." The MT actually has the singular (הַמִּצְוָה, hammitsvah), suggesting perhaps that the following terms (לְקִיּוֹם [khuqqim] and מִשְׁפָּטִים [mishpatim]) are in exegetical apposition to "commandment." That is, the phrase could be translated "the entire command, namely, the statutes and ordinances." This would essentially make מִצְוָה (mitsvah) synonymous with תּוֹרָה (torah), the usual term for the whole collection of law.

**POSB** - the curses of God and His judgment are a living reality. God is going to judge the world. Every human being who has ever lived will face the judgment of God. If a person has not approached God through the Lord Jesus Christ, that person will face the judgment of God. No matter what he professes, he will stand and give an account for rejecting God's Son, give an account because profession is not what matters to God. What matters to God is not what a person professes or says, but what he does. A person may say that he knows God, but if he does not have the righteous life to back up his words, his unrighteous life will cause him to face the judgment of God. What God is after is true faith, true belief, true obedience. God wants people who will genuinely love and worship Him in all sincerity and truth. God wants obedience. True belief and true faith that lead to true obedience are the only things that will keep a person from facing the judgment of God's curse. Moses knew this in dealing with the Israelites. For this reason, he had just finished preaching a series of messages on the commandments and laws of God. He had to make sure that the people understood the commandments of God. Once they understood, they could live in a way that would please God. Now, having just completed the messages on the commandments, it was time for a decision. The people needed to make a rededication of their lives to God. They needed to recommit their lives to obey the covenant, the commandments of God. And so Moses now begins a brief series of messages challenging the people to make a strong decision for God. He challenges them to renew their covenant with God, to rededicate their lives. This is the subject of this great passage of Scripture: The Charge to Renew the Covenant: The Command to Obey God and the Curses for Disobeying, ([Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible – Deuteronomy](#))

**Keep** (careful, guard, kept, observe, watch) ([08104](#)) **shamar** means to keep, watch, preserve, to guard, to be careful, to watch over, to watch carefully over, to be on one's guard. Hedge about as with thorns - the word the Hebrews used for a shepherd's keeping watch over a flock of sheep. Conveyed the idea of protection as in Ps 121:7-8 (used 3 times!) In the great Aaronic blessing Nu 6:24 The first use of **shamar** in [Ge 2:15](#) is instructive as Adam was placed in the garden (a perfect environment) and was commanded to **"keep"** it which in the [Septuagint](#) is translated with **phulasso** (which is used to translate shamar in Dt 27:1) which means to guard like a military sentinel would at his post. Clearly Adam did not do a good job at "keeping" the garden safe from intruders! And because of this failure he was cast out of the garden and angels stationed to **"guard** (Lxx = [phulasso](#)) the way to the tree of life" so that he would not eat of it (Ge 3:24). After Cain murdered Abel he answered God "Am I my brother's **keeper**?" (Ge 3:24)

**Deuteronomy 27:2** "So it shall be on the day when you cross the Jordan to the land which the LORD your God gives you,

- **on the day:** De 6:1 9:1 11:31 Jos 1:11 4:1,5-24
- **to the:** De 27:3 26:1
- **stones:** Eze 11:19 36:26

## SET UP MEMORIAL STONES

**So it shall be on the day when you cross the Jordan to the land which the LORD your God gives you, that you shall set up for yourself large stones** - Note once again the juxtaposition of man's responsibility and God's sovereignty. Israel had to **cross the Jordan** (their responsibility) to receive **the land which God gives** (God's sovereignty). It is notable that there were 3 sets of stones described associated with the Promised Land - stones at Gilgal (Dt 27:1–3, cf. Joshua 4), stones at Shechem (Dt 27:4–8) and thirdly after the conquest and division of the land God's law was written on a large stone and on a scroll in Josh. 24:26–27. This was in preparation for reaffirming the covenant (Old = Mosaic = Mt Sinai covenant). Stones often speak of memorials and to be sure these last words of Moses were once they dare not forget for to do so would be to their great peril!

**Jamieson on the day** - **Day** is often put for time; and the meaning is, 'about the time;' for it was not till some days after the passage, though the earliest practicable opportunity, that the following instructions were acted upon.

**Kline** - Covenant consecration must be an act of intelligent, informed faith and devotion. Therefore, the content of the covenant was to be published preparatory to its ratification by the people. That was one purpose of writing the covenant on the plastered stones, an Egyptian technique, as is confirmed by the fact that in the historical fulfillment Joshua read this law to the people (Josh 8:34). Comparable were Moses reading of the Book of the Covenant to Israel at the ratification of the Sinaitic Covenant and the proclamation of the Deuteronomic Covenant in the plains of Moab. The fact that durable stones were selected invites comparison with the two stone tables of the law written by the finger of God and suggests that a further purpose was to provide a symbolic witness to the permanence of the covenant (cf. Deut 31:26; Josh 24:26, 27).

**And coat them with lime** - whitewash them with lime which was an Egyptian method of preparing a stone for subsequent writing and it was known to be long lasting. Clearly God wanted the words of the Law to be visible for a long time and to serve as a constant reminder! Israel like all of us was prone to forget.

**TSK** - **coat them with lime** Houbigant and others are of opinion that the original words, {wesadta othom beseed}, should be rendered "thou shalt cement them with cement," because this was intended to be a durable monument. Some suppose that the writing was to be in relief, and that the spaces were to be filled up by the mortar or cement; as is frequently the case with eastern inscriptions

**IVP Bible Background Commentary** - monuments on stones coated with plaster. Ancient writing techniques included ink on papyrus (Egypt), a stylus on clay tablets (Mesopotamia), an inscribing tool on stone and a stick on wax-coated wooden boards. Engraving in stone could be very time-consuming, so one variation for longer inscriptions was to coat the stone surface with plaster and then write in the soft plaster. Inscriptions of this type have been found in the Palestine region at Deir Allah (see comment on Num 22:4–20) and Kuntillet Ajrud (see the comment on Asherah poles in Dt 7:5).

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### QUESTION - [What is the Promised Land?](#)

**ANSWER** - *Promised Land* is a term designating a region of the world that God promised as a heritage to His people, Israel (Genesis 12:7; 15:18–20). *Promised Land* is not the official name of Israel's boundaries, but it conveys a larger meaning. The Promised Land was an endowment from Earth's Creator to a specific people group, the children of Israel, in which they established their nation. Israel acquired the Promised Land only through God's guidance and His miraculous intervention in history (Exodus 33:14–16; Psalm 44:1–8; 136:10–22).

The promise of a land for God's people began in Genesis 12 when God appeared to Abram (Abraham) and told him that he had been chosen to be the father of many nations. God promised to bless Abram and lead him into a land that would belong to his offspring as a lasting heritage. God later confirmed this promise to Abraham's son Isaac (Genesis 26:3) and then to Isaac's son Jacob (Genesis 28:13).

The boundaries of the Promised Land were from the River of Egypt (the Nile) to the Euphrates (Exodus 23:31). By the time Israel was ready to take the land, hundreds of years after Abraham, it was inhabited by pagan nations: Canaanites, Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites (Exodus 33:2). When it was time for the Israelites to inherit the Promised Land, God raised up

Moses to bring His people out of slavery in Egypt and used Joshua to lead a military conquest of Canaan. The [Promised Land](#) includes modern-day Israel, including Gaza and the West Bank, and Jordan, as well as parts of Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq.

The term *promised land* has also been applied to any type of satisfying achievement or a state of realized dreams. For example, the World Series might be called baseball's "promised land." Or someone may say, "After receiving a significant raise, Joe moved his family out of the projects and into the promised land." Hebrews 6:8–10 alludes to the Promised Land when it recounts Abraham's journey to his new home in Canaan and then equates that with our journey toward God's heavenly city (verse 16).

Christians sometimes refer to heaven and the future restoration of the earth as the Promised Land. God has promised a glorious eternal home for all those who love Him and have trusted in Christ Jesus for salvation. God's eternal Promised Land is the heritage of all who come to Him through His Son (John 14:6). A familiar hymn by Samuel Stennett describes the anticipation Christians feel as we move toward our heavenly home: ([GotQuestions.org](#))

"On Jordan's stormy banks I stand  
And cast a wishful eye  
To Canaan's fair and happy land,  
Where my possessions lie.  
I am bound for the promised land,  
I am bound for the promised land;  
O who will come and go with me?  
I am bound for the promised land.

#### Related Resource:

- [Did God give Israel the Promised Land for all time? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Why was Abraham promised land that belonged to others \(Genesis 12\)? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**Deuteronomy 27:3 and write on them all the words of this law, when you cross over, so that you may enter the land which the LORD your God gives you, a land flowing with milk and honey, as the LORD, the God of your fathers, promised you.**

- **write:** Jos 8:32 Jer 31:31-33 2Co 3:2,3 Heb 8:6-10 10:16
- **a land:** De 6:8 26:9 Lev 20:24 Nu 13:27 14:8 Jos 5:6 Jer 11:5 32:22

#### Related Passages:

Joshua 8:30-32 - Then Joshua built an altar to the LORD, the God of Israel, in [Mount Ebal](#). 31 just as Moses [the servant of the LORD](#) (THOUGHT - WHAT A GREAT DESCRIPTION - WILL THIS BE GOD'S WORDS ABOUT US WHEN OUR LIFE IS OVER?) had commanded the sons of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, an altar of uncut stones on which no man had wielded an iron tool; and they offered burnt offerings on it to the LORD, and sacrificed peace offerings. 32 He wrote there on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he had written, in the presence of the sons of Israel.

### COVENANT REITERATED ON STONE

While we do not know exactly what was written, the fact that the words of this law were to be written on stone would surely recall the Decalogue's being written on stone (of course there by the finger of God - Ex 31:18+).

**And write on them all the words of this law, when you cross over** - The exact meaning of **All the words** is uncertain and could be the words Moses is speaking in this section or the entire book of Deuteronomy, or even more. We'll find out in Heaven!

**Write on them** - Other mentions of **writing** in the Pentateuch include Ex 17:14; 24:4; 34:27, 28, Nu 33:2 and Deut 27:3, 8; 28:58; 29:21; 30:10; 31:9, 22, 24–26.

**TSK** - This law probably means only the blessings and curses mentioned in this and the following chapter; which indeed contain an epitome of the whole law.

**So that** - Purpose clause. And what a purpose it is!



**You may enter the land which the LORD your God gives you, a land flowing with milk and honey, as the LORD, the God of your fathers, promised you** - Note the emphasis on God's grace (unmerited favor in this context) - **God gives...God of your fathers, promised you.**

**Guzik** makes a good point regarding Joshua's fulfillment of Moses' instructions - This dramatic scene was fulfilled in Joshua 8:32–35. In Joshua's day, it happened after a bitter defeat, then a dramatic repentance and recovery at Ai (Joshua 7 and Joshua 8). After the [victory at Ai](#), Joshua wanted to do everything he could to walk in obedience, so he led the nation in obedience to this command in Deuteronomy 27! In this, Joshua was showing himself to be a man of the Book (Joshua 1:8+), and Israel a people of the Book; they would order their lives after God's Word. This was done even at some cost or inconvenience; the distance from Ai to Ebal and Gerizim was not small distance to move all the tribes of Israel (from 20 to 25 miles). ([Deuteronomy 27](#))

**Maxwell** - The stones were to be set up at Mount Ebal, at the base of which lay the city of [Shechem](#). It was at [Shechem](#) that the Lord first appeared to Abraham, and there Abraham built his first altar to the Lord (Ge 12:6–7). There is significance in the choice of this location for the law-engraved stones. It emphasized God's faithfulness in giving Israel the land "just as the LORD God of your fathers promised you" (v. 3). ([Preacher's Commentary - Deut](#))

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#### QUESTION - [Why was Israel called the land of milk and honey?](#)

**ANSWER** - Repeatedly in the Old Testament, God describes the [Promised Land](#) as "a land flowing with milk and honey" (Exodus 3:8; Numbers 14:8; Deuteronomy 31:20; Ezekiel 20:15). This poetic description of Israel's land emphasizes the fertility of the soil and bounty that awaited God's chosen people. The reference to "milk" suggests that many livestock could find pasture there; the mention of "honey" suggests the vast farmland available—the bees had plenty of plants to draw nectar from.

In Exodus 3:8, God says to [Moses](#), "I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites." A couple things to note about this verse:

First, before the [plagues](#), the land of Egypt supported Israel and the Egyptians quite well, yet God called the new land "good and spacious." The Hebrew word translated "good" means "pleasant, beautiful, and fruitful, with economic benefits."

Second, simultaneously with promoting the goodness of the land, God mentions the enemies in the land that must be overcome. The nations displaced by Israel from the land "flowing with milk and honey" were significant in number, and they valued that land enough to fight and die for it.

Later, we have the record of the ten faithless spies who were sent into the Promised Land by Moses. The ten spies disagreed that Israel was able to conquer the inhabitants of the land, but they did agree on this: it was a land of flowing with milk and honey. "They gave Moses this account: 'We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey! Here is its fruit'" (Numbers 13:27). The "fruit" the spies showed Moses was a single cluster of grapes that had to be carried on a pole between two men (verse 23). They also brought some [pomegranates](#) and the figs from Canaan.

It is true that there are areas of very arid land in Israel, but this does not negate the fact that, overall, it is a land flowing with milk and honey. There are many areas of Israel that are extremely fertile and produce many types of fruits and vegetables. The area north of present-day Israel is biblical Mesopotamia, also known as the "Fertile Crescent," which is just that—fertile (and crescent-shaped). It is also true that the Bible records severe drought and famine in the land of Israel, but those times were connected to God's judgment on the sinful people (Deuteronomy 11:16–17; 1 Kings 18:1–2, 18).

God's description of the Promised Land as "a land flowing with milk and honey" is a beautifully graphic way of highlighting the agricultural richness of the land. God brought His people out of slavery in Egypt to a prosperous land of freedom and blessing and the knowledge of the Lord. [GotQuestions.org](#)

**Deuteronomy 27:4** "So it shall be when you cross the Jordan, you shall set up on Mount Ebal, these stones, as I am commanding you today, and you shall coat them with lime.

- **mount Ebal:** De 11:29-30 Jos 8:30-33

#### Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 11:29-30+ "It shall come about, when the LORD your God brings you into the land where you are entering to possess it, that you shall place the blessing on [Mount Gerizim](#) and the curse on [Mount Ebal](#). 30

"Are they not across the Jordan, west of the way toward the sunset, in the land of [the Canaanites](#) who live in the Arabah, opposite Gilgal, beside the oaks of Moreh?

Joshua 8:30-32 Then Joshua built an altar to the LORD, the God of Israel, in [Mount Ebal](#), 31 just as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded the sons of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, an altar of uncut stones on which no man had wielded an iron tool; and they offered **burnt offerings** on it to the LORD, and sacrificed peace offerings. 32 He wrote there on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he had written, in the presence of the sons of Israel.

## MEMORIAL STONES ON MOUNT EBAL

**So it shall be when you cross the Jordan, you shall set up on Mount Ebal, these stones, as I am commanding you today, and you shall coat them with lime** - It is interesting that Moses begins not with the blessings but with the warning curses! As [GotQuestions.org](#) says "**Mount Ebal** stood as a warning that God takes sin seriously and that harsh consequences follow the breaking of His laws." Mt Ebal was about 35 miles north of Jerusalem with **Shechem** at the base. It is notable that **Shechem** was the first place Yahweh appeared to Abram (Ge 12:6-7+), and later to Jacob (Ge 33:18-20) and thus clearly was not chosen at random, but to remind Israel of God's faithfulness to keep the covenant promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

**NET NOTE** is interesting - **Samaritan Pentateuch** (the version of the first five books of the Old Testament accepted as canonical by the Samaritans) reads "**Mount Gerizim**" for the MT (Masoretic Text (the traditional rabbinical text of the Hebrew Bible dating from the medieval period)) reading "**Mount Ebal**" to justify the location of the Samaritan temple there in the postexilic period. This reading is patently self-serving and does not reflect the original. In the NT when the Samaritan woman of Sychar referred to "this mountain" as the place of worship for her community she obviously had Gerizim in mind (cf. John 4:20+)

**TSK** - Gerizim and Ebal, mountains west of Jordan, and in the tribe of Ephraim, are opposite, or parallel to each other, extending from east to west; mount Gerizim being on the south, and mount Ebal on the north. They are separated by the beautiful valley in which [Shechem](#) or Nablous is situated, which is only about 200 paces in width. Both mountains are much alike in length, height, and figure; being about a league in length, in the form of a semicircle, and so steep, on the side of [Shechem](#), that there is scarcely any shelving: their altitude appeared to Mr. Buckingham nearly equal, not exceeding 700 or 800 feet from the level of the valley, which is itself elevated. But though they resemble each other in these particulars, yet in another they are very dissimilar; for, says Maundrell, "though neither of the mountains has much to boast of as to its pleasantness, yet, as one passes between them, Gerizim seems to discover a somewhat more verdant, fruitful aspect than Ebal: the reason of which may be, because fronting towards the north, it is sheltered from the heat of the sun by its own shade; whereas Ebal, looking southward, and receiving the sun that comes directly upon it, must by consequence be rendered more scorched and unfruitful."

**IVP Bible Background Commentary - Mount Ebal.** Gerizim and Ebal are the mountains that flank the town of [Shechem](#) in the central hill country, Gerizim (elevation 2,849 feet) to the south, Ebal (3,077 feet) to the north. The altar spoken of here is actually constructed in Joshua 8. Some archaeologists believe that the remains of this altar have been found. It is a structure on one of the peaks of Mount Ebal about twenty-five by thirty feet with walls about five feet thick and nine feet high made of fieldstones. The fill is dirt and ashes, and what appears to be a ramp leads up to the top. The structure is surrounded by a courtyard, and animal bones litter the site. Pottery on the site goes back to 1200 B.C.

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### QUESTION - [What is the significance of Mount Ebal in the Bible?](#)

**ANSWER** - Mount Ebal is located in the [Promised Land](#) of Israel, near the middle of Samaria. It is one of a pair of twin peaks, the other being [Mount Gerizim](#). Both mountains were designated by God for the reading of His blessings and curses Israel would incur for obeying or disobeying His law. Deuteronomy 11:26–29 records the Lord's words to Israel: "See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse—the blessing if you obey the commands of the Lord your God that I am giving you today; the curse if you disobey the commands of the Lord your God. . . . When the Lord your God has brought you into the land you are entering to possess, you are to proclaim on Mount Gerizim the blessings, and on Mount Ebal the curses." The Bible identifies Mount Ebal as "near the great trees of Moreh, in the territory of those Canaanites living in the Arabah in the vicinity of Gilgal" (verse 30).

Today Mount Ebal is known as *Sitti Salamiyah*, so named for a female Islamic saint whose tomb stands on the eastern side of the ridge, just before the highest point. Tradition holds that the location of the twin peaks is such that people beneath the mountains could hear words being read on either. Over the centuries various groups have experimented with that claim.

God instructed [Moses](#) to build an altar of rough stones, covered with plaster, on Mount Ebal (Deuteronomy 27:2–3). The Israelites were to write the words of the law on this altar. However, God forbade Moses himself to enter the Promised Land because of his



rebellion, so it was [Joshua](#), his successor, who actually built the altar on Ebal (Joshua 8:30). God chose the tribes of Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali to stand on Mount Ebal as the curses were pronounced as a warning to all Israel (Deuteronomy 27:13). The tribes of Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin were to stand on Mount Gerizim as the blessings on the people were pronounced (Deuteronomy 27:12).

After the battles of Jericho and Ai, Joshua led the people to Mount Ebal and did all that God had commanded Moses. He gathered the people together to read the law: "Half of the people stood in front of Mount Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of the LORD had formerly commanded when he gave instructions to bless the people of Israel" (Joshua 8:33). With the children of Israel divided on the foothills of the two mountains, the [Levites](#) stood in the valley between them and read the words of the law. The reading was thorough: "Every word of every command that Moses had ever given was read to the entire assembly of Israel, including the women and children and the foreigners who lived among them" (Joshua 8:35NLT).

The formal reading of the law in the people's presence and with their participation represented a renewal of the covenant. The curses that were read toward Mount Ebal as a warning to the Israelites in the Promised Land were a reminder that the [Mosaic Covenant](#) was conditional. Built in to the law were punishments for disobedience. Curses at Ebal were leveled against those who practiced idolatry, dishonored their parents, took advantage of the vulnerable, withheld justice, committed murder, took bribes, or committed various sexual sins. After each curse, the people were all to say, "Amen!" (Deuteronomy 27:15–26). This response showed that the people heard, understood, and agreed.

It is unknown why the Lord chose those particular mountains as symbols of His blessing and curses. Perhaps it was because they stood so close together that the people could hear all at once. God also wanted His people to understand that His blessings and curses were separate. He did not even want them to be pronounced together. The Israelites were to be a holy people, set apart from the heathen nations around them (Exodus 19:6; 22:31; Leviticus 19:2). Mount Ebal stood as a warning that God takes sin seriously and that harsh consequences follow the breaking of His laws. [GotQuestions.org](#)

**Deuteronomy 27:5 "Moreover, you shall build there an altar to the LORD your God, an altar of stones; you shall not wield an iron tool on them.**

- **you shall build** : Ex 24:4 Jos 8:30,31 1Ki 18:31,32
- **not**: Ex 20:25

### USE NO IRON TOOLS ON ALTARS

**Moreover, you shall build there an altar to the LORD your God, an altar of stones; you shall not wield an iron tool on them-**

The reason for the stipulation is not absolutely clear but most writers feel it is related to the fact that the Canaanites used iron to construct their altars and God wanted no resemblance whatsoever between the pagan altars and His holy altars! At this time Israel did not possess iron tools. The place of the cursings (Mt Ebal) interestingly is the place of the altar (the place where atonement is made) - coincidence?

**Guzik** offers another suggestion - This was commanded because God did not want the glory of the stone carver to be the center of attention at His altar. God, at His altar, will share glory with no man—the beauty and attractiveness would be found only in the provision of God, not in any fleshly display. ([Deuteronomy 27](#))

**Deuteronomy 27:6 "You shall build the altar of the LORD your God of uncut stones, and you shall offer on it burnt offerings to the LORD your God;**

- **burnt offerings**: Lev 1:1-17+ (See chart summarizing the Offerings)

### OFFER BURNT OFFERINGS

**You shall build the altar of the LORD your God of uncut stones-** This repeats the instructions given to the first generation "If you make an altar of stone for Me, you shall not build it of **cut stones**, for if you wield your tool on it, you will **profane** ([chahal](#) - ceremonially defile and so violate the sacred character of) it." (Exodus 20:25+)

**Brown** - Once these ancient Near Eastern treaties had been set down in writing, the participants shared together in an act of worship at which they honoured each other's gods and, in their presence, solemnly agreed to the terms of the covenant. It was for this reason, among others, that the Hebrews were forbidden to enter in to political alliances with foreign nations. How could they share an agreement with such people when they had heard God's word, 'You shall have no other gods before me' (Dt 5:7)? Their formal acceptance of this covenant, however, must also be marked by a special occasion for the worship of the one true God. ([Bible Speaks Today-Deut](#))

**Currid** - The reasons for this prohibition are twofold: first, it is a polemic against Canaanite altars, which were made primarily of cut, finished stone. Secondly, the Hebrews are not to wield a tool in erecting an altar so that they will not be tempted into making an idol. ([EPSC-Dt](#))

**THOUGHT** - See summary of foundational truths of covenant (scroll down page to chart) which included sacrifices, oaths, signs, witnesses, a meal and/or an altar. In this chapter we have a memorial stone as a "witness" or reminder, an altar for worship where blood was spilled signifying the significance and solemnity of the covenant, and a communal meal).

**And you shall offer on it burnt offerings to the LORD your God-** This first offering was wholly consumed and given completely to God thus expressing Israel's total dependence on Jehovah. It was an act signifying total consecration to Yahweh and His covenant stipulations much like when they said "**All the words which the LORD has spoken we will do**" in Ex 24:3, 7+. "In other words, God comes first and deserves the best." ([Brown](#)) It pictures laying it all on the altar before and for God. It is also a foreshadowing of the Messiah for Paul commands the saints at Ephesus to "**walk (present imperative see our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey)** in love, just as **Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma**. (Eph 5:2+, cf our offering in Ro 12:1+)

**Wiersbe on burnt offerings...peace offerings** - the priests would offer burnt offerings (total dedication to God) and peace offerings (joyful celebration of God's blessing). To have God's law without having a sacrifice for sins would be to bring condemnation and not consecration, for "by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20). ([Be Equipped](#))

**Burnt offerings** ([05930](#)) '[olah](#) from '[alah](#) = to ascend and thus the picture of *going up* in smoke) refers to a whole burnt offering (one which *goes up* in smoke), which was voluntary, was understood as a sacrificial gift to God, resulting in a pleasing aroma acceptable to Jehovah (Lev 1:9). The presenter laid hands on the sacrifice which many feel signifies they saw the animal sacrifice as their substitute. The blood was sprinkled on the altar (Lev 1:6) When this offering was properly carried out (including a right heart attitude not just a "going through the motions," [which was not pleasing to God - Jer 6:20, Jer 7:21, 23, 24, see David - Ps 51:16-17+] not just an external "work," but an internal submission and obedience to Jehovah), they made atonement and were acceptable before Jehovah. The total burning indicated (or should have indicated) total consecration of the presenter's heart and soul and life to Jehovah. As noted a key feature of '[olah](#) appears to be that among the Israelite sacrifices only '[olah](#) is **wholly burned**, rather than partially burned and eaten by the worshipers and/or the priest. Thus, the whole animal is brought up to the altar and the whole is offered as a gift (*minha*) in homage to Yahweh. Whole offering would be a better rendering in English to convey the theology. It is indeed burned, but the burning is essentially secondary to the giving of the whole creature to Yahweh. **Burnt Offering** - '[olah](#) , "what ascends" in smoke to God, being wholly consumed to ashes. Part of every offering was burnt in the sacred fire, the symbol of God's presence; but this was wholly burnt, as a "whole burnt offering." ([Fausset's Bible Dictionary](#)) '[Olah](#) is translated in the [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) with the Greek noun [holokautoma](#) from the verb [holokautóo](#) = to burn whole. This word is used only 3x in the NT (Mk 12:33, Heb 10:6-[note](#), Heb 10:8-[note](#)) **Holokautoma** refers to a wholly-consumed sacrifice, whole burnt offering, whole victim burned. **Holokautoma** gives us our English word "**holocaust**" (Webster says holocaust is derived from Gk holokauston, from neuter of holokaustos = burnt whole, from **hol-** = whole + **kaustos** = burnt). It is a whole burnt offering for the whole victim was burned. **BDAG** summary of **holokautoma** = (1) a cultic sacrifice in which the animal was entirely consumed by fire - whole burnt offering, literally **holocaust** (See [Jewish Holocaust](#)) (2) a person punished with death by fire because of personal conviction, whole burnt offering, holocaust figurative extension of (1) - used of [Polycarp \(who was martyred by burning at the stake\)](#) See also [Offerings and Sacrifices - Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#)

**Deuteronomy 27:7 and you shall sacrifice peace offerings and eat there, and rejoice before the LORD your God.**

- **peace offerings:** Lev 3:1-17 7:11-17 Ac 10:36 Ro 5:1,10 Eph 2:16,17 2:16,17 Col 1:20 Heb 13:20,21

■ **rejoice:** De 12:7,12 16:11,14 26:10,11 2Ch 30:23-27 Ne 8:10 Ps 100:1,2 Isa 12:3 61:3,10 Hab 3:18 Php 3:3 4:4

### Related Passages:

Leviticus 7:11-21+ 'Now this is the law of the sacrifice of **peace offerings** which shall be presented to the LORD. 12 'If he offers it by way of thanksgiving, then along with the sacrifice of thanksgiving he shall offer unleavened cakes mixed with oil, and unleavened wafers spread with oil, and cakes of well stirred fine flour mixed with oil. 13 'With the sacrifice of his peace offerings for thanksgiving, he shall present his offering with cakes of leavened bread. 14 'Of this he shall present one of every offering as a contribution to the LORD; it shall belong to the priest who sprinkles the blood of the peace offerings. 15 'Now as for the flesh of the sacrifice of his thanksgiving peace offerings, it shall be eaten on the day of his offering; he shall not leave any of it over until morning. 16' But if the sacrifice of his offering is a votive or a freewill offering, it shall be eaten on the day that he offers his sacrifice, and on the next day what is left of it may be eaten; 17 but what is left over from the flesh of the sacrifice on the third day shall be burned with fire. 18'So if any of the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings should ever be eaten on the third day, he who offers it will not be accepted, and it will not be reckoned to his benefit. It shall be an offensive thing, and the person who eats of it will bear his own iniquity. 19 'Also the flesh that touches anything unclean shall not be eaten; it shall be burned with fire. As for other flesh, anyone who is clean may eat such flesh. 20 'But the person who eats the flesh of the sacrifice of peace offerings which belong to the LORD, in his uncleanness, that person shall be cut off from his people. 21 'When anyone touches anything unclean, whether human uncleanness, or an unclean animal, or any unclean detestable thing, and eats of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace offerings which belong to the LORD, that person shall be cut off from his people.'" (See chart summarizing the Offerings)

**And you shall sacrifice peace offerings and eat there, and rejoice before the LORD your God- Peace offerings** (only mention in Deuteronomy) speak of fellowship (cf "rejoice before the LORD") but note that these offerings are in no way meritorious. Giving them did not create favor with God. God graciously called for these voluntary offerings that the people might experience His fellowship, His presence. Peace offerings were divided so that part was given to God on the altar and the rest shared with the individuals who brought the offering (in addition to the priest and needy people in the community). "The Hebrew sacrificial system was designed from the beginning to teach the Israelites the inseparable nature of thanksgiving to God and love for others." ([Brown](#)) **Rejoice** ([samah](#)) is translated in the Lxx with [euphraino](#) which (in passive voice as here) speaks of social and festive enjoyment, of being merry, of enjoying oneself, of being jubilant.

It is worth noting that covenant ratification in the Bible was often associated with a ceremonial meal as in this case. For example at the time of the first covenant's ratification we read "the nobles of the sons of Israel...saw God, and they ate and drank." (Ex 24:11+).

**Maxwell** - The "**peace offerings**", which were eaten communally, expressed their thankfulness to God and their joy in His provision. ([Preacher's Commentary - Deut](#))

**Utley** has an interesting thought on Israel's joyful celebration - YHWH wanted to bless Israel so as to attract the attention of the surrounding nations. ([Deuteronomy 27 Commentary](#))

**Peace offerings** (08002) [selem/shelem](#) is a noun which means fellowship offerings, thanksgiving offerings and all uses (except Amos 5:22) are in the plural form (**selamim**). The root Hebrew word conveys the idea of completion and fulfillment, of entering into a state of wholeness and unity, a restored relationship. The peace offerings were voluntary offerings (like burnt and grain offerings) given to God with thanks and praise. **Carr** - "Current understanding of the meaning of **šelem** follows three main lines of thought. First, **šelem** symbolizes the gift of [shalom](#), i.e. the blessing of wholeness, prosperity, and the status of being at peace with God. This involves more than forgiveness of sin, in that fullness of life, prosperity, and peace with men is the expected result of [shalom](#) status. A second alternative is identified by de Vaux as "communion sacrifice," i.e. one in which there is a sharing of the sacrificial animal and the resultant fellowship around a meal. The **šēlāmīm**, then, were social occasions "**before**" (Hebrew = panim = face) the Lord never "**with**" the Lord (Dt 12:7, 18; 14:23, 26; 15:20). There is no sense of attaining mystical union with God through these sacrifices. Rather there is a sense of joyful sharing because of God's presence. Note too, that a quarter of the animal is shared with the priest (Lev 7:32). Thirdly, the fact that the **šelem** usually comes last in the lists of the offerings (though not in the description of Lev 1-5), has prompted some scholars to argue that this is a "concluding sacrifice." This derives šelem from the rare Piel meaning "to complete." If this sense is correct, the NT references to Christ our Peace (e.g. Eph 2:14) become more meaningful, as he is the final sacrifice for us (cf. Heb 9:27; Heb 10:12)." (TWOT) **Selem** is translated in the Septuagint here in Dt 27:7 (and in most OT uses) with the adjective [soterios/soterion](#) which describes the act of delivering or saving from great danger or

peril and of healing, making whole, protecting and preserving. The significance of this particular Greek word in the context of the OT **peace offerings** is uncertain and it certainly does not imply that the human participants are "saved" in the classic NT sense as when by grace they believe in Jesus. **Liddell-Scott** give one instance in which **soterios** is used by Xenophon in the context of a thank offering for deliverance.

**Rejoice** (08055) **samah** means to be joyful, to be glad. It describes a state and agitation of rejoicing, of being happy: of people (1 Sam. 11:9); of tribes of Israel (Deut. 33:18); of God rejoicing in His works (Ps. 104:31); of people rejoicing in the Lord Himself (Deut. 12:12; Ps. 32:11). **Šamah** usually refers to a spontaneous emotion or extreme happiness which is expressed in some visible and/or external manner. It does not normally represent an abiding state of well being or feeling. This emotion arises at festivals, circumcision feasts, wedding feasts, harvest feasts, the overthrow of one's enemies, and other such events. **See also:** Joy (gladness, pleasure, delight) (08057) **simchah** and **Joyful (glad, rejoice, rejoicing)** (08056) **sameach**. **Uses of samah in Deuteronomy - REJOICING IS A THEME IN DEUTERONOMY** - Deut. 12:7; Deut. 12:12; Deut. 12:18; Deut. 14:26; Deut. 16:11; Deut. 16:14; Deut. 24:5; Deut. 26:11; Deut. 27:7; Deut. 33:18

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#### QUESTION - [What is a peace offering / fellowship offering?](#)

**ANSWER** - The modern idea of a peace offering, also known as a fellowship offering, is that of "a propitiatory or conciliatory gift." A man who offends his wife will often visit a florist with the thought that bringing home flowers will help smooth things over—the bouquet will be a "peace offering" of sorts. *Propitiate* means "to make someone pleased or less angry by giving or saying something desired," and *conciliatory* means "intended to placate or pacify." These definitions are interesting because the phrase *peace offering* has come to mean something completely different—almost the exact opposite—of what it originally meant in the Bible.

A **peace offering** in the Old Testament Law is described in Leviticus 7:11–21. It was a voluntary sacrifice given to God in three specific instances.

**First**, a peace offering could be given as a freewill offering, meaning that the worshiper was giving the peace offering as a way to say thank you for God's unsought generosity. It was basically just a way to praise God for His goodness.

The **second** way a peace offering could be given was alongside a fulfilled vow. A good example of this was when Hannah fulfilled her vow to God by bringing Samuel to the temple; on that occasion she also brought a peace offering to express the peace in her heart toward God concerning her sacrifice—it was a way to say, "I have no resentment; I am holding nothing back in the payment of my vow."

The **third** purpose of a peace offering was to give thanksgiving for God's deliverance in an hour of dire need. None of these three reasons to sacrifice had anything to do with propitiation, with appeasing God, or with pacifying Him.

There were under the Old Covenant sacrifices intended to represent propitiation (Leviticus 1—2; 4) but with the understanding that God has always been a God of grace (see Ephesians 2:8–9). He does not expect us to appease Him with our works but only to confess our need and dependence on Him. Under the Old Covenant, this relationship was expressed by the sacrificial system, which always looked forward to the sacrifice of the Messiah. Under the New Covenant, the Law has been written on our hearts (2 Corinthians 3:3), and the Holy Spirit of God gives us the power to live our lives accordingly (Romans 8:1–8; 1 Thessalonians 1:5). The sacrifices we give now are spiritual (Hebrews 13:15) and living (Romans 12:1).

Most sacrifices in the Old Testament system were not eaten by worshipers, but the peace offering was meant to be eaten—only a portion of the animal or grain brought to the altar was burned; the rest was given back to the worshiper and to the poor and hungry. The beautiful picture here is of God's provision for His people, both physically and spiritually. His grace and goodness are present throughout the offerings. In the peace offering, God was providing what we need: a way to thank Him for His goodness and physical sustenance.

God is not interested in taking from us. That is not His heart at all. But the lie we so often believe is that our good actions bring about His goodness, and our sinful actions must be paid for in personal sacrifice. The **peace offering** shows that worshipers in the Old Testament were not any more responsible for their salvation than worshipers in the New Testament. Throughout the ages, people have been tempted to think that sacrifices create God's favor. This belief is evident in our modern understanding of a peace offering as a propitiation for wrongdoing. But only Christ's sacrifice creates favor with God and covers wrongdoing, and the Old Testament sacrifices were a picture of that future provision. [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

Deuteronomy 27:8 "You shall write on the stones all the words of this law very distinctly."

- **shall:** De 27:3
- **very distinctly:** Hab 2:2 Joh 16:25 2Co 3:12

## WRITE IT OUT CLEARLY

**You shall write on the stones all the words of this law very distinctly-** They were to make the Law very clear. The word distinctly means to declare or expound and was used earlier in Dt 1:5+ to "expound" the law" meaning to make it clear and easily understood. In this context the word indicates writing in distinct letters (cf Hab 2:2+).

**THOUGHT** - There is a great application for all who preach and teach God's Word of Truth --**MAKE IT PLAIN!** I would add don't use God's PLAIN TRUTH to launch off into discussion of some pet project (which often leads to taking the Word completely out of context and ending up not conveying God's intended meaning which is for His Word to be "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness." 2 Ti 3:16+. Preach the Word in season and out of season to "reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction." (2 Ti 4:2+)

**Distinctly** (0874) **baar** denotes making something clear and plain. It is used, in conjunction with כתב, write, of inscribing words clearly. The Septuagint of Dt 27:8 is saphos which speaks of that which has a high degree of exactitude. Saphos is used of searching out an accusation thoroughly (Dt 13:15).

**IVP Bible Background Commentary - law on monumental stones.** Hammurabi's laws were inscribed on a diorite stele eight feet tall and displayed publicly for all to see and consult. Royal inscriptions often were placed in prominent locations. Memorial inscriptions in our culture are used on tombstones, cornerstones of buildings and at various historical sites. The purpose in these cases is for people to see, take note and remember. Treaty documents in the Near East, in contrast, were often stationed in holy places that were not accessible to the public. Here the purpose was to put the agreement in writing before the gods in whose name the agreement had been sworn.

Deuteronomy 27:9 Then Moses and the Levitical priests spoke to all Israel, saying, "**Be silent and listen**, O Israel! This day you have become a people for the LORD your God.

- **this day:** De 26:16-18 Ro 6:17,18,22 1Co 6:9-11 Eph 5:8,9 1Pe 2:10,11

## PROCLAMATION CALLS FOR LISTENING

**Then** - Marks progression in a narrative.

**Moses and the Levitical priests spoke to all Israel, saying, "Be silent and listen, O Israel! This day you have become a people for the LORD your God** - Moses gives two commands - **Be silent and listen**. **Be silent** (sakat - only use in OT; Lxx = **σιωπao**) means to stop speaking in order to focus and truly hear what Moses was getting ready to declare. **Listen** is **shama** meaning to hear and heed (obey). This is "super" important! This is not saying Israel was not a nation prior to **this day**. But it does signify that the covenant between Yahweh and Israel was formally renewed. These words call for the second generation to fully understand that they were not their own (to do their "own thing") but that they were set apart from the profane pagans and unto the holy God to be His possession and to be used for His holy purposes. This recalls the words of Dt 26:16-18

**Currid** - This ritual of **covenant ratification seals** the relationship: Yahweh is their God, and they are his people. (**EPSC-Dt**)

I would add that this **covenant ratification** also **seals** their "marriage relationship" for Israel is repeatedly depicted as Jehovah's **wife** and He as their **Husband** (cf Jer 31:32+, Isa 54:5, Jer 2:2, et al) And this truth helps explain His jealousy when Israel "played the harlot" and went after the Baal's (Baal means husband, owner, master). Every incursion into idolatry was in effect an adulterous dalliance so that Yahweh sums it up in Ezek 6:9 hurt Yahweh's heart (Ezek 6:9+) declaring "I have been hurt by their **adulterous hearts** which turned away from Me, and by their eyes, which **played the harlot after their idols**; and (PREDICTIVE PROMISE) they will loathe themselves in their own sight for the evils which they have committed, for all their abominations."



**This day** the LORD your God commands you to do these statutes and ordinances. You shall therefore be careful to do them with all your heart and with all your soul. 17 "You have today declared the LORD to be your God, and that you would walk in His ways and keep His statutes, His commandments and His ordinances, and listen to His voice (NOTE SIMILARITY TO FIRST GENERATION'S WORDS WHEN THE MOSAIC COVENANT WAS FIRST INAUGURATED - Ex 24:3, 7+, cf Heb 9:18-21+). 18 "The LORD has today declared you to be His people (COMPARE PHRASE ABOVE = "**A PEOPLE FOR THE LORD.**") , a treasured possession, as He promised you, and that you should keep all His commandments. (Dt 26:16-18+)

**Deuteronomy 27:10 "You shall therefore obey the LORD your God, and do His commandments and His statutes which I command you today."**

- De 10:12,13 11:1,7,8 Lev 19:2 Mic 4:5 6:8 Mt 5:48

## **PEOPLE OF THE LORD SHOULD OBEY THE LORD**

**You shall therefore** - Why **therefore**? The fact that Israel had **become a people for the LORD** called for conduct which corresponded to their identity.

**THOUGHT** - Is this not true of "Christians" today? ([Rhetorical](#) of course!) Our conduct should correspond to our identification (and oneness by the new covenant in His blood) with Christ! How tragic to say you are a Christian and to mimic the pagans (who are watching!) As Paul wrote to the saints in the idol filled city of Ephesus

So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that **you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind**, 18 being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; 19 and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. 20 But **you did not learn Christ in this way**, 21 if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, 22 that, in reference to your former manner of life, **you lay aside the old self**, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, 23 and that **you be renewed in the spirit of your mind**, 24 and **put on the new self**, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth. (Eph 4:17-24+, cf 1Pe 1:14-16+ 1Pe 4:1-3+)

**Obey the LORD your God**- Literally "listen to the voice of the LORD your God." **Listen** ([shama](#)) is correctly rendered **obey** in the NAS (and repeats the use of [shama](#) in the preceding commands to **Be silent and listen**).

**And do His commandments and His statutes which I command you today**- Hear, heed, obey and carry out the commandments. Moses is not stuttering, but trying to make this message crystal clear.

**Maxwell** - Obedience was not a condition for the covenant but the outcome of it. Obedience was to be motivated by gratitude to God for all He had done for His people and for His acceptance of them as His people. Obedience is indeed required, but it is the consequence rather than the cause of the covenant. ([Preacher's Commentary - Deut](#))

**Deuteronomy 27:11 Moses also charged the people on that day, saying,**

**Moses also charged the people on that day, saying** - The last part of this chapter describes in essence a ceremony of ratification of the covenant. This would be a renewal of the covenant for the first covenant was inaugurated with the first generation at Mt Sinai

Therefore even the **first covenant was not inaugurated** without blood. 19 For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses to all the people according to the Law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, 20 saying, **"THIS IS THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT WHICH GOD COMMANDED YOU."** 21 And in the same way he sprinkled both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry with the blood (Heb 9:18-21+)



**Deuteronomy 27:12** "When you cross the Jordan, these shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin.

- **on mount Gerizim: Mount Gerizim** - and mount Ebal being only separated by a narrow valley, not above a furlong broad, what was spoken with a loud voice on the one might be heard on the other, (See Jdg 9:7.) It is probable, however, that the particle {al} should be rendered by, as it frequently signifies; for when this direction was reduced to practice, (Jos 8:33,) it seems that the people did not stand on the mountains, but over against them in the plain. But the Talmud says, that six tribes went up on each, while the priest and Levites and the ark remained beneath. De 11:26-29 Jos 8:33,34 Jdg 9:7
- **Simeon:** Ge 29:33-35 30:18,24 35:18

Blessings @ Gerizim. Cursings @ Ebal. [ESV Study Bible](#)

**When you cross the Jordan, these shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people-** Not **IF** but **WHEN** once again reaffirming to Israel that God would keep the covenant to give them the land across the Jordan. The map above shows the valley between the two mountains which in effect functioned like a natural amphitheater (constructed by Jehovah). This would also be a location that Israelites would frequently pass and either re-read the words on the stones or at least be reminded of what God had decreed through Moses.

**THOUGHT** - Fallen flesh is forgetful and needs frequent reminders, especially concerning the things of God. This is just another reason we should be actively [Memorizing His Word](#).

**Guzik** asks a good question and then quotes **Thompson** (TOTC-Dt) - The rest of the chapter declares the curses; but where is the declaration of blessing? "The absence of a list of blessings may simply mean that they were omitted, since they would have corresponded with the curses except that they negated everyone in turn. Those who were blessed did not offend in the areas in which those who were cursed did." God commanded this "open-air-audience-participation-sermon." This would be a beautiful place to do this. The whole nation could hear this reading of the Law, because the area has a natural amphitheater effect because of the contour of the hills.. Because Gerizim and Ebal were in the geographic middle of the Promised Land, Israel had to control the middle of Canaan and the highlands to have the luxury of such an assembly at these mountains. Finally, the mountains themselves were pictures of blessing and cursing: "On all hands it is allowed that Gerizim abounds with springs, gardens, and orchards, and that it is covered with a beautiful verdure, while Ebal is as naked and barren as a rock." (Clarke) ([Deuteronomy 27](#))

**Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin** - These six tribes were descended from Jacob's wives, Leah and Rachel. Joseph of course includes [Ephraim](#) and [Manasseh](#).

**Currid** - The rationale for particular tribes being assigned to stand on one mountain or the other is unclear. The division seems partly to follow genealogy or, specifically, maternal relationships. The six tribes on Gerizim are ones descended from Leah and Rachel; the six on Ebal are the four sons of Leah's and Rachel's handmaids, and the first- and last-born of Leah. Perhaps Reuben is placed on Ebal because he forfeited his birthright by incest (Gen. 49:3-4). Another possibility is that the tribes are divided on the basis of geographical considerations. The tribes on Gerizim are allotted lands in Canaan that are roughly to the south; and the tribes on Ebal are given lands that lie more or less to the north. ([EPSC-Dt](#))

**Utley** points out on "**Joseph**" Notice the division of Joseph into [Ephraim](#) and [Manasseh](#) had not yet been documented (cf. Ge 49:22-26; Ex. 1:5; Dt. 33:13-17). ([Deuteronomy 27 Commentary](#))

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**QUESTION** - [What is the significance of Mount Gerizim in the Bible?](#)

**ANSWER** - Mount Gerizim is a mountain located in the central Samaritan highlands. Its summit is about 2,800 feet above sea level. Mount Gerizim sits directly opposite [Mount Ebal](#) with the biblical city of [Shechem](#) resting in the pass between the two elevations. Mount Gerizim on the south side of the valley and Mount Ebal to the north played significant roles in a ceremony renewing Israel's covenant with the Lord upon entering the Promised Land.

Mount Gerizim, situated about 30 miles north of Jerusalem, is known as Jabal at Tur today. Mount Ebal (modern Jabal Ibal) and Mount Gerizim are the two highest mountains in this region of the Holy Land. [Shechem](#), at the base of Mount Gerizim, was a well-traveled trade intersection in ancient times. It was also one of the most frequently referenced cities of the Old Testament.

Through Moses, God gave detailed instructions for a ceremony of "blessings and cursings" to take place when the people of Israel entered Canaan (Deuteronomy 27:1-26). The ceremony would symbolize the renewal of Israel's covenant commitment to the Lord. Once they had crossed the Jordan, the Israelites were to build a monument of stones containing the words of the law, as well as an altar for offering sacrifices to the Lord (verses 1-8). Worshiping the Lord and obeying God's Word were to be essentials for Israel's existence in the Promised Land.

After the law of Moses was written on the stones, the people were to divide into two groups. Half of Israel's tribes were to gather on Mount Gerizim and the other half on Mount Ebal, while the priests with the [Ark of the Covenant](#) were to stand in the valley between. As the Levites read the blessings for obeying the law, the six tribes on Mount Gerizim were to pronounce a resounding "Amen!" When the Levites recited the curses for disobeying the law, the other six tribes on Mount Ebal were to give a great cry of "Amen!" (Deuteronomy 27:9–26).

Joshua, successor to Moses, faithfully and precisely carried out these instructions, as recorded in Joshua 8:30–35. Through the solemn ceremony, Israel was reminded of the importance of loyal obedience to God and the foolishness of disobedience. In this way, Mount Gerizim came to be known as the "mount of blessing."

Mount Gerizim also served as the stage of a pivotal event in the period of the judges. Gideon's son [Abimelech](#) convinced the people of [Shechem](#) to make him king by conspiring with his mother's relatives there. He had his half-brothers, the 70 sons of Gideon, slaughtered. Only Jotham survived. From atop Mount Gerizim, which overlooks Shechem, Jotham delivered his "Fable of the Bramble King," a story damning Abimelech and cursing the townspeople (Judges 9:5–20). His words had no immediate impact, but within three years Abimelech lost favor with his supporters in Shechem. Eventually, he was killed while fighting against them when a woman dropped a millstone from a tower, crushing his skull (Judges 9:22–57).

The New Testament does not mention Mount Gerizim by name, but it figures notably in the story of Jesus and the [Samaritan woman](#), who called it the mountain where "our fathers worshiped" (John 4:20–23). According to Genesis 12:6–7, Abraham built an altar there, and in Genesis 33:18–20 Jacob constructed an altar there as well. For the Samaritans, Mount Gerizim had been a sacred site for the worship of God for centuries. On this mountain the Samaritans had built a temple to rival the Jewish temple in Jerusalem. But Jesus told the Samaritan woman that the physical location of our worship is not important. Temples and tabernacles, cities and mountains: these were only fading symbols that pointed to the spiritual reality—Jesus Christ—who was standing in front of her. True worshipers must worship the Lord their God in spirit and in truth. [GotQuestions.org](#)

#### Related Resource:

- [What is the importance of Shechem in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**Deuteronomy 27:13 "For the curse, these shall stand on Mount Ebal: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali.**

- **mount Ebal:** De 27:4 11:29 Jos 8:33
- **Reuben:** Ge 29:32 30:6-13,20 49:3,4

**For the curse** (qelalah), **these shall stand on Mount Ebal** - See [note](#) on Mount Ebal (see [map](#)). A valley runs between Mt Gerizim and Mt Ebal with Gerizim southwest of Ebal and the city of Shechem nearby.

[Reuben](#), [Gad](#), [Asher](#), [Zebulun](#), [Dan](#), and [Naphtali](#) - Four of the six tribes who were **for the curse** were descended from Jacob's concubines, Bilhah and Zilpah. [Reuben](#) was Jacob's firstborn who forfeited his birthright through incest (Ge 35:22; 49:3–4), and [Zebulun](#), Leah's youngest son.

**Deuteronomy 27:14 "The Levites shall then answer and say to all the men of Israel with a loud voice,**

- De 33:9,10 Jos 8:33 Ne 8:7,8 Da 9:11 Mal 2:7-9

#### Related Passages:

Joshua 8:33 All Israel with their elders and officers and their judges were standing on both sides of the ark before the **Levitical priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD**, the stranger as well as the native. Half of them stood in front of Mount Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, just as Moses the servant of the LORD had given command at first to bless the people of Israel.

**LEVITES  
SOUND OFF**

**The Levites shall then answer and say to all the men of Israel with a loud voice** - The **Levites** are to declare these cursings

and blessings because Moses will not be present at this covenant renewal ceremony.

**Maxwell** - The **Levites** stood between the two mountains to recite the blessings and curses. Actually, only the priests attending the ark stood in the middle (Josh. 8:33); all other Levites were near Mount Gerizim (Deut. 27:12). Only twelve curses on people who transgressed certain laws are included in this section. ([Preacher's Commentary - Deut](#))

[Gotquestions](#) points out that "The **Levites** were the tribe of Israelites descended from Levi, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The priests of Israel were a group of qualified men from within the [tribe of the Levites](#) who had responsibility over aspects of tabernacle or temple worship. **All priests were to be Levites, according to the Law, but not all Levites were priests**" (See also [discussion of Levites](#)).

**Wiersbe** - As the spiritual leaders read these curses, they weren't predicting what would happen if the people disobeyed God. They were calling upon the Lord to send these curses on His people if they turned away from Him. And when the people said "Amen" after each statement ("so be it"), they were telling God that they were willing to be chastened if they disobeyed Him. Their "Amen" wasn't just their agreement with the words spoken; it was their acceptance of the terms of the covenant. These curses were closely related to the law Moses had delivered and explained, especially the Ten Commandments. ([Be Equipped](#))

**Deuteronomy 27:15 'Cursed is the man who makes an idol or a molten image, an abomination to the LORD, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and sets it up in secret.' And all the people shall answer and say, 'Amen.'**

- **Cursed:** De 28:16-19 Ge 9:25 1Sa 26:19 Jer 11:3
- **makes:** De 4:16-23 5:8 Ex 20:4,23 32:1-4 34:17 Lev 19:4 26:1 Isa 44:9,10,17 Ho 13:2,3
- **an abomination:** De 29:17 1Ki 11:5-7 2Ki 23:13 2Ch 33:2 Isa 44:19 Eze 7:20 Da 11:31 Mt 24:15 Rev 17:4,5
- **sets:** Ge 31:19,34 2Ki 17:19 Ps 44:20,21 Jer 23:24 Eze 8:7-12 14:4
- **And all:** Nu 5:22 Jer 11:5 28:6 Mt 6:13 1Co 14:16

#### Related Passage:

Psalm 44:20-21 If we had forgotten the name of our God Or extended our hands to a strange god, **Would not God find this out? For He knows the secrets of the heart.**

Ezekiel 8:6-12+ (**ONE OF THE MORE UNBELIEVABLE EXAMPLES OF ISRAEL'S IDOLATRY**) And He said to me, "Son of man, do you see what they are doing, **the great abominations** which the house of Israel are committing here, so that I would be far from My sanctuary (HOLY TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM)? But yet **you will see still greater abominations.**" 8 Then He brought me to the entrance of the court, and when I looked, behold, a hole in the wall. 8 He said to me, "Son of man, now dig through the wall." (CP "**SETS IT UP IN SECRET**") So I dug through the wall, and behold, an entrance. 9 And He said to me, "Go in and see the wicked abominations that they are committing here." 10 So I entered and looked, and behold, every form of creeping things and beasts and detestable things, with all the idols of the house of Israel, were carved on the wall all around. 11 Standing in front of them were seventy elders of the house of Israel, with Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan standing among them, each man with his censer in his hand and the fragrance of the cloud of incense rising. 12 Then He said to me, "Son of man, do you see what **the elders of the house of Israel are committing in the dark, each man in the room of his carved images? For they say, 'The LORD does not see us; the LORD has forsaken the land.'**" 13 And He said to me, "Yet **you will see still greater abominations** which they are committing." 14 Then He brought me to the entrance of the gate of the LORD'S house (HOLY TEMPLE) which was toward the north; and behold, women were sitting there weeping for [Tammuz](#). 15 He said to me, "Do you see this, son of man? **Yet you will see still greater abominations than these.**" 16 Then He brought me into the inner court of the LORD'S house. And behold, at the entrance to the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, were about twenty-five men with their backs to the temple of the LORD (WHERE THE GLORY OF THE LORD WAS PRESENT) and their faces toward the east; and they were prostrating themselves eastward toward the sun (WORSHIPPING THE CREATION RATHER THAN THE CREATOR). 17 He said to me, "Do you see this, son of man? Is it too light a thing for the house of Judah to commit the **abominations** which they have committed here, that they have filled the land with violence and provoked Me repeatedly? For behold, they are putting the twig to their nose. 18 "Therefore, I indeed will deal in wrath. My eye will have no pity nor will I spare; and though they cry in My ears with a loud voice, yet I will not listen to them (CF "**CURSED IS THE MAN...**")."

## SECRET IDOLATERS OPENLY CURSED

**Cursed** ([arar](#)) is the man - **Cursed** is used 12 times (12 "representative" curses) in Deuteronomy 27 (Other curses in Dt 28:15–68) and are not statements of what will happen to the covenant breaker, but were declarations calling down a curse (nature of the curse is not specified in these verses) on the covenant breaker. The Septuagint translates **cursed** with [epikataratos](#) which means being under a severe curse, condemned by God and is the very word used by Paul to describe Christ becoming a **curse** for us! (Gal 3:13+). What ALL of Israel was entering into in the curse declarations was in essence the making of a solemn vow or oath with Yahweh. And so the Levites call down a **curse** on covenant breakers and **ALL** the people declare "**Amen**" which is tantamount to their making an oath!

**Currid** - The rationale for particular tribes being assigned to stand on one mountain or the other is unclear. The division seems partly to follow genealogy or, specifically, maternal relationships. The six tribes on Gerizim are ones descended from Leah and Rachel; the six on Ebal are the four sons of Leah's and Rachel's handmaids, and the first- and last-born of Leah. Perhaps Reuben is placed on Ebal because he forfeited his birthright by incest (Gen. 49:3–4). Another possibility is that the tribes are divided on the basis of geographical considerations. The tribes on Gerizim are allotted lands in Canaan that are roughly to the south; and the tribes on Ebal are given lands that lie more or less to the north. The Talmud is correct when it says, 'Answering "Amen" after an oath is equivalent to pronouncing the oath with one's own mouth.' ([EPSC-Dt](#))

**Deere** points out that "Eight of the 12 refer to violations of the Ten Commandments: Dt 27:15, the second commandment (Dt 5:8–10); Dt 27:16, the fifth commandment (Dt 5:16); Dt 27:17, the eighth commandment (Dt 5:19); Dt 27:20, 22–23, the seventh commandment (Dt 5:18); and Dt 27:24–25, the sixth commandment (Dt 5:17)." ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

**Wiersbe** - The first curse (v. 15) condemned idolatry and the violation of the first and second commandments (Ex. 20:1–6). To carve or cast an idol and worship it was to deny that Jehovah was the one true and living God, and it was this sin that finally brought the wrath of God on Israel. Even if a Jew worshiped an idol in secret and didn't try to persuade anybody to join him, it was still a great sin and had to be punished (Deut. 13). ([Be Equipped](#))

**Utley** on "**Cursed**" - "**Cursed**" is a word that means, "**Cursed by YHWH**". There are twelve curses (the term is used 39 times in Deuteronomy 27–29). All are in the form of Qal passive participles (Dt 27:15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26; see also Dt 28:16–19). The first is a curse against idolatry (cf. Deut. 4:15–18; 5:8–9; Ex 20:3–4, 23; Ex 34:17). Many, if not all, of the Mosaic laws can be seen in their contrast to Canaanite society ([Deuteronomy 27 Commentary](#))

**THOUGHT** - IN OTHER WORDS THE LAWS DEAL WITH SINS THAT WERE FLAGRANTLY PRACTICED BY THE GODLESS CANAANITES AND ARE MEANT TO PROTECT GOD'S HOLY PEOPLE FROM THEIR UNHOLY INFLUENCES! HIS LAWS STILL SERVE THE SAME PURPOSE TODAY IN THE LIFE OF EVERY BELIEVER, BEING GIVEN FOR OUR GOOD AND NOT TO STEAL OUR JOY! KEEPING GOD'S HOLY LAWS ENABLED BY HIS HOLY SPIRIT IS THE PATHWAY TO TRUE JOY AND PEACE AND FREEDOM IN CHRIST.

**THOUGHT** - The punishment for sin will "**find**" the guilty, if not in this lifetime, then in the next! (Nu 32:23+ [sermon by Spurgeon](#)) There is no "free pass" for sin. Either it falls on the sinner or it falls on the sinner's Savior (2 Cor 5:21+, 1 Pe 2:24+, Isa 53:5-6+) Beloved, never sweep sin [under the rug](#), but put it **under the blood**. "He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper (aka "will be found out"), But he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion." (Pr 28:13+, cf 1 Jn 1:9+).

**Who makes an idol** ([pesel](#)) **or a molten image** ([massekah](#)), **an abomination to the LORD, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and sets it up in secret** - **Abomination** ([toebah](#)) is that which causes horror and disgust in this case to God (a "[stench](#)" in His holy nostrils so to speak!) In secret indicates it kept secret and hidden away, concealed from others and unknown to them. Of course it is not kept secret from God and in Nu 32:33+ we read "behold, you have sinned against the LORD, and **be sure your sin will find you out.**" As one has said secret sin on earth is open scandal in heaven.

The eyes of the LORD are in every place,  
Watching the evil and the good.  
--Proverbs 15:3+

**Deere** on idolatry - The danger in this practice was twofold. First, since other nations used idolatry to express their devotion to their gods there was always the danger that the worship of the Lord could be contaminated by idolatrous forms of worship. Second, any attempt to represent God in any form from the natural world would have called into question the sovereignty of the One who cannot be limited by anything. As a jealous God (cf. 4:24; 32:16, 21; see comments on 6:15), He does not share His sovereign position with

any other. ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

**And all the people shall answer and say, 'Amen.'** ([amen](#)) - Note the Levites calls for **ALL** to respond to each declaration resulting in a curse. In other words, this response is to be declared by **ALL** Israel after the reading of each specific curse. The "**amen**" ("so be it") means that they were assenting to this specific aspect of the covenant curse. **Amen** means that they understood and agreed to the curse. It follows that if any of the Israelites would then commit the specific sin (or sins), they would be held guilty of breaking the covenant they had agreed to with their declaration of "**Amen**". In other words their "**Amen**" would have been tantamount to pronouncing a curse upon themselves. The [upshot](#) is that they in effect had just **pronounced a curse upon themselves!** Woe! It is interesting that **amen** is sometimes doubled for emphasis (Nu 5:22+), but in chapter 27 is reiterated twelve times!

**Uitley on amen** - This repeated liturgical formula shows acceptance of the laws by the people. Note the Jewish concept of corporality. ([Deuteronomy 27 Commentary](#)) (See Uitley's Special Topic on [Amen](#) below)

**TSK Amen:** To each of the curses the people were to say Amen, as well as to the blessings; to denote a profession of their faith in the truth of them, that they were the real declarations of the wrath of God; and an acknowledgement of the equity of these curses. It was such an imprecation upon themselves, as strongly obliged them to have nothing to do with those evil practices on which the curse is entailed. We read of those who entered a curse to walk in God's law. Ne 10:29. All the people, by saying this Amen, became bound one for another, that they would observe God's laws, by which every man was obliged, as far as he could, to prevent his neighbour from breaking these laws, and to reprove those that had offended, lest they should bear sin and the curse for them.

**Cursed** ([0779](#)) **arar** refers principally to exclamations, or imprecations, uttered by one person against another. It speaks of divine harm upon one. There are other Hebrew words for curse but this specific word means to bind (with a spell); to hem in with obstacles; to render powerless to resist. The first use is telling - "The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, **Cursed** are you more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you will go, And dust you will eat All the days of your life." (Ge 3:14+ = means "you are banned/anathematized from all the other animals" and "condemned be the soil) **Vine** writes that "God alone truly **"curses."** It is a revelation of His justice, in support of His claim to absolute obedience." **Curse** means to invoke harm or injury by means of a statement, by means of the power of God (Ge 12:3). "On the basis of Akkadian arāru "to snare, bind" and the noun irritu "noose, sling" Brichto, following Speiser, advances the interpretation that Hebrew 'ārar means "to bind (with a spell), hem in with obstacles, render powerless to resist." (TWOT)

**All uses of arar in Deuteronomy** - Deut. 27:15; Deut. 27:16; Deut. 27:17; Deut. 27:18; Deut. 27:19; Deut. 27:20; Deut. 27:21; Deut. 27:22; Deut. 27:23; Deut. 27:24; Deut. 27:25; Deut. 27:26; Deut. 28:16; Deut. 28:17; Deut. 28:18; Deut. 28:19

**Victor Hamilton** - It will be observed that the majority of "curse" sayings with 'ārar fall into one of three general categories: (1) the declaration of punishments (Gen 3:14, 17); (2) the utterance of threats (Jer 11:3; 17:5; Mal 1:14); (3) the proclamation of laws (Deut 27:15–26; 28:16–19). It is interesting that all these curse-sayings are a reflex of one violating his relationship to God. To illustrate from Deut 27:15–26, idolatry (v. 15), disrespect for parents (v. 16), deceiving one's neighbor (vv. 17, 24), manipulating the disadvantaged (vv. 18–19), sexual aberrations (vv. 20, 21, 22, 23), bribery (v. 25), and not observing God's law (v. 26) all bring the condemnation of the curse. That curse formulae existed throughout the ancient world no one will deny. But the difference between them and those of the OT are adequately illustrated in this quote from Fensham: "The mechanical magical execution of the treaty-curse ... stands in glaring contrast to the ego-theological approach of prophetic writings ... the ego of the Lord is the focal point of the threat, the execution and punishment of a curse ... Curses of the ancient Near East, those outside the Old Testament, are directed against a transgression on private property ... but the moral and ethical obligation in connection with his duty to one God and love to his neighbour is not touched on" (pp. 173–74). ([TWOT](#))

**Molten image** ([04541](#)) **massekah** is from the root **nasak** mainly used for the "pouring out" of a drink offering or libation, and for the "casting" of metal images. **Massekah** usually signifies an image or molten metal, a cast metal image, molten image, an image of an idol made out of metal. The most glaring use is the molten calf in Ex 32:4 and Ex 32:8 (Ps 106:19). God then make it clear " "You shall make for yourself no molten gods." (Ex 34:17, cf Lev 19:4, Dt 27:15). "Later, when God renews his covenant following this early act of idolatry, he first warns them to not worship any other gods and then explicitly forbids them from making "gods of cast metal" (massêkâ; Exod 34:13–17; compare Deut 27:15). Several other times when massêkâ is used, it refers back to the event at Sinai when Israel worshiped this calf (Deut 9:12, 16; Neh 9:18; Psa 106:19). Used 3 times in Dt - Dt 9:12, Dt 9:16, Dt 27:15.



**Abomination** (detestable, loathsome) (08441) **toebah** means This word is primarily understood in the context of the Law. It identifies unclean food (Deut. 14:3); the activity of the idolater (Isa. 41:24); the practice of child sacrifice (Deut. 12:31); intermarriage by the Israelites (Mal. 2:11); the religious activities of the wicked (Prov. 21:27); and homosexual behavior (Lev. 18:22). In a broader sense, the word is used to identify anything offensive (Prov. 8:7). The **Septuagint** translates **toebah** with **bdelugma** (from **bdelusso** = emit foul odor, turn away from something or someone on account of the "stench". A loathing or disgust, abhor in turn derived from **bdeo** = to stink; cf **bdekluktos**) which describes something foul, that which is extremely hated, disgusted, detested or abhorred. The first NT use of bdelugma is in Mt 24:15+ which is fitting as it describes the "**Abomination** (bdelugma) of desolation" (the Antichrist) (cp Mk 13:14+). "Israelite participation in any element of idolatry is also regarded as תועבה. Yahweh commanded his children to destroy all graven images. The person who disregarded this warning and preserved a graven image (for whatever purpose) provoked Yahweh's wrath (Deut 32:16) and placed his household under the ban (Dt 7:25–26 [herem](#)). Moses commanded the Levites to pronounce a curse on anyone who fabricated an idol for personal worship, a curse that was part of the national convocation at Shechem during Israel's conquest of Canaan (Josh 8:30–33). Any town that followed the leadership of men who seek to turn their fellow Israelites to idolatry must be utterly destroyed (חָרַם, Deut 13:12–18). (NIDOTTE)

**Toebah in Deut**-Deut. 7:25; Deut. 7:26; Deut. 12:31; Deut. 13:14; Deut. 14:3; Deut. 17:1; Deut. 17:4; Deut. 18:9; Deut. 18:12; Deut. 20:18; Deut. 22:5; Deut. 23:18; Deut. 24:4; Deut. 25:16; Deut. 27:15; Deut. 32:16;

**NET NOTE** on **abomination** - The Hebrew term translated here "abhorrent" (תועבה, to'evah) speaks of attitudes and/or behaviors so vile as to be reprehensible to a holy God. The Hebrew word תועבה (to'evah, "abhorrent; detestable") describes anything detestable to the LORD because of its innate evil or inconsistency with his own nature and character. Frequently such things (or even persons) must be condemned to annihilation (חָרַם, kherem) lest they become a means of polluting or contaminating others (cf. Deut 13:17; 20:17–18)

**Secret** (05643) (**cether/seter** for the verb **cathar/satar** = to hide) is a masculine noun which has the root idea of "hide" with the subordinate thought of protection involved when one is hidden (eg, Jonathan's instruction to David so King Saul might not kill him - 1Sa 19:2). **Cether** means secret, secret place, covering, hiding place, refuge. **Secret** implies concealment on any grounds for any motive (good and bad, but usually it is used of wicked activity). It is notable that **sexual sin** is frequently described as **secret** (cether) as in 2Sa 12:12 where David did committed his sin with Bathsheba "secretly", in Pr 9:17 where "bread eaten in secret is pleasant" (metaphorical description of adultery - see context Pr 9:14-16) and in Job 24:15 where the adulterer "disguises his face" so no one can identify him. **Cether/seter** is used adverbially with the sense of "secretly" or "in secret" as in Dt 13: 6; 2Sa. 12:12; Ps 139:15; Pr 9:17; Jer. 38:16.

**Cether/seter is used 4x in Deut**- Deut. 13:6; Deut. 27:15; Deut. 27:24; Deut. 28:57 In 2 Samuel 12:12 David in essence experienced the "curse" of God, the prophet Nathan declaring 'Indeed you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, and under the sun.' (cf Nu 32:23+ [\[sermon by Spurgeon\]](#))

**Amen** (0543) **amen** (from **aman** = to be firm, dependable, durable, steady, stable, sure, established, trustworthy) and was used to acknowledge and emphasize what was valid, sure and true, or important and significant. The idea is "surely it is true!" **Amen** is thus a strong affirmation of what is declared, and acceptance is clearly implied and in some cases even doubled for emphasis (Nu 5:22+). **Amen** signifies certainty and veracity. In the OT AMEN at the end of a sentence means truly, surely, certainly and thereby confirms the preceding words and invokes their fulfillment as indicated by the phrase "**so be it.**"

**Amen - 24v in OT, most in Deut** - Num. 5:22; Deut. 27:15; Deut. 27:16; Deut. 27:17; Deut. 27:18; Deut. 27:19; Deut. 27:20; Deut. 27:21; Deut. 27:22; Deut. 27:23; Deut. 27:24; Deut. 27:25; Deut. 27:26; 1 Ki. 1:36; 1 Chr. 16:36; Neh. 5:13; Neh. 8:6; Ps. 41:13; Ps. 72:19; Ps. 89:52; Ps. 106:48; Isa. 65:16; Jer. 11:5; Jer. 28:6

#### Related Resource:

- [What are the curses God promised Israel for disobedience? | GotQuestions.org](#)



## I. OLD TESTAMENT

A. The term “**Amen**” is from a Hebrew word for truth (emeth) or truthfulness (emun, emunah) and faith or faithfulness.

B. Its etymology is from a person’s physical stable stance (BDB 52–54). The opposite would be one who is unstable, slipping (cf. Deut. 28:64–67; Ps. 40:2; 73:18; Jer. 23:12) or stumbling (cf. Ps. 73:2). From this literal usage developed the metaphorical extension of faithful, trustworthy, loyal, and dependable (cf. Gen. 15:6; Hab. 2:4).

C. Special usages:

1. a pillar, 2 Kgs. 18:16 (1 Tim. 3:15)
2. assurance, Exod. 17:12
3. steadiness, Exod. 17:12
4. stability, Isa. 33:6; 34:5–7
5. true, 1 Kgs. 10:6; 17:24; 22:16; Prov. 12:22
6. firm, 2 Chr. 20:20; Isa. 7:9
7. reliable (Torah), Ps. 119:43, 142, 151, 168

D. In the OT two other Hebrew terms are used for active faith:

1. bth, trust (BDB 105)
2. yr’, fear, respect, worship (BDB 431, cf. Gen. 22:12)

E. From the sense of trust or trustworthiness developed a liturgical usage which was used to affirm a true or trustworthy statement of another (cf. Deut. 27:15–26; Neh. 8:6; Ps. 41:13; 72:18; 89:52; 106:48).

F. The theological key to this term is not mankind’s faithfulness, but YHWH’s (cf. Exod. 34:6; Deut. 32:4; Ps. 108:4; 115:1; 117:2; 138:2). Fallen humanity’s only hope is the merciful faithful covenant loyalty of YHWH and His promises. Those who know YHWH are to be like Him (cf. Hab. 2:4). The Bible is history and a record of God restoring His image (cf. Gen. 1:26–27) in mankind. Salvation restores mankind’s ability to have intimate fellowship with God. This is why we were created.

## II. NEW TESTAMENT

A. The use of the word “amen” as a concluding liturgical affirmation of the trustworthiness of a statement is common in the NT (cf. 1 Cor. 14:16; 2 Cor. 1:20; Rev. 1:7; 5:14; 7:12)

B. The use of the term as a close to a prayer is common in the NT (cf. Rom. 1:25; 9:5; 11:36; 16:27; Gal. 1:5; 6:18; Eph. 3:21; Phil. 4:20; 2 Thess. 3:18; 1 Tim. 1:17; 6:16; 2 Tim. 4:18).

C. Jesus is the only one who used the term (often doubled in John) to introduce significant statements (cf. Luke 4:24; 12:37; 18:17, 29; 21:32; 23:43)

D. It is used as a title for Jesus in Rev. 3:14 (possibly a title of YHWH from Isa. 65:16).

E. The concept of faithfulness or faith, trustworthiness, or trust is expressed in the Greek term pistos or pistis, which is translated into English as trust, faith, believe.

**Deuteronomy 27:16 'Cursed is he who dishonors his father or mother.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'**

- De 21:18-21 Ex 20:12 Ex 21:17 Lev 19:3 Pr 30:11-17 Eze 22:7 Mt 15:4-6

### Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 21:18-21+ (**STUBBORN SON**) “If any man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey his father or his mother, and when they chastise him, he will not even listen to them, 19 then his father and mother shall seize him, and bring him out to the elders of his city at the gateway of his hometown. 20 “They shall say to the elders of his city, ‘This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey us, he is a glutton and a drunkard.’ 21 “Then all the men of his city shall stone him to death; so you shall remove the evil from your midst, and all Israel will hear of it and fear.

Exodus 20:12+ “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you.

Exodus 21:17+ "He who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.

Leviticus 19:3+ 'Every one of you shall reverence his mother and his father, and you shall keep My sabbaths; I am the LORD your God.

**Cursed ([arar](#)) is he who dishonors his father or mother.'** - Remember that here and in the subsequent declarations, it is the Levites who are decreeing these curses. Dishonor means in essence to make small or of little weight and is the opposite of the Hebrew word "honor" ([kabad](#) as used in the commandments in Dt 5:16+ and Ex 20:12+). Honoring one's parents is to value or esteem them highly. The converse **dishonors** describes treating one's parents lightly, with contempt and/or with little respect, treating them as a "nobody" and thus degrading them. In the Septuagint it is [atimazo](#) in the present tense indicating that this was the person's continual or habitual practice. .

**Utley** has an interesting comment that **dishonors** "may specifically refer to a child "cursing" his parents (cf. Ex 21:17+; Lev. 20:9+), but the term itself means lack of respect and honor, which could denote disobedience. Religious instruction came through the parents (cf Dt 4:9, 10, 20–25; 6:7; 11:19; 32:46). Rejection of parents resulted in defective faith! ([Deuteronomy 27 Commentary](#))

**Dishonors** ([07034](#))(**qalah**) to be lightly esteemed or dishonored, to be despised. Bring shame upon, fail to respect. It means to be of little account or value, to be belittled, shamed (Deut. 25:3) **NET NOTE** says "The Hebrew term קָלָה (qalah) means to treat with disdain or lack of due respect (cf. NAB, NIV, NRSV "dishonors"; NLT "despises"). It is the opposite of כָּבַד (kaved, "to be heavy," that is, to treat with reverence and proper deference). To treat a parent lightly is to dishonor him or her and thus violate the fifth commandment (Deut 5:16; cf. Exod 21:17)." It indicates treating an important issue lightly (1 Sa 18:23). It refers to a social view of someone as unimportant (Pr. 12:9); or inferior (Isa. 3:5). It describes an insignificant remnant, nation, or people (Isa 16:14).

**Qalah** is used only 6x in OT - degraded(2), dishonors(1), inferior(1), lightly esteemed(2). Deut. 25:3; Deut. 27:16; 1 Sam. 18:23; Prov. 12:9; Isa. 3:5; Isa. 16:14

[IVP Bible Background Commentary](#) on why dishonoring parents was so important in a society - Honoring and respecting parents consists of respecting their instruction in the covenant. This assumes that a religious heritage is being passed on. The home is seen as an important and necessary link for the covenant instruction of each successive generation. Honor is given to parents as representatives of God's authority and is for the sake of covenant preservation. If parents are not heeded or their authority is repudiated, the covenant is in jeopardy. In this connection, notice that this commandment comes with covenant promise: living long in the land. In the ancient Near East it is not the religious heritage but the fabric of society that is threatened when there is no respect for parental authority and filial obligations are neglected. Violations would include striking parents, cursing parents, neglecting the care of elderly parents and failing to provide adequate burial. (See Ex 20:12.)

**And all the people shall say, 'Amen'** - This repeated refrain signifies all Israel is entering into a solemn oath.

**Deuteronomy 27:17 'Cursed is he who moves his neighbor's boundary mark.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'**

- De 19:14 Pr 22:28 23:10,11

#### Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 19:14+ "You shall not move your neighbor's boundary mark, which the ancestors have set, in your inheritance which you will inherit in the land that the LORD your God gives you to possess.

Proverbs 22:28 Do not move the ancient boundary Which your fathers have set.

Proverbs 23:10 Do not move the ancient boundary Or go into the fields of the fatherless,

## LANDMARK LAW MOVING BOUNDARIES ~ STEALING

**"AKA"** - how to sneakily steal a neighbor's property! Here God's law puts a "hedge" around a person's property.

**Background** - Down through the centuries, the boundaries of property lines have probably been one of the most controversial issues among men, causing conflict after conflict. No doubt, this was especially true before the development of accurate surveys and property maps. It was far easier for a person to move a boundary stone than it is today. ([POSB](#))

**Cursed ([arar](#)) is he who moves his neighbor's boundary mark**- This would have been easy to do because when walls and fences were not in use stones and pillars were used to mark the division between territories. To move the stone was equivalent to stealing the person's property! (cf. Job 24:2, Eph 4:28, Titus 2:10, 1 Peter 4:15, Exodus 20:15)

**Wiersbe** - In that day, officials didn't draw detailed real estate maps, what we today call "plats." Everybody was expected to honor the landmarks (boundary stones), because to move the stones meant to steal land from your neighbors and their descendants (Prov. 22:28). Unscrupulous officials could easily exploit poor widows and orphans and take away their land and their income (Prov. 15:25; 23:10–11). Since God owned the land and the people were His tenants, moving the stones also meant stealing from God, and He would punish them (Hosea 5:10). No wonder this crime was included among the curses announced from Mount Ebal (Deut. 27:17). ([Be Equipped](#))

**Utley** - "moves his neighbors boundary mark" This was serious because it had to do with the theft of the land inheritance of God, given through Joshua (cf. Joshua 12–19; Deut. 19:14; Job 24:2; Pro. 22:28; 23:10; Hosea 5:10). ([Deuteronomy 27 Commentary](#))

**And all the people shall say, 'Amen ([amen](#))'** - This repeated refrain signifies all Israel is entering into a solemn oath.

**IVP Bible Background Commentary** - **moving boundary stones.** Since the land had been given to the people by God and apportioned according to a God-given formula, to move boundary stones and thus appropriate territory unlawfully was a crime of theft against God. The antiquity of laws concerning property rights is affirmed by inscriptions on sixteenth-century B.C. Kassite kudurru boundary stones, admonitions in eleventh-century B.C. Egyptian wisdom literature against relocating a surveyor's stone (Teachings of Amenemope) and in the curse in Hosea 5:10. Each example calls on the gods to protect the owner's rights against encroachment.

**Deuteronomy 27:18 Cursed is he who misleads a blind person on the road. And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'**

- Lev 19:14 Job 29:15 Pr 28:10 Isa 56:10 Mt 15:14 Rev 2:14

#### **Related Passage:**

Leviticus 19:14+ 'You shall not curse a deaf man, nor place a stumbling block before the **blind**, but you shall revere your God; I am the LORD.

Proverbs 23:10 Do not move the ancient boundary Or go into the fields of the fatherless,

Proverbs 28:10 He who leads the upright astray in an evil way Will himself fall into his own pit, But the blameless will inherit good.

### **SPIRITUALLY BLIND MISLEADING THE BLIND**

**Cursed ([arar](#); Lxx = [epikataratos](#) as in Gal 3:10, 13) is he who misleads a blind person on the road.**- Pr 28:10 (above) gives a clue as to what this person might experience. This could refer to one literally misleading or figuratively misleading. A blind man could be taken advantage of (e.g., money stolen, etc) because he could not identify the one who misled him. God however sees all and here he says there will be justice in this case, so don't be deceived thinking you can get away with it because no one sees. God always sees!

**Utley** has an interesting thought on "**blind person on the road**" - This may be a Hebrew metaphor for one who gives counsel to someone in an area in which he is not expert and thus gives bad counsel. Because of the compassionate characteristics of Deuteronomy, I think this may simply be saying not to take advantage of the handicapped (cf. Lev. 19:14). ([Deuteronomy 27 Commentary](#))

**Misleads ([07686](#)) [shagah](#)** means to go astray but in this context means to lead astray, to guide someone in with a focus on leading in an intentionally wrong direction (Dt 27:18; Pr 28:10), note: this can refer to misleading or deceiving another in an improper belief or thought

**And all the people shall say, 'Amen ([amen](#))'** - This repeated refrain signifies all Israel is entering into a solemn oath.

**Deuteronomy 27:19 'Cursed is he who distorts the justice due an alien, orphan, and widow.' And all the people shall say,**

- De 10:18 Dt 24:17 Ex 22:21-24 23:2,8,9 Ps 82:2-4 Pr 17:23 31:5 Mic 3:9 Mal 3:5

#### Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 10:18 "He executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing.

Deuteronomy 24:17 "**You shall not pervert the justice** due an **alien** or an **orphan**, nor take a **widow's** garment in pledge.

Isaiah 1:23 (MAJOR PERVERSION OF JUSTICE ABOUT 700 YEARS LATER) Your rulers are rebels And companions of thieves; Everyone loves a bribe And chases after rewards. They do not defend the **orphan**, Nor does the **widow's plea** come before them.

Exodus 22:21+ "You shall not wrong a **stranger (ALIEN)** or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Exodus 23:9+ "You shall not oppress a stranger, since you yourselves know the feelings of a **stranger (ALIEN)**, for you also were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Leviticus 19:33-34+ 'When a **stranger (ALIEN)** resides with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. 34 'The **stranger (ALIEN)** who resides with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt; I am the LORD your God.

### PERVERSION OF JUSTICE TO THE POOR

**Cursed ([arar](#)) is he who distorts** (denies, perverts) **the justice due an alien, orphan, and widow** - This trio of people would be easy to abuse and take advantage of. It would be easy to slip the judge a few shekels to favor his side of a disagreement. This group would be less likely to bring a charge against their offender if they were wealthy or powerful, but God takes care of that by pronouncing a curse on them. God sees all!

The idea of **distort** ([natah](#)) in this context is to "bend" justice and the Lxx picks this up using the verb [ekklino](#) meaning to turn aside, turning away from doing what is just and right.

**Wiersbe** - Widows, orphans, and aliens were often abused and exploited in Israel and God called on His people to champion their cause and see that they received justice (24:17–18; Ex. 22:21–24; Luke 18:1–8). The Jews had been aliens in Egypt for many years and the Lord cared for them and judged the people who abused them. If Israel didn't care for the needy, God would also judge them. Among other things, this meant bringing their special tithes to the Lord every third year so the needy would have food to eat (Deut. 14:28–29). ([Be Equipped](#))

**Utley on distorts the justice due** - The verb ([natah](#)) basically means "stretch out," "spread out" or "turn" but in this context is used figuratively as in Dt 16:19; 24:17; and Ex 23:6 where it describes perverting or twisting of that which is right/just. And so the idea is to "turn to the right or left and leaving God's clearly revealed law" (cf. Dt. 5:32; 17:11, 20; 28:14; Josh. 1:7; 23:6). There are several places where the object of this turning/perverting is "justice" (Ex 23:6; Dt. 16:19; 24:17; 27:19; 1 Sa 8:3; Pr 17:23; Lam. 3:35; Amos 2:7). **Justice** is YHWH's will for everyone in Israelite society because it reflects His character and treatment of them (cf. Dt 32:4)....Moses' Law Code is different from the other ancient Mesopotamian Law Codes in its care for the poor, needy, and socially powerless! (Rephrased from [Commentary](#))

**And all the people shall say, 'Amen ([amen](#)) .'** - This repeated refrain signifies all Israel is entering into a solemn oath.

**Justice** ([04941](#)) [mishpat/mispat](#) from **shaphat** = to judge, govern) is a masculine noun used over 400x in the OT and has general meanings including a judgment, a legal decision, a legal case, a claim, proper, rectitude. Although מִשְׁפָּט encompasses a variety of meanings, it has decided judicial connotations. What is most often the topic of concern is the process governing the settling of some dispute, whether between human parties or between God and the Israelites, or the actual verdict itself. **Vine** adds that [mishpat/mispat](#) "has two main senses; the first deals with the act of sitting as a judge, hearing a case, and rendering a proper verdict. Eccl. 12:14 is one such occurrence. Mishpat can also refer to the "rights" belonging to someone (Ex 23:6). This second sense carries several nuances: the sphere in which things are in proper relationship to one's claims (Ge 18:19—first occurrence); a judicial verdict (Dt. 17:9); the statement of the case for the

accused (Nu 27:5); and an established ordinance (Exod. 21:1). ([Vine's Expository Dictionary](#))

**Mishpat is an important word in Deuteronomy** - Deut. 1:17; Deut. 4:1; Deut. 4:5; Deut. 4:8; Deut. 4:14; Deut. 4:45; Deut. 5:1; Deut. 5:31; Deut. 6:1; Deut. 6:20; Deut. 7:11; Deut. 7:12; Deut. 8:11; Deut. 10:18; Deut. 11:1; Deut. 11:32; Deut. 12:1; Deut. 16:18; Deut. 16:19; Deut. 17:8; Deut. 17:9; Deut. 17:11; Deut. 18:3; Deut. 19:6; Deut. 21:17; Deut. 21:22; Deut. 24:17; Deut. 25:1; Deut. 26:16; Deut. 26:17; Deut. 27:19; Deut. 30:16; Deut. 32:4; Deut. 32:41; Deut. 33:10; Deut. 33:21

**Orphan** (03490). **יָתוֹם**, **yātôm**: A masculine noun meaning orphan, a fatherless child, an orphan with a dead father and a widowed mother, as a class of persons helpless and without resource. It is possibly in some contexts both parents are dead, but this is not explicitly stated. It refers to children who had no fathers or parental support group in Israel. They, along with widows, the poor, and the oppressed, were of special concern to the Lord (Ex. 22:22, 24; Deut. 16:11, 14; 24:17; 26:12; Ps. 10:18; 68:5; 146:9; Hos. 14:3). God works on their behalf (Deut. 10:18); and those who oppress them are under judgment (Deut. 27:19; Mal. 3:5). Job was concerned to care for them (Job 29:12; 31:17, 21). Israel as a whole did not care for them sufficiently (Job 24:3, 9; Ps. 94:6; Isa. 1:23; Jer. 5:28; Ezek. 22:7).

**Swanson** - A masculine noun meaning orphan, a fatherless child. It refers to children who had no fathers or parental support group in Israel. They, along with widows, the poor, and the oppressed, were of special concern to the Lord (Ex. 22:22, 24; Deut. 16:11, 14; 24:17; 26:12; Ps. 10:18; 68:5; 146:9; Hos. 14:3). God works on their behalf (Dt. 10:18); and those who oppress them are under judgment (Dt. 27:19; Mal. 3:5). Job was concerned to care for them (Job 29:12; 31:17, 21). Israel as a whole did not care for them sufficiently (Job 24:3, 9; Ps. 94:6; Isa. 1:23; Jer. 5:28; Ezek. 22:7). ([Dictionary of Semantic Domains - Hebrew](#))

**Yatom in 42 verses** - fatherless(7), fatherless children(1), orphan(26), orphans(8). Exod. 22:22; Exod. 22:24; Deut. 10:18; Deut. 14:29; Deut. 16:11; Deut. 16:14; Deut. 24:17; Deut. 24:19; Deut. 24:20; Deut. 24:21; Deut. 26:12; Deut. 26:13; Deut. 27:19; Job 6:27; Job 22:9; Job 24:3; Job 24:9; Job 29:12; Job 31:17; Job 31:21; Ps. 10:14; Ps. 10:18; Ps. 68:5; Ps. 82:3; Ps. 94:6; Ps. 109:9; Ps. 109:12; Ps. 146:9; Prov. 23:10; Isa. 1:17; Isa. 1:23; Isa. 9:17; Isa. 10:2; Jer. 5:28; Jer. 7:6; Jer. 22:3; Jer. 49:11; Lam. 5:3; Ezek. 22:7; Hos. 14:3; Zech. 7:10; Mal. 3:5

**Widows** (0490) **אַלְמָנָה**, **'almānāh**: A feminine noun meaning widow one whose spouse has died (Gen. 38:11; Zec. 7:10; Mal. 3:5), note: often there is an associative meaning of a class of persons, low in status, meager in resources, and so pitiable that society was to take special effort to help them. The word **אַלְמָנָה** is spread all over the OT (55x), but is curiously missing in the outstanding widow story of Ruth and in Amos and Micah, the champions of social justice; The word occurs many times in the Law and the Prophets, where the well-being and care of the widow are the subject (Deut. 14:29; Isa. 1:17; Jer. 7:6; Zech. 7:10). Israel's concern for the widow was founded in the Lord's own concern (Ps. 68:5[6]; 146:9; Prov. 15:25; Jer. 49:11). Figuratively, the term occurs twice in reference to a devastated city: Jerusalem (Lam. 1:1) and Babylon (Isa. 47:8).

**Almanah in 54 verses** - fortified(2), widow(37), widow's(5), widowed(1), widows(11). Gen. 38:11; Exod. 22:22; Exod. 22:24; Lev. 21:14; Lev. 22:13; Num. 30:9; Deut. 10:18; Deut. 14:29; Deut. 16:11; Deut. 16:14; Deut. 24:17; Deut. 24:19; Deut. 24:20; Deut. 24:21; Deut. 26:12; Deut. 26:13; Deut. 27:19; 2 Sam. 14:5; 1 Ki. 7:14; 1 Ki. 11:26; 1 Ki. 17:9; 1 Ki. 17:10; 1 Ki. 17:20; Job 22:9; Job 24:3; Job 24:21; Job 27:15; Job 29:13; Job 31:16; Ps. 68:5; Ps. 78:64; Ps. 94:6; Ps. 109:9; Ps. 146:9; Prov. 15:25; Isa. 1:17; Isa. 1:23; Isa. 9:17; Isa. 10:2; Isa. 13:22; Isa. 47:8; Jer. 7:6; Jer. 15:8; Jer. 18:21; Jer. 22:3; Jer. 49:11; Lam. 1:1; Lam. 5:3; Ezek. 19:7; Ezek. 22:7; Ezek. 22:25; Ezek. 44:22; Zech. 7:10; Mal. 3:5

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#### QUESTION - [What does the Bible say about how widows are to be treated?](#)

**ANSWER** - A widow is a woman whose husband has died. Often in Scripture, when widows are referred to, it appears to carry the idea of a woman whose husband has died who also has no one to provide for her. Thus, widows are often grouped with [vulnerable members of society](#) such as the fatherless, aliens, and the poor (Deuteronomy 14:29; 16:11; 24:20; 26:12). The Bible says widows are to be treated with honor and compassion and offered protection so that no one takes advantage of them.

In ancient times, the primary purpose of women in marriage was to produce children and heirs to carry on the family line. A childless widow endured double adversity, with no husband to provide for and protect her, and no son to carry on the family name and care for her in her old age. She might have been considered a disgrace to her family and left in a precarious position.

God recognized the widow's plight and rose to her defense: "A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling" (Psalm 68:5). A person who denied justice to a widow was cursed by God: "Cursed is anyone who withholds justice from

the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow” (Deuteronomy 27:19). Laws and special provisions were put in place to safeguard widows against neglect and abuse.

At harvest time, widows could [glean in the fields of grain](#) and gather leftover grapes and olives: “When you are harvesting in your field and you overlook a sheaf, do not go back to get it. Leave it for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow, so that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands” (Deuteronomy 24:19).

The primary Old Testament law that protected widows from poverty and cruel treatment was that of the [levirate marriage](#). The purpose of the law was to ensure that a man who died before producing a son might still be guaranteed a male heir. The unmarried brother of the widow’s husband would take the widow as his wife and perform “the levirate duty.” The first son born to the widow was regarded as the legal descendant of her deceased husband. The law of levirate marriage is illustrated in the stories of [Tamar](#) and Onan and of [Ruth and Boaz](#).

In the New Testament, widows are also given special consideration. Proper religious work, according to God, involves caring for widows and orphans: “Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world” (James 1:27). Jesus condemned the Pharisees for their ill-treatment of widows (Mark 12:40).

God has deep compassion for those who are left alone, and the church is to demonstrate that same compassion. In 1 Timothy 5, the apostle Paul gives a detailed outline of how the church and individual families are to care for widows.

According to Paul, a widow who received financial and material support from the church had to meet certain qualifications. First and foremost, the widow had to be truly in need and completely alone in the world: “But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God” (1 Timothy 5:4).

It is the duty and obligation of families to care for their aging and needy family members. Christian children and grandchildren have a special privilege and opportunity to put their faith in action by giving back love and support to their parents and grandparents, and especially to widows who are alone.

Today’s Western societies, where independence takes precedence over family relationships, have lost sight of the value of God’s purpose for creating extended families. But among God’s people, families ought to be the primary source of support for widows.

Paul goes on to give guidelines for a widow to be eligible to receive the church’s support. Besides having no one to take care of her, she ought to be a woman of prayer, a dedicated servant of the Lord, more than sixty years of age, faithful to her husband when he was alive, and committed to good deeds like caring for children, showing hospitality, and serving God’s people (1 Timothy 5:9–10). Apparently, in order to receive charity in the early Christian church, eligible widows were enrolled on a list (verse 11). The age designation was likely because sixty was considered the age of retirement in the first century, and these women were probably past the age of remarrying. Younger widows were more likely to remarry; in fact, Paul counsels them to do so (verse 14).

Since God honors widows and treats them with compassion, believers should do the same: “Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow” (Isaiah 1:17). [GotQuestions.org](#)

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#### **QUESTION - [What does the Bible say about orphans and widows?](#)**

**ANSWER** - Widows are women whose husbands have died, and orphans are children whose parents, for whatever reason, are not in the child’s life. In biblical times, the main cause of a child being orphaned is that the orphan’s parents had died. The Bible reveals God’s attitude toward orphans and widows: He cares very deeply for them. God commands us to protect and care for orphans and widows (Psalm 82:3).

Husbands and fathers play an irreplaceable role in a family. When the man is not there, the wife and child can suffer in many ways. The Bible tells us that God Himself steps in to fill the role of protecting and caring for orphans and widows. “A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling” (Psalm 68:5). In our world, those who are helpless tend to be taken advantage of by those who think they can get away with it. However, nothing escapes God’s notice, and He will avenge the orphans and widows. “You, LORD, hear the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry, defending the fatherless and the oppressed, so that mere earthly mortals will never again strike terror” (Psalm 10:17–18).

God commands us to care for orphans and widows. When He gave the Law to Moses and the Israelites, He gave instructions for how to treat the orphans and widows among them—with harsh consequences promised if they failed in their responsibility (see Exodus 22:22–23). In the New Testament, James says that taking care of the needs of orphans and widows is part of religion [“pure and faultless”](#) (James 1:27). Caring for those in distress is not optional for followers of Christ.



In 1 Timothy, Paul lays out more detailed instructions for how to care for widows (1 Timothy 5:1–16). First, Paul puts an emphasis on a widow's family taking care of her, instead of leaving it all up to the church. "If a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God" (1 Timothy 5:4). Paul instructs that, for a widow to be supported by the local church, she must be over the age of 60 and she must have been faithful to her husband and have led a godly life. And she must have no family member to care for her (1 Timothy 5:9–10). The bottom line is that all widows should be receiving the care they need, without anyone getting overburdened by the responsibility.

We should not view caring for orphans and widows as simply a command from God we must fulfill "or else." There is tremendous blessing in serving and standing up for orphans and widows. In considering what our own attitude should be toward the orphans and widows around us, it's helpful to remember that all of us were adopted into God's family through Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:3–7) and betrothed to Christ (Ephesians 5:32; Revelation 19:7). It is our joy and privilege to partner with God in loving, serving, and protecting the orphans and widows among us. [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

**Deuteronomy 27:20 'Cursed is he who lies with his father's wife, because he has uncovered his father's skirt.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'**

- De 22:30 Ge 35:22 49:4 Lev 18:8 Lev 20:11 2Sa 16:22 1Ch 5:1 Eze 22:10 Am 2:7 1Co 5:1

#### Related Passage:

Genesis 35:22 It came about while Israel was dwelling in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine, and Israel heard of it. Now there were twelve sons of Jacob—

Deuteronomy 22:30+ "A man shall not take his father's wife so that he will not uncover his father's skirt.

Leviticus 18:8 You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's wife; it is your father's nakedness.

Leviticus 20:11 'If there is a man who lies with his father's wife, he has uncovered his father's nakedness; both of them shall surely be put to death, their bloodguiltiness is upon them.

### CURSE FOR UNCOVERING FATHER'S SKIRT

This next section (Dt 27:20-23) deals with various illicit sexual relationships. **Maxwell** adds an interesting comment that "The nature of these acts demands secrecy and privacy. Therefore, they would probably not be witnessed by others or brought before a court of law. Yet again we realize that the deed will be exposed before God and will bring a curse upon those who commit such wrongful acts." ([Preacher's Commentary - Deut](#))

**Cursed ([arar](#)) is he who lies with his father's wife - Lies with** is a Hebrew idiom for having sexual relations. Again, the sin might done is secret but God sees and pronounces a curse. **His father's wife** is likely his step-mother. This is the first of 4 curses against sexual sin and all relate to the seventh commandment (Ex 20:14). **Reuben** lost his rights as the firstborn because he violated this law (Ge 35:22; Ge 49:3–4).

**Wiersbe** - The perversion of sex is not only the abuse of a gift from God, but it threatens marriage and the family, which are foundational to the success of the nation. ([Be Equipped](#))

Phrase **lies with** found 20x in 19v - Ex. 22:16; Ex. 22:19; Lev. 15:18; Lev. 15:24; Lev. 15:33; Lev. 18:22; Lev. 20:11; Lev. 20:12; Lev. 20:13; Lev. 20:15; Lev. 20:18; Lev. 20:20; Deut. 22:23; Deut. 22:25; Deut. 22:28; Deut. 27:20; Deut. 27:21; Deut. 27:22; Deut. 27:23

**Because he has uncovered his father's skirt - NLT** = "he has violated his father." **NIV** = "dishonors his father's bed." **NET NOTE** says "This appears to be a circumlocution for describing the dishonor that would come to a father by having his own son share his wife's sexuality (cf. NAB, NIV "dishonor his father's bed").

**Craigie** points out that "to **cover** (a woman) with the skirt" describes metaphorically the taking of a woman in marriage (cf. Ruth 3:9). Hence, **uncovering** the skirt seems to be a euphemistic manner of describing the invasion of the privacy of the sexual relationship between the father and (step-)mother by the father's son." ([New International Commentary of Old Testament - Deuteronomy](#))

In Leviticus 18:8 it is clearly stated that not only is marriage to a father's wife forbidden, but that a son should not even be permitted to see his mother's nakedness.

**Uttley** rightly points out that "Human sexuality is both a divine gift and a powerful urge. It must be defined and regulated for a peaceful, long-lasting society....Incest affected the stability of the home and family as well as the society. The exact persons from whom one is prohibited from marrying changes from culture to culture, but all cultures (except the Egyptian royal family) have rules about incest!" **His father's skirt** is a symbol of the act of marriage (cf. 22:30; Lev. 18:8). This is another violation of honor. It typifies sin as more and more for me at any cost! ([Deuteronomy 27 Commentary](#))

**And all the people shall say, 'Amen' ([amen](#))** - This repeated refrain signifies all Israel is entering into a solemn oath.

#### Deuteronomy 27:21 'Cursed is he who lies with any animal.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'

- Ex 22:19 Lev 18:23 Lev 20:15

#### Related Passages:

Exodus 22:19+ "Whoever lies with an animal shall surely be put to death.

Leviticus 18:23+ 'Also you shall not have intercourse with any animal to be defiled with it, nor shall any woman stand before an animal to mate with it; it is a **perversion** (Hebrew from root meaning 'to confuse/mix up!)

Leviticus 20:15+ 'If there is a man who lies with an animal, he shall surely be put to death; you shall also kill the animal.

### BESTIALITY CURSED

**Cursed ([arar](#)) is he who lies with any animal - Lies with** is a Hebrew idiom for a human having sexual relations with a non-human (aka [bestiality](#)). As with other sexual sees committed under a supposed cloak of secrecy, this abomination was not a secret to Yahweh and would warrant a curse.

[IVP Bible Background Commentary](#) - Bestiality was practiced in the context of ritual or magic in the ancient Near East. It occurs in the mythology of Ugarit (and was probably ritually imitated by the priests) and is banned in legal materials (especially the Hittite laws).

**Uttley** adds that bestiality in the ancient culture had "to do with idolatry (i.e., ritual magic from Ugarit). Hittite texts show cohabiting with sacred animals symbolized unity with deity." ([Deuteronomy 27 Commentary](#))

**And all the people shall say, 'Amen' ([amen](#))** - This repeated refrain signifies all Israel is entering into a solemn oath.

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#### QUESTION - [What does the Bible say about bestiality?](#)

**ANSWER** - The Bible mentions bestiality in four different passages. Exodus 22:19 says, "Anyone who has sexual relations with an animal must be put to death." Leviticus 18:23 declares, "Do not have sexual relations with an animal and defile yourself with it. A woman must not present herself to an animal to have sexual relations with it; that is a perversion." Leviticus 20:15-16 commands, "If a man has sexual relations with an animal, he must be put to death, and you must kill the animal. If a woman approaches an animal to have sexual relations with it, kill both the woman and the animal. They must be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads." Deuteronomy 27:21 agrees, "Cursed is the man who has sexual relations with any animal." From these verses, it is abundantly clear that, according to the Bible, bestiality is a horrible, unnatural, and abominable sin.

Why is bestiality condemned so strongly? First, it is an unnatural perversion. Clearly, human beings were designed/intended to mate with other human beings, not animals. In the creation account, none of the animals were "suitable" for Adam (Genesis 2:20). Second, bestiality represents the ultimate of sexual deviancy. The fact that the animal was to be put to death (Leviticus 20:15-16), despite the fact that it would be "innocent," indicates how wickedly perverse bestiality is. Third, and perhaps most importantly, bestiality essentially denies the uniqueness of humanity which God created in His image (Genesis 1:27). Bestiality lowers humanity to nothing more than an animal, a beast which is unable to distinguish right from wrong, natural from unnatural, love from lust.

The New Testament nowhere mentions bestiality by name, but that should not be interpreted as an allowance for bestiality or a weakening of God's moral standards. Bestiality is by definition included in Scripture's many prohibitions against sexual immorality (1

**Deuteronomy 27:22** 'Cursed is he who lies with his sister, the daughter of his father or of his mother.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'

- Lev 18:9 20:17 2Sa 13:1,8-14 Eze 22:11

## INCEST CURSED

**Cursed ([arar](#)) is he who lies with his sister, the daughter of his father or of his mother** - Another sin likely committed in secret and yet it still brought down the curse of the omniscient God. Sinners may be (spiritually) blind when they sin, but God is not blind.

**And all the people shall say, 'Amen ([amen](#))'** - This repeated refrain signifies all Israel is entering into a solemn oath.

### Related Resources:

- [Why did God allow incest in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Is it wrong to have a romantic relationship with a close relative? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- Baker's Evangelical Dictionary [Incest](#)
- Charles Buck Dictionary [Incest](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Incest](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Incest](#)
- Webster Dictionary [Incest](#)
- Watson's Theological Dictionary [Incest](#)
- 1911 Encyclopedia Britannica [Incest](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Incest](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Incest](#); [Incest, Spiritual](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Incest](#)

**Deuteronomy 27:23** 'Cursed is he who lies with his mother-in-law.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'

- Lev 18:17 Lev 20:14

### Related Passages:

Leviticus 18:17+ 'You shall not uncover the nakedness of a woman and of her daughter, nor shall you take her son's daughter or her daughter's daughter, to uncover her nakedness; they are blood relatives. It is lewdness.

Leviticus 20:14+ 'If there is a man who marries a woman and her mother, it is immorality; both he and they shall be burned with fire, so that there will be no immorality in your midst.

**Cursed ([arar](#)) is he who lies with his mother-in-law.** - No sex with your father's wife even if she is not your mother.

**And all the people shall say, 'Amen ([amen](#))'** - This repeated refrain signifies all Israel is entering into a solemn oath.

**Deuteronomy 27:24** 'Cursed is he who strikes his neighbor in secret.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'

- De 19:11,12 Ex 20:13 21:12-14 Lev 24:17 Nu 35:31 2Sa 3:27 2Sa 11:15-17 2Sa 12:9-12 2Sa 13:28 2Sa 20:9-10

### Related Passages:

2 Samuel 11:15-17 (KING DAVID) He had written in the letter, saying, "Place Uriah in the front line of the fiercest battle and withdraw from him, so that he may be struck down and die." 16So it was as Joab kept watch on the city, that he put Uriah at the place where he knew there were valiant men. 17The men of the city went out and fought against Joab, and some of the people among David's servants fell; and Uriah the Hittite also

died.

**COMMENT** - Read the divine "curse" on King David in 2 Sa 12:7-9 specifically that "the sword shall never depart from your house." (2 Sa 12:10)

## SECRET ASSAULT NOT SECRET BEFORE GOD

**Utley** points out that Dt 27:24–25 "deal with murder (cf. Dt 5:17; Ex 20:13; Ex 21:12; Lev. 24:17, 21). A murder polluted **ALL** the land (cf. Dt 21:1–9+)." ([Deuteronomy 27 Commentary](#))

**Cursed** ([arar](#)) **is he who strikes his neighbor in secret** ([cether/seter](#) as in Dt 27:15+) - Notice that the key phrase is "**in secret**" implying no witnesses. Once again God declares that He is the faithful, reliable witness and He will bring about a curse on this person. **Strikes** in the Septuagint is [tupto/typto](#) meaning to inflict a blow, strike, beat or wound.

**Wiersbe** - Murder is the ultimate crime because its consequences can't be reversed, but to murder one's neighbor makes that crime even worse. The only thing more heinous would be to be paid to murder somebody! The law taught the people of Israel to love their neighbors and do them good (Lev. 19:18; Deut. 22:1–4). But whether a neighbor or a total stranger is the victim, murder is wrong and murderers must be punished. ([Be Equipped](#))

**Strikes** ([05221](#)) ([nākāh](#)) means to beat, to wound and can range from simply hitting to actually killing. There are many instances of striking physically (Ex. 21:15, 19; Job 16:10; Ps. 3:7; Song 5:7). Of Yahweh smiting the firstborn (Nu 3:13, 8:17), His own people (Nu 11:33). Of Moses striking the rock twice resulting in his not being allowed to enter the Promised Land (Nu 20:11) Frequently, **nākāh** is related to the Israelite conquest of Canaan. God used disease to **smite** the inhabitants of Canaan (Nu 14:12). This word is also used in a different sense, as when the men of Sodom and Gomorrah were stricken blind by the two angels (Ge 19:11); when a priest stuck a fork into the kettle (1 Sa 2:14); when people clapped their hands (2 Kgs. 11:12); or when people verbally abused Jeremiah (Jer. 18:18). God struck the Egyptians with plagues (Ex. 3:20); and struck people down in judgment (Isa. 5:25). Nakah in the (**hif**) = **kill, slaughter**, i.e., take the life of another (Ex 2:12); (hof) killed, slain (Nu 25:14,15, 18; Jer 18:21+);

**Nakah in Deut** - Deut. 1:4; Deut. 2:33; Deut. 3:3; Deut. 4:46; Deut. 7:2; Deut. 13:15; Deut. 19:4; Deut. 19:6; Deut. 19:11; Deut. 20:13; Deut. 21:1; Deut. 25:2; Deut. 25:3; Deut. 25:11; Deut. 27:24; Deut. 27:25; Deut. 28:22; Deut. 28:27; Deut. 28:28; Deut. 28:35; Deut. 29:7

**And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'** ([amen](#)) - This repeated refrain signifies all Israel is entering into a solemn oath.

**Deuteronomy 27:25 'Cursed is he who accepts a bribe to strike down an innocent person.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'**

- De 10:17 16:19 Ex 23:7,8 Ps 15:5 Pr 1:11-29 Eze 22:12,13 Mic 3:10,11 7:2,3 Mt 26:15 27:3,4 Ac 1:18

### Related Passages:

Exodus 23:6-8+ "You shall not pervert the justice due to your needy brother in his dispute. 7 "Keep far from a false charge, and do not kill the innocent or the righteous, for I will not acquit the guilty. 8 "You shall not take a **bribe**, for a **bribe** blinds the clear-sighted and subverts the cause of the just.

Deuteronomy 16:19+ "You shall not distort justice; you shall not be partial, and you shall not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and perverts the words of the righteous.

Proverbs 17:23 A wicked man receives a bribe from the bosom To pervert the ways of justice.

**Cursed** ([arar](#)) **is he who accepts a bribe to strike down an innocent person**- God condemns and curses bribery because it perverts justice in the judicial sphere and equity in the social sphere of the covenant community (cf. Ex 23:8; Dt 16:19; Pr 17:23)." Given the context to strike down, implies this is a prohibition of **murder for hire**! Paid assassins and/or bribed judges will receive a curse. They may think that the one who bribed them to commit the crime would never tell, but again it did not matter because God knew what they had done and would bring a curse on the perpetrator. The Septuagint translates **bribe** with the Greek word [doron](#) mean a gift or present, which Liddell-Scott says can be "presents given by way of bribe."

**Brown** - It is important to see from these curses that sins of intent (Dt 27:25) are viewed as seriously as those of action (Dt 27:24). A man who receives payment to murder someone is made to realize that such behaviour is a radical breach of the covenant whether he is successful in his sick enterprise or not. If he accepts the money for doing it, he has earned the curse of the covenant God. ([Bible Speaks Today-Deut](#))

**IVP Bible Background Commentary** - taking bribe to kill innocent. What is uncertain in this context is whether the curse concerns a payment made to an assassin (thus giving a variation on the previous verse) or a bribe made to a judge or witness in order to condemn an innocent man of a capital crime and thus have him executed (cf. 1 Kings 21:8–14). The temptation for judges and government officials to accept bribes is found in every time and place (see Prov 6:35; Mic 7:3). Taking bribes becomes almost institutionally accepted in bureaucratic situations as competing parties attempted to outmaneuver each other (see Mic 3:11; Ezra 4:4–5). However, at least on the ideal level, arguments and penalties are imposed to eliminate or at least lessen this problem. Thus Hammurabi's code (law 5) places harsh penalties on any judge who alters one of his decisions (presumably because of a bribe), including stiff fines and permanent removal from the bench. Exodus 23:8 forbids the taking of bribes and the perversion of justice as an offense against God, the weak and innocent, and the entire community (see Is 5:23; Amos 5:12).

**Bribe** (07810) **shochad** is a gift which in this context is given to influence an outcome or hire services, usually with a specific **quid pro quo** (Ex 23:8; Dt 10:17; 16:19; 27:25; 1Sa 8:3; 2Ch 19:7; Job 15:34; Ps 15:5; 26:10; Pr 6:35; 17:23; Isa 1:23; 5:23; 33:15; Eze 22:12; Mic 3:11) It can also refer to a gift given without an explicit **quid pro quo**, but implies a relationship of favor (Pr 17:8; 21:14; Isa 45:13)

**And all the people shall say, 'Amen'** ([amen](#)) - This repeated refrain signifies all Israel is entering into a solemn oath.

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#### QUESTION - [What does the Bible say about bribery / giving or receiving a bribe?](#)

**ANSWER** - A bribe is money, favor, or other consideration given in exchange for one's influence against what is true, right, or just. The Bible is clear that giving or receiving a bribe is evil.

God's Law, given to Moses for the people of Israel, forbade the taking of a bribe, "for a bribe blinds the discerning and perverts the words of the righteous" (Exodus 23:8). The same rule is repeated in Deuteronomy 16:19: "You shall not pervert justice; you shall not show partiality, nor take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous." The negative effects of taking a bribe are clearly outlined in these two passages. Bribery perverts justice. It is a blinding influence upon wisdom and discernment. It clouds the truth and perverts or twists the words of those who would be righteous in the sight of God.

The Law went even further in the case of a bribe involving the killing of an innocent person. A judge who takes a bribe to condemn to death an innocent person was as guilty as a paid assassin—he was to be "cursed" (Deuteronomy 27:25). There were incidents where this law against bribery was broken, to disastrous effect. The two men who testified against Naboth (1 Kings 21:4–16) and those who testified against Stephen (Acts 6:8–14) were probably bribed; in both instances, an innocent man was killed. When high officials give and receive bribes, it causes evil in a society. "The king establishes the land by justice, but he who receives bribes overthrows it" (Proverbs 29:4). Bribery is one characteristic of a corrupt society.

Isaiah prophesied against the evil of Israel when they had turned from the one true God and His laws. Isaiah likened the city of Jerusalem to an unfaithful harlot; the city was once full of justice, but it had become a place of rebellion, murder, and thievery. Her leaders were those who loved bribes and chased after the money bribery brought them (Isaiah 1:2–23). The people of Israel were not to follow the ways of evil but were to emulate God in their dealings with one another: "For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe" (Deuteronomy 10:17).

The most heinous example of a bribe in the Bible is the [thirty pieces of silver](#) that [Judas received to betray](#) the Lord Jesus. A direct result of Judas's treachery was that Jesus was arrested and crucified. Eventually, even Judas realized that his acceptance of a bribe was evil. But when he tried to return the money to the chief priests and elders, they refused it, calling it what it was—"blood money" (Matthew 27:3–9).

Delilah was bribed to entrap Samson (Judges 16:5). Samuel's sons disrespected their office by taking bribes (1 Samuel 8:3). The wicked Haman bribed King Ahasuerus in an attempt to destroy the Jews in Persia (Esther 3:9). Felix left Paul in prison, hoping to receive a bribe from Paul (Acts 24:26). And the soldiers charged with guarding Jesus' tomb were bribed by the chief priests and elders to spread a lie about the disappearance of Jesus' body (Matthew 28:12–15). In each case, those receiving the bribes cared nothing for truth or justice. [GotQuestions.org](#)

**Deuteronomy 27:26 'Cursed is he who does not confirm the words of this law by doing them.' And all the people shall say,**

- **Cursed:** De 27:15 28:15-68 Ps 119:21 Mt 25:41 1Co 16:22
- **confirm:** Jer 11:3-5 Eze 18:24 Ro 3:19,20 10:5 Ga 3:10

## ALL INCLUSIVE CURSE

This final curse in this section means that just because disobedience to a law has not been cursed in the previous 11 curses, to break it would still incur a curse. There was no "[wiggly room](#)" with the Law!

**Cursed** ([arar](#)) is he who does not confirm the words of this law by doing them- **NET** = "Cursed is the one who refuses to keep the words of this law." NLT = "Cursed is anyone who does not affirm and obey the terms of these instructions." Here the curse is on the person who knows the law and yet fails to abide by the law.

**Craigie** - The twelfth and final curse has a summary and all-inclusive nature; it describes that man who does not take positive action which obedience to the law demanded. There is a sense in which the previous eleven curses are only examples, the twelfth curse making it quite clear that any action that does not elevate the words of this law brings an offender under the curse of God. ([New International Commentary of Old Testament - Deuteronomy](#))

**Deere** - This last curse demonstrates that the preceding list was representative. Perhaps the 11 examples were chosen, as stated earlier, because most of them could be done in secret and therefore the offender might not be as easily detected as he would when violating other laws. The summary nature of the 12th curse, however, indicates that God desired a wholehearted obedience to the Law both in public and in private. Paul used this verse to teach that no one could find eternal life by obeying the Law (Gal. 3:10+). Eternal life is received only through God's grace when one places his faith in Jesus Christ as his substitutionary Sacrifice for sin (Ro 3:24–25; Eph. 2:8–9). ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

This passage is cited by Paul (following the Septuagint rendering) in Galatians 3:10+ "For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY ALL THINGS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW, TO PERFORM THEM."

**Comment:** As Craigie says "The reach of the law is so all-pervasive that man cannot claim justification before God on the basis of "works of the law." This all-embracing nature of the law turns our eyes to Christ, who "redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us, for it is written: Cursed be every one who hangs on a tree." (Gal 3:13). ([New International Commentary of Old Testament - Deuteronomy](#))

**Maxwell** - The last curse demonstrates that the preceding list was representative (v. 26). Perhaps the eleven examples were chosen because most of them could be done in secret; the offender might not be easily detected. The summary nature of the twelfth curse, however, indicates that God desires wholehearted obedience to His law both in public and in private. ([Preacher's Commentary - Deut](#))

**Guzik** - When all are found guilty before the law, and it is clear that they cannot conform to all the words of this law, there is still hope. A clue to this hope is found in the beginning of the chapter, where God declared that an altar be built—not upon Mount Gerizim, the mountain of blessing, but upon Mount Ebal, the mountain of cursing. We need the covering and atoning sacrifice exactly at the point where our sin and failures are revealed and God's curse is pronounced on our sin.. It is important to recognize that we, in Jesus Christ, do not have an Old Covenant relationship with God. We expect to be blessed, not because of our obedience, but because of our position in Jesus. The curse we deserved was laid upon Him (Galatians 3:10–14). Though there may be an inherent curse of consequences in our disobedience, or even the correcting hand of God, under the New Covenant, He does not punish us or curse us—because all that we deserved, past, present, and future, was poured out upon Jesus. ([Deuteronomy 27](#))

**Wiersbe** - Paul quoted this verse (Dt 27:26) in Galatians 3:10 to prove that there could be no salvation by obeying the law since nobody could obey everything God commanded. But the purpose of the law was not salvation but condemnation, the indictment of all people as sinners, and therefore the need of all people to trust Christ, "for the just shall live by faith" (Gal. 3:11+). (**ED: The way of salvation is always by faith** and it was clearly presented in the OT, so Israel was not ignorant - see their "father" Abraham - Ge 15:6+ and Hab 2:4+ [cf "circumcise your heart" Dt 10:16+ and Yahweh's provision "I will circumcise your heart" - Dt 30:6+] - these curses should have driven each hearer to the Messiah!). There can be no true conversion without conviction, and conviction comes when we see the holiness of God in His law and the sinfulness of our own hearts. To say that we've kept some of God's laws doesn't excuse us, for to break one is to break them all (James 2:10–11+). If you were hanging over a chasm holding to a chain of ten links, how many links would have to break for you to fall? (The minimizing of God's holy law today has produced a shallow evangelism and brought into the churches "religious sinners" who have never repented of their sins because they've never felt



conviction for their sins. “The person who will not repent still has his or her back turned on God” - [A.W. Tozer, Men Who Met God](#), 45) When the Israelites in the Promised Land said their “Amen” to these twelve curses, they would be assenting to the law of God, promising to obey it, and agreeing that they deserved judgment if they disobeyed it. This would be a solemn hour in the history of Israel. At Sinai, Israel had agreed to obey God’s law (Ex. 19:7–8; 24:3–8), and not long after, they made a golden calf and worshiped it! It takes more than pious words and good intentions to be a devoted and obedient child of God (Matt. 7:21–23+). ([Be Equipped](#))

**And all the people shall say, 'Amen ([amen](#))** - This repeated refrain signifies all Israel is entering into a solemn oath.