

Deuteronomy 28 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 28:1 "Now it shall be, if you diligently obey the LORD your God, being careful to do all His commandments which I command you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth.

- **it shall be:** Dt 11:13 Dt 15:5 27:1 Ex 15:26 Lev 26:3-13 Ps 106:3 111:10 Isa 1:19 Isa 3:10 55:2,3 Jer 11:4 Jer 12:16 Jer 17:24 Lu 11:28
- **being careful to do all His commandments:** Ps 119:6,128 Lu 1:6 Joh 15:14 Ga 3:10 Jas 2:10,11
- **will set:** Dt 26:19 Ps 91:14 Ps 148:14 Lu 9:48 Ro 2:7
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

[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)

THE FIRST BLESSING OF OBEDIENCE

Summary Outline:

- Blessings of Obedience Dt 28:1-14
- Curses of Disobedience Dt 28:15-68

From the outline it is obvious that most passages deal with curses, indicating that the Spirit wants to make absolutely certain Israel understands the dire consequences of disobedience.

[Bob Utley's](#) introduction - I think the whole OT can be seen as a consequence of Israel's inability to perform the Covenant stipulations, and thereby, was visited with the curses of Dt 27:15-26; 28:15-68. YHWH wanted Israel to be a revelatory channel for all the world to come to know Him. He wanted to bless Israel to gain the attention of the nations and thereby to attract the nations unto Himself. The curses for disobedience are more numerous than the promised blessings. This same structure is paralleled in the treaties of the ancient Near East...This cursing and blessing section is parallel to Leviticus 26:1-46 (ED: GIVEN TO THE FIRST GENERATION OF ISRAELITES). This is the second sermon of Moses (i.e., Deut 5-28). The **first** sermon looked back to YHWH's gracious, powerful extraction of Israel from Egypt and His presence and provision through the wilderness wandering period. The **second** sermon focuses on YHWH's will for national Israel in the Promised Land. He establishes Israel's distinctiveness so as to reveal Himself to the world. The **third** sermon (chapters 29-32) deal with covenant renewal and affirmation of Israel's loyalty and obedience to YHWH alone.

Jack Deere has an interesting thought on why there are almost 4x as many curses and blessings suggesting "the greater length of the curse section was meant to foreshadow Israel's eventual failure under the covenant." (See [Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old](#)

[Testament - Page 311](#)).

Meredith Kline - In the corresponding section of the Sinaitic Book of the Covenant (Ex 23:20-33), the **blessings** predominated. Now, the forty years' history of Israelite apostasy having intervened, Moses' emphasis falls heavily on the **curses**...The remarkable preview in Deuteronomy 28–30 of Israel's history, especially of the faroff exile, has been a major stumbling-block to the recognition of the Mosaic origin of this document by naturalistic higher criticism. (ED: IN OTHER WORDS THE CRITICS ASK HOW COULD MOSES HAVE BEEN SO ACCURATE? OF COURSE THE ANSWER IS BECAUSE GOD'S SPIRIT REVEALED THESE TRUTHS TO HIM!) (See [Wycliffe Bible Commentary - Page 119](#) for all notes on Deut 28-34)

Richardson - It is, however, Deut. 28 that deserves to be called the locus classicus for the ideas of the blessing and the curse, every variety of either being specified in Dt 28:1-14, 15-68—the latter in the light of the judgment of God upon Israel in the exile. (Borrow [Theological Wordbook](#))

Guzik - The word "IF" looms large. In this chapter, Moses exhorted the nation with **choice**. The covenant God made with Israel contained three major features: The **law**, the **sacrifice**, and the **choice**. The idea behind the **choice** is that God was determined to reveal Himself to the world through Israel. He would do this either by making them so blessed that the world would know only God could have blessed them so; or by making them so cursed that only God could have cursed them and cause them to still survive. The **choice** was up to Israel.. As a literary form, this chapter is similar to ancient treaties between a king and his people; this is God the King, making a covenant with His people, Israel. "In the ancient Near East it was customary for legal treaties to conclude with passages containing **blessings** upon those who observed the enactments, and **curses** upon those who did not." (Harrison)

James Coakley makes an interesting observation that "Blessing and cursing go all the way back to the opening chapters of the Pentateuch (Ge 1:22; Ge 3:17), and the mentions there and here of those topics serve as bookends for the entire book of Moses (from Genesis to Deuteronomy) ([Moody Bible Commentary](#))

Now it shall be, if you diligently obey the LORD your God - Note the conditional nature of the blessing is emphasized by the repetitive use of **IF** - Dt 28:1, 2, 9, 13. In the same way **IF** in Dt 28:15+ introduces the conditional nature of the curses (**IF** repeated one last time in Dt 28:58). The blessings and cursings are grounded in the Mosaic Covenant made at Mount Sinai and renewed with the second generation. Be sure to distinguish this from the Abrahamic Covenant (See [Abrahamic versus Mosaic](#)) which is an unconditional covenant and which granted Israel entrance into the Promised Land (Note: God's unconditional covenant with Israel has not been cancelled and includes a future restoration of the literal nation of Israel composed of believing Jews). Obedience to the Mosaic Covenant then was necessary to assure Israel would remain in the Promised Land (cf the promise of Dt 28:63 if they disobeyed the Mosaic Covenant).

Diligently obey is **shama shama**, repeated for emphasis (intensification) and thus is translated "diligently obey," "careful to observe" (NET), "carefully keep" (NLT), "faithfully obey **the voice** of the LORD." (ESV) The **ESV** is more accurate because it translates the Hebrew word **qol** which means **voice**. Recall that the phrase **the LORD your God** is found 279 times in Deuteronomy (out of a total of 447 times in the entire OT). Yes Yahweh is their God, but their persistence in the Land was dependent on their faithfulness to obey Him.

Wiersbe = "Observe to do" (Dt 28:1KJV) is translated "carefully follow" in the NIV and is found also in Dt 16:12; 17:19; 19:9; 24:8; 28:1, 13, 15, 58; 29:9; 31:12. ([Wiersbe Bible Commentary - OT](#))

Kline - Although Israel's inheritance and continued enjoyment of the promises was not a matter of legal merit (ED: I.E. THEY DID NOT EARN THE BLESSINGS BY THEY "GOOD WORKS" OR THEIR OBEDIENCE - IT WAS STILL ALL OF GRACE), there was a connection between the nation's corporate piety and her prosperity. (See [Wycliffe Bible Commentary - Page 119](#) for all notes on Deut 28-34)

J Vernon McGee - Israel's tenure in the land, their dwelling there, would be determined by their obedience to God. That was a conditional arrangement (MOSAIC COVENANT). But the land was given to them with no conditions attached whatsoever. God has given that land to Israel, and that is an unconditional covenant (ABRAHAMIC). God will bring Israel back into that land because it belongs to them. That is something very important for us to realize at the present time.

Obey (listen, understand)([08085](#)) **shama** means to **hear** (Adam and Eve hearing God = Ge 3:8, 10, Ge 18:10 = "overheard"), to **listen** (Ge 3:17, Ge 16:2 [= this was a big mistake and was the origin of Jews and Arabs!] Ex 6:9,16:20, 18:19, Webster's 1828 on "listen" = to hearken; to give ear; to attend closely with a view to hear. To obey; to yield to advice; to follow admonition) and since hearing/listening are often closely linked to obedience, **shama** is translated **obey** (1 Sa 15:22, Ge 22:18, 26:5, 39:10, Ex 19:5, **disobedience** = Lev 26:14, 18, 21, 27) or to understand. KJV translates **shama** "**hearken**" (196x) a word which means to give respectful attention. **Shama** means "to hear intelligently and attentively and respond appropriately." In other

words to hear does not convey the idea of "in one ear and out the other!" The greatest significance of the use of shama is that of relation of man to God, especially where the context speaks of obedience. Obedience is the supreme test of faith and reverence for God. The Old Testament conception of obedience was vital. It was the one important relationship which must not be broken. While sometimes this relation may have been formal and cold, it nevertheless was the one strong tie which held the people close to God. The significant spiritual relation is expressed by Samuel when he asks the question, "Hath Yahweh as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying (shama) the voice of Yahweh? Behold, to obey (shama) is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Sa 15:22). It was the condition without which no right relation might be sustained to Yahweh. This is most clearly stated in the relation between Abraham and Yahweh when he is assured "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed (shama) my voice" (Ge 22:18). In prophetic utterances, future blessing and prosperity were conditioned upon obedience: "If ye be willing and obedient (shama), ye shall eat the good of the land" (Isa 1:19). After surveying the glories of the Messianic kingdom, the prophet assures the people that "this shall come to pass, if ye will diligently obey (shama) the voice of Yahweh your God" (Zec 6:15). On the other hand misfortune, calamity, distress and famine are due to their disobedience and distrust of Yahweh.

Being careful to do all His commandments which I command you today - Being careful is [shamar](#) which means to guard, observe, watch and in the **Lxx** is the verb [phulasso](#) in the present tense, signifying continually watching, guarding (to prevent from escaping), protecting, observing (following the law - Lk 28:21+) The verb **to do** ([asah](#)) in the **Lxx** is [poieo](#) in the present tense, signifying continually doing. In other words this calls not for perfection (not possible until we reach glory) but for the general direction toward **all His commandments**. **Command (tsawah; Lxx = [entole](#))** is repeatedly used in Deuteronomy 28 - Deut. 28:1; Deut. 28:8; Deut. 28:13; Deut. 28:14; Deut. 28:15; Deut. 28:45.

Being careful ([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 many of the OT uses of **shamar**) 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 4:9)

Shamar is a key verb in Deuteronomy - Deut. 2:4; Deut. 4:2; Deut. 4:6; Deut. 4:9; Deut. 4:15; Deut. 4:23; Deut. 4:40; Deut. 5:1; Deut. 5:10; Deut. 5:12; Deut. 5:29; Deut. 6:2; Deut. 6:3; Deut. 6:12; Deut. 6:17; Deut. 6:25; Deut. 7:8; Deut. 7:9; Deut. 7:11; Deut. 7:12; Deut. 8:1; Deut. 8:2; Deut. 8:6; Deut. 8:11; Deut. 10:13; Deut. 11:1; Deut. 11:8; Deut. 11:16; Deut. 11:22; Deut. 11:32; Deut. 12:1; Deut. 12:13; Deut. 12:19; Deut. 12:28; Deut. 12:30; Deut. 12:32; Deut. 13:4; Deut. 13:18; Deut. 15:9; Deut. 16:1; Deut. 16:12; Deut. 17:10; Deut. 19:9; Deut. 23:9; Deut. 23:23; Deut. 24:8; Deut. 26:16; Deut. 26:17; Deut. 26:18; Deut. 27:1; Deut. 28:1; Deut. 28:9; Deut. 28:45; Deut. 28:58; Deut. 29:9; Deut. 30:10; Deut. 30:16; Deut. 31:12; Deut. 33:9

Command ([06680](#))(**tsawah**) 1 [נִצַּח](#). (piel) command, order, tell, instruct, give direction, decree, i.e., state with force/authority what others must do (Ge 2:16); (pual) commanded, directed, be ordered (Ge 45:19; Ex 34:34; Lev 8:35; 10:13; Nu 3:16; 36:2; Eze 12:7; 24:18; 37:7); 2. (piel) appoint, ordain, give charge, i.e., assign one to a role or function for a task or office, with a focus on the authority of the one who appointed the leader (1Sa 25:30); 3. LN 13.104–13.163 (piel) be forbidden, i.e., pertaining to what does not happen, as it is not allowed by an authority (Dt 4:23), ([Swanson](#))

Vine - tsawah ([נִצַּח](#)), "to command." This verb occurs only in biblical Hebrew (in all periods) and imperial Aramaic (starting from around 500 B C.). Biblical occurrences number around 485. Essentially, this verb refers to verbal communication by which a superior "orders" or "commands" a subordinate. The word implies the content of what was said. Pharaoh "ordered" ("commanded") his men concerning Abraham, and they escorted Abraham and his party out of Egypt (Gen. 12:20). This "order" defines an action relevant to a specific situation. Tsawah can also connote "command" in the sense of the establishment of a rule by which a subordinate is to act in every recurring similar situation. In the Garden of Eden (the first appearance of this word in the Bible), God "commanded" ("set down the rule"): "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: ..." (Gen. 2:16). In this case, the word does not contain the content of the action but focuses on the action itself One of the

recurring formulas in the Bible is “X did all that Y commanded him”—e.g., Ruth “did according to all that her mother-in-law bade her” (Ruth 3:6). This means that she carried out Naomi’s “orders.” A similar formula, “X did just as Y commanded,” is first found in Num. 32:25, where the sons of Reuben and Gad say to Moses that they “will do as my lord commandeth.” These formulas indicate the accomplishment of, or the intention to accomplish, the “orders” of a superior. The verb **tsawah** can be used of a commission or charge, such as the act of “commanding,” “telling,” or “sending” someone to do a particular task. In Gen. 32:4, Jacob “commissioned” his servants to deliver a particular message to his brother Esau. They acted as his emissaries. Jacob commissioned (literally, “commanded”) his sons to bury him in the cave of Machpelah (Gen. 49:30), and then he died. This “command” constituted a last will and testament—an obligation or duty. The verb again indicates, therefore, appointing someone to be one’s emissary. **The most frequent subject of this verb is God.** However, He is not to be questioned or “commanded” to explain the work of His hands (Isa. 45:11). He tells Israel that His “commands” are unique, requiring an inner commitment and not just external obedience, as the commands of men do (Gen. 29:13). His “ordering” is given to Moses from above the mercy seat (Exod. 25:22) and from His “commands” at Sinai (Lev. 7:38; cf. 17:1ff.). At other times when He “commands,” the thing simply occurs; His word is active and powerful (Ps. 33:9). He also issues “orders” through and to the prophets (Jer. 27:4) who explain, apply, and speak His “commands” (Jer. 1:17). ([Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Old Testament and New Testament Words](#))

Tsawah - 474 verses - appoint(1), appointed(4), appoints(1), charge(5), charged(17), charging(1), command(56), commanded(332), commander(1), commanding(18), commands(6), commission(3), commissioned(4), commit(1), gave a command(1), gave them a charge(1), gave command(2), gave commandment(2), gave orders(2), give his charge(1), give you in commandment(1), give you charge(1), give orders(3), given(1), given a command(1), given it an order(1), given command(1), given commandment(1), giving(1), instructed(1), issued a command(2), laid(1), laid down(1), ordained(4), order(4), ordered(5), put(1), sent(1), set his in order(1), set your in order(2). Gen. 2:16; Gen. 3:11; Gen. 3:17; Gen. 6:22; Gen. 7:5; Gen. 7:9; Gen. 7:16; Gen. 12:20; Gen. 18:19; Gen. 21:4; Gen. 26:11; Gen. 27:8; Gen. 28:1; Gen. 28:6; Gen. 32:4; Gen. 32:17; Gen. 32:19; Gen. 42:25; Gen. 44:1; Gen. 45:19; Gen. 47:11; Gen. 49:29; Gen. 49:33; Gen. 50:2; Gen. 50:12; Gen. 50:16; Exod. 1:22; Exod. 4:28; Exod. 5:6; Exod. 6:13; Exod. 7:2; Exod. 7:6; Exod. 7:10; Exod. 7:20; Exod. 12:28; Exod. 12:50; Exod. 16:16; Exod. 16:24; Exod. 16:32; Exod. 16:34; Exod. 18:23; Exod. 19:7; Exod. 23:15; Exod. 25:22; Exod. 27:20; Exod. 29:35; Exod. 31:6; Exod. 31:11; Exod. 32:8; Exod. 34:4; Exod. 34:11; Exod. 34:18; Exod. 34:32; Exod. 34:34; Exod. 35:1; Exod. 35:4; Exod. 35:10; Exod. 35:29; Exod. 36:1; Exod. 36:5; Exod. 36:6; Exod. 38:22; Exod. 39:1; Exod. 39:5; Exod. 39:7; Exod. 39:21; Exod. 39:26; Exod. 39:29; Exod. 39:31; Exod. 39:32; Exod. 39:42; Exod. 39:43; Exod. 40:16; Exod. 40:19; Exod. 40:21; Exod. 40:23; Exod. 40:25; Exod. 40:27; Exod. 40:29; Exod. 40:32; Lev. 6:9; Lev. 7:36; Lev. 7:38; 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Deut. 4:14; Deut. 4:23; Deut. 4:40; Deut. 5:12; Deut. 5:15; Deut. 5:16; Deut. 5:32; Deut. 5:33; Deut. 6:1; Deut. 6:2; Deut. 6:6; Deut. 6:17; Deut. 6:20; Deut. 6:24; Deut. 6:25; Deut. 7:11; Deut. 8:1; Deut. 8:11; Deut. 9:12; Deut. 9:16; Deut. 10:5; Deut. 10:13; Deut. 11:8; Deut. 11:13; Deut. 11:22; Deut. 11:27; Deut. 11:28; Deut. 12:11; Deut. 12:14; Deut. 12:21; Deut. 12:28; Deut. 12:32; Deut. 13:5; Deut. 13:18; Deut. 15:5; Deut. 15:11; Deut. 15:15; Deut. 17:3; Deut. 18:18; Deut. 18:20; Deut. 19:7; Deut. 19:9; Deut. 20:17; Deut. 24:8; Deut. 24:18; Deut. 24:22; Deut. 26:13; Deut. 26:14; Deut. 26:16; Deut. 27:1; Deut. 27:4; Deut. 27:10; Deut. 27:11; Deut. 28:1; Deut. 28:8; Deut. 28:13; Deut. 28:14; Deut. 28:15; Deut. 28:45; Deut. 29:1; Deut. 30:2; Deut. 30:8; Deut. 30:11; Deut. 30:16; Deut. 31:5; Deut. 31:10; Deut. 31:14; Deut. 31:23; Deut. 31:25; Deut. 31:29; Deut. 32:46; Deut. 33:4; Deut. 34:9; Jos. 1:7; Jos. 1:9; Jos. 1:10; Jos. 1:11; Jos. 1:13; Jos. 1:16; Jos. 1:18; Jos. 3:3; Jos. 3:8; Jos. 4:3; Jos. 4:8; Jos. 4:10; Jos. 4:16; Jos. 4:17; Jos. 6:10; Jos. 7:11; Jos. 8:4; Jos. 8:8; Jos. 8:27; Jos. 8:29; Jos. 8:31; Jos. 8:33; Jos. 8:35; Jos. 9:24; Jos. 10:27; Jos. 10:40; Jos. 11:12; Jos. 11:15; Jos. 11:20; Jos. 13:6; Jos. 14:2; Jos. 14:5; Jos. 17:4; Jos. 18:8; Jos. 21:2; Jos. 21:8; Jos. 22:2; Jos. 22:5; Jos. 23:16; Jdg. 2:20; Jdg. 3:4; Jdg. 4:6; Jdg. 13:14; Jdg. 21:10; Jdg. 21:20; Ruth 2:9; Ruth 2:15; Ruth 3:6; 1 Sam. 2:29; 1 Sam. 13:13; 1 Sam. 13:14; 1 Sam. 17:20; 1 Sam. 18:22; 1 Sam. 20:29; 1 Sam. 21:2; 1 Sam. 25:30; 2 Sam. 4:12; 2 Sam. 5:25; 2 Sam. 6:21; 2 Sam. 7:7; 2 Sam. 7:11; 2 Sam. 9:11; 2 Sam. 11:19; 2 Sam. 13:28; 2 Sam. 13:29; 2 Sam. 14:8; 2 Sam. 14:19; 2 Sam. 17:14; 2 Sam. 17:23; 2 Sam. 18:5; 2 Sam. 18:12; 2 Sam. 21:14; 2 Sam. 24:19; 1 Ki. 1:35; 1 Ki. 2:1; 1 Ki. 2:43; 1 Ki. 2:46; 1 Ki. 5:6; 1 Ki. 5:17; 1 Ki. 8:58; 1 Ki. 9:4; 1 Ki. 11:10; 1 Ki. 11:11; 1 Ki. 11:38; 1 Ki. 13:9; 1 Ki. 13:21; 1 Ki. 15:5; 1 Ki. 17:4; 1 Ki. 17:9; 1 Ki. 22:31; 2 Ki. 11:5; 2 Ki. 11:9; 2 Ki. 11:15; 2 Ki. 14:6; 2 Ki. 16:15; 2 Ki. 16:16; 2 Ki. 17:13; 2 Ki. 17:15; 2 Ki. 17:27; 2 Ki. 17:34; 2 Ki. 17:35; 2 Ki. 18:6; 2 Ki. 18:12; 2 Ki. 20:1; 2 Ki. 21:8; 2 Ki. 22:12; 2 Ki. 23:4; 2 Ki. 23:21; 1 Chr. 6:49; 1 Chr. 14:16; 1 Chr. 15:15; 1 Chr. 16:15; 1 Chr. 16:40; 1 Chr. 17:6; 1 Chr. 17:10; 1 Chr. 22:6; 1 Chr. 22:12; 1 Chr. 22:13; 1 Chr. 22:17; 1 Chr. 24:19; 2 Chr. 7:13; 2 Chr. 7:17; 2 Chr. 18:30; 2 Chr. 19:9; 2 Chr. 23:8; 2 Chr. 25:4; 2 Chr. 33:8; 2 Chr. 34:20; Ezr. 4:3; Ezr. 9:11; Neh. 1:7; Neh. 1:8; Neh. 5:14; Neh. 7:2; Neh. 8:1; Neh. 8:14; Neh. 9:14; Est. 2:10; Est. 2:20; Est. 3:2; Est. 3:12; Est. 4:5; Est. 4:8; Est. 4:10; Est. 4:17; Est. 8:9; Job 36:32; Job 37:12; Job 38:12; Ps. 7:6; Ps. 33:9; Ps. 42:8; Ps. 44:4; Ps. 68:28; Ps. 71:3; Ps. 78:5; Ps. 78:23; Ps. 91:11; Ps. 105:8; Ps. 111:9; Ps. 119:4; Ps. 119:138; Ps. 133:3; Ps. 148:5; Isa. 5:6; Isa. 10:6; Isa. 13:3; Isa. 23:11; Isa. 34:16; Isa. 38:1; Isa. 45:11; Isa. 45:12; Isa. 48:5; Isa. 55:4; Jer. 1:7; Jer. 1:17; Jer. 7:22; Jer. 7:23; Jer. 7:31; Jer. 11:4; Jer. 11:8; Jer. 13:5; Jer. 13:6; Jer. 14:14; Jer. 17:22; Jer. 19:5; Jer. 23:32; Jer. 26:2; Jer. 26:8; Jer. 27:4; Jer. 29:23; Jer. 32:13; Jer. 32:23; Jer. 32:35; Jer. 34:22; Jer. 35:6; Jer. 35:8; Jer. 35:10; Jer. 35:14; Jer. 35:16; Jer. 35:18; Jer. 36:5; Jer. 36:8; Jer. 36:26; Jer. 37:21; Jer. 38:10; Jer. 38:27; Jer. 39:11; Jer. 47:7; Jer. 51:59; Lam. 1:10; Lam. 1:17; Lam. 2:17; Lam. 3:37; Ezek. 9:11; Ezek. 10:6; Ezek. 12:7; Ezek. 24:18; Ezek. 37:7; Ezek. 37:10; Amos 2:12; Amos 6:11; Amos 9:3; Amos 9:4; Amos 9:9; Nah. 1:14; Zech. 1:6; Mal. 4:4

ISRAEL THE HEAD OF ALL THE EARTH'S NATIONS

The LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth- Note there is no "Amen" for in these blessings as there was for the previous 12 curses. This begins a series of blessings which prophesy what God promises to accomplish for an obedient people. The blessing is preeminence as the foremost nation in the world. Earlier Moses had declared that Yahweh would **set Israel "high above all nations** which He has made, for praise, fame, and honor; and that you shall be a consecrated people to the LORD your God, as He has spoken.” (Dt 26:19+)

The purpose of the elevation is revelation

The purpose of Israel **high above all the nations of the earth** was not for their glory but for the glory of the LORD, for in this position they would be **“a light to the Gentiles”** (Isa 49:6KJV, see Dt 28:10+). Paul quoted Isa 49:6KJV in Acts 13:47+ on his first missionary journey among the Gentiles, his quote showing that he clearly understood God’s intention for the Jewish nation was to be a **light to the Gentiles**, a mission in which they failed but was ultimately fulfilled by Israel’s Messiah, the Light of the world (Jn 1:9+, Jn 8:12) Instead of quoting his own commission to the Gentiles given to him on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:15-16+), he chose to quote God’s commission for all Israel as found in the Old Testament. Israel’s mission had always been to bring the Gentile nations to

God (cf Isa 42:6KJV).

THOUGHT - And beloved to be lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation (Php 2:15+, cf Mt 5:14-16+) is also our mission, but it is even broader for us because we are to take the Gospel "to the Jew first and also to the Greek." (Ro 1:16+) How are you doing with your mission (cf 2 Cor 5:18-20+) ? Is it an omission? Do not miss your mission for it is the opportunity of a lifetime (Eph 5:16+, see Redeem the Time for a little musical motivation **watch the clock** on this video "[Redeem the Time](#)").

Utley on "**God will set you high above all the nations of the earth**" - The purpose of the elevation is revelation (cf. Dt 26:19; Dt 28:13)! God wants to draw the world to Himself through Israel (cf. Ge 12:3; Dt 22:18; Ex 19:5-6).

Believer's Study Bible - Typical of ancient Near Eastern covenant documents, Deuteronomy contains in this chapter blessings (vv. 1-14) and curses (vv. 15-68) promised on the basis of Israel's response of obedience. **This is one of the most important chapters in the O.T., furnishing the basis on which the prophets preached repentance to later generations of Israel** (e.g., Amos 4:6-13). As testified by the arguments of Job's friends, however (cf. Job 8:3-7, 20-22; 11:13-20; 15:20-35), the corporate and national focus of these promises was often missed, even in biblical times. The blessings and curses came to be removed from their covenant context and were applied contractually to individuals, so that wealth was regarded as symptomatic of righteousness, and suffering as consequential of sin. Jesus flatly declared this to be false (John 9:3; cf. Matt. 19:23-25). Although immeasurable blessings of every kind were (and are) promised to men and women of faith, receipt of material blessings was not necessarily assured in this life (unless they were specifically promised to an individual, as they were to Abraham). Material as well as spiritual blessings in this life were being promised in Deut. 28 only to the righteous nation of Israel.

Paul speaks of believers raised in a different even better way in Ephesians 2:5-7

even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and **seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus**, so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

QUESTION - [What are the blessings God promised Israel for obedience?](#)

ANSWER - God promised many blessings to Israel in the book of Deuteronomy if they would obey His commands. Many important blessings are listed together in Deuteronomy 28:1-14. They include the following:

1. **Prominence above other nations:** "If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations on earth" (Deuteronomy 28:1).
2. **Successful cities and farming:** "You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the country" (Deuteronomy 28:3).
3. **Blessings of children, food, and livestock:** "The fruit of your womb will be blessed, and the crops of your land and the young of your livestock—the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks" (Deuteronomy 28:4).
4. **Protection and power against enemies:** "The Lord will grant that the enemies who rise up against you will be defeated before you. They will come at you from one direction but flee from you in seven" (Deuteronomy 28:7).
5. **Bountiful harvest of food:** "The Lord will send a blessing on your barns and on everything you put your hand to. The Lord your God will bless you in the land he is giving you" (Deuteronomy 28:8).
6. **Set apart as God's holy people:** "The Lord will establish you as his holy people, as he promised you on oath, if you keep the commands of the Lord your God and walk in obedience to him" (Deuteronomy 28:9).
7. **Feared by other nations:** "Then all the peoples on earth will see that you are called by the name of the Lord, and they will fear you" (Deuteronomy 28:10).
8. **Prosperity regarding family, food, and farm livestock:** "The Lord will grant you abundant prosperity—in the fruit of your womb, the young of your livestock and the crops of your ground—in the land he swore to your ancestors to give you" (Deuteronomy 28:11).
9. **Appropriate rain and favorable blessing upon their work, including freedom from debt:** "The Lord will open the heavens, the storehouse of his bounty, to send rain on your land in season and to bless all the work of your hands. You will lend to many nations but will borrow from none" (Deuteronomy 28:12).
10. **Leadership among other people and nations:** "The Lord will make you the head, not the tail. If you pay attention to the commands of the Lord your God that I give you this day and carefully follow them, you will always be at the top, never at the bottom"

(Deuteronomy 28:13).

In the original Hebrew of this passage, the blessings are arranged in a [chiasmic pattern](#) with many of the themes repeating. The concepts of prosperity, success, and God's favor predominate as themes of God's people living in the Promised Land. These blessings were conditional, as are the [curses](#) in the next set of verses. | [GotQuestions.org](#)

Deuteronomy 28:2 "All these blessings will come upon you and overtake you if you obey the LORD your God:

- **come** De 28:15,45 Zec 1:6 1Ti 4:8
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

BLESSINGS WILL OVERTAKE ISRAEL

What a description of such great potential promised to the nation of Israel -- **come upon and overtake** -- not just that Israel would receive these prophetic blessings but the blessings would in a sense be pursuing Israel and would **overtake** her if she proved obedient to Jehovah's laws and commands. Israel was "**overtaken**" but sadly it predominantly by the curses than by the blessings for she repeatedly proved herself to be an unfaithful wife of Jehovah, continually "a-whoring" (playing the harlot) after other "lovers," (idols, including the Baal's, which is fascinating as "Baal" means husband, owner, master!)

All these blessings will come upon you and overtake you if you obey (shama) the LORD your God - IF (If in Dt 28:1, 2, 9, 13, 15, 58) **you obey** is the condition to be met in order to receive the divine blessings. **Blessings** in the Septuagint is [eulogia](#). Note the word **overtake** is used again in this chapter for the good (blessings Dt 28:15+) and the bad (curses would **overtake** them! - Dt 28:45+) This is the same verb used in Dt 19:6+ "otherwise the avenger of blood might pursue the manslayer in the heat of his anger, and **overtake** him, because the way is long." This gives you a sense of the "force" with which the divine blessings will **overtake** those who are obedient. The Greek for **overtake** is [heurisko](#) which means to come upon or find. The fascinating picture presented by use of the verbs come upon (pursue) and **overtake** is that Israel would not be able to escape the blessings of Yahweh. The point is that when they obey, they are absolutely guaranteed of being blessed.

THOUGHT - As an aside, the principle that was true of Israel is also true in our life today as believers. While we may not always be experientially aware of God's blessing, we can be sure that His blessing will **overtake** us when we **obey** Him! May our Father grant each of us to **be** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) **holy** in ALL our behavior, for it is written "You shall be holy for I am holy." In Jesus' Name. Amen. (1 Peter 1:15-16+)

Scofield on IF - What under law was conditional is, under grace, freely given to every believer. The "if" is the essence of law as a method of divine dealing, and the fundamental reason why "the law made nothing perfect" (Heb 7:18-19; cp. Ro 8:3). To Abraham the promise preceded the requirement; at Sinai the requirement preceded the promise. In the New Covenant the Abrahamic order is followed (see Heb 8:8-12).

Blessings (01293) ([berakah](#) from [barak](#)) is a feminine noun referring to something that brings prosperity and life. It is either the verbal endowment with good things or a collective expression for the good things themselves. It designates the good favor bestowed on someone as by giving a gift (Ge 33:11, 1 Sa 25:27) or by giving words of blessing (Ge 27:36, 49:28), which were a verbal picture of tangible blessing. Berakah most often describes divine favor bestowed on the righteous (Ge 12:2, Mal 3:10). It denotes words of blessing from a parent (Gen. 27:12, 41), from Moses (Deut. 33:1), from God (Deut. 11:26, 27, 29; Josh. 8:34; 2 Sam. 7:29), from the people (Prov. 11:26; 24:25), and from a poor person (Job 29:13).

The [1828 Webster's Dictionary](#) says BLESSING is "Any means of happiness; a gift, benefit or advantage; that which promotes temporal prosperity and welfare, or secures immortal felicity."

Overtake (05381) ([nasaq](#)) means to overtake (Ge 14:9 Egyptians "**overtook** them camping by the sea.", cf Ge 15:9), to reach (Ge 31:24 "Laban **caught up** with Jacob"), to get. It often means to overtake, to catch up to someone (Ge 31:25; 44:4, 6; Ex. 14:9; 15:9; Nu 6:21). It is used figuratively of age, of years attaining a certain level (Gen. 47:9); or of joy and rejoicing arriving, becoming a reality (Isa. 35:10). It means to afford, to have at one's hand, the ability, to have sufficient (Lev. 5:11; 14:21); or to obtain, come into possession of property (Lev. 25:47). **Vine - nasag** (5381 ,נָסַג), "to reach, overtake, attain." First use is Ge 31:25: "Then Laban **overtook** Jacob." Often it is used in connection with the verb, "to pursue, follow," as in Ge 44:4: "follow after the men; and when thou dost overtake them...." **Nasag** is sometimes used in the figurative sense to describe

“being overtaken” by something undesirable or unwanted, such as war (Hos. 10:9), the sword (Jer. 42:16), or curses (Deut. 28:15, 45). Fortunately, blessings may “overtake” those who are obedient (Deut. 28:2). **Nasag** may mean “to attain to” something, “to come into contact” with it: “The sword of him that layeth at him [Leviathan] ...” (Job 41:26). Used figuratively, “The ransomed of the Lord ... shall obtain joy and gladness ...” (Isa. 35:10). Jacob complained: “... the days of the years of my pilgrimage ... have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers ...” (Gen. 47:9).

Currid on overtake - This verb is often used of someone pursuing his object: its use here involves a personification of the blessings. They will pursue and track down the obedient! ([EPSC-Deuteronomy](#))

Nasaq - 47v - able*(1), afford*(2), attained(1), becomes sufficient(1), caught(1), find(1), insufficient(2), last until(2), limited(1), means*(1), obtain(1), overtake(17), overtaken(2), overtakes(1), overtook(6), prospers(1), put(1), reach(1), reaches(1), recovers(1), remove(1), surely overtake(1), within(2). Gen. 31:25; Gen. 44:4; Gen. 44:6; Gen. 47:9; Exod. 14:9; Exod. 15:9; Lev. 5:11; Lev. 14:21; Lev. 14:22; Lev. 14:30; Lev. 14:31; Lev. 14:32; Lev. 25:26; Lev. 25:47; Lev. 25:49; Lev. 26:5; Lev. 27:8; Num. 6:21; Deut. 19:6; Deut. 28:2; Deut. 28:15; Deut. 28:45; Jos. 2:5; 1 Sam. 14:26; 1 Sam. 30:8; 2 Sam. 15:14; 2 Ki. 25:5; 1 Chr. 21:12; Job 24:2; Job 27:20; Job 41:26; Ps. 7:5; Ps. 18:37; Ps. 40:12; Ps. 69:24; Prov. 2:19; Isa. 35:10; Isa. 51:11; Isa. 59:9; Jer. 39:5; Jer. 42:16; Jer. 52:8; Lam. 1:3; Ezek. 46:7; Hos. 2:7; Hos. 10:9; Zech. 1:6

Raymond Brown has some interesting, pithy introductory comments on this section - The initial list of blessings and curses is deliberately presented as ten stark alternatives. The couplets aid the memory process but they also heighten the importance of choice: You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the country ... You will be cursed in the city and cursed in the country (28:3, 16). Do the people want the abundant blessing of God upon their life, urban and rural, physical and material, herds and flocks, basket and kneading trough, returning home and going away—or do they deliberately wish to choose the reverse? The Lord knew that, however attractive the ‘blessings’ might be, his people would, like ourselves, learn more through adversity than in prosperity. Dietrich Bonhoeffer proved that in a Nazi prison. In a letter to a friend he confesses to something which finds an echo in the experience of most of us: ‘When all’s said and done, it is true that it needs trouble to drive us to prayer, though every time I feel it is something to be ashamed of.’ Affliction is a persuasive teacher and its lessons are not easily forgotten. Instead of drawing us close to God, life’s prosperous circumstances can lead to spiritual apathy and indifference. This book has already issued that warning: ‘... when you eat and are satisfied, be careful that you do not forget the LORD’ (Dt 6:11–12). For this reason, it is the curses which dominate the list. It is not that God is vindictive; the curses are merciful warnings. ‘If you persist in doing that, then these consequences will inevitably follow.’ The long list reads like a prolonged agonizing dirge but it is not simply a catalogue of grim catastrophe. As a good warning device it serves a distinctive educational purpose—‘Don’t let this happen to you’. The solemn theme of divine judgment is presented with four facets. (See [The Message of Deuteronomy](#))

Deuteronomy 28:3 "Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the country.

- **in the city:** Ps 107:36-37 128:1-5 144:12-15 Isa 65:21-23 Zec 8:3-5
- **in the country:** Ge 26:12 39:5 Am 9:13,14 Hag 2:19 Mal 3:10,11
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

"OMNIPRESENT" BLESSING

[Omnipresent](#) means everywhere and simultaneously.

Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the country- The locations **city** and **country** are used as metaphors signifying EVERYWHERE Israel would live! It could also refer to God's blessing on their homes and their farms."Both the merchant in the city and the farmer in the country would be blessed." (Deere [Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament - Page 311](#)) **Blessed** is **barak** (Lxx = [eulogeo](#)) used in Dt 28:3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 12.

Wiersbe has a note on how these promised blessings to Israel relate to the church today - God hasn't promised to make His spiritual children wealthy, but He has blessed His church with "all the blessings of the Spirit" (Eph. 1:3+), and in Christ He has lifted us up "far above all" (Eph 1:20–23). We must not apply to the church today the covenant promises God gave only to Israel. ([Wiersbe Bible Commentary - OT](#))

Blessed ([01288](#)) **barak** us a verb which literally can mean to kneel (to go to one's knees - Camel in Ge 24:11,

Solomon in 2Chr 6:13) as contrasted with standing position or even a bowing at the waist). And so barak can refer to an act of adoration sometimes on bended knee. To give divine blessings (Ge 1:22, 9:1-7) To esteem greatly or adore God for His blessings (Ge 24:48, Ps 103:1) To invoke blessings upon another (Ge 24:60, 27:4, 27) Barak occurs first in Ge. 1:22. God's first word to man is introduced in the same way in Ge 1:28). Thus the whole creation is shown to depend upon God for its continued existence and function (cf. Ps 104:27-30). Barak is used again of man in Ge 5:2, at the beginning of the history of believing men, and again after the Flood in Ge 9:1. The central element of God's covenant with Abram is: "I will bless thee ... and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee ... and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Ge 12:2-3). This "blessing" on the nations is repeated in Ge. 18:18; 22:18; 28:14 (cf. Ge 26:4; Jer. 4:2). In all of these instances, God's blessing goes out to the nations through Abraham or his seed.

Deuteronomy 28:4 "Blessed shall be the offspring of your body and the produce of your ground and the offspring of your beasts, the increase of your herd and the young of your flock.

- De 28:11 7:13 Ge 22:17 49:25 Lev 26:9 Ps 107:38 127:3 128:3 Pr 10:22 Pr 13:22 20:7 1Ti 4:8
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

ANIMAL AND HUMAN OFFSPRING SIGNIFIED PROSPERITY

Blessed shall be the offspring of your body (lit - "the fruit of your womb") **and the produce of your ground and the offspring of your beasts, the increase of your herd and the young of your flock** - Fertile wombs, fertile fields and fertile herds. All of these things are gifts of God and indicative of His hand of blessing on the nation of Israel. Large families, abundant harvests and plentiful animals would all be fruits of obedience

Utley - The man with large families, large herds, was one who was blessed by God (cf. 7:13; 28:4, 11; 30:9). These were physical signs of God's blessings (cf. Gen. 1:22, 28).

Deuteronomy 28:5 "Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl.

- **kneading bowl**, De 28:5
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

NEVER A "NEED" NO FAMINE

Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl- **Baskets** in this context of abundant produce (v4) were used for carrying the produce, the implication being that Yahweh would fill them up. The **kneading bowl** was used to prepare meals, so Moses is saying they would never starve, never lack for adequate supply of food and nourishment. Dt 28:17 gives us the antithetical curse "Cursed shall be your **basket** and your **kneading bowl**."

TSK - By basket, may be understood the olive-gathering and vintage, in which it was employed; and by the store or remainder, all laid up for future use, or prepared for present consumption.

Deuteronomy 28:6 "Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out.

- De 31:2 Nu 27:17 2Sa 3:25 2Ch 1:10 Ps 121:8
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Psalms 121:8 The LORD will guard your going **out** and your coming **in** From this time forth and forever.

Isaiah 37:28 "But I know your sitting down And your going **out** and your coming **in** And your raging against

Me.

A BLESSED LIFE IN & OUT

Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out- Coming and going was a Hebraic way of describing one's entire life (see Dt 31:2, Nu 27:17). They would be blessed when they came **in** their homes (their family life) and when they went **out** (their secular/business life), in short is all areas of their life. The antithetical curse for disobedience is Dt 28:19 "Cursed shall you be when you come in, and cursed shall you be when you go out.

THOUGHT - Do you want to enjoy God's blessings in all aspects of your life? The answer is simple. Obey God's commands. "Disclaimer" - This does not mean you will never have trials, tests, afflictions, etc, but it does mean that God's presence and power will be always accessible to you when you walking through the valley of the shadow of death.

Deuteronomy 28:7 "The LORD shall cause your enemies who rise up against you to be defeated before you; they will come out against you one way and will flee before you seven ways.

- **shall cause:** De 28:25 32:30 Lev 26:7,8 2Sa 22:38-41 Ps 89:23
- **flee before:** Jos 8:22 Josh 10:10,11,42 1Sa 7:3-11 2Ch 14:2-6,9-15 19:4 2Ch 20:22-25 31:20,21 32:21,22
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

1 Samuel 7:3-11 (Then Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel, saying, "If you return to the LORD with all your heart, remove the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you and direct your hearts to the LORD and serve Him alone; and He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines." 4 So the sons of Israel removed the Baals and the Ashtaroth and served the LORD alone. 5 Then Samuel said, "Gather all Israel to Mizpah and I will pray to the LORD for you." 6 They gathered to Mizpah, and drew water and poured it out before the LORD, and fasted on that day and said there, "We have sinned against the LORD." And Samuel judged the sons of Israel at Mizpah. 7 Now when the Philistines heard that the sons of Israel had gathered to Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the sons of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines. 8 Then the sons of Israel said to Samuel, "Do not cease to cry to the LORD our God for us, that He may save us from the hand of the Philistines." 9 Samuel took a suckling lamb and offered it for a whole burnt offering to the LORD; and Samuel cried to the LORD for Israel and the LORD answered him. 10 **Now Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, and the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel. But the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day against the Philistines and confused them, so that they were routed before Israel.** 11 **The men of Israel went out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines, and struck them down as far as below Beth-car.**

STRIKING VICTORIES OVER THEIR ADVERSARIES

The LORD shall cause - Do not miss this. Supernatural military success is promised! Israel would not be victorious because of their natural strength but because of the good hand (power) of Yahweh on them in turn because of their obedience. Dt 30:7; Dt 33:27-29 describe Yahweh's taking the offense against Israel's enemies, thus serving as her Defender when she was obedient.

THOUGHT - The believer's enemies today are the [world](#), the [flesh](#) and the [devil](#) and their wage incessant against our soul (cf 1 Pe 2:11+, Gal 5:17+). If we are obedient in our general lifestyle (not perfection but direction), God will enable us to more regularly and with greater ease to defeat these powerful adversaries. But remember that even then, it is not "Let go, let God," but "Let God, let's go." He will enable us with the **desire** and the **power** (Php 2:13NLT+) to kill sin (Ro 8:13+, Col 3:5+), but we must still work out our salvation in fear and trembling (Php 2:12+). This is the "[Paradoxical Principle of 100% Dependent and 100% Responsible](#)". The corollary truth is if you are have frequent defeats with one or all three of these enemies, you need to do a "mirror check" and see if the failure to defeat these enemies is directed related to your own personal disobedience. Upshot - Kill sin before it kills you!

Your enemies who rise up against you to be defeated before you - Why? Because Jehovah is fighting with them and for them. This prophecy was repeated a number of times when Israel was walking in obedience (Read [King Asa](#) of Southern Kingdom - 2Ch 14:9-15, [King Jehoshaphat](#) in 2Ch 20:22-25, [King Hezekiah](#) in 2Chr 31:20-21 and 2Chr 32:20-22). The word **forenemies** is repeatedly used in this chapter (most often in the curses) - Deut. 28:7; Deut. 28:25; Deut. 28:31; Deut. 28:48; Deut. 28:53; Deut. 28:55; Deut. 28:57; Deut. 28:68. The first use of enemies is in Yahweh's promise to Abraham that "your seed shall possess the gate of their **enemies**." (Ge 22:17) Of course now we see that this was not an unconditional promise, but was conditioned on Israel's obedience.

They will come out against you one way and will flee before you seven ways -- **Flee** seven ways is a figurative way to describe Israel's complete routing of their enemies. **Utley** says "This idiom refers to the fearful, unorganized retreat of Israel (cf. Dt 28:20, 25)."

Currid - The adversary may attack en masse on one road, but he will be routed and scattered in all directions. He will flee on 'seven' roads; that number denotes fullness and completion—the enemy will be broadly scattered. Israel has already witnessed this blessing in effect when Yahweh defeated Egypt and the other nations during the Exodus and the wilderness wanderings. ([EPSC-Deuteronomy](#))

Enemies (0341) **ayab**: means to be actively hostile toward another, to be in open opposition and hostility, to treat as an enemy. It denotes hatred and active hostility on the part of a person or group of persons (e.g., a nation) directed towards an individual, group, or nation. TWOT says "While the word usually refers simply to the enemies of a nation or an individual, theological implications are inherent in a number of contexts. The defeated enemy was a mark of God's blessing on Israel (Lev 26:7–8; Deut 6:19). But when Israel forsook God she could expect to be defeated at the hands of her enemies (Lev 26:17, 25, 32 etc.; Num 14:42; Deut 1:42; II Kgs 21:14). Israel's victory over her enemies was conditioned upon obedience, e.g. observing God's commandments (Lev 26:3; cf. v. 7) and repenting (I Kgs 8:33; II Chr 6:24). The defeat of David's enemies was a mark of God's favor on him (II Sam 7:9; 22:18, 41). The destruction of Israel's enemies was seen as a result of God's intervention and thus became evidence of God's sovereignty (Josh 23:1; Jud 8:34; I Kgs 8:46). Even God has enemies, but they will experience certain retribution (Isa 66:6; Ps 37:20; 68:1). The word occurs in several contexts in an ethical sense. One should not rejoice over the fall of an enemy (Prov 24:17). Even one's enemies will be at peace with him when his ways please the Lord (Pr 16:7).

Ayab - 274 verses - enemies(196), enemies'(2), enemy(79), enemy to your enemies(1), enemy's(1), foes(2). Gen. 22:17; Gen. 49:8; Exod. 15:6; Exod. 15:9; Exod. 23:4; Exod. 23:22; Exod. 23:27; Lev. 26:7; Lev. 26:8; Lev. 26:16; Lev. 26:17; Lev. 26:25; Lev. 26:32; Lev. 26:34; Lev. 26:36; Lev. 26:37; Lev. 26:38; Lev. 26:39; Lev. 26:41; Lev. 26:44; Num. 10:9; Num. 10:35; Num. 14:42; Num. 23:11; Num. 24:10; Num. 24:18; Num. 32:21; Num. 35:23; Deut. 1:42; Deut. 6:19; Deut. 12:10; Deut. 20:1; Deut. 20:3; Deut. 20:4; Deut. 20:14; Deut. 21:10; Deut. 23:9; Deut. 23:14; Deut. 25:19; Deut. 28:7; Deut. 28:25; Deut. 28:31; Deut. 28:48; Deut. 28:53; Deut. 28:55; Deut. 28:57; Deut. 28:68; Deut. 30:7; Deut. 32:27; Deut. 32:31; Deut. 32:42; Deut. 33:27; Deut. 33:29; Jos. 7:8; Jos. 7:12; Jos. 7:13; Jos. 10:13; Jos. 10:19; Jos. 10:25; Jos. 21:44; Jos. 22:8; Jos. 23:1; Jdg. 2:14; Jdg. 2:18; Jdg. 3:28; Jdg. 5:31; Jdg. 8:34; Jdg. 11:36; Jdg. 16:23; Jdg. 16:24; 1 Sam. 2:1; 1 Sam. 4:3; 1 Sam. 12:10; 1 Sam. 12:11; 1 Sam. 14:24; 1 Sam. 14:30; 1 Sam. 14:47; 1 Sam. 18:25; 1 Sam. 18:29; 1 Sam. 19:17; 1 Sam. 20:15; 1 Sam. 20:16; 1 Sam. 24:4; 1 Sam. 24:19; 1 Sam. 25:22; 1 Sam. 25:26; 1 Sam. 25:29; 1 Sam. 26:8; 1 Sam. 29:8; 1 Sam. 30:26; 2 Sam. 3:18; 2 Sam. 4:8; 2 Sam. 5:20; 2 Sam. 7:1; 2 Sam. 7:9; 2 Sam. 7:11; 2 Sam. 12:14; 2 Sam. 18:19; 2 Sam. 18:32; 2 Sam. 19:9; 2 Sam. 22:1; 2 Sam. 22:4; 2 Sam. 22:18; 2 Sam. 22:38; 2 Sam. 22:41; 2 Sam. 22:49; 1 Ki. 3:11; 1 Ki. 8:33; 1 Ki. 8:37; 1 Ki. 8:44; 1 Ki. 8:46; 1 Ki. 8:48; 1 Ki. 21:20; 2 Ki. 17:39; 2 Ki. 21:14; 1 Chr. 14:11; 1 Chr. 17:8; 1 Chr. 17:10; 1 Chr. 21:12; 1 Chr. 22:9; 2 Chr. 6:24; 2 Chr. 6:28; 2 Chr. 6:34; 2 Chr. 6:36; 2 Chr. 20:27; 2 Chr. 20:29; 2 Chr. 25:8; 2 Chr. 26:13; Ezr. 8:22; Ezr. 8:31; Neh. 4:15; Neh. 5:9; Neh. 6:1; Neh. 6:16; Neh. 9:28; Est. 7:6; Est. 8:13; Est. 9:1; Est. 9:5; Est. 9:16; Est. 9:22; Job 13:24; Job 27:7; Job 33:10; Ps. 3:7; Ps. 6:10; Ps. 7:5; Ps. 8:2; Ps. 9:3; Ps. 9:6; Ps. 13:2; Ps. 13:4; Ps. 17:9; Ps. 18:3; Ps. 18:17; Ps. 18:37; Ps. 18:40; Ps. 18:48; Ps. 21:8; Ps. 25:2; Ps. 25:19; Ps. 27:2; Ps. 27:6; Ps. 30:1; Ps. 31:8; Ps. 31:15; Ps. 35:19; Ps. 37:20; Ps. 38:19; Ps. 41:2; Ps. 41:5; Ps. 41:11; Ps. 42:9; Ps. 43:2; Ps. 44:16; Ps. 45:5; Ps. 54:7; Ps. 55:3; Ps. 55:12; Ps. 56:9; Ps. 59:1; Ps. 61:3; Ps. 64:1; Ps. 66:3; Ps. 68:1; Ps. 68:21; Ps. 68:23; Ps. 69:4; Ps. 69:18; Ps. 71:10; Ps. 72:9; Ps. 74:3; Ps. 74:10; Ps. 74:18; Ps. 78:53; Ps. 80:6; Ps. 81:14; Ps. 83:2; Ps. 89:10; Ps. 89:22; Ps. 89:42; Ps. 89:51; Ps. 92:9; Ps. 102:8; Ps. 106:10; Ps. 106:42; Ps. 110:1; Ps. 110:2; Ps. 119:98; Ps. 127:5; Ps. 132:18; Ps. 138:7; Ps. 139:22; Ps. 143:3; Ps. 143:9; Ps. 143:12; Prov. 16:7; Prov. 24:17; Isa. 1:24; Isa. 9:11; Isa. 42:13; Isa. 59:18; Isa. 62:8; Isa. 63:10; Isa. 66:6; Isa. 66:14; Jer. 6:25; Jer. 12:7; Jer. 15:9; Jer. 15:11; Jer. 15:14; Jer. 17:4; Jer. 18:17; Jer. 19:7; Jer. 19:9; Jer. 20:4; Jer. 20:5; Jer. 21:7; Jer. 30:14; Jer. 31:16; Jer. 34:20; Jer. 34:21; Jer. 44:30; Jer. 49:37; Lam. 1:2; Lam. 1:5; Lam. 1:9; Lam. 1:16; Lam. 1:21; Lam. 2:3; Lam. 2:4; Lam. 2:5; Lam. 2:7; Lam. 2:16; Lam. 2:17; Lam. 2:22; Lam. 3:46; Lam. 3:52; Lam. 4:12; Ezek. 36:2; Ezek. 39:27; Hos. 8:3; Amos 9:4; Mic. 2:8; Mic. 4:10; Mic. 5:9; Mic. 7:6; Mic. 7:8; Mic. 7:10; Nah. 1:2; Nah. 1:8; Nah. 3:11; Nah. 3:13; Zeph. 3:15

Deuteronomy 28:8 "The LORD will command the blessing upon you in your barns and in all that you put your hand to, and He will bless you in the land which the LORD your God gives you.

- **command**: Lev 25:21 Ps 42:8 44:4 133:3
- **barns**, Lev 26:4-5,10 2Ki 6:27 Ps 144:13 Pr 3:9-10 Hag 2:19 Mal 3:10-11 Mt 6:26 13:30 Lu 12:18,24,25
- **gives**: De 15:10
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Leviticus 26:4-5; 10+ then I shall give you rains in their season, so that the land will yield its produce and the trees of the field will bear their fruit. 5'Indeed, your threshing will last for you until grape gathering, and grape gathering will last until sowing time. You will thus eat your food to the full and live securely in your land....10 'You will eat the old supply and clear out the old because of the new.

Proverbs 3:9-10+ Honor the LORD from your wealth And from the first of all your produce; 10 So your **barns will be filled with plenty** And your vats will overflow with new wine.

Malachi 3:10-11+ "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this," says the LORD of hosts, "if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows. 11"Then I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of the ground; nor will your vine in the field cast its grapes," says the LORD of hosts.

BLESSING ON BARNs AND HANDs

The LORD will command the blessing upon you in your barns and in all that you put your hand to- Note that Yahweh is sovereign over blessings here commanding them to fall on Israel, in this case grain filling their barns full. One is reminded of James 1:17+ "Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with Whom there is no variation or shifting shadow." **Blessing** upon their **barns** speaks of abundant harvests (God caused the growth and provided the water for growth).

And He will bless you in the land which the LORD your God gives you- This is a more all inclusive blessing taking care of things not mentioned in the previous blessings. Everything the obedient Israelites did would be blessed by Yahweh. The phrase **the land which the LORD your God gives you** is an affirmation of **the land** promised in the Abrahamic Covenant (Ge 12:1-3+, Ge 15:18-19+).

Deuteronomy 28:9 "The LORD will establish you as a holy people to Himself, as He swore to you, if you keep the commandments of the LORD your God and walk in His ways.

- **establish:** De 7:6 Dt 26:18-19 Dt 29:13 Ge 17:7 Ex 19:5-6 Ps 87:5 Isa 1:26 62:12 2Th 3:3 Tit 2:14 1Pe 2:9-11 5:10
- **swore:** De 7:8 13:17 29:12 Ex 19:5,6 Jer 11:5 Heb 6:13-18
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 7:6-8+ "For you are a **holy people** to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth 7 "The LORD did not **set His love** on you nor **choose** you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples 8 but because the LORD loved you and **kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers**, the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

ISRAEL A HOLY PEOPLE

The LORD will establish you as a holy people to Himself - Establish is [qum](#) (Lxx = [anistemi](#)) which means to raise up, to set. **Holy** (Lxx = [hagios](#)) is first used in Ex 3:5 to describe Moses standing on "holy ground." Wherever God is, is holy and His people are to also be holy, set apart from the corrupt, profane depraved godless world and set apart to Him and His service, His purposes (and not to be used for common or sinful, idolatrous purposes).

From the birth of Israel as a nation this was Yahweh's desire for the "chosen people"

Exodus 19:5-6+ Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; 6 and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a **holy nation.**' These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel."

[Guzik](#) makes an excellent point - Perhaps the best blessing had to do with Israel's own relationship with God. God would separate and obedient Israel unto Himself, speaking of a special relationship. If not for this, all the material blessings described previously would be empty.

Holy ([06918](#)). **שִׁדְדָה** **qāḏōšh** - An adjective meaning sacred, holy. It is used to denote someone or something that is inherently sacred or has been designated as sacred by divine rite or cultic ceremony. It designates that

which is the opposite of common or profane. It could be said the qāḏōš is a positive term regarding the character of its referent, where common is a neutral term and profane a very negative term. Three times in the OT God's **Spirit** is called the Holy Spirit (Ps. 51:11; Isa. 63:10f). **Holy** things and holy people are not to be used for common or sinful, idolatrous purposes. God is holy and speaks and swears on the basis of his holiness (cf. Ps 60:6; 89:35). This means that He acts consistently with his moral character. His acts, flowing from his nature, define what goodness and purity are. Holiness really sums up all of what God is as separate from his creation and from all evil; He is awesome and wonderfully good (Ps. 97:12). God's people should worship Him "in the beauty of holiness" (Ps. 29:2), which may refer to the LORD himself or to what worshipers are to wear when approaching Him.

As He swore ([shaba](#); Lxx - [omnuo](#)) **to you** - After Israel's redemption from slavery in Egypt Yahweh gives them this promise "Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; 6 and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a **holy** nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel." (Exodus 19:5-6+)

Currid on as He swore to you - This latter clause serves as a formula in Deuteronomy to designate the divine promises to the patriarchs (see 1:8; 4:31; 6:10; 7:12; etc.).

Swore - [shaba](#) uses in Deuteronomy - Deut. 1:8; Deut. 1:34; Deut. 1:35; Deut. 2:14; Deut. 4:21; Deut. 4:31; Deut. 6:10; Deut. 6:13; Deut. 6:18; Deut. 6:23; Deut. 7:8; Deut. 7:12; Deut. 7:13; Deut. 8:1; Deut. 8:18; Deut. 9:5; Deut. 10:11; Deut. 10:20; Deut. 11:9; Deut. 11:21; Deut. 13:17; Deut. 19:8; Deut. 26:3; Deut. 26:15; Deut. 28:9; Deut. 28:11; Deut. 29:13; Deut. 30:20; Deut. 31:7; Deut. 31:20; Deut. 31:21; Deut. 31:23; Deut. 34:4;

If you keep ([shamar](#)) **the commandments of the LORD your God and walk in His ways- IF** (Dt 28:1, 2, 9, 13, 15, 58) identifies the condition which must be fulfilled by Israel for God to establish them as a holy people. Keep means to watch over or guard the commandments but this called for a commensurate walk. As we often say it is necessary to "walk the talk." (or it is just all talk, all "hot air!"). **Walk** (halak; Lxx = [poreuo](#) + hodos = way) speaks of one's daily conduct and in this context describes one who trusts and obeys Yahweh's commandments.

Deuteronomy 28:10 "So all the peoples of the earth will see that you are called by the name of the LORD, and they will be afraid of you.

- **So all:** Mal 3:12
- **called:** Nu 6:27 2Ch 7:14 Isa 63:19 Da 9:18,19
- **they will:** De 4:6-8 Dt 11:25 Ex 12:33 Ex 14:25 Jos 5:1 1Sa 18:12-15,28,29 1Ch 14:17 Jer 33:9 Rev 3:9
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Malachi 3:12+ "All the nations will call you blessed, for you shall be a delightful land," says the LORD of hosts.

Deuteronomy 11:25+ "No man will be able to stand before you; the LORD your God will lay the dread of you and the fear of you on all the land on which you set foot, as He has spoken to you.

Joshua 5:1 Now it came about when all the kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan to the west, and all the kings of the Canaanites who were by the sea, heard how the LORD had dried up the waters of the Jordan before the sons of Israel until they had crossed, that their hearts melted, and there was no spirit in them any longer because of the sons of Israel.

THE ULTIMATE PURPOSE OF GOD'S BLESSING ON ISRAEL

So - NLT and NET have "then" - In other words Yahweh's "election" of Israel (holy people in Dt 28:9) would serve as a witness to the surrounding pagan nations. See [preceding note](#) on "Israel's purpose".

All the peoples of the earth will see that you are called by the Name of the LORD, and they will be afraid of you- God set Israel high above the nations to be a beacon pointing to the **Name of the LORD**. Israel was to obey and thus live such holy lives that the pagans would understand they were holy and blessed because of their Holy God and be drawn to Him. Sadly Israel disobeyed that the peoples (enemies) defeated them (which is ancient culture was considered tantamount to defeating the nation's

god!) and became "a horror, a proverb, and a taunt among all the people!" (Dt 28:25, 37)

Guzik - God's purpose in blessing Israel was greater than just enriching the nation for its own sake. He intended to glorify Himself through blessing them.. When Israel walked after the LORD, these blessings were real; one example of this is when the Queen of Sheba came to Solomon and saw a nation so blessed, she knew it had to be of God (1 Kings 10:1–13).

Utey points out that "The phrase **“called by the name of the LORD”** (Niphal PERFECT) denotes YHWH's ownership of Israel (cf. 2 Sa 6:2; Isa. 43:7; Jer. 7:10–12; 14:9; 15:16; 32:34; Dan. 9:18, 19; Amos 9:12). YHWH wanted Israel to be a revelatory channel for all the world to come to know Him. He wanted to bless Israel to gain the attention of the nations and thereby to attract the nations unto Himself.

Currid agrees with Utey writing that "This is the language of ownership (see 2 Sam. 12:28). It identifies the people with the name of their God; they are literally called by his name." ([EPSC-Deuteronomy](#))

NET NOTE adds "Heb “the name of the Lord is called over you.” The Hebrew idiom indicates ownership; see 2 Sam 12:28; Isa 4:1"

And they will be afraid of you - If they feared Israel, they would be less likely to attack Israel. Pagans were religious and superstitious and when they saw the blessings of Israel, they would be afraid.

Bob Utey points out that "Israel was not to fear because YHWH was with them, for them, and fought on their behalf (e.g., Dt 1:21, 29; 3:2, 22; 7:18; 20:1, 3; 31:6, 8)."

Meredith Kline - If Israel would obey the Lord, she would come out on top in every military and commercial encounter with other nations. Within the kingdom there would be abundance of the earth's goodness. Canaan would truly be a paradise flowing with milk and honey. Of primary import, Israel would prosper in her relationship to her covenant Lord. That is the secret of all beatitude, for his favor is life. From the manifest tokens of God's favor to Israel, all the earth would recognize that the name of the Lord is called upon thee. That is, it would be clear that God's covenant was established with Israel and that he, the Suzerain, was Israel's Owner and Defender (cf. Isa 63:19; Jer 7:10, 11; 15:16). (See [Wycliffe Bible Commentary - Page 119](#) for all notes on Deut 28-34)

Deuteronomy 28:11 "The LORD will make you abound in prosperity, in the offspring of your body and in the offspring of your beast and in the produce of your ground, in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers to give you.

- **abound:** De 28:4 30:9 Lev 26:9 Pr 10:22
- **body:** Job 19:17 Ps 132:11
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passage:

Deut 28:4+ "Blessed shall be the offspring of your body and the produce of your ground and the offspring of your beasts, the increase of your herd and the young of your flock.

SUMMARY OF BLESSINGS ON OBEDIENT ISRAEL

The LORD will make you abound in prosperity, in the offspring of your body(lit - "the fruit of your womb") **and in the offspring of your beast and in the produce of your ground** - This blessing virtually repeats that in Dt 28:4 (see above). Here Moses adds **prosperity** ([tob](#)) an adjective which means good (practical and material good, of favorable character) as well as fruitful (bountiful, fertile).

In the land which the LORD swore to your fathers to give you- An indirect allusion to the Abrahamic Covenant and Yahweh's promise of the land of Canaan.

Deuteronomy 28:12 "The LORD will open for you His good storehouse, the heavens, to give rain to your land in its season and to bless all the work of your hand; and you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow.

- **open:** De 11:14 Lev 26:4 Job 38:22 Ps 65:9-13 Ps 135:7 Joe 2:23,24
- **to bless all:** De 14:29 Dt 15:10

- **lend:** De 28:44 Dt 15:6 Pr 22:7
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 11:14+ that **He will give the rain** for your land in its season, the early and late rain, that you may gather in your grain and your new wine and your oil.

Leviticus 26:4+ then **I shall give you rains in their season**, so that the land will yield its produce and the trees of the field will bear their fruit.

Proverbs 22:7 The rich rules over the poor, And the borrower becomes the lender's slave.

Malachi 3:10+ "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this," says the LORD of hosts, "if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows.

ABUNDANT RAIN, PRODUCTIVITY AND WEALTH

The LORD will open for you His good storehouse, the heavens, to give rain to your land in its season and to bless all the work of your hand - Rain was from the heavens and a clear indication of God's blessing on the land. From Dt 11:14+ ("the early and late rain") we seen that Yahweh gives rain at the appropriate times for optimum effect on growth of the crops. **Rain** is not at the whim of "mother nature," but at the word of God! If Israel disobeys the Yahweh "will make the **rain** of (their) land powder and dust." (Dt 28:24+) Only a sovereign God can open the storehouses of Heaven, not the false gods of the Canaanites like **Ba'al** the so-called fertility god.

Bob Utley suggest this blessing was "possibly a sarcastic reference to **Ba'al worship**. **Ba'al** was the Canaanite god of prosperity (i.e., rain, cf. 1 Ki 17:1-18:46). Yet, it was YHWH who provided all blessings to His people (cf. Dt 28:47; 11:14; Lev. 26:4)."

Currid adds that "Canaanite cults centred on forms of worship that promoted fertility. Rituals of worship were primarily aimed at manipulating the gods so that they would bring productivity to the womb, the animals and the land. Acts such as child sacrifice and temple prostitution were used in an attempt to gain the gods' favour and goodwill. Israel is not to act in such a manner to receive material benefits. Yahweh brings these things on his people, and they are simply required to keep his word. There is no sense of the manipulation of the divine." ([EPSC-Deuteronomy](#))

and you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow - In other words Israel would be prosperous financially and have a surplus to lend other nations. Disobedience and the curses bring the antithetical condition, for the Gentiles "shall **lend** to you, but you will not **lend** to him." (Dt 28:44+).

Related Resources:

- [Who was Baal? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Why was the worship of Baal and Asherah a constant struggle for the Israelites? | GotQuestions.org](#)

Deuteronomy 28:13 "The LORD will make you the head and not the tail, and you only will be above, and you will not be underneath, if you listen to the commandments of the LORD your God, which I charge you today, to observe them carefully,

- **the head:** Nu 24:18-19 Isa 9:14-15
- **if you** De 28:1 4:6-9 Php 1:27
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

ISRAEL THE HEAD NATION

The LORD will make you the head and not the tail, and you only will be above, and you will not be underneath - This is reiterative way (**head...tail/above...not be underneath**) of figuratively (idiomatically) saying Israel would be the chief of all the nations and would be subservient to none. In Dt 28:1 God said He would set Israel "high above all the nations of the earth."

if you listen ([shama](#)) to the commandments of the LORD your God, which I charge you today, to observe([shamar](#)) them

carefully ([asah](#) = literally "keep and do") = The **IF** (Dt 28:1, 2, 9, 13, 15, 58) once again emphasizes the importance that Israel understand their blessings are based on their obedience. In the case of disobedience would make the Gentile, pagan nations "the head and (Israel" the tail." (Dt 28:44+) Note the repeated pattern keep (observe - [shamar](#)) and do ([asah](#)) - Dt 28:1, Dt 28:13, Dt 32:46.

Deuteronomy 28:14 and do not turn aside from any of the words which I command you today, to the right or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.

- **Do not turn:** De 5:32 Dt 11:16,26-28 Jos 23:6 2Ki 22:2 Pr 4:26,27
- **the right:** Isa 30:21
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

TURNING ASIDE FROM LIVING TRUTH TO DEAD IDOLS

And do not turn aside from any of the words which I command you today, to the right or to the left(see note Dt 5:32), **to go after other gods to serve them** - To turn aside to the right or left is a figurative description of disobedience. Note the downhill spiritual slide - turn aside from truth (God's Law), go after other gods and ending up enslaved to other gods! The Hebrew word for serve ([abad](#)) is translated in the Septuagint with the verb [latreuo](#) which conveys the sense of to worship because serving an idol was conceived as worshipping the idol. Notice the phrase **to go after** which clearly indicates one must first turn away from the true God, a bit like "*repentance in reverse*", so to speak, exactly the opposite of the action Paul described among the pagan idol worshippers in 1 Th 1:9-10+ who "turned to God **from** idols to **serve** a living and true God." Notice that what they turned to they served!

THOUGHT - Whenever we turn away from God to idols, we are in effect serving that idol, whatever it might be. If money (the Greek god "[Mammon](#)") is your idol then make no mistake about it -- you are bowing down to "[Mammon](#)" ([SEE PICTURE](#)) and serving [Mammon](#) (see study of Greek word [mamonas](#))! You are committing the same sin that resulted in manifold curses for God's chosen people Israel. If you are bowing to any idol today, confess it to the Living God, repent and turn from the false to the true God and serve Him Alone! God is impartial and if you are a true believer and think you will not suffer God's hand of chastisement you are deceived. If you are ensnared by idolatry (for men tragically this is often pornography freely available on the Internet and easy to commit in secret - but it is never truly in secret - Pr 15:3+, Nu 32:23+, Pr 28:13+ = "He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper") Beloved of Christ, idolatry of all shapes and sizes always has dire consequences! As James 1:16+ says "**Do not be deceived** (ie., "stop being deceived" = [present imperative with a negative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)), my beloved brethren." (cf Gal 6:7, 8+, Heb 3:13+ = "deceitfulness of sin", Heb 11:25+ = "passing pleasures of sin.") In sum Solomon (who failed to heed his own proverbial warnings) one's "own iniquities will capture the wicked, and **he will be held with the cords of his sin.**" (Pr 5:22+)

Bob Utley - "**do not turn aside ... to the right or to the left**" It is used literally in Nu. 20:17; 22:26; Deut. 2:27, but usually it is a Hebrew idiom for "any deviation from the standard or clearly marked path is sin" (cf. Dt 5:32; 17:11, 20; Josh. 1:7; 23:6; 2 Kgs. 22:2). Notice here, idolatry is specifically referenced (cf. 5:7-9; 27:15; Exod. 20:23; 34:17).

Currid's application of the blessing section - The covenant requires true obedience and fidelity to God. A story is told of an officer in the army of Wellington. He received his orders directly from Wellington, but he complained to the commander saying that the orders were impossible to execute. Wellington replied, 'I did not ask your opinion; I gave you my orders, and expect them to be obeyed.' Implicit obedience is required of every soldier of Jesus Christ. And, indeed, we have been given God's Word, and we must obey it. (**ED: GOD'S COMMANDMENTS INCLUDE HIS ENABLEMENT** - SEE [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) The bestowal of blessings is certain if the conditions attached to them are met. Indeed, if the Israelites had not committed wholesale idolatry but had remained true to Yahweh, then they would have remained in the land. The same is true for us; if we are obedient to God's Word, then blessing will certainly follow. It may not be material prosperity, but blessing can be measured in many different ways. Obedience may be part of sanctification—that is, our becoming more and more like Christ. Our obedience may be used by God to prompt others to ponder the meaning of life. And, finally, our obedience is ultimately to glorify God as we attempt to serve him faithfully. As Watson comments, 'If you would wear the crown of righteousness, then walk in the way of righteousness.' ([EPSC-Deuteronomy](#))

Serve (enslave, worship) ([05647](#)) [abad](#) means basically means to minister to or wait on another, human or

divine = to work (to cultivate, till - Ge 2:5, 15 - Lxx = [ergazomai](#) before the fall! Ge 3:23 after the fall, Lxx = [ergazomai](#)), be a slave, be indentured, to serve (be enslaved or hold in bondage - Ex 6:6 - Lxx = [katadouloo](#) = make a slave; Lev 25:38, 39 Lxx = [douleuo](#))(Ge 14:4, 15:13, 14 - Lxx = [douleuo](#)), worship. Labor (as when Israel was in Egyptian bondage - Ex 1:13,14+ same word abad translated worship in Ex 3:12, cf Ex 7:16, 8:1, 8:20, 9:1, et al where Lxx = [latreuo](#)). **Abad** is often used toward God: "Ye shall serve God upon this mountain" (Exod. 3:12), meaning "to worship" as in the NASB and the NIV. The word is frequently used with another verb: "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him" (Deut. 6:13), or "hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the Lord your God, and to serve him." (Deut. 11:13). All nations are commanded: "Serve the Lord with gladness." (Ps. 100:2). In the reign of Messiah, "all nations shall serve him" (Ps. 72:11).

Abad in Deuteronomy - Deut. 4:19; Deut. 4:28; Deut. 5:9; Deut. 5:13; Deut. 6:13; Deut. 7:4; Deut. 7:16; Deut. 8:19; Deut. 10:12; Deut. 10:20; Deut. 11:13; Deut. 11:16; Deut. 12:2; Deut. 12:30; Deut. 13:2; Deut. 13:4; Deut. 13:6; Deut. 13:13; Deut. 15:12; Deut. 15:18; Deut. 15:19; Deut. 17:3; Deut. 20:11; Deut. 21:3; Deut. 21:4; Deut. 28:14; Deut. 28:36; Deut. 28:39; Deut. 28:47; Deut. 28:48; Deut. 28:64; Deut. 29:18; Deut. 29:26; Deut. 30:17; Deut. 31:20

Deuteronomy 28:15 "But it shall come about, if you do not obey the LORD your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes with which I charge you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you.

- **if you do not obey:** Lev 26:14-46 La 2:17 Da 9:11-13 Mal 2:2 Ro 2:8,9
- **all these curses:** De 28:2 Dt 27:15-26 Dt 29:20 Isa 3:11 Ga 3:10
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

A CHANGE OF DIRECTION BLESSINGS TO CURSES

But - Moses "[turns the tide](#)" now! This is a woeful term of contrast, in essence contrasting the preceding blessings of obedience with the following **curse**s of disobedience.

Wiersbe points out that "The judgments are given in greater detail than are the blessings and are just the opposite of the blessings. (Compare Dt 28:1–14 with Dt 28:15–64.) God wanted His people to know that when these calamities struck, they would recognize the hand of the Lord and not think it was a series of coincidences." Just as God promised to bless them in every area of life if they obeyed His covenant, so He warned that He would curse them in every area of life—their bodies, families, fields, flocks, and herds—if they disobeyed. ([Wiersbe Bible Commentary - OT](#))

Guzik - The covenant's aspect of the choice was a sword with two edges. Obedience would carry great blessing, but disobedience would carry terrible curses. Like the blessings for an obedient Israel, the curses for a disobedient Israel would be inevitable. The rest of the chapter is almost overwhelming. "Actually, a logical analysis of the chapter is almost impossible, since the final aim was not to be logical but to build up a vivid impression by presenting picture after picture until the hearer could see and feel the import of the preacher's words." (Thompson)

Raymond Brown sums up this next section - They cannot deliberately flout the agreement made at Sinai and renewed in the plains of Moab, and then imagine that they can get away with it. Rebels will experience plague (20–22), drought (23), invasion (25–35), exile (36–52), famine (53–57), sickness (58–61) and desolation (62–68). Therefore, should the people wilfully choose to disobey God's word, these judgments will surely not take them by surprise. They had been warned. On days when the ripening sun was replaced by the burning sirocco (24), the scorching desert wind which almost ignited their crops, then they would know that God was speaking to them. Their pain would be like the shrill, sharp blasts of a warning trumpet. The word they had ignored in their prosperity would become eloquent in their grief. A sovereign cannot be silenced. If we will not hear him in plenty, then poverty must be his messenger. (See [The Message of Deuteronomy](#))

Prosperous times are invariably our most dangerous times for forgetting God's goodness

THOUGHT - Beloved, this lesson is also for us in the New Covenant. If we are genuine believers and persistently wilfully disobey in good times, we can be absolutely certain that God will send "bad" times, times of loving discipline and chastisement as described in Hebrew 12:5-11+, because ultimately He desires us to experience the "peaceful fruit of righteousness" (v11+). Prosperous times are invariably our most dangerous

times for forgetting God's goodness and promises and seeking after the lusts of our fallen flesh.

It shall come about, if you do not obey ([shama](#) - Lit = "listen to the voice of") **the LORD your God, to observe** ([shamar](#)) **to do** ([asah](#)) **all His commandments and His statutes with which I charge you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you** - NET = "then all these curses will come upon you in full force." Note that except for the addition of **NOT**, this is almost the mirror image of the phrase which introduced the blessings in Dt 28:1+ = "if you diligently obey ([shama](#)) the LORD your God, being careful ([shamar](#)) to do ([asah](#)) all His commandments." This **IF** (Dt 28:1, 2, 9, 13, 15, 58) introduces the conditional promise which will result in reception of the curses of Yahweh. It reminds one of the inviolable law of reaping and sowing (cf Gal 6:7-8+, Hos 8:7). Moses had spoken a similar warning to the first generation of Israelites regarding the curses for disobedience.

Curses ([qelalah](#)) in the Septuagint is [katara](#)

Richardson - '**Curse**' is the contrary of 'blessing'. As a word of blessing spoken in Jehovah's Name expresses (and also conveys) that which proceeds from his gracious favour—health, strength, wisdom, prosperity, success, and all that is comprehended under the word shalom (peace, q.v.), so a curse expresses (and also conveys) that which proceeds from his wrath—disease, ill-success, ruin, desolation, death. (Theological Wordbook of the Bible)

The verb **overtake** presents a striking metaphorical picture (and a striking contrast with the same verb [nasaq](#) used in Dt 28:2). The verb [nasaq](#) describes someone pursuing someone (as Laban when he "**caught** Jacob" - Ge 31:25). The Septuagint translates [nasaq](#) with [katalambano](#) meaning to seize, grab with force, overpower which speaks of the intensity of the coming curses! In the present context the word **curses** is personified as a hunter as if they were in hot (successful) pursuit of the disobedient Israelites! There will be no escape from the **curses** if Israel disobeys and forsakes Yahweh! This same truth is repeated in Dt 28:45+ where Moses "[ups the ante](#)" declaring "all these curses shall come on you and pursue you and **overtake** ([nasaq](#)) you until you are **destroyed!**"

TSK - The same variety of expression is used in these terrible curses, as in the preceding blessings, to intimate every kind of prosperity or adversity, personal, relative, and public. Consulting the marginal references will generally lead to the best exposition of the terms employed; and will frequently point out the fulfilment of the promises and threatenings.

Raymond Brown - The judgment is predicted - God's wrath will be manifested in the life of these potential offenders not primarily because of their offensive moral or social misdemeanours. **Their cardinal sin is a spiritual one.** It is not simply that they have disobeyed God's word; they have abandoned the covenant God. Grief will inevitably overtake them, because of the evil you have done in forsaking him (Dt 28:20 = "**because you have forsaken Me**"). The very fact that they have been warned in this way, however, is a token of God's generous mercy. He warns them because he loves them and does not want them to suffer. The land they are about to enter is populated with Baal-worshippers. (See [The Message of Deuteronomy](#))

Warren Wiersbe gives a "summary of the judgments listed in these verses...It's quite depressing to read this long list of calamities, especially when you realize that Israel experienced all of them at one time or another and that innocent people suffered because of the sins of the guilty. Not only Deuteronomy 28, but also Jeremiah's Book of Lamentations is a solemn reminder that it doesn't pay to rebel against God and try to have your own way ([Wiersbe Bible Commentary - OT](#))

- children cursed (Dt 27:18); low birth rate (Dt 27:62–63)
- crops ruined and animals killed (Dt 27:18, 22, 31–32, 38–40, 42, 51)
- confusion of mind, madness, and fear (Dt 27:20, 28–29, 34, 65–68)
- sickness (Dt 27:21–22, 27–28, 35, 59–61)
- drought, hunger, and thirst (Dt 27:22–24, 48)
- defeat in war (Dt 27:25, 49–50, 52)
- wives ravished (Dt 27:30)
- oppression and slavery (Dt 27:29, 33, 48, 68)
- cannibalism (Dt 27:53–57)
- captivity (Dt 27:36, 63–64)
- corpses not buried (Dt 27:26)
- plans shattered (Dt 27:30)
- poverty, debt, and nakedness (Dt 27:44, 48)
- robbery (Dt 27:29, 31, 33)
- children kidnapped (Dt 27:32, 41)
- aliens take over the land (Dt 27:43)
- shame and scorn (Dt 27:37)

Curses ([07045](#))([qelalah](#) from verb [qalal](#)) הָלַל means curse, a cursing, execration, imprecation, the action

and formula of cursing, the invoking of divine harm under certain conditions, with a focus on the content of the oath, and describes the general speaking of ill-will against another (2Sa 16:12; Ps. 109:17, 18); as well as the official pronouncement on a person, as Jacob feared he would receive from Isaac (Ge 27:12, 13); or on a nation, as Balaam gave to Moab (Dt. 23:5; Neh. 13:2). God’s curse is on the disobedient (Dt. 11:28; Dt 28:15; Jer. 44:8); while His blessing, *berākāh*, is on the righteous (Dt. 11:26; 30:19). The primary emphasis is the absence (or reversal) of a blessed or rightful state and lowering to a lesser state. *qē lālā* also stresses the formula whereby this is expressed.

Bob Utley - This is a NOUN form from the root “to be small” (cf. Dt 27:15–26, Dt 28:15–68). These curses were meant to cause Israel to return to YHWH.

Compare other words for curse - **Curse** (devoted to destruction) ([02764](#)) *herem*; **Curse** (blaspheme) ([05344](#)) *naqab*; **Curse** (despise, lighten, swift) ([07043](#)) *qalal*; **Curse** ([07045](#)) *qelalah*; **Curse** ([0779](#)) *arar*

Qelalah - 33 verses - accursed(1), curse(27), curses(2), cursing(3), imprecation(2). Gen. 27:12; Gen. 27:13; Deut. 11:26; Deut. 11:28; Deut. 11:29; Deut. 21:23; Deut. 23:5; Deut. 27:13; Deut. 28:15; Deut. 28:45; Deut. 29:27; Deut. 30:1; Deut. 30:19; Jos. 8:34; Jdg. 9:57; 2 Sam. 16:12; 1 Ki. 2:8; 2 Ki. 22:19; Neh. 13:2; Ps. 109:17; Ps. 109:18; Prov. 26:2; Prov. 27:14; Jer. 24:9; Jer. 25:18; Jer. 26:6; Jer. 29:22; Jer. 42:18; Jer. 44:8; Jer. 44:12; Jer. 44:22; Jer. 49:13; Zech. 8:13

The Covenant Chastenings				
Chastening	Amos	Leviticus	Deuteronomy	1 Kings
Hunger/famine	Am 4:6	Lv 26:26, 29	Dt 28:17, 48	1 Ki 8:37
Drought	Am 4:7-8	Lv 26:19	Dt 28:22-24 Dt 28:48	1 Ki 8:35
Blight/mildew	Am 4:9	Lv 26:20	Dt 28:18, 22 Dt 28:30 Dt 28:39-40	1 Ki 8:37
Locusts	Am 4:9	---	Dt 28:38, 42	1 Ki 8:37
Plagues	Am 4:10	Lv 26:16, 25	Dt 28:21-11 Dt 28:35 Dt 28:59-61	1 Ki 8:37
Military defeat	Am 4:10	Lv 26:17, 25 Lv 26: 33, 36-39	Dt 28:25-26 Dt 28:49-52	1 Ki 8:33
Devastation	Am 4:11	Lv 26:31-35	Dt 29:23-28	---

Dictionary of Biblical Imagery - Covenant Curses. In Deuteronomy, Israel swears to their willingness to keep Yahweh’s covenant with a series of solemn “Amens” (Deut 26:15–19). In Deuteronomy 27–28 Yahweh recites Israel’s prospects of blessings and curses, a recitation that bears on every sphere of existence. Should Israel depart from him in going after other gods: “The LORD will send on you curses, confusion and rebuke in everything you put your hand to, until you are destroyed” (Deut 28:20 NIV). At stake is Israel’s national identity, whether it will be as “head” (Deut 28:13) or as “tail” (Deut 28:44), whether Israel will be a recipient of the blessings of God or a recipient of his wrath. The ultimate curse of exile would mean nothing less than the removal of that which makes Israel glorious: the divine presence.

It is arguable that the force of Deuteronomy 28–29 lies in its images of curse as constraint. As God’s appropriate response to disobedience, the curse threatens to deprive covenant violators of security, freedom, health and blessings. Israel under the curse will be partially or entirely constrained from enjoying certain blessings, resulting in a debasement of their God-given identity. Within the NT we find the sense of curse as constraint and debasement in the imagery of spiritual slavery (e.g., Jn 8:34–47; Rom 6:20; Gal 4:8; Jude 6).

The motif of God’s covenant curse - expressed as the “wrath of God” is experienced by Israel most prominently in its conquest by

Babylon and the ensuing exile. The exile is the reflex of the exodus. The covenant-making God who battles for Israel at the exodus becomes "like an enemy" (Lam 2:5) when Jerusalem is destroyed for its covenant unfaithfulness. Even though Israel returns to the land, the NT finds a situation in which Israel remains in spiritual exile within the land, with the pious still yearning for the "consolation of Israel" (Lk 2:25), the "redemption of Jerusalem" (Lk 2:38). Broadly speaking, the story of Jesus is of the messiah offering to Israel the promised return from exile and the blessings of a new covenant (Mt 5:1–12). But Israel is largely unreceptive, and Jesus pronounces curses upon the nation (e.g., Mt 11:20–24; Mk 11:12–14, 20–21; 12:1–11) and warns of a coming great national disaster (Mk 13:14–23; Lk 13:34–35; 19:42–44; 21:20–24). Jesus takes upon himself the "curse of the law" (Gal 3:13), the penalty for Israel's (and the world's) unfaithfulness, and thus provides a pathway of salvation through the coming judgment for all those who will follow him. In this way, "the blessing of Abraham" comes upon the Gentiles (Gal 3:14). Israel and the Gentiles are redeemed from the "present evil age" (Gal 1:4; 4:3–9). Ultimately, however, the NT speaks of an eschatological curse, a final judgment, in which those who reject God's salvation perish in their separation from God.

Deuteronomy 28:16 "Cursed shall you be in the city, and cursed shall you be in the country."

- **in the city:** De 28:3-14 Pr 3:33 Isa 24:6-12 43:28 Jer 9:11 26:6 44:22 La 1:1 La 2:11-22 4:1-13 Mal 2:2 4:6
- **in the country:** De 28:55 Ge 3:17,18 4:11,12 5:29 8:21,22 1Ki 17:1,5,12 Jer 14:2-5,18 La 5:10 Joe 1:4,8-18 2:3 Am 4:6-9 Hag 1:9-11 Hag 2:16,17 Mal 3:9-12
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

DIVINE CURSES WILL BE "OMNIPRESENT"

Cursed shall you be in the city, and cursed shall you be in the country- These two locations in essence describe the divine curse as "omnipresent." God's judgment on disobedience will touch EVERY area of life (as shown by the following variety of curses). There will be no place of rest or respite from God's righteous wrath. Israel's disobedience would prove very costly.

Disobedience is ALWAYS costly, then and now!

It is notable that the curses in Dt 28:16-19 are in general the antithesis of the blessings in Dt 28:3-6.

THOUGHT - The passages that jump into my mind as I write this are Paul's warnings in 1 Corinthians 10:6-12+

Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved. 7 Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written, "THE PEOPLE SAT DOWN TO EAT AND DRINK, AND STOOD UP TO PLAY." 8 Nor let us act immorally, as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day. 9 Nor let us try the Lord, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the serpents. 10 Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. 11 **Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.** 12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands **take heed** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) that he does not fall (GOD DOES NOT PLAY FAVORITES AND SO DOES NOT GIVE A PASS IF YOU ARE A PASTOR, TEACHER, ETC. TAKE HEED!)

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 **curse**." 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 'ārār 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;

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](#))

Brown - The judgment is extensive - God will treat all rebels alike. His undeserved favour can be enjoyed but it cannot be earned. The Israelites vainly imagined that, like Baal, God could be persuaded to change his mind simply by offering a few appropriate sacrifices. Human nature has changed little over the centuries. People are still like that. Men and women want a deity it is possible to manipulate and control, a god they can keep in their pockets and have on their terms, not his. They want a god who will punish evil-doers but will treat their case as an exception to the rule. Surely God will guarantee his favour if they show willing by occasional church attendance, uncostly living, social ‘do-gooding’, unsacrificial service? But the striking feature about these verses is that there are no exceptions. The judgment reaches everyone. All covenant breakers will be judged, every single one, whatever their religious achievements, moral conformity or social status. Like a determined hunter, the judgment of God will stalk the offender and find him, even when he sins in secret. All the sins listed in the grim cursing liturgy are secret transgressions (Dt 27:14–26) but God sees them all....**All the sad judgments described in these verses actually happened in Israel’s fragile history.** The warnings were certainly necessary. In the centuries which followed their settlement in the land, these sobering threats became a terrifying reality. A passage of this kind is saying, in highly persuasive Hebrew idiom that men and women cannot hope to live without God and experience life ‘in all its fullness’. We have been made for God and those who choose to ignore him thereby deny themselves essential spiritual resources. (See [The Message of Deuteronomy](#))

Deuteronomy 28:17 "Cursed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl.

- De 28:5 Ps 69:22 Pr 1:32 Hag 1:6 Zec 5:3,4 Mal 2:2 Lu 16:25
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

CURSED BASKET AND BOWL

Cursed ([arar](#)) shall be your basket and your kneading bowl- Cursed in their kitchens! As noted this curse is the antithesis of the blessings in De 28:5. **Basket** would be used for carrying the produce, the implication being there was nothing in the basket! The **kneading bowl** was used to prepare meals the curse indicating a lack of adequate supply of food and nourishment. The implication of course is famine and starvation.

Deuteronomy 28:18 "Cursed shall be the offspring of your body and the produce of your ground, the increase of your herd and the young of your flock.

- **body**: De 28:4 5:9 Job 18:16-19 Ps 109:9-15 La 2:11,12,20 Ho 9:11-14 Mal 2:3 Lu 23:29,30
- **ground**: De 28:16 Lev 26:19,20,26 Hab 3:17
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

CURSED OFFSPRING PRODUCE & LIVESTOCK

Cursed ([arar](#)) shall be the offspring of your body (Heb - fruit of your womb) **and the produce of your ground, the increase of your herd and the young of your flock** - This curse is the opposite of the blessing in Dt 28:4. Their wombs would be barren instead of many healthy children.

Deuteronomy 28:19 "Cursed shall you be when you come in, and cursed shall you be when you go out.

- De 28:6 Jdg 5:6,7 2Ch 15:5
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Cursed ([arar](#)) shall you be when you come in, and cursed ([arar](#)) shall you be when you go out -Coming and going was a Hebraic way of describing one's entire life (see Dt 31:2, Nu 27:17). They would be cursed when they came **in** their homes (their family life) and when they went **out** (their secular/business life), in short is ALL areas of their life. The antithetical blessing for obedience is described in Dt 28:6+.Cursed in the Lxx is [epikataratos](#) which means to be under divine condemnation, doomed to punishment. The first use is in (Ge 3:14+) "Because you have done this, **Cursed (Lxx = [epikataratos](#))** are you more than all cattle."Jer 11:4 says "'Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, "**Cursed (Lxx = [epikataratos](#))** is the man **who does not heed the words** of this ([Mosaic, conditional](#)) covenant."

Deuteronomy 28:20 "The LORD will send upon you curses, confusion, and rebuke, in all you undertake to do, until you are destroyed and until you perish quickly, on account of the evil of your deeds, because you have forsaken Me.

- **send:** Ps 7:11 Mal 2:2
- **curses:** 1Sa 14:20 Ps 80:4-16 Isa 28:19 30:17 51:20 66:15 Zec 14:12,13 Joh 3:36 1Th 2:16
- **until:** De 4:26 Lev 26:31-33,38 Jos 23:16
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 4:26+ I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that you will surely perish quickly from the land where you are going over the Jordan to possess it. You shall not live long on it, but will be utterly destroyed.

HORRIBLE DESTRUCTION

Deere comments that "Each individual judgment essentially had one goal: to turn Israel from disobedience." (See [Bible Knowledge Commentary](#) for all comments on Deuteronomy).

The LORD will send upon you curses, confusion, and rebuke, in all you undertake to do (Heb = the putting forth of your hand which you do), **until you are destroyed ([shamad](#)) and until you perish ([abad](#); Lxx = [apollumi](#) = ruined) quickly, on account of the evil of your deeds** - **NET** = "The LORD will send on you a curse, confusing you and opposing you in everything you undertake." Israel faced extinction if she disobeyed the covenant.

It is sadly ironic that the word **confusion** ([mehûmâh](#)) is the very term used to describe the divine induced panic that came on Israel's enemies and rendered them helpless in battle or tortured them with painful diseases (cf. 1 Sa 5:9; 1 Sa 14:20). It describes a mental state characterized by lack of clear and orderly thought and behavior. In Dt 7:23+ this word **confusion** is in a promise that "the LORD your God will deliver them (Dt 7:22 - the nations in the Promised Land) before you, and will throw them into great **confusion** until they are destroyed."

Rebuke means to blame, to scold sharply, to reprimand as God said He would do to His people, stating what is wrong.

Vine on destroyed - While the word is often used to express literal "destruction" of people (Dt. 2:12; Jdg. 21:16),**shamad** frequently is part of an open threat or warning given to the people of Israel, promising "destruction" if they forsake God for idols (cf. Dt. 4:25-26).

NIDOTTE - Israel's later destruction is thus explainable (Isa 48:19); so also is the destruction of certain royal families (1Ki 15:29; 2Ki 10:17) or leadership groups in Israel (Ezek 14:9—false prophets; Ezek 34:16—shepherds = kings).

Curses (03994). מְאָרָה **me'ērāh**: is a feminine noun designating a curse, a malediction, the content of what is spoken to injure another. It refers to God's sending evil or destruction on His disobedient people (Dt. 28:20; Mal. 2:2; Mal 3:9); or on the wicked in general (Pr 3:33). A curse may befall those who do not help the poor (Prov. 28:27).

Confusion (04103) מְהוּמָה **mehûmāh**: has the basic meaning of to be a severe disturbance, to disturb greatly, stir, discomfit. It is a feminine noun meaning confusion, panic, tumult, disturbance; a state of discomfiture (uncomfortableness) and consternation because one is not understanding a situation, and so implying turmoil and panic (Dt 7:23; 28:20; 1Sa 5:9, 11; 14:20; 2Ch 15:5; Pr 15:16; Isa 22:5; Eze 7:7; 22:5; Am 3:9; Zec 14:13),. If the Israelites diligently observed God's covenant stipulations, He would throw the nations occupying Canaan into a great panic and give them over into the Israelites' hands (Dt. 7:23). If, however, the Israelites did not obey and thus forsook the Lord their God, this same panic would be sent upon them instead (Dt. 28:20). After the Philistines captured the ark of God and brought it to Gath (one of their five main cities), the Lord struck the people of that city with a great panic and severe tumors (1 Sa 5:9 = "great confusion" 1 Sa 5:11 = "deadly confusion"). Isaiah the prophet warned Jerusalem that a day of tumult, trampling, and confusion was at hand for it (Isa. 22:5). The term also functions to describe daily life in certain geographical locations during troubled periods of time: Jerusalem (Ezek. 22:5); Israel and the surrounding lands (2 Chr. 15:5); and the mountains of Samaria (Amos 3:9). Once the word describes the trouble wealth brings to a household that does not fear the Lord (Prov. 15:16). The term derives from the verb hûm (1949).

Destroyed (Septuagint = [exolethreuo](#)) (08045) **shamad** is a verb meaning "be destroyed, decimated, perished, overthrown, exterminated, i.e., pertaining to being in a totally ruined state, which can include death of a person or extinction of an entity." (Swanson) The destruction depicted by **shamad** usually involves a rather sudden catastrophe such as warfare or a mass killing. For example in Dt 6:15 God says He will "**wipe**" Israel off the face of the earth, so great was His anger against them! It is worth noting that the last OT use of **shamad** is one of the greatest for the nation of Israel, the prophet **Zechariah** recording "And in that day (WHAT DAY - Read Zechariah 12:1-14+) I (JEHOVAH/YAHWEH HIMSELF) will set about to destroy all (HOW MANY?) the nations that come against Jerusalem." (Zechariah 12:9+) [Anti-Semitism](#) will be obliterated! Nearly four-fifths of the occurrences of שָׁמַד carry a heavy theological load since they are in contexts where God is the immediate or implied subject. Extermination comes upon a nation or class of people because they have fallen under the judgment of God. Two-thirds of the theological uses occur in Deut or deuteronomistic texts (Josh through 2 Kgs). The OT authors have appropriated the word as indicating what God will do or did to the nations that inhabited the land of Canaan. Deut 7:23–24 is typical. This was a part of the theology of the gift of the land. The inhabitants had to be annihilated because of their abominations, lest Israel learn their ways and abandon God.

Shamad is used repeatedly in Deuteronomy 28 Deut. 28:20; Deut. 28:24; Deut. 28:45; Deut. 28:48; Deut. 28:51; Deut. 28:61; Deut. 28:63;

Other uses of Shamad in Deut are Deut. 1:27; Deut. 2:12; Deut. 2:21; Deut. 2:22; Deut. 2:23; Deut. 4:3; Deut. 4:26; Deut. 6:15; Deut. 7:4; Deut. 7:23; Deut. 7:24; Deut. 9:3; Deut. 9:8; Deut. 9:14; Deut. 9:19; Deut. 9:20; Deut. 9:25; Deut. 12:30; Deut. 31:3; Deut. 31:4; Deut. 33:27;

Perish (lost, destroy, ruin; Lxx = [apollumi](#) = ruined) (06) **abad** is a verb meaning to perish, to be destroyed, to be ruined, to be lost, to in a state of ruin and destruction pertaining to an object, including the death (Ex 10:7). Abad can mean literally to die, or, in the case of things, reputation, etc., to pass away. In a causative sense, abad means to destroy, to reduce to some degree of disorder. God's destruction of evil, both threatened (Lev. 26:38) and realized (Nu 17:12); Israel's destruction of the Canaanites and their altars (Nu 33:52; Dt. 12:2, 3); the perishing of natural life (Ps. 49:10; 102:26; Eccl. 7:15); the perishing of abstract qualities such as wisdom and hope (Isa. 29:14; Lam. 3:18); and an item or animal being lost (Dt. 22:3; Eccl. 3:6)

Stephen Renn - Abad - It is first of all predicated of God's people under divine judgment for rebellion against him, under the covenant curse. In particular, abad constitutes the inevitable fate of the Israelite people, who will perish in the process of being sent into exile (cf. Lev. 26:38; Dt 4:26; 8:20; 30:18; Jos. 23:13; Jer. 4: 9; 27:10; Eze. 25: 7). The people will also perish on account of their idolatry (cf. Dt 8:19; Jos. 23:16). Individuals or groups of people are also said to "perish" at the hand of God - Korah (Nu. 16:33); Ahab's dynasty (2Ki 9: 8, cp Ps 2:12; Jer. 6:21; Mic. 4: 9; Jon. 3: 9. Nu 17: 2 expresses the fear of perishing. The enemies of Yahweh are said to perish as a consequence of judgment pronounced on them (cf. Nu 21:30; Jdg

5:31; Ps 9: 3, 6; 37:20; Isa. 41:11; Jer. 51:18 [Babylon]; Amos 1: 8 [Philistia]).

Abad in Deuteronomy (note 4 times in chapter 28!) - Deut. 4:26; Deut. 7:10; Deut. 7:20; Deut. 7:24; Deut. 8:19; Deut. 8:20; Deut. 9:3; Deut. 11:4; Deut. 11:17; Deut. 12:2; Deut. 12:3; Deut. 22:3; Deut. 26:5; Deut. 28:20; Deut. 28:22; Deut. 28:51; Deut. 28:63; Deut. 30:18; Deut. 32:28;

Because - Term of explanation. Their destruction was not coincidence or a divine whim but would have a clear explanation. Note carefully that this verse teaches that deviation from the commandments (**the evil of your deeds**) is tantamount to forsaking God.

You have forsaken Me - Have forsaken in the Lxx is [egkataleipo](#) which means to abandon, desert, to separate connection with someone, in this case Jehovah! [As noted below](#) Israel was not just any nation, but was elected by God Who placed His love on her and after redeeming her from bondage entered into a "marriage covenant" with her at Mount Sinai. This covenant relationship helps one understand why God was **jealous** (Ex 20:5 Ex 34:14 Dt 4:24 Dt 5:9 Dt 6:15) when Israel went after idols, other so-called gods, other "lovers," other [baal's](#) (husbands), in effect committing spiritual adultery (cf phrase **played the harlot** - Ex 34:15; Ex 34:16; Lev. 17:7; Lev. 20:5; Lev. 20:6; Nu 15:39; Nu 25:1; Dt. 22:21; Dt. 31:16; Jdg. 2:17; Jdg. 8:27; Jdg. 8:33; Jdg. 19:2; 1 Chr. 5:25; 2 Chr. 21:11; 2 Chr. 21:13; Ps. 106:39; Isa. 23:17; read the statement by Yahweh in Ezek. 6:9!!!; Ezek. 16:15; Ezek. 16:16; Ezek. 16:17; Ezek. 16:26; Ezek. 16:28; Ezek. 16:34; Ezek. 16:41; Ezek. 20:30; Ezek. 23:3; Ezek. 23:5; Ezek. 23:19; Ezek. 23:30; Hos. 2:5; Hos. 3:3; Hos. 4:10; Hos. 4:12; Hos. 4:13; Hos. 4:14; Hos. 4:15; Hos. 4:18; Hos. 5:3; Hos. 9:1) For example see Hosea 9:1 "Do not rejoice, O **Israel**, with exultation like the nations! For **you have played the harlot**, (HOW?) **forsaking your God**. You have loved harlots' earnings on every threshing floor."

Forsaken (05800) 'azab basically means to depart from, to abandon, to leave. Things that can left behind or forsaken include persons (Ge 44:22; Nu 10:30; Ru 1:16; 2Ki4:30), people who should left behind (Ge 2:24); places (2Ki 8:6; Jer 18:14; 25:38) and objects (Ge 39:12,13; 50:8; Ex 9:21). Men can forsake God (apostatize) (Dt 28:20, 31:16, Jer 1:16), can abandon qualities of virtue (1Ki 12:8, 2Chr 10:8, 13), the way (of righteousness) (Pr 15:10), instruction/wisdom (Pr 4:2, 6), reproof (Pr 10:17 - "ignore" = forsake), kindness (lovingkindness, faithfulness) (Pr 3:3). God promises to not forsake His people (Ge 24:27, 28:15, Dt 31:6,7 contrast what God's people will do = Dt 31:16). In a use similar to Pr 28:13, we are instructed to "forsake wrath." (Ps 37:8) **1828 Webster - Forsake** = To quit or leave entirely; to desert; to abandon; to depart from. 2. To abandon; to renounce; to reject. 3. To leave; to withdraw from; to fail. In anger, the color forsakes the cheeks. In severe trials, let not fortitude forsake you. 4. In scripture, God forsakes his people, when he withdraws his aid, or the light of his countenance.

Stephen Renn on **azab** (Expository Dictionary of Bible Words) - One significant concept that underlies the usage of this term is that of "abandonment," particularly in regard to Israel's neglect and rejection of their covenant obligations towards God. Theologically speaking, the idea of "forsaking" one's covenant responsibility, in the sense of abandoning or neglecting it, is of prime importance. It is predicated of God negatively in that He never abandons His responsibility and always keeps His promises with regard to His people (e.g., Ge 24: 7; Dt 31: 6, 8; Jos 1: 5; 1Ki. 6:13; Ezra 9: 9; Isa. 42:16). However, it is also predicated of Yahweh when He abandons His people, albeit temporarily, as punishment for violating the terms of the covenant and hands them over to the curse sanctions of the law (e.g., Dt 31:17; Isa. 17: 2, 9; 54:7; Jer. 12: 7). In regard to the Israelite people themselves, azab is frequently employed to indicate their "abandonment," their "rejection" of God (e.g., Dt 28:20; 2Ki. 21:22; 2Ch. 13:11; Ezra 8:22; Isa. 1: 4; Jer. 2:17). It is something they are warned against doing in Jos. 24:20; 1Ch. 28: 9. The Israelites' wholesale "abandoning" of the covenant is referred to in Jer 22: 9; Da. 11:30. The practice of idolatry as an inevitable consequence of "abandoning" God is cited in Jdg 2:12, 13; 10:6; 1Sa. 12:10; 1Ki. 9: 9; 19:10; 2Ki. 22:17; 2Ch. 34:25; Jer. 1:16; Hos. 4:10. Israel is also condemned for "abandoning," "forsaking" the commandments of Yahweh — that is, for disobeying them (cf. 2Ki. 17:16; Ezra 9:10; Jer. 9:13).

Azab in Deuteronomy - Deut. 12:19; Deut. 14:27; Deut. 28:20; Deut. 29:25; Deut. 31:6; Deut. 31:8; Deut. 31:16; Deut. 31:17; Deut. 32:36;

Brief Excursus

Israel the Wife of Jehovah

Note - See more complete discussion of this topic at [Israel The Wife of Jehovah](#)

Jehovah was the "**Husband**" of Israel as described in Je 31:31, 32[±], Isa 54:5 (cf Ho 2:2). Note that the word "**husband**"

is [baal](#) (master, owner - see [baal](#), [ba'al](#), [ba'al](#)) and is the same word used for Israel's "lover" with whom she had an adulterous affair, for these idols were often named "**Baal!**" (cf Jdg 2:11-13+) In the **OT**, under the Old Covenant, Israel formally became Jehovah's "Wife" in the "ceremony" at the foot of Mt. Sinai (Ex 19:1,2+) when God gave Moses the Law and Israel said "**Yes**" (cf marriage ceremony where bride says "I do" - Israel the "bride" of Yahweh said "We will do!" - Ex 24:3,7+) to the vows. Note that the solemn, binding nature of their entrance into this covenant was ratified by the blood of the covenant (Ex 24:3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8+, see also Heb 9:18-21+). Israel was (repeatedly) an unfaithful, adulterous wife and was thus disowned by Jehovah, but will she will one day in the future repent (cf Zech 12:10-14+) and be restored (Isa 62:4, 5 - where the verb "**married**" = [baal!](#)), a prophecy which will be fulfilled in the Messianic Age - see [\[a\] Events Leading up to the Millennium](#); [\[b\] OT Promises of God to Israel which will finally be fulfilled in the Millennium](#)).

Related Passages:

Hosea 2:19-20 "I will betroth you to Me forever; Yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and in justice, In lovingkindness and in compassion, And I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness. Then you will know the LORD.

Comment by Henry Morris - Israel will indeed be restored as the **wife of Jehovah**. This promise is eternal, not conditional, though its implementation must await the national repentance and acceptance of Messiah when He returns, after His long absence and Her long affliction (Hosea 5:5; Matthew 23:37-39).

Isaiah 54:5 "For your husband is your Maker, Whose name is the LORD of hosts; And your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel, Who is called the God of all the earth.

Comment by Henry Morris - The God of all the earth is also the "Maker" of Israel, as well as her Redeemer. Note that, symbolically, Israel is sometimes pictured as the **wife of Jehovah**, just as in the New Testament the church is called the Bride of Christ.

[Anthony Garland's Discussion of Israel Married to Jehovah](#) Israel Married to Jehovah

The nation Israel is unlikely to be the Lamb's bride because she has already been wed. God the Father is Israel's husband:13

"Return, O backsliding children," says the Lord; "for I am married to you. I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion." (Jer. 3:14) [emphasis added]

"They say, 'If a man divorces his wife, and she goes from him and becomes another man's, may he return to her again?' Would not that land be greatly polluted? But you have played the harlot with many lovers; yet return to Me," says the Lord. (Jer. 3:1) [emphasis added]

Then I saw that for all the causes for which backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but went and played the harlot also. (Jer. 3:8) [emphasis added]

Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah-not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. (Jer. 31:31-33) [emphasis added]

Even though Israel proved to be an unfaithful wife which God put away by divorce, He promises to remain faithful to her in His relationship as husband. Moreover, in order to divorce her, she had to first be married.

Bring charges against your mother, bring charges; For she is not My wife, nor am I her Husband! Let her put away her harlotries from her sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts . . . (Hos. 2:2) [emphasis added]

She will chase her lovers, but not overtake them; yes, she will seek them, but not find them. Then she will say, 'I will go and return to my first husband, for then it was better for me than now.' (Hos. 2:7) [emphasis added]

As unfaithful as Israel has been, God promises to stand by her. Their husband-wife relationship will be reestablished:

"And it shall be, in that day," says the Lord, "That you will call Me 'My Husband,' And no longer call Me 'My Master.'" (Hos. 2:16) [emphasis added]

I will betroth you to Me forever; yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and justice, in lovingkindness and mercy; I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness, and you shall know the Lord. (Hos. 2:19-20) [emphasis added]

The LORD's accomplished purpose in Israel's chastening also will result in the reestablishment of her original husband-wife relationship to the LORD.¹⁴

The relationship between Israel and Jehovah is dramatically different than what the NT records concerning Christ and His bride. Perhaps the most significant difference is that the marriage of Jehovah to Israel occurred in time past, whereas the marriage of Christ with His bride has not yet taken place. This is the subject of the passage before us.

Israel in her land was the wife of Jehovah (Jer. 3:14-20; Isa. 54:1), but the wife was divorced because of her iniquity. Israel, however, is to be reinstated in Jehovah's favour. But a divorced wife can never again be a virgin, and it is not a divorced wife but a virgin whom the Lord marries (Lev. 21:14).¹⁵

Deuteronomy 28:21 "The LORD will make the pestilence cling to you until He has consumed you from the land where you are entering to possess it."

- Ex 5:3 Lev 26:25 Nu 14:12 16:46-49 25:9 2Sa 24:15 Jer 15:2 16:4 Jer 21:6,7 24:10 Mt 26:7
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Exodus 5:3+ Then they said, "The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please, let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God, otherwise He will fall upon us with **pestilence** or with the sword."

Leviticus 26:25+ 'I will also bring upon you a sword which will execute vengeance for the covenant; and when you gather together into your cities, I will send **pestilence** among you, so that you shall be delivered into enemy hands.

Numbers 14:12+ "I will smite them with **pestilence** and dispossess them, and I will make you into a nation greater and mightier than they."

CLINGING, CONSUMING PESTILENCE

The LORD will make the pestilence cling to you until He has consumed you from the land where you are entering to possess it - The nature of the pestilence is difficult to determine from the context because of no medical details. **Cling** ([dabaq](#)) describes the **pestilence** as "sticking like glue" to the Israelites. The Lxx translates **cling** ([dabaq](#)) with [proskollao](#) which means to adhere closely to (used of a husband clinging to his wife - Ge 2:24). There is no escape from the **pestilence** **until** it has accomplished its task of consuming Israel.

Pestilence (01698. דָּבַר **deber**: A noun meaning plague or pestilence. A pandemic occurrence of sickness that causes widespread death, often with the associative meaning of judgment from God. Any kind of pestilence which results in death is meant. Aside from about five instances, all uses of **deber** relate to pestilence as sent by God as punishment. **Deber** is commonly mentioned together with such words as famine, evil, blood, judgment, sword, and noisome beast (KJV; ASV "evil beast"). Jeremiah in his predictions of dire events quite often combines sword, famine, and pestilence (14:12; 21:7, 9; 24:10; 27:8, 13; 29:17-18; 32:24, 36; 34:17; 38:2; 42:17, 22; 44:13). This plague is a dreaded disease similar to the bubonic plague in the Middle Ages. It was likely carried by rat fleas and produced tumors on the infected person. First Samuel 5-6 describes the plague on the Philistines as a punishment from God. The word is also used as the most dreaded threat of the Lord against His people (Lev. 26:25; Num. 14:12). The prophets use this word frequently to predict coming judgment and destruction as in the common phrase, sword, famine, and plague (Jer. 21:9; 38:2; Ezek. 6:11, NIV).

Cleaved (1692) [dabaq](#) means to stick to, adhere to, cling to, join with, stay with, stay in close proximity to and which yields the noun form for "glue". **Dabaq** describes something that sticks or clings to something else (Ezek 29:4 and Ezekiel's tongue to roof of his mouth Ezek. 3:26). **Dabaq** is used in Ge 2:24 = "For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and **be joined to** his wife; and they shall become one flesh."

Consumed (destroyed)(03615) [kalah](#) The primary meaning is the notion of "completion" of some process -- to be complete, at an end, finished, accomplished, or spent. To bring a process to completion.

To [consummate](#).

Deuteronomy 28:22 "The LORD will smite you with consumption and with fever and with inflammation and with fiery heat and with the sword and with blight and with mildew, and they will pursue you until you perish.

- **consumption:** Lev 26:16 2Ch 6:28 Jer 14:12
- **blight:** 1Ki 8:37 Am 4:9 Hag 2:17
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passage:

Leviticus 26:16+ I, in turn, will do this to you: I will appoint over you a sudden terror, **consumption** and **fever** that will waste away the eyes and cause the soul to pine away; also, you will sow your seed uselessly, for your enemies will eat it up.

CURSE SMITES PEOPLE AND PLANTS

The LORD will smite you with consumption and with fever and with inflammation and with fiery heat (Heb - "hot fever") and with the sword and with blight and with mildew, and they will pursue you until you perish ([abad](#); Lxx = [apollumi](#) = ruined) - **Smite** is ironically the same word used to describe what Israel did to the kings of Sihon and Og (Dt 29:7)! God shows no favoritism to Israel, but metes out righteous judgment for their sins just as He did for Sihon and Og.

[IVP Bible Background Commentary](#) (page 496) - **pathology in the ancient Near East.** Affliction by various diseases is one of the curses found in Assyrian treaty texts. Pathology in the ancient Near East was always considered in the light of supernatural cause and effect. Generally either hostile demons or gods angry at the violation of some taboo were considered responsible. "Wasting disease" probably included tuberculosis (rare in ancient Israel) as well as other diseases characterized by the same outward symptoms; verse 22 also includes categories of diseases characterized by fevers and inflammation; verse 27 describes a variety of skin diseases; and the symptoms of verse 28 are common with syphilis (in the ancient Near East generally the nonvenereal type). The categories of pathology can therefore be seen to be symptom related.

Smite (Lxx = [patasso](#) = inflict a heavy blow)([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

Consumption (07829) שֶׁחֶפֶט **šaḥepet**: A feminine noun indicating consumption; a wasting disease, i.e., a disease causing serious illness, with a focus on the emaciating the body, such as consumption or tuberculosis, diarrhea, etc. It refers to a disease that causes a person's body to waste away (Lev. 26:16; Deut. 28:22). It could be brought about by the Lord as a curse on a disobedient people. **Saḥepet** occurs in the context of the curses which accompany the breaking of a covenant. In ancient Near Eastern legal contracts, after the stipulations of a covenant were listed, curses then followed for violation of the agreement. These curses were guaranteed by the gods to ensure that the parties kept their agreement. The unique thing about the Mosaic Covenant was that God, the Guarantor of the contract, was also the Party Who initiated the agreement. The inanity of violating a contract with God was profoundly obvious to the original audience, as alienating Him meant that the curses would most certainly follow. A listing of nasty ailments was a common element in the curse sections of ancient Near Eastern contracts.

NET NOTE - "consumption" (so KJV, NASB, NRSV). The term is from a verbal root that indicates a weakening of one's physical strength (cf. NAB "wasting"; NIV, NLT "wasting disease").

Fever (only in Lev 26:16, Dt 28:22) (06920). תַּדְּחַחַת **qaddahat**: A feminine noun meaning fever a state or condition in which one has an elevated temperature of the body causing a hot feeling to the ill person. It was one of the pestilences or plagues the Lord would send on a disobedient people (Lev. 26:16; Deut. 28:22).

Mildew (03420) יָרֵאֶזֶן **yērāqôn**: A masculine noun referring to paleness, mildew. It was a disease attacking grains and forming rust or mildew on the grain. It was often considered a curse or pestilence from the Lord because of Israel's sin (1 Ki 8:37; 2 Chr. 6:28; Amos 4:9; Hag. 2:17). It was used of people's faces turning "green," that is, pale from fear of judgment, paleness, sickly yellow, formally, greenish color, i.e., to have a loss of blood to the face as a basal response to fear (Jer. 30:6).

Deuteronomy 28:23 "The heaven which is over your head shall be bronze, and the earth which is under you, iron."

- Lev 26:19 1Ki 17:1 18:2 Jer 14:1-6 Am 4:7
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Leviticus 26:19+ I will also break down your pride of power; I will also make your sky like iron and your earth like bronze.

1 Kings 17:1 Now Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the settlers of Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the LORD, the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, surely there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word."

BRONZE SKY HARD EARTH

TSK - The language here is remarkable: "The heaven;" that part of the atmosphere which was over Judea, instead of being replenished with aqueous vapours, should become, with respect to moisture, like brass: and consequently their land would become as hard as iron, and wholly incapable of cultivation; while the clouds might give showers in abundance, and the earth be moist and fruitful in other regions.

The heaven which is over your head shall be bronze, and the earth which is under you, iron-

NET NOTE - Or "heavens" (also in the following verse). The Hebrew term שָׁמַיִם (shamayim) may be translated "heaven(s)" or "sky" depending on the context.

Bob Utley on **iron** - **Iron** is often a metaphor for difficulties: (1) the land will not produce, because of no rain it turns as hard as metal, v. 23, cf. Lev. 26:19 (2) the yoke of iron is placed on Israel's neck, v. 48 (3) Egypt as an iron furnace of affliction, cf. 4:20

Deuteronomy 28:24 "The LORD will make the rain of your land powder and dust; from heaven it shall come down on you until you are destroyed."

- **make the rain:** De 28:12 Ge 19:24 Job 18:15-21 Isa 5:24 Am 4:11
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Dust Storm, Oklahoma, 1936

DUST BOWL CURSE

The LORD will make the rain of your land powder and dust; from heaven it shall come down on you until you are destroyed (**shamad**; Lxx = **apollumi** = ruined) This was a natural consequence of the heaven's being bronze and yielding no rain; for the surface of the earth was reduced to **powder and dust**, and frequently taken up by strong winds, which would blow dust instead of rain (See [Dust Storm 1935](#)). These showers of sand frequently, in the East, are capable of burying entire caravans!

[IVP Bible Background Commentary](#) (page 203) - **bronze sky, iron ground**. An Assyrian treaty curse from the seventh century

B.C. (Esarhaddon) is very similar to this, not only using the analogies of bronze and iron but elaborating that there is no fertility in iron ground and no rain or dew comes from bronze skies.

Deuteronomy 28:25 "The LORD shall cause you to be defeated before your enemies; you will go out one way against them, but you will flee seven ways before them, and you will be an example of terror to all the kingdoms of the earth.

- **cause:** De 28:7 32:30 Lev 26:17,36,37 Isa 30:17
- Jer 15:2-9 24:9 29:18 34:17 Eze 23:46 Lu 21:24
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passage (antithesis):

Deuteronomy 28:7+ The LORD shall cause your enemies who rise up against you to be defeated before you; they will come out against you one way and will flee before you seven ways.

DEVASTATING DEFEATS

The LORD shall cause you to be defeated before your enemies; you will go out one way against them, but you will flee seven ways before them - This is the opposite of the blessing in Dt 28:7 describing the routing of Israel's armies by her enemies.

[Bob Utley](#) says **flee seven ways before them** is an idiom which "refers to the fearful, unorganized retreat of Israel (cf. Dt 28:7). This is a metaphor describing Israel's military planning as being totally useless. Seven is a numerical symbol for "perfection." Israel will be in total retreat. The promises of "holy war" have been reversed!"

And you will be an example of terror to all the kingdoms of the earth- "Israel will be used by YHWH to reveal Himself to the world; either positively (i.e., the blessings) or negatively (i.e., the curses, cf. v. 37; 2 Chr. 29:8; Jer. 15:4). YHWH wanted to use Israel to reach all mankind." ([Bob Utley](#))

Deuteronomy 28:26 "Your carcasses will be food to all birds of the sky and to the beasts of the earth, and there will be no one to frighten them away.

- 1Sa 17:44-46 Ps 79:1-3 Isa 34:3 Jer 7:33 8:1 16:4 19:7 34:20 Eze 39:17-20
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Resource:

1 Samuel 17:44-46 The Philistine also said to David, "Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the sky and the beasts of the field." 45 Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted. 46 "This day the LORD will deliver you up into my hands, and I will strike you down and remove your head from you. **And I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel,**

Psalm 79:1-3 A Psalm of Asaph. O God, the nations have invaded Your inheritance; They have defiled Your holy temple; They have laid Jerusalem in ruins. 2 They have given the dead bodies of Your servants for food to the birds of the heavens, The flesh of Your godly ones to the beasts of the earth. 3 They have poured out their blood like water round about Jerusalem; And there was no one to bury them.

FALLEN FELLOW ISRAELITES FODDER FOR THE BIRDS!

Your carcasses will be food to all birds of the sky and to the beasts of the earth, and there will be no one to frighten them away - In other words Israel would be defeated in battle and lose many men and would flee from the enemy without taking time to bury their fallen fellow Israelites, which adds "[insult to injury](#)" as we often say, for it was an utter disgrace for a Jew to leave a body unburied! Consider, for example, the fate of Jezebel as recorded in 2 Kings 9:33-37.

Deuteronomy 28:27 "The LORD will smite you with the boils of Egypt and with tumors and with the scab and with the itch, from which you cannot be healed.

- **the boils of Egypt** De 28:35 Ex 9:9-11 Ex 15:26
- **tumors:** 1Sa 5:6,9,12 Ps 78:66
- **scab:** Lev 13:2-8 21:20 Isa 3:17
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Exodus 9:9-11+ "It will become fine dust over all the land of Egypt, and will become boils breaking out with sores on man and beast through all the land of Egypt." 10 So they took soot from a kiln, and stood before Pharaoh; and Moses threw it toward the sky, and it became boils breaking out with sores on man and beast. 11 The magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils, for the boils were on the magicians as well as on all the Egyptians.

Exodus 15:26+ **(ISRAEL HAD BEEN WARNED ABOUT DISOBEDIENCE)** And He said, "If you will give earnest heed to the voice of the LORD your God, and do what is right in His sight, and give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have put on the Egyptians; for I, the LORD, am your healer."

BOILS, TUMORS AND SCABS

The LORD will smite ([nākāh](#); Lxx = [patasso](#) = inflict a heavy blow) you with the boils of Egypt and with tumors and with the scab and with the itch, from which you cannot be healed - See also [note](#) on Dt 28:35. Boils of Egypt describe the sixth plague (see Exodus passage above). It is a tragic irony that disobedient Israel would be forced to experience the very diseases and plagues they had seen inflicted on the pagan, godless Egyptians. In short, they would now be treated as if they were "godless" for they had forsaken the LORD their God! Scabs would be the result of dermatological disorders and would make one ceremonially unclean (as if that truly had any significance for such a disobedient people - cf Lev 21:10, 22:22). One of the curses that would befall Israel if they were unfaithful to their Covenant with the LORD was that they would suffer from an **itch** similar to the plagues which scourged the Egyptians before the Israelite Exodus.

As horrible as these curses are they are reflective of the principle Jesus describes in Luke 12:47-48+

"And that slave who knew his master's will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, will receive many lashes, but the one who did not know it, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few. From **everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more.**

THOUGHT - Jesus' words should cause us to shudder, for we in America have been "blessed" with so much, with such free access to Bibles and churches, etc and yet as of 2021 it appears that our government is doing everything it can to blot God and His righteousness out of our society. Woe!

[IVP Bible Background Commentary](#) (page 203) - Boils again represent a symptom, not a disease. The symptoms are not given in enough detail for specific diagnosis (guesses have included smallpox, chronic eczema, skin ulcers, syphilis and scurvy), but it is the symptom more than the disease that is the curse. This same symptom is the sixth plague in Egypt (Ex 9:8-11) and the affliction that tormented Job (Job 2:7-8), as well as being named among the skin diseases in Leviticus 13 (vv. 18-23).

Currid has an interesting note on **tumors** (hemorrhoids) - The next affliction is called 'haemorrhoids', and the Hebrew term is one that appears only here and in 1 Samuel 5:6, 9, 12; 6:4-5. In 1 Samuel it is used to describe the ailment visited on the Philistines for having seized the ark of the covenant from Israel. The Masoretes thought this term to be indecent and so when reading aloud they used the word 'tumours' (qere) instead of 'haemorrhoids' (kethib). This is an example of the rabbinic principle cited by Tov: 'Our rabbis taught: wherever an indelicate expression is written in the text, we substitute a more polite one in reading.' ([EPSC-Dt](#))

Tumors (06754) I. לִפְּזָה ('ō-ṣēl): n.masc.; tumor, buboes, i.e., lymph abscesses of the groin area, possibly a hemorrhoidal-like abscess - 6 verses in OT - Deut. 28:27; 1 Sam. 5:6; 1 Sam. 5:9; 1 Sam. 5:12; 1 Sam. 6:4; 1 Sam. 6:5

Scab (01618). גָּרַב **gārāb**: A masculine noun indicating scabs, an eruption of skin, a dermatological ailment, i.e., a festering sore, open rash, or scurvy or some such scabbing/itching disorder. It designates skin disease of some kind that prohibited a priest from offering sacrifices to the Lord (Lev. 21:20) and also disqualified an animal to be used for sacrifice (Lev. 22:22). This condition was one of the curses the Lord would place on His people for breaking His covenant (Deut. 28:22). Used in 3 verses - Lev. 21:20; Lev. 22:22; Deut. 28:27

Itch (02775). חֵרֵס **heres**: masculine noun indicating a skin eruption of some kind that itches. It is listed among the curses as one of the skin diseases the Lord will bring on Israel if they disobey the Sinai covenant (Deut. 28:27).

Deuteronomy 28:28 "The LORD will smite you with madness and with blindness and with bewilderment of heart;

- 1Sa 16:14 Ps 60:3 Isa 6:9,10 19:11-17 43:19 Jer 4:9 Eze 4:17 Lu 21:25,26 Ac 13:41 2Th 2:9-11
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

PSYCHOLOGICAL CURSES

The LORD will smite (**nākāh**; Lxx = **patasso** = inflict a heavy blow) **you with madness and with blindness and with bewilderment of heart** - The hand of God will drive them out of their mind and they will be blinded (presumably physically but also spiritually) and their heart will be stunned by the curses they are experiencing. Some think these mental disorders could be related the horrendous skin disorders described in v27. One consideration is syphilis which can affect the skin and then later in **tertiary syphilis** will result in **neurosyphilis** in a percentage of patients.

It is interesting that in the last days when Yahweh comes to the rescue of the nation of Israel, all three of the words in this passage are used in Zechariah 12:4+ "In that day," declares the LORD, "I will strike every horse with **bewilderment** and his rider with **madness**. But I will watch over the house of Judah, while I strike every horse of the peoples with **blindness**." The hand of the LORD defends Israel and sends the enemy into total panic and confusion. God is not finished with Israel despite the horrible curses in Deuteronomy 28!

Madness (07697). שִׁגְגָּ'וֹן **šiggā'ôn**: A masculine noun meaning insanity, madness, an irrational state of not having a right mind, and so capable of erratic behavior similar to panic. It is always used in a negative, accusatory way of persons who behave abnormally to a threatening and excessive extent (Deut. 28:28; Zech. 12:4); but it is used of especially agitated or excessive physical activity in general (2 Kgs. 9:20). Only 3x - Deut. 28:28; 2 Ki. 9:20; Zech. 12:4

Blindness (05788). עִוְרֹן **'iwwārôn**, עִוְרַת **'awweret**: I. An abstract masculine noun meaning blindness, a state or condition of not being able to see, implying a state of confusion. It is used especially of spiritual and religious blindness (Deut. 28:28). It is used figuratively of horses being blind, that is, the power and might of the nations (Zech. 12:4 = only other OT use).

Bewilderment (08541). תִּמְחֹהוֹן **timmāhôn**: A masculine noun indicating bewilderment, confusion, confusion, panic, i.e., a state or condition of a stunned, confused response. It refers to a curse that God will bring on a disobedient people of confusion, disorientation at what is happening (Deut. 28:28); even horses will be dazed (Zech. 12:4).

Deuteronomy 28:29 and you will grope at noon, as the blind man gropes in darkness, and you will not prosper in your ways; but you shall only be oppressed and robbed continually, with none to save you.

- **grobe**: Job 5:14 12:25 Ps 69:23,24 Isa 59:10 La 5:17 Zep 1:17 Ro 11:7-10,25 2Co 4:3,4
- **shall be**: Jdg 3:14 Jdg 4:2,3 Jdg 6:1-6 Jdg 10:8 Jdg 13:1 1Sa 13:5-7,19-22 Ne 9:26-29,37 Ps 106:40-42 La 5:8 Ac 21:24
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

CONFUSION OF MIND

And you will grope at noon, as the blind man gropes in darkness; Groping is a powerful picture of the Israelites reaching about uncertainly; feel their way, blindly searching.

You will not prosper in your ways - Prosper ([salah](#)) means to succeed, prosper, etc. They will not to successfully accomplish a task or goal. They will not accomplish satisfactorily what they had intended because true prosperity is from the blessing of the hand of God in the one who seeks God Him (Israel had abandoned Him and He abandoned them). (cf 2 Chr 31:21; Josh 1:8; Ps 1:3).

Jack Deere - "The physical and mental afflictions would be so great that the Israelites would not have the strength or presence of mind to complete any task (they would be unsuccessful in everything), nor could they defend themselves from oppressors." (See [Bible Knowledge Commentary](#) for all of Deere's comments on Deuteronomy).

But you shall only be oppressed and robbed continually, with none to save you - Robbed ([qazal](#)) means to take away something by force or by stealth.

TWOT has this note on **robbed** ([qazal](#)) - This root has in its meaning the **violence that goes beyond mere stealing or taking another's belongings but includes robbing by force, tearing off**. One of the most violent horrors of the ancient world was the practice of flaying people, that is, literally skinning them alive. It was one of the atrocities committed by the armies of Assyria. In other contexts the verb refers to deeds of similar horror. For example, tearing a fatherless child from the breast (Job 24:9), seizing by violence wells of water (Ge 21:25), houses (Job 20:19), and fields (Mic 2:2).

Will grope ([04959](#)). [מָשַׁח](#) *māšāš*: (or mashash) A verb meaning to touch, to feel, to grope. It refers to feeling around, groping after something to identify it or to move around, such as Isaac did (Gen. 27:12, 22); or as the Egyptians did during the plague of darkness (Ex. 10:21). It has the sense of staggering, trying to find one's way in a figurative sense (Deut. 28:29; Job 12:25), especially of the wicked (Job 5:14). Swanson adds "(qal) touch, feel, i.e., make contact with an object, usually with the hands (Ge 27:12, 22); (piel) grope, search thoroughly, implying more intense contact (Ge 31:34, 37; Dt 28:29; Job 5:14; 12:25); (hif) make one grope (Ex 10:21), note: this refers to a darkness so deep one must grope about in order to move

Masas - 8verse - feel(1), felt(2), felt through(2), grope(3), gropes(1). Gen. 27:12; Gen. 27:22; Gen. 31:34; Gen. 31:37; Exod. 10:21; Deut. 28:29; Job 5:14; Job 12:25

Oppressed ([06943](#)) [אָשַׁח](#) *'ā-šāq/ashaq*: v.; oppress, mistreat, i.e., treat a disadvantaged member of society unjustly with the effect of causing one to suffer ill treatment. To be come down upon unjustly. A verb meaning to oppress, to defraud. It refers to extorting or exploiting someone (Lev. 6:2[5:21], 4[5:23]), especially a servant. It has the sense of cheating or robbing in some contexts (Lev. 19:13); keeping what is rightfully someone else's. A righteous person does not oppress or exploit another person (1 Sam. 12:3, 4). Job thought that God was oppressing him (Job 10:3). God will curse the one who oppresses others (Ps. 72:4; 105:14). To oppress another person is to abuse, to revile one's Creator (Prov. 14:31). Even the poor may be oppressors. (Prov. 28:3). It is used to designate the guilt of blood on a person (Prov. 28:17). In its passive usage, it refers to a person who is abused or defrauded in some way (Isa. 23:12). The prophets spoke strongly against the oppressors of the poor (Amos 4:1; Mic. 2:2; Zech. 7:10; Mal. 3:5). ([Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament](#))

Swanson - 1. (qal) oppress, mistreat, i.e., treat a disadvantaged member of society unjustly with the effect of causing one to suffer ill treatment (1Ch 16:21; Job 10:3; Ps 72:4; 105:14; 119:121, 122; Pr 14:31; 22:16; 28:3; Ecc 4:1b; Isa 23:12; 52:4; Jer 7:6; 21:12; Eze 22:29b; Am 4:1; Zec 7:10+), note: in some of these contexts the oppression can refer to economic or financial oppression; (qal pass.) oppressed, be tormented (Dt 28:29, 33; Ps 103:6; 146:7; Pr 28:17; Ecc 4:1a; Jer 50:33; Hos 5:11+); (pual) crushed (Isa 23:12+); 2. (qal) defraud, extort, cheat, formally, oppress or mistreat, i.e., steal or rob from disadvantaged persons in a financial or business transaction which has unjust leverage in favor of rich over the poor, and so creating suffering and undue torment of the poor or disadvantaged (Lev 5:21,23; 19:13; Dt 24:14; 1Sa 12:3, 4; Eze 18:18; 22:29a; Hos 12:8; Mic 2:2; Mal 3:5+); 3. (qal) flow heavily, rage, i.e., have a condition of a large quantity of a mass flow from a source along a descending path (Job 40:23+),

Asaq - 35v - crushed(1), defrauded(2), extorted(1), got(1), laden(1), oppress(11), oppressed(9), oppresses(3), oppressor(2), oppressors(2), practiced(2), rages(1), rob(1). Lev. 6:2; Lev. 6:4; Lev. 19:13; Deut. 24:14; Deut. 28:29; Deut. 28:33; 1 Sam. 12:3; 1 Sam. 12:4; 1 Chr. 16:21; Job 10:3; Job 40:23; Ps. 72:4; Ps. 103:6; Ps. 105:14; Ps. 119:121; Ps. 119:122; Ps. 146:7; Prov. 14:31; Prov. 22:16; Prov. 28:3; Prov. 28:17; Eccl. 4:1; Isa. 23:12; Isa. 52:4; Jer. 7:6; Jer. 21:12; Jer. 50:33; Ezek. 18:18; Ezek. 22:29; Hos. 5:11; Hos. 12:7; Amos 4:1; Mic. 2:2; Zech. 7:10; Mal. 3:5

Deuteronomy 28:30 "You shall betroth a wife, but another man will violate her; you shall build a house, but you will not live in it; you shall plant a vineyard, but you will not use its fruit.

- **betroth**: De 20:6,7 Job 31:10 Jer 8:10 Ho 4:2
- **build**: Job 3:18 Isa 5:9,10 65:21,22 Jer 12:13 La 5:2 Am 5:11 Mic 6:15 Zep 1:13
- **you will not use its fruit**, De 20:6
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

WIVES, HOUSES VINEYARDS ALL CURSED

Currid notes "These are commonly known as 'futility curses': the people will have many good things, but they will not be able to enjoy them." ([EPSC-Dt](#))

You shall betroth a wife, but another man will violate her- This is horrible for husbands to see their beloved betrothed (promised in marriage) raped and ravished by another man. Israel would be defeated in wars and one of the spoils of war was the women! **Swanson** however says the idea is more of "aggressively have illicit sexual intercourse with a woman pledged to another, but not necessarily rape her." (see Isaiah 13:16; Zechariah 14:2)

Currid on **violate** - The rabbis believed this word to be obscene, and so when reading the text they would say instead 'he shall lie with her'. The Septuagint softens it further by simply saying that another man will 'possess' her. ([EPSC-Dt](#))

you shall build a house, but you will not live in it- Another horrible consequence. Labor would be in vain!

you shall plant a vineyard, but you will not use its fruit- Vineyards often took several years to mature, but the Israelite who planted it would never see the fruit of his labors.

Deuteronomy 28:31 "Your ox shall be slaughtered before your eyes, but you will not eat of it; your donkey shall be torn away from you, and will not be restored to you; your sheep shall be given to your enemies, and you will have none to save you."

- Jdg 6:1 Job 1:14,15
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

LIVESTOCK LOSS IN THIS CURSE

Your ox shall be slaughtered before your eyes, but you will not eat of it; your donkey shall be torn away from you, and will not be restored to you; your sheep shall be given to your enemies, and you will have none to save you - **Save** ([yasha'](#)) usually refers to salvation but in this context is referring primarily to saving physically. There will be no one to help Israel when their livestock is killed or stolen.

Save (deliver, help) ([03467](#)) [yasha'](#) (See also [yeshua](#) from which we get our word "Jesus") is an important Hebrew verb which means to help, to save, to deliver. The root in Arabic is "make wide" which underscores the main thought of [yasha'](#) as to bring to a place of safety or broad pasture in contrast to a narrow strait which symbolizes distress or danger.

Deuteronomy 28:32 "Your sons and your daughters shall be given to another people, while your eyes look on and yearn for them continually; but there will be nothing you can do."

- **sons**: De 28:18,41 Nu 21:29 2Ch 29:9 Ne 5:2-5 Jer 15:7-9 16:2-4 Eze 24:25 Joe 3:6 Am 5:27 Mic 4:10
- **there will be nothing you can do**: De 28:65 Job 11:20 17:5 Ps 69:3 119:82,123 Isa 38:14 La 2:11 4:17 La 5:17
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE PATHETIC PLIGHT OF ISRAELITE PARENTS

Your sons and your daughters shall be given to another people, while your eyes look on and yearn for them continually; but there will be nothing you can do - Does this not remind us of scenes we have all seen in the Nazi concentration camps where

the train pulled into the camp, the families got off and then the Nazis separated screaming children from their wailing parents!

NET NOTE on **there will be nothing you can do** - Hebrew literally = "and there will be no power in your hand"

TSK - In several countries, particularly in Spain and Portugal, the children of the Jews have been taken from them, by order of the government, to be educated another faith

McGee suggests "This verse was accurately fulfilled in Judah's last king, **Zedekiah**, whose sons were slain before him; then his eyes were put out. Blind and helpless, he was carried away into Babylonian captivity." (See [Thru the Bible](#))

Deuteronomy 28:33 "A people whom you do not know shall eat up the produce of your ground and all your labors, and you will never be anything but oppressed and crushed continually.

- **produce** De 28:30,51 Lev 26:16 Ne 9:36,37 Isa 1:7 Jer 5:17 8:16
- **will never:** De 28:29 Jer 4:17
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

PRODUCE EATEN BY OTHERS

A people whom you do not know shall eat up the produce of your ground and all your labors- NLT "A foreign nation you have never heard about will eat the crops you worked so hard to grow." This was fulfilled for example in the days of the Judges, in Judges 6:1-6+

Then the sons of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD gave them into the hands of Midian seven years. 2 **The power of Midian prevailed against Israel.** Because of Midian the sons of Israel made for themselves the dens which were in the mountains and the caves and the strongholds. 3 **For it was when Israel had sown,** that the Midianites would come up with the Amalekites and the sons of the east and go against them. 4 So they would camp against them and **destroy the produce of the earth** as far as Gaza, and **leave no sustenance in Israel as well as no sheep, ox, or donkey.** 5 For they would come up with their livestock and their tents, they would come in like locusts for number, both they and their camels were innumerable; and they came into the land to devastate it. 6 So Israel was brought very low because of Midian, and the sons of Israel cried to the LORD.

and you will never be anything but oppressed and crushed continually- NLT - "You will suffer under constant oppression and harsh treatment." The word **oppressed** is used of the wealthy taking advantage of the poor and outcasts, but here refers to the disobedient Israelites. This is a summary statement of the various effects of the many curses.

Deuteronomy 28:34 "You shall be driven mad by the sight of what you see.

- De 28:28,68 Isa 33:14 Jer 25:15,16 Rev 16:10,11
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

DRIVEN MAD

You shall be driven mad by the sight of what you see- Re-read the curses described in the preceding passages and you begin to understand that a natural reaction would **be to be driven mad** by these things.

Currid explains that **mad** "is a figure of wild and out-of-control panic. It is a word used to describe the way in which Jehu drove his chariot—that is, in a frenzy (2 Kings 9:20)." ([EPSC-Dt](#))

Mad (07696. מַדֵּם **šaga'**: A verb meaning to be insane, to be demented, to be mad like a maniac thinking irrationally and not in one's right state of mind. (Deut. 28:34; 1 Sam. 21:14[15], 15[16]; 21:15[16]; 2 Kgs. 9:11; Jer. 29:26; Hos. 9:7).

Deuteronomy 28:35 "The LORD will strike you on the knees and legs with sore boils, from which you cannot be healed, from the sole of your foot to the crown of your head.

- **Boils:** De 28:27 Job 2:6-7 Isa 1:6 3:17,24
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Job 2:6-7 So the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your power, only spare his life." 7Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head.

Isaiah 1:6 From the sole of the foot even to the head There is nothing sound in it, Only bruises, welts and raw wounds, Not pressed out or bandaged, Nor softened with oil.

MORE BOILS

The LORD will strike ([nākāh](#); Lxx = [patasso](#) = inflict a heavy blow) you on the knees and legs with sore boils, from which you cannot be healed, from the sole of your foot to the crown of your head - See [boils](#) in Dt 28:27. Here they are from top to bottom indicating they are widespread. (cf. Job 2:7; Isa. 1:5–6). The point is these are incurable diseases.

Deuteronomy 28:36 "The LORD will bring you and your king, whom you set over you, to a nation which neither you nor your fathers have known, and there you shall serve other gods, wood and stone.

- **bring:** 2Ki 17:4-6 24:12-15 25:6,7,11 2Ch 33:11 36:6,17,20 Isa 39:7 Jer 22:11,12,24-27 24:8-10 39:5-7 52:8-11 La 4:20 Eze 12:12,13
- **there:** De 28:64 4:28 Jer 16:13 Eze 20:32,33,39
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

ISRAEL EXILED

The LORD will bring you and your king, whom you set over you - The phrase **the LORD will bring you** indicates that Yahweh is actively involved in this exile! **Your king** is a prophecy that Israel would one day be ruled by a human king (see Dt 17:14-20+).

We read of the two exiles to a nation neither you nor your fathers have known...

2 Kings 17:6 (722 BC - 10 NORTHERN TRIBES TAKEN TO ASSYRIA) In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria and carried Israel away into exile to Assyria, and settled them in Halah and Habor, on the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.

2 Kings 25:21 (586 BC - 2 SOUTHERN TRIBES TAKEN TO BABYLON) Then the king of Babylon struck them down and put them to death at Riblah in the land of Hamath. So Judah was led away into exile from its land.

Wiersbe comments that "After the Babylonian Captivity, in 538 BC they were permitted to return to their land, rebuild Jerusalem, and restore the temple (Ezra 1–6; the Book of Haggai); and about 50,000 Jews took advantage of this opportunity." ([Wiersbe Bible Commentary - OT](#))

To a nation which neither you nor your fathers have known, and there you shall serve ([abad](#); Lxx = [latreuo](#) = carry out religious duties in spirit of worship of) other gods, wood and stone - They will be returned to slavery and idolatry, the very conditions they had experienced in Egypt! Refusal to serve the living God would result in Israel being cast into a strange land to serve lifeless gods!

Deuteronomy 28:37 "You shall become a horror, a proverb, and a taunt among all the people where the LORD drives you.

- **become:** De 28:28 29:22-28 1Ki 9:7,8 2Ch 7:20 Ps 44:13,14 Jer 24:9 25:9 Joe 2:17 Zec 8:13
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

ISRAEL AN OBJECT OF HORROR, SCORN AND RIDICULE

You shall become a horror, a proverb, and a taunt among all the people where the LORD drives you- If Israel obeyed "the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth." (Dt 28:1). Here disobedience causes them to be the most despised, ridiculed nation on earth. I have little doubt that the fulfillment of this curse is to a significant degree responsible for persistence worldwide [anti-Semitism](#).

Guzik - Even as with the blessings, God's purpose in cursing Israel would be greater than just immediately punishing them for their sin. It was to be a witness to the nations.

TSK - The name of Jew has long been a proverbial mark of detestation and contempt among all the nations wherever they have been dispersed, and is so to this day.

Deuteronomy 28:38 "You shall bring out much seed to the field but you will gather in little, for the locust will consume it.

- **shall bring:** Isa 5:10 Mic 6:15 Hag 1:6
- **the locust:** Ex 10:14-15 Joe 1:4 2:3,25 Am 4:9 7:1,2
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



[Acridium peregrinum](#)

PLAGUE OF LOCUSTS

Dt 28:38-40 describe Israel's devastated economy where their fervent efforts would only yield frustration and futility! As **Currid** says "These are curses of frustration and failure: much labour will result in little reward." ([EPSC-Dt](#))

You shall bring out much seed to the field but you will gather in little, for the locust will consume it- This recalls the eighth plague of locusts over Egypt "The locusts came up over all the land of Egypt and settled in all the territory of Egypt; they were very numerous. There had never been so many locusts, nor would there be so many again. 15 For they covered the surface of the whole land, so that the land was darkened; and they ate every plant of the land and all the fruit of the trees that the hail had left. Thus nothing green was left on tree or plant of the field through all the land of Egypt. (Ex 10:14-15+) All attempts at prosperity, would be thwarted by Yahweh.

A **locust** can consume its own weight in food each day and can cover as many as 400 square miles. Even one square mile can teem with over 100 million insects.

Locusts (swarming locusts)([0697](#)) [arbeh](#) rom [rabah](#) = to be or become much, many, great) is a masculine noun translated in NAS as locust (8), locusts (11), swarming locust (5) and is the most commonly used Hebrew word for locusts. See the discussions below for more specific details about locusts. Solomon asked God that if there was a plague (including locusts) and Israel supplicated to Him, that He would forgive their sin (1 Ki 8:37, 35-40, cf 2 Chr. 6:28)

A locust is a large, grasshopper-like insect belonging to the order Orthoptera that is especially known for forming immense migratory swarms capable of devastating vegetation and crops. The Bible uses numerous Hebrew terms for locusts—likely reflecting either different species or stages in their development—but they all refer to insects that multiply rapidly and travel in vast numbers. Locusts resemble large grasshoppers with powerful hind legs that allow them to leap great distances and wings that enable them to migrate long ranges, often carried by the wind. When they swarm, their numbers can be so great that they darken the sky and blanket the ground, consuming nearly every green plant in their path and leaving the land stripped bare (Exodus 10:12–15; Joel 1:4–7; 2:2–10). Because ancient Near Eastern societies depended heavily on agriculture, such infestations were considered one of the most destructive natural disasters, capable of causing famine and national hardship

(Deuteronomy 28:38; 1 Kings 8:37; 2 Chronicles 7:13).

Despite their destructive reputation, locusts were classified as “clean” insects under the Mosaic Law and could be eaten (Leviticus 11:21–22). They were commonly prepared by roasting, drying, or grinding them into meal and were sometimes mixed with flour to make cakes. This explains why John the Baptist’s diet included locusts and wild honey (Matthew 3:4; Mark 1:6), a practice that would not have been unusual in the ancient world. In Scripture locusts also function symbolically. Their vast numbers and relentless advance made them a fitting image for invading armies or instruments of divine judgment (Joel 2:4–11; Jeremiah 51:14, 27; Nahum 3:15–17). In prophetic imagery, such as Revelation 9:3–10, locusts represent terrifying forces unleashed in judgment. Thus, throughout the Bible locusts illustrate both a literal agricultural scourge and a powerful metaphor for overwhelming destruction and divine discipline.

- [Why did God use a locust swarm to punish Israel \(Joel 1:4\)? | GotQuestions.org](#)

Edwin Yamauchi has an excellent of locusts - (’arbeh) Locust. The word is probably derived from the root rābâ “to become numerous.” It occurs in Akkadian as erebu, arbû, etc. In the Ugaritic KRT text (103, 192), the king’s army is described as covering the field like locusts (irby). Of the many words for locust, ’arbeh is the general word, and is used most frequently, twenty-four times. The KJV translates it “locust” twenty times and “grasshopper” four times. The ’arbeh plague (Deut 28:38) is listed as one of the divine curses which would befall the Israelites if they disobeyed God’s commands. The ’arbeh is one of the plagues which Moses called down upon Egypt (Ex 10:4ff.; Ps 78:46; 105:34). **Locusts are used in similes of vast numbers** in Jdg 6:5+; Jdg 7:12+; Jer 46:23; Nah 3:15. Locusts belong to the order of the [Orthoptera](#), “straight-winged.” With the grasshoppers they belong to the subfamily [Saltatoria](#), “leapers,” which were considered edible (Lev 11:21–22). The biblical locust is not the cicada called “locust” in some areas of the United States. Locusts belong to the family Acridiidae, “short-horned grasshoppers.” Of the ninety-one species found in Palestine only the desert locust (*Schistocerca gregaria* or [Acridium peregrinum - see picture](#)) has served to plague the near east from time immemorial. At maturity these locusts are two and one-half inches long. They have two sets of wings and an enlarged pair of legs for jumping. **In appearance they are compared to horses** (Joel 2:4; Job 39:20; Rev 9:7-[see Tony Garland's interesting note on interpretation of the "locusts"](#); cf. German Heupferd, Italian ciallette). Desert locusts are phenomenal travelers. They are able to fly for seventeen hours at a time and have been known to travel fifteen hundred miles. The sound of their wings is compared to the sound of chariots (Joel 2:5-[note](#); Rev 9:9). Their route of travel is determined by the prevailing winds (Ex 10:13, 19). In the [plague of 1915 \(click for original article\)](#), locusts came to Jerusalem from the northeast (cf. Joel 2:20+). The Bible does not exaggerate when it speaks of swarms of locusts covering the ground (Ex 10:5). A swarm has been known to cover a hundred square miles and to be so dense as to blot out the sun. A truly large swarm may contain ten billion locusts. Unlike the Babylonians who resorted to magical incantations to avert locust plagues, the Israelites asked God in fasting, repentance, and prayer to remove locust plagues (1 Ki 8:37; 2 Chr 6:28). In Lev 11:22 the ’arbeh and three other types of locusts (sol’ām, ḥargōl, ḥāgāb) are listed as edible insects. Bas reliefs from Nineveh show servants bringing skewered locusts for Sennacherib’s table. John the Baptist subsisted on honey and locusts (Mt 3:4; Mk 1:6). Many Africans and Arabs after removing the wings, legs, and heads eat locusts either cooked or ground up as flour. There are nine Hebrew words which designate locusts: ’arbeh, gāzām, gēbā, only as plural gēbīm, gōbay, ḥāgāb, ḥasīl, yeleq, sol’ām, šēlāšal. Akkadian recognizes eighteen names for locusts, and the Talmud twenty names. ([TWOT](#))

Ancient Locusts. THE Locust, or grasshopper, is one of the most formidable insects mentioned in the sacred writings. It is used as the symbol of desolation, so great and terrible were its ravages. It is still dreaded in the East. M. Olivier thus describes its attacks : *“With the burning south winds (of Syria) there come from the interior of Arabia and the most southern parts of Persia, clouds of locusts, whose ravages to these countries are as grievous, and nearly as sudden, as those of the heaviest hail in Europe. We witnessed them twice. It is difficult to express the effect produced on us by the sight of the whole atmosphere filled on all sides, and to a great height, by an innumerable quantity of these insects, whose flight was slow and uniform, and whose noise resembled that of rain ; the sky was darkened, and the light of the sun was considerably weakened. In a moment the terraces of the houses, the streets, and all the fields were covered by these insects, and in two days they had devoured all the leaves of the plants.”* The effects of the locusts in Egypt ([Ex 10:12-15](#)) were terrible beyond description. No plague could have been more dreadful or impressive in the East, where the ravages of locusts are so dreadful that they are chosen as the fit symbol of a destroying conqueror. The very threat had urged Pharaoh’s courtiers to remonstrance, but he had refused to yield and had driven Moses and Aaron from his presence. Now he recalled them in haste, and asked them to forgive his sin “only this once,” and to entreat God to take away “this death only.” A strong west wind removed the locusts as an east wind had brought them ; but their removal left the king’s heart harder and more rebellious than ever. Locusts were used as food, and are still in some parts of the East. Sometimes they are ground and pounded, and mixed with flower and water, and made into cakes, or they are salted, and then eaten; sometimes smoked, boiled or roasted, stewed or fried in butter, and are considered a luxury. It was the locust that constituted the food of St. John the Baptist. (**Animals, Birds, Insects, And Reptiles Of The Bible**)

Deuteronomy 28:39 "You shall plant and cultivate vineyards, but you will neither drink of the wine nor gather the grapes, for the worm will devour them.

- **worms:** Joe 1:4-7 2:2-4 Jon 4:7
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

GRAPES DEVOURED

You shall plant and cultivate ([abad](#)) vineyards, but you will neither drink of the wine nor gather the grapes, for the worm will devour them - Worm is the Hebrew word [tola](#) which is the same word that describes a deep red material as in Israel's sins "Though they are red like **crimson** (tola)."

Deere quips that "**Locusts** and **worms** would obey the sovereign Lord even if Israel would not." (See [Bible Knowledge Commentary](#) for all of Deere's comments on Deuteronomy).

Deuteronomy 28:40 "You shall have olive trees throughout your territory but you will not anoint yourself with the oil, for your olives will drop off.

- **anoint:** Ps 23:5 Ps 104:15 Mic 6:15
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passage:

Micah 6:15+ "You will sow but you will not reap. You will tread the olive but will not anoint yourself with oil; And the grapes, but you will not drink wine.

OLIVES DROP LIKE ROCKS

You shall have olive trees throughout your territory but you will not anoint yourself with the oil, for your olives will drop off - The point is that the olives will drop off before they ripen and will be useless for producing [olive oil](#). In the hot, dry, arid climate of Israel oil was used to soothe and soften the skin (cf Ps 104:15), and give the person a more pleasant aroma (there were no [deodorants](#) in that day) but it would not be available because of this divine curse on the olives! Notice how this curse affects the basic elements of life -- interpersonal relations (body odor) and cooking (olive oil for cooking).

Bob Utley adds that "The people of the ancient Near East put olive oil on their faces as a symbol of prosperity and joy (e.g., Ruth 3:3; 2 Sam. 12:20; 14:2)."

[IVP Bible Background Commentary](#) (page 203)- **olives dropping off**. The oil of the olive is derived only from the black, ripe fruit. Olive trees normally lose a large percentage of the potential fruit due to the blossoms or the green olives dropping off the tree. The small proportion left can be further depleted by drought or disease, causing heavier dropping off. This curse is not found in Assyrian texts because sesame seed oil was used in Mesopotamia.

Related Resources:

- Baker's Evangelical Dictionary [Anoint](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Anoint](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Anoint](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Anoint](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Anointing, Anointed](#)

Deuteronomy 28:41 "You shall have sons and daughters but they will not be yours, for they will go into captivity.

- De 28:32 2Ki 24:14 La 1:5

- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passage:

2 Kings 24:11+ And Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon came to the city, while his servants were besieging it. 12 Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he and his mother and his servants and his captains and his officials. So the king of Babylon took him captive in the eighth year of his reign. 13 He carried out from there all the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the LORD, just as the LORD had said. 14 Then he led away into exile all Jerusalem and all the captains and all the mighty men of valor, ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and the smiths. None remained except the poorest people of the land. 15 So he led Jehoiachin away into exile to Babylon; also the king's mother and the king's wives and his officials and the leading men of the land, he led away into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. 16 All the men of valor, seven thousand, and the craftsmen and the smiths, one thousand, all strong and fit for war, and these the king of Babylon brought into exile to Babylon. 17 Then the king of Babylon made his uncle Mattaniah king in his place, and changed his name to Zedekiah.

You shall have sons and daughters but they will not be yours, for they will go into captivity- This is a prophecy of Israel's defeat by her enemies resulting in sons and daughters taken into captivity in Assyria (722 BC) and Babylon (586 BC - eg. Ezekiel and Daniel).

Deuteronomy 28:42 "The cricket shall possess all your trees and the produce of your ground.

- **trees:** De 28:38,39 Am 7:1,2
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

CONSUMING "CRICKETS"

The cricket shall possess all your trees and the produce of your ground- A **cricket** is likely a whirring locusts. Chirping crickets would be maddening for sure, but devouring locusts are far worse for they would lead to famine, starvation and death. As a boy in the hot Texas summers (without an air conditioner) I was continually irritated by the buzzing sound of the cicadas ([listen to a cicada buzz](#)), who always seemed to be loudest in the hottest time of the day! See [diet of crickets](#).

NET NOTE on **cricket** - The Hebrew term denotes some sort of buzzing or whirring insect; some have understood this to be a type of locust (KJV, NIV, CEV), but other insects have also been suggested: "buzzing insects" (NAB); "the cricket" (NASB); "the cicada" (NRSV).

Deuteronomy 28:43 "The alien who is among you shall rise above you higher and higher, but you will go down lower and lower.

- Jdg 2:3,11-15 4:2,3 10:7-10 14:4 15:11,12 1Sa 13:3-7,19-23 2Ki 17:20,23 24:14-16 Joh 18:31 19:15
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

ALIEN ELEVATION

The alien who is among you shall rise above you higher and higher, but you will go down lower and lower- **Alien** is anyone not a Jew by birth. Aliens were generally strangers or aliens living in a strange land among strange people. The phrases **higher and higher** and **lower and lower** describe a continuous progress and increasing intensity. It would get worse and worse for the Israelites. Do you see the irony? God had blessed them with the gift of the Land of Promise and disobedience made it a land of cursing.

Deere - During the plagues the Lord made a distinction between the Egyptians and Israelites and protected the Israelites from the disasters that fell on Egypt. The reverse would be true in this judgment for the alien would profit at Israel's expense, becoming the

leader (head; cf. Dt 28:13). (See [Bible Knowledge Commentary](#) for all of Deere's comments on Deuteronomy).

Deuteronomy 28:44 "He shall lend to you, but you will not lend to him; he shall be the head, and you will be the tail.

- De 28:12-13 La 1:5
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 28:12-13[±] "The LORD will open for you His good storehouse, the heavens, to give rain to your land in its season and to bless all the work of your hand; and you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow. 13 "The LORD will make you the head and not the tail, and you only will be above, and you will not be underneath, if you listen to the commandments of the LORD your God, which I charge you today, to observe them carefully,

RADICAL ROLE REVERSAL

He shall lend to you, but you will not lend to him; he shall be the head, and you will be the tail- This curse is the antithesis of the prior blessing (see passages above).

Deuteronomy 28:45 "So all these curses shall come on you and pursue you and overtake you until you are destroyed, because you would not obey the LORD your God by keeping His commandments and His statutes which He commanded you.

- **So:** De 28:5,15 29:20,21 Lev 26:28 2Ki 17:20 Pr 13:21 Isa 1:20 65:14,15 Jer 24:9,10 La 2:15-17 Eze 7:15 14:21
- **because:** De 11:27,28 Ps 119:21 Jer 7:22-25
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE CAUSE FOR THE CURSE

So all these curses shall come on you and pursue you and overtake you until you are destroyed ([shamad](#); Lxx = [olothreuo](#)) - Notice how this passage parallels and relates to Dt 28:15 "all these curses will **come upon you** and **overtake** you." As [Currid](#) points out "The opening verse of this passage is the first conclusion to the entire maledictory section that began in verse 15 above." ([EPSC-Dt](#))

Because - This explains the cause of the effect (curses).

You would not obey ([shama](#)) **the LORD your God by keeping** ([shamar](#)) **His commandments and His statutes which He commanded you** - In a word the explanation for all these horrible curses is DISOBEDIENCE.

Deuteronomy 28:46 "They shall become a sign and a wonder on you and your descendants forever.

- **sign:** De 28:37,59 29:20,28 Isa 8:18 Jer 19:8 25:18 Eze 14:8 23:32,33 Eze 36:20 1Co 10:11
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

CURSES ARE A SIGN & WONDER

They shall become a sign and a wonder on you and your descendants forever - What is **they**? **These curses** of Dt 28:45. NLT has "These horrors will serve as a **sign** and warning among you and your descendants forever." The tragic irony of this prediction is that **sign** and **wonder** appeared earlier as exerting a positive or beneficial effect on Israel.

Dt 6:22-23+ Moreover, the LORD showed great and distressing **signs** and **wonders** before our eyes against Egypt, Pharaoh and all his household; He brought us out from there in order to bring us in, to give us the land which He had sworn to our fathers.'

Dt 7:19+ the great trials which your eyes saw and the **signs** and the **wonders** and the mighty hand and the outstretched arm by which the LORD your God brought you out (OF EGYPT). So shall the LORD your God do to all the peoples of whom you are afraid.

Dt 26:8+ and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with great terror and with **signs** and **wonders**;

Deere comments that the curses "would have a pedagogical function, however, for as a **sign** they would serve as a warning of God's miraculous intervention in judgments, and as a **wonder** the curses would be so so horrible and comprehensive that they would attract the attention of future Israelites. The curses would also demonstrate the Lord's retributive justice." (See [Bible Knowledge Commentary](#) for all of Deere's comments on Deuteronomy).

Currid has an interesting comment - Now Yahweh will bring these very things on his own people (see Dt 28:27). This is part of what is known as the '**exodus reversal**'. ([EPSC-Dt](#))

Deuteronomy 28:47 "Because you did not serve the LORD your God with joy and a glad heart, for the abundance of all things;

- De 12:7-12 16:11 32:13-15 Ne 9:35 1Ti 6:17-19
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

ANOTHER CAUSE FOR THE CURSE

Because - The next reason the curses would come upon Israel is they had an attitude of joyless ingratitude! How do you serve the LORD, **in** gratitude or **in**gratitude?

You did not serve ([abad](#); Lxx = [latreuo](#) = carry out religious duties in spirit of worship of) **the LORD your God with joy and a glad heart, for the abundance of all things** - **NIV** renders abundance of all things as "in the time of prosperity." One would think this would be a minor issue compared with their penchant for idolatry, but it is critically important as Paul shows in Romans 1:21-25+ writing

For even though they knew God (ISRAEL HAD NOT JUST [NATURAL REVELATION](#) BUT [SPECIAL REVELATION](#)), they **did not honor** Him as God or **give thanks**, (GIVING THANKS IS CRITICALLY IMPORTANT!) but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened (ISRAEL FORGOT GOD). 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures (ISRAEL WAS ENSNARED BY THE GROSS IDOLATRY OF THE CANAANITES). 24 Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. 25 For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature (ISRAEL TURNED TO THE LIE OF IDOLS - cf Dt 4:19+ WAS FULFILLED IN Jer 8:2, 19:13, 44:17-19) rather than the Creator, Who is blessed forever. Amen.

Wiersbe makes a poignant remark that "Idolatry begins with a proud and selfish heart that loves the gifts more than it loves the Giver, and it ends by losing both the Giver and the gifts." ([Wiersbe Bible Commentary - OT](#))

Craigie - Because of God's abundant provision for all his people's needs, they should have learned to serve God with rejoicing and with a good heart; but to receive the blessing of God and then to find no joy in it and offer no thanks for it, was to invite the curse of God. On account of the abundance of everything—these words, which point to the prosperity of the community of God, provide a point of contrast for those cursed of God, who are in need of everything (vv. 48, 57). ([New International Commentary of Old Testament - Deuteronomy](#))

Deuteronomy 28:48 therefore you shall serve your enemies whom the LORD will send against you, in hunger, in thirst, in

- **serve:** 2Ch 12:8 Ne 9:35-37 Jer 5:19 17:4 Eze 17:3,7,12
- **in hunger:** Jer 44:17,18,22,27 La 5:2-6 Eze 4:16,17
- **a yoke:** Isa 47:6 Jer 27:12,13 28:13,14 Mt 11:29
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

SERVITUDE TO ENEMIES

Therefore - Since they served Yahweh with joyless ingratitude, He would give them masters which would justify their ingratitude! They would be assigned to serve their enemies!

Currid - Some have argued that this section so obviously alludes to the sixth-century exile in Babylon that the text must have been written after that event. Mayes, however, rightly concludes that the descriptions here are standard formulas for depicting an invading army. He says, 'The expressions used to describe the enemy in these verses are in many cases stereotyped; they could be used of any conqueror.' ([EPSC-Dt](#))

You shall serve ([abad](#); Lxx = [latreuo](#) = carry out religious duties in spirit of worship of) **your enemies whom the LORD will send against you, in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, and in the lack of all things; and He will put an iron yoke on your neck until He has destroyed** ([shamad](#); Lxx = [olothreuo](#)) **you** - Yokes were normally of wood, so this description is most likely figuratively, but striking for an iron yoke would be much heavier and far more burdensome than a wooden yoke, which is the message of this particular curse. In addition in this context the **yoke** would be a symbol of political slavery to a foreign king (Dt 28:48; cf Jer 27:8–12, Jer 28:14). Note the striking contrast between the phrase **all things** in v47 and **all things** in this passage! Once again we see bitter irony in this curse for in Deut 2:7 Moses declared to Israel as a result of Yahweh's hand of blessing they had "**not lacked a thing,**" but now because of disobedience and ingratitude, they **lack of all things!** This incredible cost for disobedience reminds me of the painful saying that...

Sin will take you further than you ever wanted to stray!
Cost you more than you ever dreamed you would pay!
Keep you longer than you ever thought you would stay!

Yoke ([05923](#)) **'ol** is a masculine noun which literally describes a wooden frame or a bar placed on the neck of work animals to harness them for labor (Nu 19:2, Dt 28:48, 1Sa 6:7). As used in this passage, 'ol was frequently used as a symbol for slavery or enslavement. It also conveyed the picture of something that oppressed or was a burden. For example, in Lamentations 1:14 transgressions were described as the "yoke" that enslaved! Woe! Is this not what the old sin nature does to all of us (even believers if we fail to walk in the light and the power of the Spirit!)? Note that the majority of the OT uses are in the book of Jeremiah.

Summary of Yoke in the Bible - In the Bible a yoke was originally a wooden bar or frame placed across the necks of two draft animals, usually oxen, allowing them to pull a plow, cart, or other load together. This agricultural tool is described in passages such as Numbers 19:2 and Deuteronomy 21:3, which mention animals that had never been placed under a yoke for labor. The Hebrew word most commonly used is 'ol, referring to the curved wooden beam that rested on the animals' necks and was secured with straps or bands so that they could work together in submission to the farmer's direction. Because the yoke joined animals in shared labor, the word could also refer to a pair of animals working together, as in 1 Samuel 11:7 and 1 Kings 19:19, where a "yoke of oxen" means two oxen harnessed together. In some contexts it even represented a measure of land—the amount that a pair of oxen could plow in a day (cf. Isaiah 5:10).

From this everyday farming image, the yoke became a powerful figurative symbol of subjection, burden, or bondage. Just as animals under a yoke were controlled by their master, people under political domination or harsh labor were said to bear a yoke. For example, the Israelites complained of the heavy "yoke" imposed by Solomon's rule (1 Kings 12:4), and the prophets described oppressive foreign domination as an "iron yoke" (Deuteronomy 28:48; Jeremiah 28:13). Conversely, God's deliverance was portrayed as the breaking of the yoke, symbolizing liberation from slavery or oppression. When God rescued Israel from Egypt, He said, "I broke the bars of your yoke and made you walk erect" (Leviticus 26:13), and the prophets promised that He would again break the yoke of oppressive rulers (Isaiah 9:4; Jeremiah 30:8). Thus the yoke came to represent both bondage under oppressive power and freedom when God removed that burden.

In Jewish thought the term also developed a spiritual meaning, referring to submission to religious teaching or

authority. To take upon oneself “the yoke” meant to accept obedience to God’s law or the instruction of a teacher. This background explains Jesus’ famous invitation in Matthew 11:29–30, where He says, “Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me... For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” Jesus contrasts His gracious leadership with the heavy religious burdens imposed by the scribes and Pharisees. His “yoke” represents discipleship—living under His authority and learning His way—but unlike oppressive bondage it brings rest and restoration to the soul. The New Testament also warns against placing believers under a burdensome religious system, calling legalistic demands “a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear” (Acts 15:10) and urging Christians not to be entangled again in a “yoke of slavery” (Galatians 5:1). Thus throughout Scripture the yoke symbolizes submission to a master, whether the oppressive yoke of sin and bondage or the life-giving yoke of Christ that leads to true freedom.

NET NOTE - The **yoke** is a common biblical symbol of political servitude (see, e.g., Dt 28:48; 1Kgs 12:4, 9, 10). From the context of 1 Ki 12:1-33 it is clear that it applied to taxation and the provision of conscript labor. In international political contexts it involved the payment of heavy tribute which was often conscripted from the citizens (see, e.g., 2Ki 15:19–20; 23:34–35) and the furnishing of military contingents for the sovereign’s armies (see, e.g., 2Ki 24:2). Jeremiah’s message here combines both a symbolic action (the wearing of a yoke) and words of explanation as in Jer 19:1–13. (See Isa 20:1–6 for an example outside of Jeremiah.) The casting off of the yoke has been used earlier in Jer 2:20, 5:5 to refer to Israel’s failure to remain spiritually “subject” or faithful to God.

Deuteronomy 28:49 "The LORD will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, as the eagle swoops down, a nation whose language you shall not understand,

- **bring a nation:** Nu 24:24 Isa 5:26-30 Jer 5:15-17 Da 6:22,23 9:26 Hab 1:6,7 Lu 19:43,44
- **as the eagle:** Jer 4:13 48:40 49:22 La 4:19 Eze 17:3,12 Ho 8:1 Mt 24:28
- **nation whose:** Jer 5:15 Eze 3:6 1Co 14:21
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE SOVEREIGN GOD BRINGS AN "EAGLE" ON ISRAEL

The LORD will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, as the eagle swoops down, a nation whose language you shall not understand ([shama](#)) - Note the LORD's active hand in this curse (see Nebuchadnezzar God's servant - Jer 25:9). He Himself will bring the nation against His chosen people! The phrase **eagle swoops down** depicts how sudden and swift will be the invasion of Israel.

Currid on understand ([shama](#)) - The Hebrew verb for ‘understand’ literally means ‘to hear’. The Septuagint took that to mean that Israel will not hear the enemy advance, but that it will be a surprise and sneak attack. ([EPSC-Dt](#))

Warren Wiersbe asks "Who is the “nation ... from far, from the end of the earth” that will swoop down like the eagle? (Deut. 28:49) In Scripture, the image of the eagle is often used to describe military invasion by different nations, including **Babylon** (Jer. 48:40; 49:22; Ezek. 17:3), **Egypt** (Ezek. 17:7), and **Assyria** (Hosea 8:1). The Assyrians captured the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 722 BC and the Babylonians invaded the Southern Kingdom of Judah in 606 and destroyed Jerusalem and the temple in 586 BC. Thousands of Jews were taken captive to Babylon and forced to live in that land of idols, and this cured them once and for all of idol worship. Perhaps the image in Deuteronomy 28:49 was meant to cover all the invasions that brought chastening to the Jewish people, including the Roman invasion in A.D. 70. The things described in Dt 28:49–57 certainly happened during both the Babylonian and the Roman sieges of Jerusalem. ([Wiersbe Bible Commentary - OT](#))

TSK comments that "the Chaldeans (Babylonians) are frequently described under the figure of an **eagle**, yet these verses especially predict the desolations brought on the Jews by the Romans (70 AD); who came from a country far more distant than Chaldea; whose conquests were as rapid as the eagle’s flight, and whose **standard bore this very figure**; who spake a language to which the Jews were then entire strangers, being wholly unlike the Hebrew, of which the Chaldee was merely a dialect; whose appearance and victories were terrible; and whose yoke was a yoke of iron; and the havoc which they made tremendous.

Deuteronomy 28:50 a nation of fierce countenance who will have no respect for the old, nor show favor to the young.

- **of fierce countenance:** Heb. strong of face, Pr 7:13 Ec 8:1 Da 7:7 8:23

- **will not:** 2Ch 36:17 Isa 47:6 Ho 13:16 Lu 19:44 21:23,24
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

GOD BRINGS A RUTHLESS MERCILESS NATION

a nation of fierce countenance who will have no respect for the old, nor show favor to the young- This invading nation will be merciless and have no compassion regardless of age.

Currid - This enemy will be merciless, rapacious and predatory. The text literally describes the invader as 'a nation of ruthless faces who will lift no faces'. This cruelty will be across the board; and no one will be spared, not even 'the old' or 'the young'. Those two words constitute a merism, indicating that no one will be excluded from the violent treatment of this nasty nation! ([EPSC-Dt](#))

Bob Utley - Assyrians especially, but also the Babylonians, would kill the elderly (opposite of Lev. 19:32) and the children as a way of demoralizing the population before they were deported to a distant region and resettled in someone else's houses.

Deuteronomy 28:51 "Moreover, it shall eat the offspring of your herd and the produce of your ground until you are destroyed, who also leaves you no grain, new wine, or oil, nor the increase of your herd or the young of your flock until they have caused you to perish.

- the fruit: De 28:33 Isa 1:7 62:8
- which also: Lev 26:26 Jer 15:13 17:3 Eze 12:19 Hab 3:16,17
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

LIVESTOCK AND STAPLE FOODS DESTROYED

Moreover, it shall eat the offspring of your herd and the produce of your ground until you are destroyed([shamad](#)) - The conquering nation would demolish Israel's livestock and produce.

Who also leaves you no grain, new wine, or oil, nor the increase of your herd or the young of your flock until they have caused you to perish ([abad](#); Lxx = [apollumi](#) = ruined) - Note the repetition of synonyms **destroyed** and **perished** presenting a tragic picture for Israel. The bitter irony is that this curse is the almost exact antithesis of the blessing promised in Dt 7:13+

He will love you and bless you and multiply you; He will also bless **the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground, your grain and your new wine and your oil, the increase of your herd and the young of your flock**, in the land which He swore to your forefathers to give you.

Bob Utley - In this verse the invading nations are described in terms of a total devastation of resources similar to the locust plagues of Joel, Amos, and Micah.

Deuteronomy 28:52 "It shall besiege you in all your towns until your high and fortified walls in which you trusted come down throughout your land, and it shall besiege you in all your towns throughout your land which the LORD your God has given you.

- Lev 26:25 2Ki 17:1-6 18:13 24:10,11 2 Ki 25:1-4 Isa 1:7 62:8 Jer 21:4-7 37:8 39:1-3 52:4-7 Eze 4:1-8 Da 9:26 Zec 12:2 14:2 Mt 22:7 24:15,16 Lu 19:43,44 21:20-24
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

TRUSTING IN ONE'S OWN MIGHT

It shall besiege you in all your towns - The enemy nation would set siege against Israel. See the **Assyrian's siege** in 2Ki 17:1-6 and **Babylon's siege** in 2 Ki 25:1-4.

Until your high and fortified walls in which you trusted come down throughout your land - This predicts the enemy's

successful siege and Israel's misplaced truth. Israel sadly trusted in their **high and fortified walls**, instead of trusting in their God Who is high and lifted up above all the nations, including Israel's enemies!

One is reminded of Pr 18:11 which says

"A rich man's wealth is his strong city, and like a high wall in his own imagination."

Currid - There is an echo here of Deuteronomy 1:28, in which the Israelites thought the Canaanites to be safe and secure behind their city walls. But such human defences are mere chaff before Yahweh! ([EPSC-Dt](#))

And it shall besiege you in all your towns throughout your land which the LORD your God has given you- So the siege was not just of Jerusalem but all the towns in Israel. This passage would be a painful reminder that they would lose control of the very land Yahweh had **given** them.

Deuteronomy 28:53 "Then you shall eat the offspring of your own body, the flesh of your sons and of your daughters whom the LORD your God has given you, during the siege and the distress by which your enemy will oppress you.

- the fruit: De 28:18,55,57 Lev 26:29 2Ki 6:28,29 Jer 19:9 La 2:20 4:10 Eze 5:10 Mt 24:19
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages: WHICH DOCUMENT CANNIBALISM....

Leviticus 26:29 'Further, you will eat the flesh of your sons and the flesh of your daughters you will eat.

2 Kings 6:24-30 Now it came about after this, that Ben-hadad king of Aram gathered all his army and went up and besieged Samaria. 25 There was a great famine in Samaria; and behold, they besieged it, until a donkey's head was sold for eighty shekels of silver, and a fourth of a kab of dove's dung for five shekels of silver. 26 As the king of Israel was passing by on the wall a woman cried out to him, saying, "Help, my lord, O king!" 27 He said, "If the LORD does not help you, from where shall I help you? From the threshing floor, or from the wine press?" 28 And the king said to her, "What is the matter with you?" And she answered, "This woman said to me, 'Give your son that we may eat him today, and we will eat my son tomorrow.' 29 **"So we boiled my son and ate him; and I said to her on the next day, 'Give your son, that we may eat him'; but she has hidden her son."** 30 When the king heard the words of the woman, he tore his clothes—now he was passing by on the wall—and the people looked, and behold, he had sackcloth beneath on his body.

Jeremiah 19:9 "I will make them eat the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters, and they will eat one another's flesh in the siege and in the distress with which their enemies and those who seek their life will distress them."

Lamentations 2:20 See, O LORD, and look! With whom have You dealt thus? Should women eat their offspring, The little ones who were born healthy? Should priest and prophet be slain In the sanctuary of the Lord?

Lamentations 4:10) The hands of compassionate women Boiled their own children; They became food for them Because of the destruction of the daughter of my people.

Ezekiel 5:10 'Therefore, fathers will eat their sons among you, and sons will eat their fathers; for I will execute judgments on you and scatter all your remnant to every wind.

The Siege and Destruction of Jerusalem, by David Roberts (1850).

THE CURSE OF CANNIBALISM CAUSED BY THE SIEGE

Then you shall eat the offspring of your own body ("the fruit of your womb"), **the flesh of your sons and of your daughters whom the LORD your God has given you, during the siege and the distress by which your enemy will oppress you** - Sieges were used in ancient warfare to cause famine of the inhabitants and in this case the famine drives them to do the unthinkable, to commit cannibalism of their offspring, another irony for their offspring were meant to be a blessing from Yahweh! (see Dt 28:4, 11). Lamentations 4:1–11 vividly describes the horrors of the siege of Jerusalem. **NET** = You will then eat your own offspring, the flesh of the sons and daughters the LORD your God has given you, because of the severity of the siege by which your enemies will

constrict you." **NLT** = "The siege and terrible distress of the enemy's attack will be so severe that you will eat the flesh of your own sons and daughters, whom the LORD your God has given you.

This prophetic curse was also fulfilled in 70 AD when the Roman General Titus laid siege to Jerusalem (**see picture above**).

Jack Deere - Whereas their enemies would eat or destroy Israel's livestock and crops (Dt. 28:51) the Israelites would devour their own children, "the fruit" of their own wombs (Dt 28:4), God's gifts to them. This curse was literally fulfilled when the Arameans besieged Samaria (2 Kings 6:24–29) and when the Babylonians besieged Jerusalem (Lam. 2:20; 4:10). This was one of the greatest examples of the depth of perversity to which disobedience to God leads. (See [Bible Knowledge Commentary](#) for all comments on Dt 28-34).

[IVP Bible Background Commentary](#) (page 203)- Cannibalism is a standard element of curses in Assyrian treaties of the seventh century B.C. It was the last resort in times of impending starvation. This level of desperation could occur in times of severe famine (as illustrated in the Atrahasis Epic) or could be the result of siege, when the food supply had become depleted, as mentioned in this text and anticipated in the treaty texts. Siege warfare was common in the ancient world, so this was not as rare an occasion as might be presumed. An example of this drastic measure can be seen in the biblical record in 2 Kings 6:28–29.

QUESTION - [What does the Bible say about cannibalism? Is there cannibalism in the Bible?](#)

ANSWER - Cannibalism is mentioned in the Bible. Although there is no direct statement such as, "Thou shalt not eat human flesh," the obvious indication from Scripture is that cannibalism is a terrible evil.

After the global flood, God gave Noah permission to eat meat. "Everything that lives and moves about will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything" (Genesis 9:3). However, God specifies that the "food for you" does not include fellow human beings. People are treated much differently from animals: "Whoever sheds human blood, by humans shall their blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made mankind" (Genesis 9:6).

Cannibalism is mentioned several times in Scripture (Leviticus 26:29; Deuteronomy 28:53-57; Jeremiah 19:9; Lamentations 2:20; 4:10; Ezekiel 5:10), but in each case, the practice is regarded as a horrible curse and inhuman act of desperation. Moses and other prophets predicted that, if the Israelites forsook God, they would fall into such awful degradation as to cannibalize their own children. These harrowing prophecies were fulfilled during the siege of Samaria during the reign of King Jehoram (2 Kings 6:28-29). Cannibalism was the physical horror which accompanied the spiritual horror of apostasy.

Cannibalism has been ritualized in some pagan cultures as part of a religious ceremony or cultural superstition. Thus, not only is the act itself wrong, but also the reason behind the act is wrong. For example, some people groups would eat the flesh of dead family members, believing that doing so would allow the spirits of those who had died to live on. Such cannibalistic rites have no biblical justification. The Bible teaches that the spirit does not remain in the body, nor does it wander around at liberty. A spirit either goes to be with the Lord immediately upon death (2 Corinthians 5:8) or goes to hades to be kept until the judgment (Luke 16:19-26; Revelation 20:11-15).

Murdering someone in order to cannibalize him (homicidal cannibalism) is undeniably wrong. But what about cannibalizing someone who is already dead (necro-cannibalism) in order to prevent starvation? This is not an entirely hypothetical question, as "survival cannibalism" has indeed occurred. Those who have resorted to cannibalism to stave off starvation include the Donner party in 1846 and the survivors of a 1972 plane crash in the Andes. However, given the Bible's wholly negative portrayal of cannibalism, it would seem that self-preservation cannot justify such barbarism. Even in the direst and most desperate circumstances, cannibalism should not be a consideration.

In summary, while Scripture gives no explicit command against cannibalism, from the beginning (Genesis 1:26-27) God made it clear that mankind is unique and distinct from the animal kingdom. Mankind, created in God's image, has a value and honor above that of animals. The Old Testament closely associates cannibalism with the final stages of judgment from God, thus marking it as a loathsome and evil practice. [GotQuestions.org](#)

Related Resources:

- [Wikipedia - Cannibalism](#)
- 1911 Encyclopedia Britannica [Cannibalism](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Cannibalism](#)

Deuteronomy 28:54 "The man who is refined and very delicate among you shall be hostile toward his brother and toward the wife he cherishes and toward the rest of his children who remain,

- **refined and very delicate:** De 15:9 Pr 23:6 28:22 Mt 20:15
- **toward:** De 13:6 2Sa 12:3 Mic 7:5
- **his children:** Ps 103:13 Isa 49:15 Mt 7:9-11 Lu 11:11-13
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

CANNIBALISM PART 2

The man who is refined (tender) **and very delicate** (sensitive, fastidious) **among you shall be hostile toward** (Lit his eye shall be evil toward) **his brother and toward the wife he cherishes** (Lit "of his bosom") **and toward the rest of his children who remain-** Even the tender hearted man will fall prey to preying on his children's flesh and even begrudge sharing with those closest to him! **NET=** "The man among you who is by nature tender and sensitive will turn against his brother, his beloved wife, and his remaining children." **NLT =** The most tenderhearted man among you will have no compassion for his own brother, his beloved wife, and his surviving children."

TSK The Roman armies at length besieged, sacked, and utterly desolated Jerusalem: and during this seige, the famine was so extreme, that even rich and delicate persons, both men and women, ate their own children, and concealed the horrible repast, lest others should tear it from them! "Women snatched the food out of the very mouths of their husbands, and sons of their fathers, and (what is most miserable) mothers of their infants." "In every house, if there appeared any semblance of food, a battle ensued, and the dearest friends and relations fought with one another; snatching away the miserable provisions of life." "A woman distinguished by birth and wealth, after she had been plundered by the tyrants (or soldiers) of all her possessions, boiling her own sucking child, ate half of him, and concealing the other half, reserved it for another time!"

Deuteronomy 28:55 so that he will not give even one of them any of the flesh of his children which he will eat, since he has nothing else left, during the siege and the distress by which your enemy will oppress you in all your towns.

- **the siege:** Jer 5:10 34:2 52:6
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

CANNIBALISM PART 3

so that he will not give even one of them any of the flesh of his children which he will eat, since he has nothing else left, during the siege and the distress by which your enemy will oppress you in all your towns - This describes an amazing depth of desperation and depravity, for the tender hearted man will not even share the cannibalistic meal! That is SICK! **NET =** "He will withhold from all of them his children's flesh that he is eating (since there is nothing else left), because of the severity of the siege by which your enemy will constrict you in your villages." **NLT =** He will refuse to share with them the flesh he is devouring-- the flesh of one of his own children-- because he has nothing else to eat during the siege and terrible distress that your enemy will inflict on all your towns."

Deuteronomy 28:56 "The refined and delicate woman among you, who would not venture to set the sole of her foot on the ground for delicateness and refinement, shall be hostile toward the husband she cherishes and toward her son and daughter,

- **delicateness:** Isa 3:16 La 4:3-6
- **be hostile:** De 28:54
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

CANNIBALISM PART 4

In Dt 28:56-57 we have the female counterpart of Dt 28:54:55! Even a pampered woman who rides in a carriage and is carried on a litter so her feet do not touch the ground will be compelled to commit cannibalism!

The refined and delicate woman among you, who would not venture to set the sole of her foot on the ground for delicateness and refinement, shall be hostile toward the husband she cherishes and toward her son and daughter - NET = Likewise, the most tender and delicate of your women, who would never think of putting even the sole of her foot on the ground because of her daintiness, will turn against her beloved husband, her sons and daughters," **NLT** = The most tender and delicate woman among you-- so delicate she would not so much as touch the ground with her foot-- will be selfish toward the husband she loves and toward her own son or daughter."

[IVP Bible Background Commentary](#) (page 203)- **touch the ground with the sole of her foot.** The author is showing that the most genteel, refined woman imaginable, one who would not even dream of walking around barefoot, would be so desperate that she would begin cannibalizing her family.

Deuteronomy 28:57 and toward her afterbirth which issues from between her legs and toward her children whom she bears; for she will eat them secretly for lack of anything else, during the siege and the distress by which your enemy will oppress you in your towns.

- **issues** Ge 49:10 Isa 49:15
- **she will:** De 28:53
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

CANNIBALISM PART 5

and toward her afterbirth which issues from between her legs and toward her children whom she bears; for she will eat them secretly for lack of anything else, during the siege and the distress by which your enemy will oppress you in your towns - The delicate woman is no longer delicate but seeks to hide her placenta and newborn from others so she may eat them! SICK! **NET** - and will secretly eat her afterbirth and her newborn children (since she has nothing else), because of the severity of the siege by which your enemy will constrict you in your villages." **NLT** = "She will hide from them the afterbirth and the new baby she has borne, so that she herself can secretly eat them. She will have nothing else to eat during the siege and terrible distress that your enemy will inflict on all your towns."

Deuteronomy 28:58 "If you are not careful to observe all the words of this law which are written in this book, to fear this honored and awesome name, the LORD your God,

- **If:** De 28:15 Lev 26:14,15 Jer 7:9,10,26-28
- **fear:** De 6:13 Ex 3:14,15 6:2,3 20:2 34:5-7 Ne 9:5 Ps 50:7 72:19 83:18 Isa 41:10 42:8 Jer 5:12 Mt 10:28 Heb 10:30,31 12:28,29
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

COVENANT WRITTEN IN A BOOK

If you are not careful to observe ([shamar](#)) all the words of this law which are written in this book, to fear this honored and awesome name, the LORD your God - Note the **IF** which means the curses are conditional, specifically conditioned on obedience and fear of the LORD (the effect of which is to keep one from evil - Pr 8:13). The **honored and awesome Name** stands for the person and character of the LORD. This reiterates the general principle that disobedience to the Law of God (in v59) invites the curses of God.

[IVP Bible Background Commentary](#) (page 203) - **book.** We tend to think of a book as having pages, a binding and a cover. Books of that sort did not exist in the ancient world. The term used here can refer to any document from inscription to scroll, from papyrus to clay tablet to stone.

Raymond Brown observes that there are "A series of refrains are found within this extended passage which indicate why those

judgments will take place. It will be entirely because of certain things the covenant people persistently did not do:

- They did not heed God's word (45, 62): disobedience.
- They did not appreciate God's mercies (46–47): ingratitude.
- They did not honour God's name (58): irreverence. (See [The Message of Deuteronomy](#))

Deuteronomy 28:59 then the LORD will bring extraordinary plagues on you and your descendants, even severe and lasting plagues, and miserable and chronic sicknesses.

- De 28:46 29:20-28 31:17,18 32:22,26 1Ki 9:7-9 16:3,4 La 1:9,12 La 4:12 Da 9:12 Ho 3:4 Mk 13:19
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

EXTRAORDINARY PLAGUES FROM YAHWEH

then the LORD will bring extraordinary plagues on you and your descendants, even severe and lasting plagues, and miserable and chronic sicknesses - God basically promises because of Israel's lack of reverence and disobedience He would undo all of the blessings He had promised for obedience.

Rashi comments, 'He will afflict you with plagues exceptional and quite different from other plagues.'

Currid says **lasting** "normally means 'certain, constant, persistent and reliable'." ([EPSC-Dt](#))

Deuteronomy 28:60 "He will bring back on you all the diseases of Egypt of which you were afraid, and they will cling to you.

- De 7:15 Ex 15:26
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

PLAGUES REDUX

[Redux](#) means brought back.

He will bring back on you all the diseases of Egypt of which you were afraid, and they will cling ([dabaq](#) - stick like glue!) to you - God had afflicted the Egyptians with disease in order to bring blessing to Israel. But this pattern is now reversed so that the diseases that had brought blessing would now be meted out as a divine curse. The Israelites had seen the **diseases** but had not experienced them. That is all changed in light of their disobedience!

What a contrast with Moses' earlier declaration of one of the blessings of obedience - "The LORD will **remove from you all sickness**; and He will not put on you any of the harmful **diseases of Egypt** which you have known, but He will lay them on **all who hate you**." (Deuteronomy 7:15+)

NET NOTE - These are the plagues the LORD inflicted on the Egyptians prior to the exodus which, though they did not fall upon the Israelites, must have caused great terror (cf. Exod 15:26).

Currid says "This is part of what is often called the '**exodus reversal**' found throughout the curses of this chapter." ([EPSC-Dt](#))

Deuteronomy 28:61 "Also every sickness and every plague which, not written in the book of this law, the LORD will bring on you until you are destroyed.

- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

UNKNOWN PLAGUES ON ISRAEL

Also every sickness and every plague which, not written in the book of this law, the LORD will bring on you until you are destroyed ([shamad](#); Lxx = [olothreuo](#)) - The point is that even plagues Israel had never heard about would become reality in their lives!

[Bob Utley](#) - **book** means scroll, but this does assert that Moses wrote or had someone record YHWH's law dictated through him (cf. Dt 27:3, 8; 28:58; 29:21, 29; 30:10).

NET NOTE on **book of this law** - The Hebrew term תּוֹרָה (torah) can refer either (1) to the whole Pentateuch or, more likely, (2) to the book of Deuteronomy or even (3) only to this curse section of the covenant text. "Scroll" better reflects the actual document, since "book" conveys the notion of a bound book with pages to the modern English reader. Cf. KJV, NASB, NRSV "the book of this law"; NIV, NLT "this Book of the Law"; TEV "this book of God's laws and teachings."

Deuteronomy 28:62 "Then you shall be left few in number, whereas you were as numerous as the stars of heaven, because you did not obey the LORD your God.

- **few in number:** De 4:27 Lev 26:22 2Ki 13:7 24:14 Ne 7:4 Isa 1:9 24:6 Jer 42:2 Jer 52:28-30 Mk 13:20 Ro 9:27-29
- **as the stars:** De 10:22 Ne 9:23 Ro 9:27
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Genesis 15:5+ And He took him outside and said, "Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be."

Genesis 22:17+ indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies.

Genesis 26:4 "I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven, and will give your descendants all these lands; and by your descendants all the nations of the earth shall be blessed;

REVERSAL OF THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

Then - Marks progression in the description of the curses. Note that the title does not mean God will not keep His promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, for He will perfectly and complete them to the nation of Israel in the future.

You shall be left few in number, whereas you were as numerous as the stars of heaven- Moses reminds Israel here of who they were supposed to be - **as numerous as the stars**. They were children of the promise given to the patriarchs (Ge 15:5; 22:17; 26:4). The but they would forfeit the promise by their disobedience. In Egypt they grew from few to many, but now would be divinely shrunk from many to few!

[Bob Utley](#) had "promised that they would be (1) like the "stars of heaven" (cf. Gen. 15:5; 22:17; 26:4); (2) like "the sand" (cf. Gen. 22:17; 32:12); and (3) like "the dust" (cf. Gen. 13:16; 28:14; Num. 23:10).

Currid comments that "A scarcity of numbers is to be understood as a sign and symbol of covenant unfaithfulness." [EPSC-Dt](#))

TSB on **left few in number** - In the siege of Jerusalem (70 AD) there died 1,100,000 persons, and more than 90,000 were carried captive; and, having afterwards provoked the Romans by their crimes and rebellions, they persecuted them nearly to extirpation; to which, if the tens of thousands which were slaughtered year after year in every country be added, it appears wonderful that there were any remains left.

Because you did not obey ([shama](#)) **the LORD your God - Did not obey** is literally "Heb "have not listened to the voice of." Like a broken record, Israel was broken because of her continued disobedience.

Deuteronomy 28:63 "It shall come about that as the LORD delighted over you to prosper you, and multiply you, so the LORD will delight over you to make you perish and destroy you; and you will be torn from the land where you are entering to possess it.

- **delighted over:** De 30:9 Isa 62:5 Jer 32:41 Mic 7:18 Zep 3:17 Lu 15:6-10,23,24,32
- **rejoice over:** Pr 1:26 Isa 1:24 Eze 5:13 33:11
- **torn from:** De 7:22 Jer 12:14,15 18:7 24:6 31:28,40 42:10 Da 7:8
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

DIVINE DELIGHT TO DESTROY

It shall come about that as the LORD delighted over you to prosper you, and multiply you God originally took pleasure in blessing Israel. The word **delighted** expresses God's willingness and joy in doing good to His people. The blessings listed earlier in Deuteronomy 28 describe the prosperity Yahweh delighted to give His Chosen People.

so the LORD will delight over you to make you perish (abad) and destroy (shamad; Lxx = olothreuo = root out, cut off) you This phrase is not saying that God takes pleasure in suffering itself. Rather, it means that God will faithfully carry out the covenant warnings just as surely as He fulfilled the blessings. In short, God's justice would be shown as certain as His mercy.

and you will be torn (nash) from the land where you are entering to possess it- The people who were meant to dwell securely in the land would instead be removed from it. **Torn from the land** pictures in a sense a reversal of the Abrahamic Covenant as disobedient Israel would be plucked from the Promised Land. They would be forcibly removed from the Promised Land. This prophetic chastening was fulfilled in the exile of Israel (2 Ki. 17:7-23 - 722 BC) and the exile of Judah (2Chr. 36:11-21 - 586 BC). Don't misunderstand. God's promises regarding the Land to Israel were still valid and will one day in the future be fulfilled to believing Israel.

Torn (05255) נָשָׂהּ nasah: means to tear down, to tear out, uproot, i.e., cause one to be displaced to another place. To tear down as in tearing down a house, or "to tear out," as in plucking out someone from a location or removing a people from their land. This verb is used to describe the wrath of God in punishing sin by tearing the wicked man away from his tent (q., Ps 52:5 [7]), destroying the house of the proud (q., Prov 15:25), and in having his people torn from the Promised Land (ni., Deut 28:63). According to the psalmist, God would snatch the unrighteous from the comforts of their homes for putting trust in material wealth rather than in Him (Ps. 52:5). Similarly, Pr 2:22 indicates that the righteous would remain in the land while the unrighteous would be removed from it. Finally, the Lord promised to tear down or destroy the house of the proud person (Pr 15:25).

Deuteronomy 28:64 "Moreover, the LORD will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other end of the earth; and there you shall serve other gods, wood and stone, which you or your fathers have not known.

- **scatter:** De 4:27-28 Lev 26:33 Ne 1:8 Jer 16:13 50:17 Eze 11:16,17 Lu 21:24
- **there:** De 28:36 Jer 16:13
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passage:

Deuteronomy 4:25-28+ When you become the father of children and children's children and have remained long in the land, and act corruptly, and **make an idol** in the form of anything, and do that which is evil in the sight of the LORD your God so as to provoke Him to anger, 26 I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that **you will surely perish quickly from the land where you are going over the Jordan to possess it. You shall not live long on it, but will be utterly destroyed'** 27 The LORD will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the LORD drives you. 28"There you will serve gods, the work of man's hands, wood and stone, which neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell.

Leviticus 26:33+ You, however, I will scatter among the nations and will draw out a sword after you, as your land becomes desolate and your cities become waste.

Jeremiah 16:13 'So I will hurl you out of this land into the land which you have not known, neither you nor your fathers; and there you will serve other gods day and night, for I will grant you no favor.'

WORLDWIDE DISPERSION

Moreover, the LORD will scatter you among all peoples - This scattering is distinct from Israel's being taken into exile to a nation they did not know in Dt 28:35, for this would be essentially to all the nations **of the earth**. Instead of living securely in the Promised Land, Israel would be driven out and dispersed among foreign nations. This scattering (the diaspora) would be the worldwide dispersion after the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. The people who were meant to be gathered in their own land would instead be spread throughout the world.

from one end of the earth to the other end of the earth - This expression emphasizes the global extent of the dispersion. Israel would not merely be relocated to one neighboring nation but scattered widely across many lands.

and there you shall serve ([abad](#); Lxx = [latreuo](#) = carry out religious duties in spirit of worship of) **other gods, wood and stone, which you or your fathers have not known** - It is as if God said, so if you do not want Me but instead want idols, then you can have your fill of idols to the ends of the earth (cf Dt 28:36). The irony is that refusal to serve the Living God with joy would result in forced service to lifeless gods and despair! **Wood and stone** highlights the worthlessness and deadness of idols (cf Ps 115:4–7), a stark contrast with the Living God.

[Guzik](#) has a lengthy discussion - In the end, Israel would be dispersed. We find that because of their disobedience, these curses became the history of the nation of Israel.

i. Of course, many of these horrible curses upon a disobedient Israel were fulfilled in the years of history recorded in the Old Testament; but their fulfillment did not end with the end of Bible history, Old or New Testament.

ii. For example, around 68 A.D. the Romans finally had enough of the rebellious Jews in their province of Judea, so they laid siege to Jerusalem. At the time, the Jews fervently expected the coming of the Messiah to save them and conquer the Romans, based on God's promise to destroy the armies laying siege to Jerusalem in Zechariah 12:1–9. Sadly, the Jews of that time refused to fulfill Zechariah 12:10+ which described their humble, repentant embrace of a pierced Messiah.

ii. Nevertheless the Jews of that day were so confident of Messiah's coming that their factions actually fought each other and burned each other's food, trying to be the most powerful group when the Messiah came. According to Josephus, it was "as though they were purposely serving the Romans by destroying what the city had provided against a siege and severing the sinews of their own strength" (Wars 5.24). "Through famine certainly the city fell, a fate which would have been practically impossible, had they not prepared the way for it themselves." (Wars 5.26)

iii. When the Roman general Vespasian came to Jerusalem, the Jewish factions were busy fighting each other. His staff urged him to attack immediately, but he knew that an attack would instantly unite the Jews. So he held back and let them destroy each other for as long as possible. He said that God was a better general than he, and that He was delivering the Jews into the hands of the Romans. Before Jerusalem was attacked, Vespasian became emperor, and he put his son Titus in charge of the attack.

iv. In contrast, Christians in Jerusalem heeded the words of Jesus in Luke 21:20–24, in which He told people to flee Jerusalem when it was surrounded by armies, because the days of vengeance were at hand.

v. In this siege of Jerusalem hunger became so great that many tried to escape the walls and forage for food. Five hundred or more were captured and crucified daily. "The soldiers out of rage and hatred amused themselves by nailing their prisoners in different postures; and so great was their numbers, that space could not be found for the crosses nor crosses for the bodies." (War 5.451) More than 600,000 died from starvation, and their dead bodies were dumped over the walls of the city. In total more than a million died and 97,000 were captured, with most of the captives being shipped as slaves to Egypt. The promise of Deuteronomy 28:68 was tragically fulfilled: you shall be offered for sale to your enemies as male and female slaves, but no one will buy you. This happened as too many Jewish slaves glutted the Egyptian slave market, and no one could buy all the available slaves.

vi. After the conquest the Jews still living in Judea were continually subjugated and humiliated by the Romans. The Romans continued to collect the temple tax from the Jews, even though their temple had been completely destroyed. So the Romans took the temple tax and used it to support their pagan temples.

vii. After some years of this, the Jews of Judea rebelled against the Romans again in 132 A.D. with a man named bar-Kochoba leading the fight. He was proclaimed messiah by the rabbis who supported the revolt. But after the bar-Kochoba rebellion, Rome finally and utterly crushed the Jewish population of Judea. Josephus said that as a result of the many battles, the once beautiful land was destroyed, and that it could not even be recognized.

viii. But the curse for Israel had not ended. Now, tragically, the church and Christians turned on the Jews. It was as if the branches of the tree attacked their own root. As the church gained in political power and became the official religion of the Roman Empire, the decided to attack the Jews.

ix. They did this in part as retribution for the distant early years of Jewish persecution of the Christians. It was also because the current Jewish rejection of Jesus as Messiah was thought so offensive. But the greatest motivation was a bizarre evangelistic strategy. Christians thought, "The Jews are cursed because they have killed their Messiah. The curses are meant to turn the heart of the nation back to God. We will help God by being His instrument to curse the Jewish people."

x. For centuries, the worst enemies Jews ever had were the Christians who thought they could help God by cursing the Jewish people. At one time in Medieval Rome, the Pope commanded a procession of the Jews through the city, where they presented a scroll of the Old Testament to the Pope. He received the scroll and said, "Beautiful law; wretched people." The shameful history of the Church against the Jews is recorded in the story of the Crusades, the slaughters, and the ghettos.

xi. This helps to explain the great corruption and lack of spiritual power in the church through the Dark Ages. God promised to Abraham and his covenant descendants, the Jewish people, I will bless those who bless you, and curse him who curses you (Genesis 12:3). Satan's clever, and powerful strategy to curse the church was effective: Curse the church by inspiring them to curse the Jewish people. Just as God judged Assyria, Babylon, Rome, and Germany for their mistreatment of the Jewish people, so the church was cursed as long as it persecuted the Jews. The church ignorantly disregarded the words of Jesus in Matthew 18:7: For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes! If the Jewish people were to be cursed, it was God's business, not the Church's business!

xii. "They have, it is true, grievously sinned; but, O ye Christians, have they not grievously suffered for it? Is not the stroke of God heavy enough upon them? Do not then, by any unkind treatment or cruel oppression, increase their miseries. They are, above all others, the men who have seen affliction by the stroke of his rod." (Adam Clarke, 1811)

xiii. Gloriously, the curse was not and is not the end of God's plan for the Jewish people. As Ezekiel 37 describes, God will—and has begun to—revive the Jewish people as back from the dead, and prepare them to be used in these last days. God is not done with Israel, and the curse will not be their final legacy.

Deuteronomy 28:65 "Among those nations you shall find no rest, and there will be no resting place for the sole of your foot; but there the LORD will give you a trembling heart, failing of eyes, and despair of soul."

- **shall find no rest** Ge 8:9 Isa 57:21 Eze 5:12-17 Ezek 20:32-35 Am 9:4,9,10
- **the LORD** Lev 26:36 Isa 51:17 Eze 12:18,19 Ho 11:10,11 Hab 3:16 Lu 21:26
- **failing of eyes:** Lev 26:16 Isa 65:14 La 3:65 Mt 24:8 Ro 11:10
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passage:

Leviticus 26:36+ 'As for those of you who may be left, **I will also bring weakness into their hearts** in the lands of their enemies. And the sound of a driven leaf will chase them, and even when no one is pursuing they will flee as though from the sword, and they will fall.

Leviticus 26:16+ I, in turn, will do this to you: I will appoint over you a sudden terror, consumption and fever **that will waste away the eyes** and cause the soul to pine away; also, you will sow your seed uselessly, for your enemies will eat it up.

DISPERSED, RESTLESS, TREMBLING AND DESPAIR

Among those nations you shall find no rest, and there will be no resting place for the sole of your foot; but there the LORD will give you a trembling heart, failing of eyes, and despair of soul - Once again we see that instead of remaining in to the **resting place** God was giving them (Dt 12:9), they would be driven out of the **resting place** and would be unable to find a **resting place**.

Among those nations you shall find no rest Because of disobedience, Israel would be scattered among foreign nations. Instead of peace and stability in the Promised Land, the people would live as exiles and refugees, never feeling secure or settled. They would constantly face uncertainty, hostility, and instability.

And there will be no resting place ([manowach](#)) **for the sole of your foot** - This expression emphasizes perpetual wandering and

insecurity. The phrase recalls language used of a traveler or refugee who cannot find a place to settle. Israel would be unsettled and displaced, without a homeland where they could live in safety. It echoes the experience of Cain, who became a restless wanderer as punishment for his sin (Ge 4:12). What a stark contrast, for instead of the Promised Land of milk and honey being their place of rest, they would live in a condition of continual displacement.

but there the LORD will give you a trembling heart - Note that the Giver is Yahweh. He will give them constant fear and anxiety and their heart would be filled with dread. The phrase suggests nervous fear, inner agitation and continual expectation of danger. The peace promised to obedient Israel would be replaced by persistent terror.

Trembling ([raggaz](#)) is used only here in the OT but the root verb [ragaz](#) is used to speak of the dread that would come on Israel's enemies Moses declaring that "when they (ISRAEL'S ENEMIES) hear the report of you, (THEY) will **tremble**" (Dt 2:25+) Sadly because of their disobedience Moses prophesies that they not their enemies would be the ones who would be **trembling**!

Failing of eyes - The meaning of this description is not easy to discern. While one could not rule out literal (e.g., blindness), this description is more likely figurative. One consideration is that this phrase refers to the exhaustion and despair that come from constantly looking for relief or deliverance that never arrives. It paints the picture of someone whose eyes grow weary from watching and waiting in vain for help, peace, or restoration. In the ancient Hebrew idiom, the eyes "**fail**" when hope fades. Lamentations 4:17 uses similar language: "**Our eyes failed**, ever watching vainly for help; in our watching we watched for a nation which could not save." The idea is not physical blindness but emotional and spiritual weariness, a loss of hope because of unrelenting suffering and disappointment.

And despair of soul - **Despair** means a complete loss of hope, the feeling that nothing will improve and that there is no possibility of rescue or relief, emotions which the exiles would experience. The Hebrew word **despair** (deabon; LXX - [athumeo](#) = become disheartened to the extent of losing motivation, be discouraged, lose heart, become dispirited) is used only here in Scripture and describes deep inner anguish with one's soul (the inner life) overwhelmed with a sense of hopelessness. It is not merely sadness or discouragement but a profound hopelessness that touches the deepest part of a person's life. The prophet Jeremiah later described this same condition when he lamented the destruction of Jerusalem: "My soul is bereft of peace; I have forgotten what happiness is" (Lamentations 3:17). This verse captures the essence of despair of soul, a state in which the heart can no longer remember joy or rest because it has turned away from the source of both.

For more discussion see [What does the Bible say about despair? | GotQuestions.org](#)

Jack Deere - Once she (ISRAEL) lived in security, but now she would live in anxiety, despair, and in constant suspense and fear for her life (vv. 65–66) (See [Bible Knowledge Commentary](#) for all of Deere's comments on Deuteronomy).

Bob Utley - YHWH wants His people to have a place of rest (i.e., the Promised Land, cf. 3:20; 12:9–10; 25:19; Josh. 1:13, 15; 21:44), but their willful covenant disobedience brought a reverse exodus (i.e., exile, cf. Ps. 95:11). "**the failing of eyes**" This term is related to v. 32; judgment causing the wasting away of life's vitality and joy!

TSK on among: After the conquest of their country by the Romans, Hadrian, by a public decree, ratified by the senate, forbade any Jew to come even within sight of Judea; and hence they were dispersed over every quarter of the globe, where they found no alleviation or respite from misery. In no country are they treated as denizens; all suspect them as enemies, and behave to them as aliens; if they do not, as had been too frequently the case, harass, oppress, and persecute them, even unto death.

Resting place (04494) [manowach](#) from root [nuach/nuah](#) which signifies absence of movement and thus pictures one being quietly settled in a particular place with the presence of security as when "the ark **rested** ([nuach/nuah](#)) upon the mountains of Ararat" (Ge 8:4). In contrast "the dove found no **resting** ([manowach](#)) place for the sole of her foot (Ge 8:9) It describes a place where one can rest and recuperate from activity, with the focus on the rest itself including to be in a state of contentment and satisfaction (Ps 116:7)

Trembling (07268. רָגַז [raggāz](#) from verb [ragaz](#) = to be agitated, quiver, quake or shake). An adjective meaning trembling, quaking, quivering, shaking. Deuteronomy 28:65 records the sole occurrence of this word. It describes a fainting heart that is full of unease. Anxious, agitated, i.e., pertaining to a condition of worry and distress. Moses said that if the Israelites dwelt with other nations in exile, there would be emotional "trembling" among the people (cf. Lam. 1:3). Only use in OT is Dt 28:65. The root verb [ragaz](#) is used to cause dread in Israel's enemies (Dt 2:25, Dt 11:25), but because of their disobedience they were the fearful ones!

Deuteronomy 28:66 "So your life shall hang in doubt before you; and you will be in dread night and day, and shall have no assurance of your life."

- De 28:67 La 1:13 Heb 10:27 Rev 6:15-17
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Lamentations 1:13 "From on high He sent fire into my bones, And it prevailed over them. He has spread a net for my feet; He has turned me back; **He has made me desolate, Faint all day long.**

HANGING BY A SPIDER'S WEB

So your life shall hang in doubt before you; and you will be in dread night and day and shall have no assurance of your life - Moses is describing the psychological and emotional misery that would accompany national judgment. This is a dramatic contrast of the promise of long life in the Promised Land, for under this curse they would not know from one minute to the next if they would they would remain alive. They would live in fear that their life was continually "[hanging in the balance](#)", in a persistently perilous and precarious state.

Your life shall hang in doubt before you - The image is that of life suspended by a thread, uncertain and fragile. The Hebrew idea conveys a sense of life dangling or hanging, as if it could be cut off at any moment. Instead of security in the land God promised them, the people would live with the constant feeling that death or disaster could strike at any time.

*Turning away from God
replaces peace with fear.*

You will be in dread night and day - **Dread** is a deep, fearful expectation that something bad or threatening is about to happen and is closely related to anxiety but usually carries a stronger sense of fear about a specific coming danger. Even worse in this case it refers to all-inclusive **dread**, for there would be dread when night comes, dread when morning comes, dread when traveling and dread when resting! All humans have at some time experienced the emotion of dread, but continual dread is indeed a "dreadful thought!" This is a picture of relentless anxiety, where no time of day brings relief. What a striking contrast to obedience in Lev 26:6+ where Yahweh promises obedient Israel "I shall also grant peace in the land, so that you may lie down with no one making you tremble. I shall also eliminate harmful beasts from the land, and no sword will pass through your land."

Sin does not only bring external consequences—it also produces inner unrest, fear, and instability, while obedience to God brings peace and security.

Proverbs 1:33 "But he who listens to me shall live securely And **will be at ease from the dread of evil!**"

Shall have no assurance ([aman](#)) - Hebrew literally reads "you will not be confident in your life." NET renders it "will have no certainty of surviving from one day to the next." The Hebrew word **assurance** ([aman](#)) is that which provides stability, security and confidence, like a baby would find in the arms of a parent. Life would feel unstable and unsafe. Instead of trusting in God's protection, the people would feel exposed, vulnerable, and threatened. Historically this was fulfilled in periods such as the Assyrian invasion, the Babylonian exile and later national persecutions. In those times many Israelites literally lived in constant danger of death, exile, or oppression (think of the Jews in early 1930's Germany as Hitler and the Nazis were beginning to rise in power, inciting fear because of their radical anti-Semitism).

Driver says "it" shall be, as it were, suspended in front of thee on a thread, which threatens every moment to break."

Raymond Brown writes that "Throughout this long dirge there are words and phrases which read like the anticipation of wider humanity's greater plight. Here in this passage its pain and isolation is expressed in deeply sombre tones, like the mournful toll of a bell: you will grope about like a blind man in the dark ... oppressed and robbed, with no-one to rescue you ... powerless to lift a hand ... in hunger and thirst, in nakedness and dire poverty ... an iron yoke on your neck ... no resting place for the sole of your foot ... never sure of your life (Dt 28:29, 32, 48, 65–66). It is the same grim, realistic imagery which is used centuries later by Jesus and the early Christian preachers. The anguish of universal sin is exposed in the New Testament as well as the Old. In biblical teaching, men and women without Christ are exactly like the people described in these verses—blind, lost, beggars, weak, sad victims of the ravages of sin, bereft prisoners and helpless refugees. Taking our humanity upon himself, however, the perfect Son of God has invaded this dark world of powerless offenders. All that judgment he has freely borne and, through his unique sacrificial death, these doomed lives may be for ever changed. By God's grace the worst of things can always be different. Moses goes on to make that very point in the teaching which follows (30:1–10). (See [The Message of Deuteronomy](#))

Deuteronomy 28:67 "In the morning you shall say, 'Would that it were evening!' And at evening you shall say, 'Would that it were morning!' because of the dread of your heart which you dread, and for the sight of your eyes which you will see.

- De 28:34 Job 7:3,4 Rev 9:6
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

DREAD IN THE DAYS AND THE NIGHTS

In the morning you shall say, 'Would that it were evening!' And at evening you shall say, 'Would that it were morning!'- The verse describes the mental anguish, fear, and emotional torment that accompany divine judgment. Moses portrays a life where no part of the day brings relief. The exile would be so painful that Israel would be wishing the hours would be shortened, in the futile hope of escape from her misery. There would be no relief.

In the morning you shall say, 'Would that it were evening!'- Morning normally represents hope, new beginnings, and renewed strength (cf. Psalm 30:5). But under judgment, even the start of a new day brings no hope. Instead of looking forward to the day, the people would wish it were already over. We've all had one of those "dread day" just praying that the evening would come quickly because of some stressful situation we are in! The idea is "I cannot face what this day will bring."

And at evening you shall say, 'Would that it were morning!'- When evening finally arrives, instead of relief there is continued fear and sleepless anxiety. The night does not bring rest, safety, or peace. So they wish the night were over. A friend of mine has had this experience and literally has not had a full, decent night of sleep for about 6 months! And his countenance and voice show it!

This shows a horrible cycle of their misery, for day brings dread of what may happen and night fails to give relief but brings fear of what may come in the darkness or the next day! Thus they are in effect trapped between two fears. To me, this makes me think of the future judgment of all unbelievers where they are in continual fear and that fear is forever, in conscious torment, regret, and separation from God.

Because - Term of explanation. Explains why there will be no relief or respite.

Of the dread of your heart which you dread - NET = because of the things you will fear and the things you will see." **NLT** = "For you will be terrified by the awful horrors you see around you." The phrase describes overwhelming inner fear, that dark terror that lives inside one's heart. They are not merely facing external danger (which they are) but even worse are consumed with continual anxiety and panic. Because they were terrified, they would wish the days and nights would be shortened so that there was less time to be in dread.

and for the sight of your eyes which you will see- This is a horrible picture. The terror would not only be internal but also visible in the events around them, war, suffering, destruction, oppression, and exile. What they see with their eyes will continually reinforce their fear. This anticipates horrors which would come upon disobedient Israel such as invading armies, devastation of cities and famine and exile.

This passage teaches a clear, simple spiritual principle that rebellion against God destroys peace and produces fear. When people reject God, life becomes dominated by fear and uncertainty, but walking with God brings peace instead of dread.

Deuteronomy 28:68 "The LORD will bring you back to Egypt in ships, by the way about which I spoke to you, 'You will never see it again!' And there you will offer yourselves for sale to your enemies as male and female slaves, but there will be no buyer."

- **bring**: De 17:16 Jer 43:7 44:12 Ho 8:13 9:3
- **there**: Ex 20:2 Ne 5:8 Es 7:4 Joe 3:3-7 Lu 21:24
- Deuteronomy 28 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

ULTIMATE HUMILIATION WORTHLESS SLAVES!

The LORD will bring you back to Egypt in ships, by the way about which I spoke to you, 'You will never see it again!' And

there you will offer yourselves for sale to your enemies as male and female slaves, but there will be no buyer - Remember the contest is children of the first generation that were delivered from Egypt and have completed the wilderness wanderings. Moses now describes the ultimate reversal of Israel's redemption from Egypt if the nation persisted in rebellion against the LORD. It was as if they now would go "[full circle](#)" so to speak, for after being set free from slavery in Egypt, they would now return to slavery in Egypt, but this time slavery which was far worse. Imagine the humiliation of first of all being a slave and second of being a worthless slave for which there would **be no buyer!**

The LORD will bring you back to Egypt in ships - Egypt was the place from which God had miraculously delivered Israel during the Exodus. **In ships** is striking because travel between Israel and Egypt normally occurred by land, not by sea. The mention of ships likely emphasizes forced deportation, where captives are transported like cargo. Historically this was fulfilled when conquered Jews were transported as prisoners and slaves after military defeats. For example, after the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, the Jewish historian Josephus records that many Jews were taken captive and shipped away into slavery across the Mediterranean world.

You will offer yourselves for sale to your enemies as male and female slaves, but there will be no buyer - The situation becomes so desperate that the people would try to sell themselves as slaves simply to survive. This portrays extreme humiliation of a nation redeemed from slavery now begging to become slaves. But then comes an even lower prophetic promise that even in slavery markets there would be no demand for them! In effect, their judgment will be so severe that their condition will be worse than ordinary slavery.

This passage yields a sobering truth for Israel (and for all who disobey Jehovah) that rejecting God's deliverance eventually leads back into slavery, spiritually and sometimes even physically. In John 8:34+ Jesus did not mince words declaring "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin."

Currid says "The final malediction is the ultimate indignation; it is the crescendo or climax of all the curses against a covenant-breaking Israel. Here Israel sits in the plains of Moab facing the land of promise after having been delivered out of Egypt. Now God says that he will send the people back to Egypt if they are disobedient. But it will be harder this time in Egypt. The Israelites will attempt to sell themselves as slaves, but they will find that no one will have them. Even slaves will have a more secure position in Egypt than the Hebrews!" ([EPSC-Dt](#))

Bob Utley on "**the LORD will bring you back to Egypt**" The reversal of the Exodus. The re-captivity of Israel! "**there will be no buyer**" The VERB "to buy" (Qal ACTIVE PARTICIPLE) was often used of YHWH purchasing Israel out of Egyptian bondage (cf. Ex 15:16; Ps. 74:2), but here it is used of the fate of Israel whereby even Egypt would not buy them back as slaves. **They were totally rejected by God and man.**

[IVP Bible Background Commentary](#) (page 204) - **returning to Egypt in ships.** Assyrian kings of the seventh century coerced their vassals into supplying troops for their military campaigns. One way then for Israelites to return to Egypt in ships would be in the Assyrian campaigns launched from the Phoenician coast in which they were obliged to take part. This represents continued oppression by foreign enemies, as the curses have detailed. Another possibility would include falling victim to Egypt's slave trade in Syro-Palestine, where the slaves were often transported by ship

TSK - This verse seems especially to point out an event, which took place subsequently to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, and the desolation made by Hadrian. Numbers of the captives were sent by sea into Egypt (as well as into other countries), and sold for slaves at a vile price, and for the meanest offices; and many thousands were left to perish from want; for the multitude was so great, that purchasers could not be found for them all at any price!

***the greater the privilege,
the greater the responsibility***

Wiersbe applies the truth in this chapter - During these times of severe suffering, more than one Jew asked the Lord, "Why do Your people suffer when the wicked Gentile nations escape suffering? How can a holy God use godless Gentile nations to chasten His chosen people?" This is one of the themes of the Book of Habakkuk and it is discussed in several psalms (Pss. 74; 77; 79-80). But the fact that Israel is God's chosen people and a special nation explains why He chastens them, for the greater the privilege, the greater the responsibility. "You only have I chosen of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your sins" (Amos 3:2, NIV). Divine election isn't an excuse for human rebellion. "For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required" (Luke 12:48, NKJV). There's a sobering message here for the church in today's world. Like Israel of old, we are God's chosen people and a holy nation (1 Peter 2:9-10) and have been greatly blessed in Jesus Christ. We are here to "advertise" the virtues of the Lord and declare the good news of the Gospel. If we fail to glorify God and obey His Word, He will chasten us just as He chastened Israel (Heb. 12:1-14). "For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?" (1 Peter 4:17) If God chastens His own people for their sins, what

will He do to those who don't belong to the family and have resisted His will? But judgment will begin in God's family, and the only way we can avoid it is to turn from our sins and obey His will. The church that thought it was rich, Jesus said was poor; and the church that thought it was poor, Jesus said was rich (Rev. 2:9; Rev 3:17). What will Jesus reveal about our churches when the fire of chastening falls? ([Wiersbe Bible Commentary - OT](#))