

## Message #35

## Deuteronomy 28:15-48

In the Old Testament there are primarily three main proper names or proper nouns used for God. In most English Bible translations those names are differentiated: “LORD” is the name Jehovah, the sovereign covenant God of Israel. “Lord” is the name Adonai, the sovereign controller God over all. “God” is the name Elohim, the sovereign creator God over all.

We may observe as we look at these 34 verses that the name LORD, the sovereign covenant God of Israel, is used 14 times (28:15, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 27, 28, 35, 36, 37, 45, 47, 48).

Moses is stressing the fact that God is in a covenant relationship with the nation Israel. Now there are two aspects to this covenant relationship. **There is the covenant relationship that God has with Israel, which cannot be changed. There is a covenant fellowship that God has with Israel that can be changed.**

In other words, Israel will always be the covenant nation of God. Nothing can ever change that. This point was even stressed by the Apostle Paul in Romans (Rom. 11:1-2). In fact, Paul makes it clear that this covenant relationship guarantees that Israel will one day experience a national salvation and she will be in her land with the full blessings of God (Rom. 11:26-27).

**So Israel cannot lose her covenant relationship with God. What Israel can lose and has lost is covenant fellowship with God.** When God’s people lose covenant fellowship with God, God causes their world to fall apart. They cannot lose their salvation, what they can lose are the blessings of God.

Now here is where this becomes very applicable to us. We are in a covenant relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ. We have a covenant relationship we cannot lose. Once we believe in Jesus Christ, we have “everlasting life.” What we can lose is covenant fellowship with God. God’s program right now is not primarily aimed at national Israel, but individual Gentiles. That is exactly what Paul said in Romans 11:11. But here is the thing, Paul makes it clear that we can lose covenant fellowship with God, and if we do that, God can cause our world to completely fall apart (Rom. 11:18-22). Just as God cut off covenant blessings from Israel, He can do the same to us.

**The thing that causes God to cut off covenant fellowship with His covenant people is disobedience. This is true in the O.T. and this is also true in the N.T.**

The indicators that God has covenant fellowship with His people is that He blesses them in a variety of ways and contexts. The indicators that God does not have covenant fellowship with His people is that He negatively chastises them in a variety of ways and contexts.

In **verses 1-13**, God promised some amazing blessings if His people would obey His word. Last time we saw 15 specific blessings He would give His people if they would obey Him. They would have great fellowship with God and would receive wonderful blessings from God.

As Moses was wrapping up the blessing section, he said in **verse 14**, do not turn aside from the words God has given. The key to covenant fellowship with God and the key to the blessings of God is take the very “words” of the Scripture personally and don’t turn away from them.

Then he follows that up in **verse 15** by saying if you don’t obey the words and you don’t purpose to observe all the commandments, not only will you lose covenant fellowship with God, but God will track you down with 29 chastising judgments. You will not be overtaken with positive blessings, but with negative cursings. The point of this section is as clear as can be:

**IF GOD’S PEOPLE DO NOT OBEY THE WORD OF GOD, HE WILL SEND TWENTY-NINE CURSING, CHASTISING JUDGMENTS AGAINST HIS OWN PEOPLE.**

If God’s people do not obey the word of God, they will receive the exact opposite of what could have been in this relationship. In fact, God says I will permit these things to “overtake you.” You won’t be able to stop it.

As we go through this list of things, we certainly may observe that most of them did come against national Israel at various times in her history. We may also be warned that these same kinds of things may come against us and certainly may be in the process of coming against the United States. If God did not spare Israel these things, He will not spare the United States.

Now there are some commentators who jump over this text. One actually went through the blessing section and then skipped this section completely. But if we are honest with God’s word, we cannot evade these verses, we cannot escape these verses and we cannot explain away these verses. We must take them in the context God gave them.

We have three main enemies in this world: Our flesh, the world and the Devil. We need to stay close to the Word of God because not only can those enemies pull us away from fellowship with God, they can lead us to experience the negative chastisements of God.

**Curse #1 - God will curse His covenant people in the city or country. 28:16**

If God decides to implement negative chastising judgments on His people, it does not matter where they live. They will not be able to get away from it. They could move away to an island or a city or a country and the judgment would track them down.

**Curse #2 - God will curse their food preparation and supply. 28:17**

God would not bless the women working to provide a meal for the family. He would actually see to it that their preparation would not work. Judgment goes into one’s kitchen.

**Curse #3** - God will curse their offspring. **28:18a**

God would see to it that their children would not amount to anything. They would not receive His blessings.

**Curse #4** - God will curse their fields. **28:18b**

They could work as hard as they could and they would not succeed.

**Curse #5** - God will curse their cattle and herds. **28:18b**

The animals that can bring so much joy to someone would bring misery. The animals would be sick and it would be difficult to provide for them.

**Curse #6** - God will curse them in all directions and locations. **28:19**

When God is chastising His people, they can travel in any direction or be in their house or out of their house and cannot get away from the judgment.

**Curse #7** - God will send curses, confusion and rebuke to His people. **28:20**

God's people would be confused and unable to come up with a plan to have a positive life. Nothing they would plan or try would work. **They would be destroyed "on account of the evil of your deeds because you have forsaken Me."**

**Curse #8** - God will send clinging pestilence to consume people. **28:21**

Not sure what the pestilence is. The word "dabar" means some plague pestilence that causes death (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 188). When God would send it there would be no easing up and no relief. They would not be able to shake it or find relief. This would be glued to them.

**Curse #9** - God will smite His people with disease until they perish. **28:22**

The language used in Hebrew in this verse describes the fact that there is a burning up fever. There is a fiery heat that causes extreme burning inward and outward. Not only will the people be burning, but also the land. This would be of epidemic proportions that will cause great mortality.

**Curse #10** - God will not give relief from heaven or from earth. **28:23**

God is in complete sovereign control of what happens in heaven and on earth and He will not cause anything favorable to happen to help His people.

**Curse #11** - God will send drought to the land. **28:24**

God will not send the rain and He will burn up the land and turn it into a desert and drought.

**Curse #12** - God will cause you to be defeated by enemies and scattered all over. **28:25**

Instead of God allowing victory after victory, He will cause defeat after defeat. This is exactly what God did to Israel. They were routed by the Assyrians, Babylonians, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. They still have not turned to the Lord so there is one more dominant power yet to come, and it will be the Antichrist who will lead the world against Israel.

**Curse #13** - God will cause death to His own people. **28:26**

Not only does God authorize His people to die, He does not even permit them to have an honorable funeral or burial.

**Curse #14** - God will cause bodily infirmities that will not be able to be healed. **28:27**

There is a list of bodily infirmities here that God says He authorizes:

- 1) boils - some violent inflamed swelling.
- 2) tumors - would be a hemorrhoid type of swelling or burning.
- 3) scab - would be something that destroys the eyes.
- 4) itch - some sort of burning itch that you want to scratch.

Now God says here that “you cannot be healed.” It does not mean that there aren’t medicines that were there to help heal, what it means is you cannot get rid of it. No matter how much medicine you take, it won’t work.

**Curse #15** - God will cause mental instability. **28:28a**

God says I will cause your mind to think in ways that are insane. You will not have any ability to make logical and rational judgments.

**Curse #16** - God will cause blindness. **28:28b**

God will not ever turn a blind eye to the disobedience of His people. What He says here is that He will cause blindness of mind and heart.

**Curse #17** - God will cause spiritual instability. **28:28c**

God will cause a blindness of spirituality. I do not think people realize that the ability to grow and understand God’s word is a grant from God. Paul said to the Corinthians that he wished he could teach them the deep things of God, but they were carnal and were not able to grow.

The writer of Hebrews challenged believers to go on to maturity in their spirituality and then he said this will we do “if God permits” (Heb. 5:11-6:3). God has to authorize spiritual growth and stability and if a child of God pursues that which is evil, He will not let them grow.

**Curse #18** - God will cause no prosperity. **28:29a**

No matter what one plans to do, he will not prosper. He will be groping in darkness.

**Curse #19** - God will remove all protection and allow you to be robbed. **28:29b**

God would permit horrible, evil things to happen to His own people.

**Curse #20** - God will cause everything to be taken away from you. **28:30-33**

God will cause one disastrous and disappointing thing to hit His people.

God’s people would lose their mates. **28:30a**

God’s people would lose their house. **28:30b**

God’s people would lose their vineyards. **28:30c**

God’s people would lose their oxen. **29:31a**

God’s people would lose their donkeys. **29:31b**

God’s people would lose their sheep. **29:31c**

God’s people would lose their children. **29:32**

God’s people would lose everything. **29:33**

**The scariest statement of all is in verse 31, you have “no Savior.”**

This is God talking to His own people and He says you can reach a point where I will no longer be one who will save you.

**Curse #21** - God will let you see things that will drive you mad. **28:34**

God says all you will be able to do is watch what I am doing. You will not be able to stop it and you will see things that will drive you crazy.

**Curse #22** - God will strike you down with things that cannot be healed. **28:35**

God says I will go after individuals. I will strike them down with inflammation in their knees and legs. I will permit various burning inflammations to attack various parts of a person’s body from head to foot.

**Curse #23** - God will cause foreigners to dominate His people. **28:36**

God says I will allow godless powers and people to dominate my own people.

**Curse #24** - God will cause His people to become as a horror story. **28:37**

God says I will cause the story of what I did to My people to be the talk of the world.

**Curse #25** - God will not allow His people to prosper in their agricultural work. **28:38-40**

God says I will not permit you to succeed in any area of life. Your crops will fail and you will have to depend on foreign powers for food.

**Curse #26** - God will not bless your children. **28:41**

You will not be able to enjoy your children and grandchildren for they will be gone.

**Curse #27** - God will cause insects to destroy trees and produce. **28:42**

God says I control the insect world and I will direct those insects to destroy your crops.

**Curse #28** - God will allow foreigners to reach higher levels than His people. **28:43**

God says I will permit godless powers and people to be elevated over My own people. It will almost appear like I am blessing them.

**Curse #29** - God will make His people borrow and the godless lend. **28:44**

God said I will make it so that My own people look like beggars.

**In verses 45-48**, God reiterates four key realities:

**(Reality #1)** - All these destructive curses will come against His people because they do not seek to obey His word. **28:45** They hardened their hearts against God's word.

**(Reality #2)** - All these destructive curses should be a sign to the people of God so they want to obey the word of God. **28:46**

People all over the world will realize that God is specifically targeting His own people.

**(Reality #3)** - All these destructive curses come against His people because they did not joyfully serve the Lord with thankful hearts. **28:47**

Don't miss this. They did not attend worship services and joyfully give and worship.

**(Reality #4)** - God will permit awful things to happen to His own people until they are destroyed. **28:48**

God's people will lack everything.

God loves to exalt His people as His trophies of His blessings. But in order for that to happen, they must seek to carefully understand and obey His word.

Paul warned that if God would do these things to national Israel, don't become arrogant and think He can't do them to us. The scariest thought of all is for one to have "no Savior." There is a Savior who can save you from all your sins and His name is Jesus Christ.