

OpenTheo

Deuteronomy 27 - 28



Deuteronomy - Steve Gregg

This session provides an in-depth analysis of Deuteronomy chapters 27-28 by Bible teacher Steve Gregg. The chapters focus on blessings and curses based on obedience, with a warning against idol worship or profaning tools used for sacred purposes. The speaker highlights the importance of the nation as a whole, not just individual promises, as well as the consequences of disobedience. He also draws parallels to historical events, such as the siege of 70 AD when the Romans destroyed crops and animals, leading to widespread starvation and cannibalism.

Transcript

We want to take Deuteronomy chapters 27 and 28 together in this session, both of which are somewhat longer than the chapters immediately behind us. Chapter 20 in particular is a very long chapter, which means we'll have to move somewhat more quickly than we moved through previous chapters. But both of these, the reason we want to talk these together is because it talks about the blessings and the curses that God promises and threatens upon Israel, depending on their obedience or disobedience.

The first part of this, which is chapter 27, gives instructions about what they shall do when they enter the promised land, how they shall set up a stone on Mount Ebal and cover it with plaster and inscribe in the plaster all the laws. And then the second part of chapter 27 is about how six tribes will stand on Mount Ebal and six tribes will stand on Mount Gerizim, with a valley in between them where the Levites will be, some of the Levites will be, and they will verbally pronounce in a loud voice the curses and the blessings. This actually was fulfilled, these commandments were fulfilled by Israel in Joshua chapter 8, and this is instructions about what they shall do.

It's a one time thing they're going to do once they have conquered the land and come into the land of Canaan. And so these instructions are given here. They are obeyed and fulfilled in Joshua chapter 8. Then Moses, with the elders of Israel, commanded the people saying, and this is the only time the elders of Israel are joined with Moses and giving commands.

I'm not sure why they're included here, as opposed to other times. It may be that they've been involved all along. It's possible that the congregation is so large that Moses' voice had to be relayed to different groups, you know, some distance away, and that the elders of Israel were kind of the repeaters.

You know, Moses would say something and it would be repeated, you know, by elders to people further back who couldn't hear Moses and someone further back who heard one of those elders would be an elder who would do it. And they might have been people. All these speeches might have been given this way.

It may be that only here is mentioned, but Moses and the elders together gave these commands saying, keep all the commandments which I command you today, and it shall be on the day when you cross over the Jordan to the land which the Lord your God is giving you that you shall set up for yourself large stones and whitewash them with lime. You should write on them all the words of this law. When you have crossed over that you may enter the land which the Lord your God is giving you a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the Lord God of your fathers has promised you.

Therefore, it shall be when you have crossed over the Jordan that on Mount Ebal, you shall set up these stones which I command you today, and you shall whitewash them with the lime, and there you should build an altar to the Lord your God, an altar of stones. You shall not use any iron tool on them. You should build with the whole stone, the altar of the Lord your God, and offer burnt offerings on it to the Lord your God.

You shall offer peace offerings and shall eat there and rejoice before the Lord your God, and you shall write very plainly on the stones all the words of the law. Then Moses and the priests, the Levites, spoke to all the Israel saying, Take heed and listen. Oh, Israel, this day you have become the people of the Lord your God.

Therefore, you shall obey the voice of the Lord your God and observe his commandments and statutes which I give you command you today. Now the setting of these stones. Interestingly, they're supposed to whitewash them with lime, sort of a plaster cover and just inscribe in the in the finish the laws.

Now that would not be permanent, not like the Ten Commandments where the laws are engraved right in the stone itself. This is to be inscribed in the lime in the in the plaster that's on the stones. Obviously, that would wash off over time with weather and things like that.

So I'm not sure whether, you know, they were supposed to maintain it, come back and rewrite them every once in a while. You know, every after the winter and past the rains and come and gone that they got replaced the whitewash and inscribed those in there again, or if it's just be done one time for this one ceremony. That is not made clear whether they're obligated to keep that law inscribed in that way permanently readable.

If so, that would take a lot of maintenance. And maybe that would be the point. Maybe the idea that they have to come back and rewrite it from time to time.

Maybe that they that there's a lot of maintenance involved. It's labor intensive, that it would keep them always focused on the law. They'd have to never be able to forget it because they have to rewrite it all the time.

Or maybe it would just be allowed to wash off. And that'd be the end of that particular stone's testimony. Maybe the stone by itself would stand as a testimony without the laws written on it after after the surface had been, you know, worn off by weather.

They offer sacrifices there to make an altar there that's not elaborate, made of whole stones that are not carved. There were instructions about that kind of an altar at the end of Chapter 20 of Exodus, where it says in Exodus 20 verse 25, If you make me an altar of stone, you should not build it on a hewn stone. For if you use your tool on it, you profaned it.

So you don't want them carving stones or making when they begin to carve stones, they get dangerously close to making stone images and idols and things like that. So you just don't carve those stones. Now, verse 11 here says, Moses commanded the people on the same day, saying, These shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people when you have crossed over the Jordan.

And these are the tribes that be on Mount Gerizim. Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph and Benjamin. All of whom, of course, are either sons of Leah or of Rachel, although two of the sons of Leah are not included because you've got six tribes on the other side, too.

And so it says in verse 13, These shall stand on Mount Ebal to curse Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan and Naphtali and the Levites shall speak with a loud voice and say to all the men of Israel, Cursed is the one who makes any carved or molded image and abomination to the Lord. The work of the hands of the craftsman and sets it up in secret and all the people shall answer and say, Amen. Cursed is the one who treats his father or his mother with contempt and all the people shall say, Amen.

Cursed is the one who moves his neighbor's landmark and all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed is the one who makes the blind and wander off the road and all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed is the one who perverts the justice due to the stranger, the fatherless and the widow, and all the people shall say, Amen.

Cursed is the one who lies with his father's wife because he is uncovered in his father's bed and all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed is the one who lies with any kind of animal and all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed is the one who lies with his sister, the daughter of his father or the daughter of his mother, and all the people shall say, Amen.

Cursed is the one who lies with his mother-in-law and all the people will say, Amen.

Cursed is the one who attacks his neighbors secretly and all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed is the one who takes a bride to slay an innocent person, and all the people shall say, Amen.

Cursed is the one who does not confirm all the words of this law and all the people shall say, Amen. So there's like 12 different curses here. It's an interesting selection.

I mean, it's all a selection from laws that have been given previously. It seems like if you're going to pick 12, you might pick 12 that are more characteristic of the bunch. And I mean, for example, cursed is everyone who marries or who sleeps with his father's wife or his sister or his mother-in-law.

I mean, these are all kind of under the same category of incest. It seems like you wouldn't use up three of your 12 on those, especially since there's quite a few other close relatives besides those ones that were forbidden. But in any case, I think what we're supposed to understand is that this is just considered a sampling, a random sampling of the laws that God has given.

And then the rest are covered in the last statement in verse 26. Cursed is the one who does not confirm all the words of this law. That is, you know, we'll give several examples.

But really, once we've given these examples, we're going to say and all the rest, too. You know, it's not just these few. So the examples could be any sampling from the law, because it's just to prolong.

The ceremony, because really the bottom line is you have to keep all the laws that are given in Galatians, chapter three, Paul quotes this last verse. Which he he quotes it, cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them. And the way it reads in Deuteronomy is cursed is the one who does not confirm all the words of this law.

But Moses or Paul is quoting it and sort of amplifying it with with words that obviously are taken from other parts of the law. And Paul quotes this to show that that is anyone who's under the law is under this curse because there is no one who has kept all the law perfectly. And therefore, this curse applies to them because it requires absolute obedience.

And that's the context where Paul goes on to say that Jesus became a curse for us. He took the curse of the law on himself by being hanged on a tree. Now, chapter 28, this is the long chapter where actually the first 14 verses are about the blessings and just about every category of life that God would bring upon Israel if they are obedient.

But then after those 14 verses, there's like 56 verses or 58 verses, much more like four times as many verses telling about the curses that would come upon them. And it paints a darker and darker picture as you go through this list of curses. It just begins to feel

like, wow, these people, you know, they might as well just.

You know, shoot themselves in the head, you know, rather than have these curses stacked one upon another upon them, and God is trying to give them very strong incentives to keep this line, but the irony or the sadness is that God said these things again and again and again and again, and yet it didn't work. It didn't stop them. They just didn't get it.

And one wonders how it can be that human beings can be so stubborn and so forgetful of things that are so essential to their well-being. It's like if you forgot to eat and starved to death or you forgot to breathe and died of suffocation. It's like God being faithful to God.

That's essential to your life. And everything's going to go horribly for you if you don't. And yet they forget.

It's just an amazing thing to me. I'm not saying they're worse than other people because, I mean, other people forget, too. But I just it's just in their case, we actually have a case history of human forgetfulness of God.

It may be repeated many times over in every country where God is known or preached through the gospel. They forget God, too. But this is the prototype of human forgetfulness to their own destruction.

In Chapter 28, it says now it should come to pass if you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God to observe carefully all his commandments, which I command you today, that Yahweh your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth and all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you because you obey the voice of the Lord your God. Now, notice this is a promise that is a national promise. I will set you higher than all the nations of the earth.

This is something that will be a blessing on the nation as a whole, the prosperity and all the good things. But it does not necessarily extend to every individual. There could still be a disobedient individual or even a righteous individual who suffers a way that the nation as a whole is not suffering.

It's not necessary to assume that every Jew would be exempt from every problem in the world if the nation as a whole was pretty much obedient. God was treating the nation as a whole. With blessing or cursing, but even when the nation came under cursing, there were individual Jews who didn't come under these things because they were the righteous remnant or even even bad Jews who escaped them.

These are these are the national faith. If America was wiped out in a war, that doesn't mean that every last American would be dead. But it would be the end of America as an entity.

And so with Israel, these are the fortunes of the nation as a nation. And of course, what happens to the nation as a whole affects the individuals who are part of it. But the individual's experience might differ from that of the group as a whole, so that the nation under blessing might still have some individuals who experience bad circumstances in their lives.

We even, as we could say, God has blessed America above most nations in modern times, but there are still individuals in America whose circumstances are far from happy or blessed. So again, this is stated to them as a nation, not as just so many individuals receiving individual promises. And all these blessings should come upon you and overtake you because you obey the voice of the Lord, your God, verse two says.

Verse three, blessed shall you be in the city and blessed shall you be in the country. Blessed shall be the fruit of your body and the fruit of your ground and the increase of your herds and the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks. Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl, probably meaning there'll be plenty of grain and plenty of flour.

Blessed shall you be when you come in and blessed shall you be when you go out. The Lord will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before your face. They should come out against you one way and scatter before you seven ways.

That means all directions, seven would be the number of complaints, they'll be totally routed and they come from one direction, but they'll be scattered randomly and totally disorganized. The Lord will command the blessing on you in the storehouses and in all to which you set your hand and he will bless you in the land which the Lord, your God, is giving you. The Lord will establish you as a holy people to himself, just as he has sworn to you.

If you keep the commandments of the Lord, your God, and walk in his way, then all the peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of Yahweh. And they shall be afraid of you and Yahweh will grant you plenty of goods. In the fruit of your body, there'll be a lot of children in the increase of your livestock and in the produce of your ground.

In the land of which the Lord swore your fathers to give you, the Lord will open to you his good treasure, the heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season and to bless all the work of your hands. You shall lend to many nations you shall not borrow. And the Lord will make you the head and not the tail.

You shall be above only and not be beneath. If you heed the commandments of the Lord, your God, which I command you today and are careful to observe them. So you shall not turn aside from any of the words which I command you this day to the right hand or to the left to go after other gods to serve them.

Now, since this did not materialize, it's kind of a moot point to read these things. What this passage tells us is what it was they gave up by their abominations that they engaged in. They went after idols.

They forfeited these blessings. We don't know if they ever, except maybe in the time of David, really enjoyed all of these blessings. But the list is given so that they might know what they could have.

And as we read it now, we know what they could have had. But this is what could have been for them. But we know that the history went another direction than that.

They didn't keep God's commandments or keep his covenant. And all the curses did come upon them. As we read this extensive listing of bad things that would happen to them, we'll find that all of them did happen and have happened.

And some of them still are happening to them in some of the places where they live on the earth. It's a sad story. But it's amazing that living in the 21st century, we can read this document written in the second millennium B.C. and say, wow, it was predicted here and it happened.

You know, when people say, well, you know, the fulfillment of prophecy, maybe that's fake. Maybe the process were written after the event. You know, some skeptics say that.

Well, can't say that in this case. The event is still happening. This is not written after the event is written before the event.

And we can see before our eyes its fulfillment in the fact that the Jews, as a people, are still scattered throughout the nations. Yes, some of them have come back to Israel. They still don't have peace there.

But most Jews are not even there. Most Jews are still scattered as this chapter will find them and it will leave them at the end of the chapter. We find them scattered throughout the nations as it is at this day, at this time.

Verse 15 gives the other side of the coin, but it shall come to pass if you do not obey the voice of the Lord your God to observe carefully all his commandments and his statutes, which I command you today that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you. Initially, we can see the curses correspond one to one with the blessings that were offered. But then he takes off and elaborates on it.

Cursed shall you be in the city. Cursed shall you be in the country. Cursed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl.

Cursed shall be the fruit of your body and the produce of your land, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks. Cursed shall you be when you come in and cursed

shall you be when you go out. The Lord will send upon you cursing, confusing and rebuke in all that you set your hand to do until you are destroyed and until you perish quickly because of the wickedness of your doings in which you have forsaken me.

The Lord will make the plague cling to you until he has consumed you from off the face of the land which you're going to possess. Now, if they're going to be consumed off the land which they were to possess, that would suggest they don't have a permanent claim to the land. Do they? I mean, not unconditionally, at least that be the end of their possession of the land if they're consumed from it.

The Lord will strike you with consumption, with fever, with inflammation, with severe burning fever. Severe burning fever with the sword, with scorching and with mildew and they shall pursue you until you perish. Now mildew would be probably the what would grow in their houses as what they called leprosy in a house in chapter 14 of Leviticus.

So they'll have these sicknesses in their houses be afflicted too. And your heavens will be your heavens, which are over your head, shall be bronze and the earth which is under you shall be iron, meaning there'll be no rain coming from the sky and the earth will be so dry it'll be not soft. It'll be like sowing seeds on an iron surface rather than on soil.

The Lord will change the rain of your land to powder and dust. From the heaven it shall come down on you until you are destroyed. Instead of rainstorms you'll have dust storms because there'll be so much drought.

The Lord will cause you to be defeated before your enemies. You shall go out one way against them and flee seven ways before them. And you should become troublesome to all the kingdoms of the earth.

That's interesting. This is part of the curse on Israel that they will be troublesome to all the kingdoms of the earth. The reason I mentioned that over in Zechariah chapter 12, there is a prediction, which I understand quite differently than it is popularly understood, because it says in Zechariah 12, 2, Zechariah 12, 2 says, Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem.

And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a heavy, very heavy stone for all peoples. All who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth be gathered against it. Now many people understand this to be a blessing on Jerusalem.

That Jerusalem is made secure. The nations that tried to destroy it are themselves injured. Well, there is injury to those nations mentioned here, but but that's a burdensome stone to all the nations and all the peoples suggests not only trouble to the peoples, but the way it's worded here in chapter 28 of Deuteronomy, you should become

troublesome to all the kingdoms of the earth.

It's part of the curse that's on Israel. Israel was supposed to be a blessing to all the kingdoms of the earth. It's a failure to fulfill their mission.

Jerusalem is not supposed to be a burdensome stone to all the nations. It's supposed to be a blessing to all the nations, according to the promise made to Abraham. And instead of being a blessing to the nations, it becomes a trouble to the nations of the earth.

Verse 26, your carcasses should be food for all the birds of the air and the beast of the earth, and no one shall frighten them away. This means you'll be slaughtered in such large numbers. There will be no one to bury you out of the sight of the birds and the animals so that your corpses just be eaten and there won't be anyone left standing to chase the animals away.

The Lord will strike you with boils of Egypt, with tumors, with the scab and with the itch from which you cannot be healed. The Lord will strike you with madness and blindness and confusion of heart. Now, I don't know if blindness means physical blindness or all these three words are modified by the expression of heart, madness of heart, blindness of heart and confusion of heart.

If blindness is blindness of heart, it certainly agrees with what Paul said in Romans 11, that God has blinded part of Israel and given them a spirit of slumber, eyes that cannot see and ears that cannot hear. That is a judgment that Paul says has come upon Israel because of their failure to follow Christ. It says that in Romans 11.

Verse 7, it says, What then Israel has not obtained what it seeks, but the elect have obtained it and the rest were hardened, just as is written. God had given them a spirit of stupor, eyes that they should not see, ears that they should not hear to this very day. Now, the quotation is from Isaiah 29:10, but but also it seems agreeable with the curse that's here that they've been given blindness of heart, eyes that cannot see.

Spiritually speaking, they've been driven mad. There's more reason why they're said to be driven mad in some verses later on here where they see their children going off into captivity, so that will make them go mad with with grief. And I'm sure it would.

Just reading about it is horrible to read of what comes upon verse 29. And you should grope at noonday as a blind man gropes in the darkness. You shall not prosper in your ways.

You shall be only oppressed and plundered continually and no one shall save you. You shall betroth a wife, but another man will lie with her. You should build a house, but you should not dwell in it.

You should plant a vineyard, but shall not gather its grapes. Remember, these three

things were mentioned when Israel was to go to war with God's blessing and in Chapter 20 of Deuteronomy, where it gave the conditions of war. When the people gather for war, say, Has anyone built a house and dedicated it, hasn't lived in it, betrothed the wife, has not married her, planted a vineyard, hasn't eaten from it, go home.

Because it was considered that these are very important things. You betroth a wife, you want to marry her. You build a house, you want to live in it.

You plant a vineyard, you should be the first to participate in it, the product of it. That's important enough even to go home from war about. And you don't want to get killed and miss these opportunities.

But here it's talking about them not being killed and missing the opportunities, but rather living to see these things deprived of them. They betroth a wife, someone else lives with her. They build a house, someone else lives in it.

They plant a vineyard, someone else gathers its grapes. Your ox shall be slaughtered before your eyes, but you shall not eat it. Your donkey should be violently taken away from you, but shall not be restored to you.

Your sheep should be given to your enemies and you should have no one to rescue them. Your sons and your daughters shall be given to another people and your eyes shall look and fail with longing for them all day long. And there should be no strength in your hand.

A nation whom you have not known shall eat the fruit of your land and the produce of your labor, and you shall be only oppressed and crushed continually. So you should be driven mad because of the sight which your eyes see. It sounds like there'd be a lot of incentive here to be obedient.

The Lord will strike you in the knees and on the legs with severe boils which cannot be healed. And from the sole of your foot to the top of your head, the Lord will bring you and the 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.

Now, remember, it was apparently Deuteronomy that was found in the temple in days of Josiah and the people of Judah had not read it for years, maybe generations even. They didn't even know what the book was. And when King Josiah read the book, he said, wait a minute, we're under all these curses.

He was probably reading this chapter. And you can see why it would make his hair stand on end. Because of, wait a minute, this is what we have coming on us because we have neglected these laws.

And then he set out to, you know, diligently set out to reform everything, to tear down

the idol temples and the high places and the shrines and to get rid of the sodomites from the land and all kinds of things that he did to try to clean up the mess. But no doubt reading about these curses was what gave him that fear of God, which, of course, previous generations should have had equally, but apparently didn't. I think it's interesting that it says in verse thirty five that the boils and sores of that will be from the sole of your foot to the top of your head, because that's exactly how Isaiah describes Israel in his day, having come under God's stroke of judgment.

In Isaiah 1, 5 and 6, Isaiah says, Why should you be stricken again? You will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick. The whole heart thinks from the sole of the foot, even to the head.

There is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises, putrefying sores. They've not been closed or bound up or sued with ointment. And basically he's saying you have been stricken by God because of your disobedience and you are sick and covered with sores from the sole of your foot to the head.

And that's exactly what was threatened in chapter twenty eight of Deuteronomy, verse thirty five. The Lord will strike you. With severe boils, which cannot be healed and from the sole of your foot to the top of your head, Isaiah is clearly echoing this and saying that Israel and Judah in his day were pretty much experiencing this particular curse.

The Lord will bring you, he says, and the king whom he sent over you into a nation that you neither you nor your fathers have known. That would be Babylon, of course, that happened. And there you shall serve other gods, wood and stone, and you should become an astonishment.

And astonishment is a thing of horror that when people consider what happened to them, it'll just put horror in them to consider how horrible these things are. A proverb and a byword among all the nations for the Lord shall drive you. Now, a proverb and a byword in this context means something like people will use Israel as an example of what not to become.

Like may it be come to you as it is to Israel would be a curse. They would use as a byword or a proverb. He says you'll become something that people be horrified to see happen to them.

They'll use you as a byword and a proverb as an example of someone they would speak of as, you know, pitiful, miserable and someone whose fate no one would wish to share. You should carry much seed out into the field and gather little in, for the locusts shall consume it. You shall plant vineyards and tend them, but you shall neither drink of the wine nor gather the grapes, for the worms shall eat them.

So locusts and worms will just take out their produce. You shall have olive trees

throughout all your territory, but you shall not anoint yourself with the oil for the olive shall drop off apparently before they ripen. You should be at sons and daughters, but they shall not be yours for they should go into captivity.

Locusts shall consume all your trees and the produce of your land. There is such a judgment of locusts that came on Judah in the days of Joel. The book of Joel is written at such a time where the locusts have eaten just about everything Joel says, and he sees it as the army that God has sent against them as a judgment, a fulfillment of these threats.

The alien who is among you shall rise higher and higher above you, and you should come down lower and lower. The alien that lives in Israel, the non-Jew will rise higher and higher. The Palestinians who are there now in some ways have an advantage over Israel, not entirely, but they certainly have killed off a lot of Israelis and the Israelis don't seem to be able to stop at this point.

One almost could see this as part of the curse, too. They have aliens, non-Jewish people living in their land who have ascendancy over them and advantage over them. He says, You shall lend.

I'm sorry, he will lend to you, but you will not lend to him. And again, this is this is like a third or fourth time we've found this kind of idiom. And it's just saying you'll be rich enough that you'll be lending to others, not borrowing from them.

But in this case, it's the opposite. You'll be poor enough that you'll have to borrow from strangers and you won't be in a position to lend them. That stranger in your midst, he'll be your head and you should be the tail.

Moreover, all these curses shall come upon you and pursue and overtake you until you are destroyed because you did not obey the voice of Yahweh, your God, to keep his commandments and his statutes, which he commanded you. And they shall be upon you for a sign and a wonder and on your descendants forever. Now, I would just call your attention to this is saying that these curses would come upon them forever.

And I point that out because there are many who would point out other places in the scripts that talk about how God will bless them and give them the land and they will be his people forever. And we can see that the word forever often has a conditional element to it. And it's even as when we take wedding vows, we make, we vow our fidelity forever.

As long as we both shall live is essentially the same thing, the same forever in those vows. The assumption is, though, of course, that there's going to be equal fidelity on both sides. That's a condition that is implied, if not stated.

Obviously, if the spouse runs off with someone else and marries them, well, then the one abandoned is not going to say, well, I'm going to stay loyal forever. I mean, they could, but that's not necessarily something that is expected just by virtue of the vows. The

vows have, you know, unstated, but implied conditions.

Yeah, you can be my people forever, but only if you keep obeying. You can also come under judgment forever. And Israel, we could argue, is more in that state forever than in the other, because they have spent the last 2000 years almost excluded from their own land.

And certainly in the conditions that are described here in foreign countries, there's more description of it coming up. And we'll see the similarities between what Moses said would happen and those things that have happened. And while I wouldn't argue that, you know, every Jew is in trouble with God forever, it certainly is as legitimate to say that the negative things are forever as to say that the positive things are forever.

For people to say there's some unconditional position of favor that Israel has just because they're Israelites, because there's some promises that say forever in them. Well, there's some threats that say forever in them, too. And so obviously, what is to happen to them forever is dependent on how they react and what they do.

And that's made very clear here. Verse 47, because you did not serve the Lord, your God, with joy and gladness of heart. For the abundance of all things, therefore, you shall serve your enemies whom the Lord will send against you.

And you'll do so in hunger and thirst and nakedness and in need of all things. And he will put a yoke of iron on your neck until he has destroyed you. The Lord will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flies, a nation whose language you do not understand, a nation of fierce countenance, which does not respect the elderly or show favor to the young.

And they shall eat the increase of your livestock and the produce of your land until you are destroyed. They shall not leave you grain or new wine or oil or the increase of your cattle or the offspring of your flocks until they have destroyed you. They shall besiege you at all your gates until your high and fortified walls in which you trust come down throughout all your land.

And they shall besiege you at all your gates throughout all your land, which the Lord your God has given you. Now, the next section is an extended section about how they will eat their children. This is during the siege.

This happened. In fact, all these things happened more than once to Israel. Of course, when the Romans came in a B 70, all these things happened in the siege and all the things in this chapter have happened to the Israelites since that time, as they've been dispersed throughout the world.

And this one seems to be the forever one because it's lasted for 2000 years. There was a time when all these same things happened. And before that, in 586 B.C., when the

Babylonians came against them in the days of the kings of Judah and destroyed Jerusalem.

And but first they besieged it and all the same things that we read of here happened in that siege as well. And for a little while, 70 years, they were in exile, but God gave them a chance to come back. It's clear that that wasn't forever.

That lasted for a couple of generations or so, and then they were given another chance. The remnant was given another chance. However, they didn't really remain faithful to God, as the testimony of Jesus against them suggests, and therefore judgment came upon them again.

But that time was permanent, at least appears to be. The first time was like God firing a warning shot over their heads and this is what you can look forward to. If you don't repent, they didn't repent.

And so he brought about the permanent situation. 70 years is not permanent. 2000 years has the look of being permanent.

And while no one knows to what degree Israelite in our future may get wise and turn to God on his terms. And we may hope that they will do so in large numbers. Yet what has happened to them in 8070 looks like it's a permanent condition in general, and there are certainly no guarantees it will change, but the seeds that they've been doing this happens when the Babylonians besieged them in 586 BC.

It also happened when the Romans besieged them in 70 AD. Both cases there are recorded cases of cannibalism and. Verses 53 through 57, he says, You shall eat the fruit of your own body, the flesh of your sons and your daughters, whom the Lord your God has given you in the siege in desperate straits in which the enemy shall distress you.

The man among you who is sensitive and very refined will be hostile toward his brother, toward his wife of his bosom, toward the rest of his children, whom he leaves behind so that he will not give any of them the flesh of his children, whom he will eat because he has nothing left in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you at all your days. The tender and delicate woman among you who would not venture to set the sole of her foot on the ground because of her delicateness and sensitivity will refuse the husband of her bosom and to her refused to the husband of her bosom and to her son and to her daughter, her placenta, which comes out from between your feet and her children whom she bears, for she will eat them secretly for lack of all things in the siege and the desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you at all your days. It seems like he wants to paint a really, really ugly picture.

It just kind of hit its nadir. What people are eating their children and they're so selfish about it, they won't even help. They won't even let their spouse or their other surviving

children have any of the food.

It's bad enough to eat your children. Another thing to starve out the rest of your family because you want to keep all the meat for yourself. And it's just really an ugly description.

I read somewhere that people who are deprived of regular food will often resort to cannibalism after about 20 days. I guess the Donner party and that group of athletes that crashed in the Andes, remember that group that crashed up in Chile, Argentina, where they crashed and they had to eat each other and stuff like that. There's been a lot of modern cases of people who, after they felt there was no other food available after about usually about 20 days is the limit, they begin to eat humans.

If a siege would go longer than that and the food supplies had run out, it's not unheard of. It was not unheard of among the Jews to eat their own children. It's an awful thing.

I'm sure that the way that they would justify it, that they might even wait for their children to die and then eat them. We don't necessarily have to assume that they killed their children to eat them in every case. They might have.

They might have seen that their children were starving anyway. And before their children died slowly and painfully of starvation, they may have mercifully killed them and thought, well, now we can eat them. I mean, I'm sure that when you're starving to death and your children are starving, all kinds of strange thoughts may go through your mind.

I personally don't think I would eat my children because I mean, starvation is a pretty, I guess, painful way to go. But so is cancer. And I wouldn't eat my children to get myself out of cancer either.

You know, there's certain principles, I think, that most people of character would observe. But the Jews who reject the covenant of God are by their definition, people who are not people of character. They're unfaithful.

They're lacking natural affection and so forth. And not only the Jews. This is not anti-Semitic.

There are other nations, there are other pagans who are just as bad. Maybe most people are just as bad. But we're not reading about their history.

We're reading about Israel's. The difference is that Israel knew better or should have because God warned them. The pagans didn't have warnings like this.

Verse 58, if you do not carefully observe all the words of this law that are written in this book that you may fear the glorious and awesome name Jehovah your God. And you'll notice in the New King James, the Lord, your God is in all capital letters here. And I've

checked every commentary I've got available to me right now to figure out why did they capitalize all these words, the Lord, your God? I mean, sometimes people when they're writing letters and stuff like that, they'll capitalize whole words to emphasize them or something like that.

But the Bible usually doesn't resort to that kind of stuff. That's kind of a it's not really a very professional literary publishing technique. Usually if the Lord is in all capitals, it's because it's the word Yahweh.

And it is here, too. But the Lord, your God, all in capitals. It may be for emphasis, but I'm not sure why they emphasize it in this case and they don't in any other case.

I thought maybe the maybe the words in the Hebrew were somewhat different than the other 280 times that Deuteronomy says the Lord, your God. But I haven't really been in the country. They haven't really given me any clues.

So I can't tell you why it's all capital here. Then the Lord will bring upon you and your descendants extraordinary plagues, great and prolonged plagues and serious and prolonged sicknesses. Moreover, he will bring back on you all the diseases of Egypt.

He's kind of winding the tape backwards. They're going back to Egypt as we shall see back when you get to verse 68. He says, and the Lord will take you back to Egypt in ships, by the way of which he said, you shall never see it again.

God told them they'd never see Egypt again, but he's taking that back because they have gone back on him. He's like I said, rewinding the tape. They're going backwards from having come out of Egypt into the promised land.

They're taken out of the promised land and going back to Egypt. The diseases that they have seen in Egypt, of which you were afraid in verse 60, it says, those that come on you and cling to you. Also, every sickness and every plague, which is not written in the book of this law.

Like if I've left anything out, all those will be added to, you know, it's like I've given you a pretty long list here, but you know, if I've forgotten any, all the ones I haven't written down, those will come on you as well. Every every plague that can come on human beings will come upon you. The Lord will bring upon you until you're destroyed.

You should be less few in number or as you were as the stars of heaven in multitude, because you would not obey the voice of the Lord your God. And it shall be, and this is a remarkable sentence here in verse 63. It shall be that just as Yahweh rejoiced over you to do you good and to multiply you, so Yahweh will rejoice over you to destroy you and to bring you to nothing.

And you should be plucked from off the land which you go to possess. So you'll lose the

land. And in fact, God will take as much pleasure in destroying you as he formerly took in blessing you.

Then Yahweh will scatter you among all the peoples. And this is not just the Babylonian exile. This looks beyond to our present time where they truly are scattered among all the peoples all over the world from one end of the earth to the other.

And there you will serve other gods, which neither you nor your fathers have known, wood and stone. And among those nations you shall find no rest. So it's not like you get scattered and then you can settle down and be OK.

Even there, you'll never be secure. And this has been. This is why in modern times, in at least my parents lifetime, there was a concern of most nations that Israel should be able to have a place to go where they aren't in this condition that's described here.

It was after the Holocaust, of course, that the international sensitivities about the plight of the Jews was raised so that people realize, well, you know, the Jews are always experiencing this kind of stuff because they don't have a homeland. They are strangers in other people's countries, and those people take advantage of them, hate them, persecute them. The Jews will never be free from this unless they get to go back to their own land.

And so the United Nations finally gave a charter to make Israel a nation again in 1948. And now they have a land they can go back to. Most of them have not done so.

And even the ones who have don't have peace there. There's still suicide bombers that may do anything. I mean, the security measures in Israel are so tight, you know, it's like I just when I was there, I wanted to go with my friends to visit Bethlehem.

And Bethlehem's not in it's in the Palestinian territories. And you have to go through. It's like going through the Iron Curtain or something.

You know, there's this it's like going into a high security prison, all the walls, all the gates that have to open separately. You go into one compartment, they open another gate. You have to show your passport several different times.

And it's like the security is incredible just to go from one part of the country to the next part of the country. They're not exactly at rest. They're not exactly at peace.

They are insecure, even within their own land. And it says, even among those nations who shall not find rest, nor shall the sole of your foot have resting a resting place. That's why the term the wandering Jew came to be, because they go to one area and they land there for a while and stay there for a while.

And then they get persecuted like the Russian pogroms. You know, they'd be just

uprooted from certain villages and have to find somewhere else to go. They don't really have rest.

They have to wander from place to place. But there the Lord will give you a trembling heart, failing eyes and anguished soul. Your life shall hang in doubt before you.

You shall fear day and night and have no assurance of life. And of course, not every Jewish person is experiencing this particular turmoil. It is the general state of the nation of Israel, the race.

There are secure Jews. There are powerful Jews. There are rich Jews.

There are Jews who are settled for a very long period of time and for life, maybe for generations in one spot. Not every Jew is in this condition, but it is the condition that the Jews in general have had to face ever since they were driven out of their land because of their. Well, because they didn't keep the covenant.

The crucifixion of Christ, their rejection of the new covenant he offered was the last straw. And so they were driven out of their land and this has been their faith. And it's such a sad thing because, I mean, so many of the Jews don't have anything to do with the offenses that brought this on their nation.

Their nation is suffering because of a policy that the nation took originally against Christ. But of course, one could argue most of you are still taking that policy personally against him. But many Jews do not.

Many Jews have turned to Christ. And in the morning, you shall say, oh, that it were evening like, oh, another day. I wish this day was over when they wake up.

I wish this day was over already. But when it's evening, they'll say, oh, that it were morning because of the fear which terrifies your heart and because of the sight which your eyes see. That's really an interesting way of putting things.

And you can almost see it when someone's life is miserable. They don't look forward to waking up in the morning and starting a day from another miserable day. So I wish this day was over already.

But then at night, I wish this night was over. I wish it was daytime again, because there's no time that's OK. You just wish it was the other time, no matter what time it happens to be.

And the Lord will take you back to Egypt in ships by the way in which I said to you, you shall never see it again. And there you should be offered for sale to your enemies as male and female slaves. But no one will buy you.

You won't even be valued as slaves. You'll be unwanted. Now, this going back to Egypt in

ships, of course, it's not the case that the Jews have all gone back to Egypt.

But he is not saying they all would. He made it very clear that they'd be scattered to all the nations from one end of the earth to the other. That would include many nations other than Egypt.

He's just pointing out that many of them would end up having to go back to Egypt. And that was true. Jeremiah ended up being carried down to Egypt by his countrymen because they were seeking to escape from the retaliation of the Babylonians.

Once Goliath, the governor, had been killed, assassinated, they knew the Babylonians would come down and wipe them out. So the remnants of Israel went down to Egypt. And that's where they ended up.

In later days, there was a huge Jewish population in Egypt. Alexandria, Egypt, had an enormous Jewish population. That's where the Septuagint was translated.

And, you know, a significant part of the Jewish nation was in Egypt in those days. I don't know how many Jews are in Egypt right now. It doesn't really matter.

I'm sure there are some Jews there. Just there are everywhere else. It's just the irony that Egypt is where they came from.

And in the dispersal of the Diaspora, many of them will end up back in Egypt again, a place where he told them they'd never have to go again. But the reason they would never have to go there again is because they were to be obedient to him. Obviously, their disobedience changed all that.

And so that's how the chapter ends with these warnings. I would think if anyone gave these warnings to me, it would put the fear of God in me. I don't know why it didn't work for their descendants.

I mean, one would say, well, this generation obeyed. So it worked. Right.

But why didn't their descendants have that? I mean, I live. I'm not even one of their descendants. And I live thousands of years afterward.

When I read of it puts the fear of God in me. Why wouldn't it put the fear of God in every generation, especially those who were given this warning? It's just it's unthinkable how the capacity people have, humans have, the Jews, just like other humans, to forget and to be dull and to rebel against God to your own destruction.