

### [The Punishment of the 39 Stripes \(Deut 25:1-3\)](#)

The Law restricted it to 40 but the Jews later made it 39 so as to not accidentally going over the legal number. The punishment must fit the offence and not demean the offender.

### [Not Muzzling the Ox which threshes \(Deut 25:4\)](#)

The command not to put a muzzle upon the ox when threshing, is no doubt proverbial in its nature, and even in the context before us is not intended to apply merely literally to an ox employed in threshing, but to be understood in the general sense in which the Apostle Paul uses it in 1Cor 9:9 and 1 Tim 5:18, viz., that a labourer was not to be deprived of his wages.

### [The Levirate Marriage \(Deut 25:5-10\)](#)

There are some special conditions to observe: (1) they had to be living near each other, i.e., the wife would not be a total stranger, (2) the couple had to be childless (it was against the law for the brother to marry his sister in law if they had children, Lev 18:16) and (3w) the brother-in-law had to be willing to marry her. If he refused even before the elders, then his brother's wife was allowed to humiliate him publicly and if he married, his house would be known as 'the house of the barefooted one.' Only the poor, mourners, and prisoners of war went barefoot (Is 20:2-4; Micah 1:8; Luke 15:22) but to get your shoes back was to be reinstated in society (2Ch 28:15; Luke 15:22)

### [Concerning Fights \(Deut 25:11-12\)](#)

Two men fighting is an invitation for more trouble; better they should seek help and settle their dispute in a more constructive way. It's understandable that the wife would want her husband to win, but her method of assistance was shameful, unfair, and grossly offensive. In describing this scenario, Moses prohibited all indecent methods of combat by either men or women. The penalty would certainly restrain anybody from doing such a thing.

### [Honest Weights and Measures \(Deut 25:13-16\)](#)

Honest weights and measures were essential to the public good (Lev 19:35-37). The prophets denounced dishonest weights and measures because their use made the poor poorer and the rich richer (Amos 8:5; Micah 6:10-11).

Once again, Moses reminded the people that their future security and blessing in the land depended on their obedience to God's Law. When they cheated others, they only cheated themselves.

### [Concerning Amalek \(Deut 25:17-19\)](#)

The Amalekites were rejected by the Lord and Israel was not to forget their evil deeds (Ex 17:8-13). It wasn't until the time of Hezekiah that the Amalekites finally disappeared from the scene (1 Ch 4:41-43).

### [Presenting your Firstfruits to the LORD \(Deut 26:1-11\)](#)

With this chapter Moses concludes the particular statutes which he thought fit to give Israel in charge at his parting with them. Moses gives them a form of confession to be made by him that offered the basket of his first-fruits (v1-11). (1) The offerer must begin with a receipt in full for the good land which God had given them. (2) He must remember and own the mean origin of that nation of which he was a member. (3) He must thankfully acknowledge God's great goodness, not only to himself in particular, but to Israel in general, in bringing them out of Egypt and in settling them in Canaan. (4) He must offer to God his basket of first-fruits. When he has finished the service, the offerer must give glory to God and then go home and rejoice with his family, the Levite and the alien in the Lord.

### [Paying the Welfare Tithe \(Deut 26:12-15\)](#)

It is fitting that God, who by His providence gives us all we have, should by His law direct the using of it. Then we may take the comfort of our enjoyments, when God has thus had his dues out of them. They were to testify that they had been faithfully with this tithe. To this solemn protestation they must add a solemn prayer for God's people Israel; for in the common peace and prosperity every particular person prospers and has peace.

### [Concluding Exhortation \(Deut 26:1-16-19\)](#)

At the close of his discourse, Moses sums up his whole discourse in earnestly admonishing Israel to give the Lord their God occasion to fulfill His promises to them, by their keeping His commandments with all their heart and soul.

### [The Two Mountains \(Deut 27:1-13\)](#)

Once Joshua had led the nation into the Promised Land, they were to interrupt their conquest and engage in a ceremony of reaffirming the covenant. The valley between the two mountains formed a natural amphitheater where the priests and the Levites could assemble and declare God's Word. The six tribes assembled on Mount Gerizim, the mount of blessings were Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph and Benjamin – all Jacob's sons by his 2 wives, Leah and Rachel. The six tribes assembled on Mount Ebal, the mount of curses were Reuben and Zebulun (sons of Leah) and the sons of the maidservants, Gad, Asher, Dan and Naphtali.

Joshua was commanded to plaster some large stones on Mount Ebal and write on them the laws that God gave His people. He was also to build an altar at the base of Mount Ebal where the priests would offer burnt offerings (total dedication to God) and peace offerings (joyful celebration of God's blessing).

The location held sacred memories for Israel, for Abraham built an altar near Shechem (Gen 12:6-7) and so had Jacob (Gen 33:17-20).



Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal are in the natural centre of Canaan. Mount Ebal, means *rocky*, is a mountain in *Samaria*, in central Israel. At a height of 3,077 feet / 937 meters above sea level, and 1,200 feet / 365 feet above the level of the adjacent valley, it was located on the north side of the ancient city of Shechem. Mount Gerizim was to the south of Shechem on the opposite side of the valley. Well within sight of each other, Mount Ebal's rather barren appearance contrasted with the more lush-covered Mount Gerizim. This difference was used in a ceremony to symbolize the blessings for those who obey God, and the curses for those who disobey - a principle that applies as much now as at any other time during *Bible History*.

Between Mt. Gerizim (left) and Mt. Ebal (right) is the city of Shechem which is preeminent in the biblical record, beginning with God's promise of the land to Abraham.



### The Curses (Deuteronomy 27:14-26)

This wasn't just a ceremony. Israel was calling on the Lord to send these curses on His people if they turned away from Him, and when the people said "Amen" (so be it) after each statement, they were telling God that they were willing to be chastened if they disobeyed Him. Their "Amen" wasn't just their agreement with the words spoken; it was their acceptance of the terms of the covenant.

The first curse (v15) condemned idolatry and the violation of the 1st and 2nd commandments (Exo 20:1-6). Idolatry is a great sin and if a Jew worshiped an idol in secret and didn't try to persuade anybody to join him, it was still a great sin and had to be punished (Deut 13).

The 2nd curse (v16) related to the family and the home (Ex 20:12) and the 3rd (v17) to property (Deut 19:14; Ex 20:15). The 4th curse (v18) revealed God's special concern for people with disabilities (Lev 19:14).

The 5th curse (v19) focuses on treating with kindness and justice the helpless and unfortunate in the land. Widows, orphans and aliens were often abused and exploited in Israel and God called His people to champion their cause and see that they received justice (Deut 24:17-18; Ex 22:21-24; Lk 18:1-8). Among other things, they had to bring their special tithes every 3rd year so the needy would have food to eat (Deut 14:28-29)

Curses 6-9 (v20-23) have to do with sexual purity and relate to the 7th commandment (Ex 20:14). Incest (v20,22-23) was especially condemned in Israel (Lev 18:8-9,17; 20:11). Reuben lost his rights as the firstborn because he violated this law (Gen 35:22; 49:3-4). Bestiality (v21) was practiced in some pagan religions and "sacred animals" were used in the worship of their false gods but Israel was forbidden to follow their practices (Lev 18:23).

The 10-11th curses (v24-25) echoed the 6th commandment (Ex 20:13). This speaks of a deliberate act of murder and not of manslaughter.

The 12th curse (v26) obligated the Jews to obey every law that God gave them, whether it was named in this list or not. Paul quoted this verse (Gal 3:10) to show that there could be no salvation by obeying the law since nobody could obey everything God commanded.

The purpose of the Law was not salvation but condemnation, the indictment of all people as sinners and therefore the need of all people to trust Christ, for "the just shall live by faith" (Gal 3:11). There can be no true conversion without conviction, and conviction comes when we see the holiness of God in His law and the sinfulness of our own hearts.

This was a solemn hour for Israel as they assented to God's Law, promising to obey it and agreeing that they deserved judgment if they broke it. They would remember the golden calf incident where a similar profession of obedience was given but it was broken in less than 40 days! It takes more than pious words and good intentions to be a devoted and obedient child of God (Matt 7:21-23).

### The Blessings (Deut 28:1-14)

The nation was still in its spiritual infancy (Gal 4:1-7) and one way of teaching children is by way of rewards and punishments. These material blessings were God's way of reminding His children that obedience brings blessings but disobedience brings chastening. God taught His people that their obedience as a witness to the other nations (Deut 28:12)

However, it wasn't long before thinking Israelites discovered that wicked people were also receiving blessings, so there was something more to faith than just being rewarded (see Ps 73; Jer 12:1-4). The people gradually learnt that obedience built godly character so they could enter into the blessing of being a holy nation and a kingdom of priests

### The Curses (Deut 28:15-68)

Just as God promised to bless them in every area of life if they obeyed Him, so He warned that He would curse them in every area of life – their bodies, families, fields, flocks, and herds – if they disobeyed. They would be sick in body and mind, deprived of the necessities of life, defeated in battle and scattered throughout the world and serving their enemies. Then they would realize that serving God wasn't so difficult after all, but it would be too late by then. Here is a summary of the judgments listed:

- Children cursed (v18); low birth rate (v62-63)
- Crops ruined and animals killed (v18, 22, 31-32, 38-40, 42, 51)
- Confusion of mind, madness and fear (v20, 28-29, 34, 65-69)
- Sicknes (v21-22,27-28,35,59-61), Drought, hunger & thirst (v22-24, 48)
- Defeat in war (v25, 49-50, 52)
- Wives ravished (v30).children kidnapped (v32, 41)
- Oppression and slavery (v29, 33, 48, 68)
- Cannibalism (v53-57), captivity (v36, 63-64)
- Corpses not buried (v26), shame and scorn (v37)
- Plans shattered (v30), poverty, debt and nakedness (v44, 48)
- Robbery (v29, 31, 33)
- Aliens take over the land (v43)

This is a solemn reminder that it doesn't pay to rebel against God and have your own way.

During times of severe suffering, more than one Jew asked the Lord, "Why do Your people suffer when the wicked Gentile nations escape suffering?" Habakkuk will discuss this theme and also Psalms 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. Amos 3:2 - "You only have I chosen among all the families of the earth; Therefore, I will punish you for all your iniquities."

Here is a sobering message for the church today. Like Israel of old, we are God's chosen people and a holy nation (1 Pet 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 12:1-4)

1 Peter 4:17 For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

### The Covenant Renewed (Deut 29)

Moses reviewed the past (v1-8) and called the people to obey God (v9-16) and warned them what would happen if they disobeyed (v17-29). Repetition is necessary because the people had no copies of the law while the priests and Levites had (17:18; 31:26). Too often God's people forget what they ought to remember and remember what they ought to forget!

Moses never seemed tired of reminding the people of God's grace and mercy bestowed on the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

### Calling for Obedience (Deut 29:9-16)

The secret of prosperity was the blessing of God, and the secret of receiving that blessing was obedience to God's law. Moses began with the leaders of the nation (v10), for if leaders don't set the example as spiritual people, there's not much hope for the followers. But all are included, the women and children, the resident aliens and the lowest servants. What God does for us depends a great deal on how we relate to Him. The covenant He made with their fathers would stand forever, but their enjoyment of the promises depended on their obedience to the obligations.

Note that what they did that day affected their descendants in the years to come (v14-15). Just as Israel's decision at Sinai was binding on the new generation on the plains of Moab, so the new generation's decision would be binding on their descendants

### Warning of Judgment (Deut 29:17-29)

Moses reminded the people of the gross idolatry they witnessed while enslaved in Egypt and then while traveling through the wilderness. They knew the judgments of the Lord on the Egyptians. Thus if they followed the idolaters and disobeyed the Lord, the Lord would judge the whole land and it would become an example to others of what happens when God's law is violated.

Will Israel be an obedient people? Would God send these curses? What does the future hold for the nation? Some of them might be asking this question, but this was not a time for speculation, but for dedication. The future belongs to the Lord and our responsibility as God's people isn't to try to pry open the doors of the future, but to obey God's will here and now. It is not necessary to know God's secrets, but it is essential that we obey what God has clearly revealed to us.

### The Promise (Deut 30:1-10)

In this chapter Moses looked down through the centuries and saw the future restoration of Israel in their land and the blessings of God again poured out on them.

The key words in this chapter are "heart" (v2,6,10,14,17) and "command" or "commandment" (v2,8,10,11,16), "turn" or "return" (v2,10,17) and "life" (v15,19,20).

If God's people turn from their sins and return with all their heart to God and God's commandments and obey them, they will enjoy life as only God can give.

### The Choice (Deut 30:11-20)

Because we are created in the image of God, we have minds to think with, hearts to feel with and a will to decide with and God calls us to make right decisions. We're not robots; we can hear God's words, learn God's will, and decide either to obey or disobey. Moses made it clear that making this decision isn't a difficult task. After all, we have the revealed truth of God in God's Word, and that Word is now easily available to us.

Paul quoted this passage in Romans 10:6-10 to prove that righteousness isn't obtained by doing great feats but by exercising simple faith in Christ Jesus. We are called to also make a choice

This choice is between "life and death" and "the blessing and the curse". Israel had to make this choice and so must we today.

We will know, as Israel, that we have chosen life by our actions, not just by mere words! We prove our choices by our lives when we love God and obey Him and His Word.

This marks the end of Moses' farewell address, the review of the law and the renewal of the covenant.

## Irrefutable Facts about God's Judgments

1. This is God's World. He makes the rules.
2. God is immutable, & His judgments are immutable – no nation is exempt.
3. Refusal to believe that God will judge & destroy the wicked does not negate the fact.
4. The only escape from God's Judgments is in Christ.

## God's Judgments are According to Pattern

1. He first touches our blessings (Deut 28:3-6, 15-19; Jer 5:23-25)  
THEIR SIN: stubborn & rebellious heart; turned aside, no fear of God, iniquities, sin  
THEIR JUDGMENT: rain in its season withheld, poor or no harvests, good withheld
2. Then He punishes a disobedient nation with destruction (Deut 28:45, 63)
 

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. by disease (Deut 28:21-22, 27-29, 35, 58-61)</li> <li>b. by drought (Deut 28:23-24)</li> <li>c. by war (Deut 28:25-26, 49-50)</li> <li>d. with corresponding consequences of:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) loss of family &amp; possessions (Deut 28:30-34, 41-42, 51-57, 62)</li> <li>2) exile &amp; idolatry (Deut 28:36,41,63-64)</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3) become a byword (Deut 28:37, 46)</li> <li>4) crop failure = economic failure (Deut 28:38-40)</li> <li>5) become the tail instead of the head (Deut 28:43-44)</li> <li>6) living in constant fear (Deut 28:65-67)</li> <li>7) slavery (Deut 28:47-48, 68)</li> </ol>
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3. Then He punishes severely with sword, famine and pestilence (Leviticus 26)
  - \* Simply praying for Judgment to be averted or stayed, will accomplish nothing
  - \* Eg: WW2 which lasted for 5 years, with about 47 million killed, & billions of dollars lost
  - \* We can know the future by studying the past because God's ways are absolutely unchangeable when it comes to His dealings with sinful nations (see 1 Corinthians 10:6-11; 2 Peter 2:6)

### Crossing the Line

1. **Hardening your heart in the face of predicted judgment (Isaiah 22:12-14)**
2. **Shedding innocent blood (Psalm 94:21, 23; 9:12; cf. 2 Kings 24:3-4)**
3. **Rise of militant homosexual power (Genesis 19; Judges 19)**
4. **Ignoring the warnings of the prophets (Jeremiah 7:1-5) & of history (Jeremiah 7:12)**

### Don't Misread the Times

1. Search Bible History to discover how God has dealt with all other nations to know how He will act in all His judgments
2. Follow Daniel's example in Daniel 9:2 – he studied the revealed Word of God & gained prophetic insight into his times (Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 28)
3. Seek the Lord until He gives you a word.

# The Gradual Implementation of the Judgments

Blessings (Lev 26:1-13)	Curses (Lev 26:14-46)				
	Judgement Pronounced	1 <sup>st</sup> Sevenfold increase	2 <sup>nd</sup> Sevenfold Increase	3 <sup>rd</sup> Sevenfold Increase	4 <sup>th</sup> Sevenfold Increase
<p>v4 rains in its season</p> <p>v5 abundant harvests</p> <p>v5 eat food to the full, live securely in the land</p> <p>v6 peace in the land – <b>no one to make you tremble, no harmful beasts, no sword will pass through</b></p> <p>v7-8 enemies defeated</p> <p>v9 be fruitful &amp; multiply – <b>“I will confirm My covenant with you”</b></p> <p>v10 plenty (of food)</p> <p>v11-12 Spiritual blessings: <b>“I will make My dwelling among you, &amp; My soul will not reject you. I will also walk among you &amp; be your God &amp; you shall be My people”</b></p> <p>v13 set free from slavery</p>	<p><b>“I, in turn, will do this to you”</b></p> <p>v16 sudden terror, consumption, fever</p> <p>v16 sow seed uselessly – eaten by enemies</p> <p>v17 defeated, killed by your enemies</p> <p>v17 ruled by those who hate you</p> <p>v17 flee when no one is pursuing</p>	<p><b>“I will punish you seven times more for your sins”</b></p> <p>v19 pride of power broken</p> <p>v19 sky like iron, earth like bronze</p> <p>v20 spend strength uselessly – land won't yield its produce nor trees their fruit</p>	<p><b>“I will increase the plague on you seven times according to your sins”</b></p> <p>v21 plague increased seven times</p> <p>v22 wild beasts shall eat your children, &amp; cattle &amp; reduce your number – so that your roads lie deserted</p>	<p><b>“I will act with hostility against you; and I, even I, will strike you seven times for your sins”</b></p> <p>v25 sword will execute vengeance for the covenant</p> <p>v25 pestilence in cities – delivered into enemies' hands</p> <p>v26 famine – eat &amp; not be satisfied</p>	<p><b>“I will act with wrathful hostility against you; and I, even I, will punish you seven times for your sins”</b></p> <p>v29 cannibalism</p> <p>v30 high places &amp; incense altars cut down, your remains heaped on idols – <b>My soul shall abhor you</b></p> <p>v31, 33 cities &amp; sanctuaries desolate – <b>I will not smell your soothing aromas</b></p> <p>v32 land desolate – enemies appalled at it</p> <p>v33 exile – perish &amp; rot away (v38)</p> <p>v36-37 those left – weakness &amp; fear</p>
	<p><b>Disease</b></p> <p><b>War</b></p>	<p><b>Famine</b></p> <p><b>Weather</b></p> <p><b>=&gt; economic ruin</b></p>	<p><b>Wild Beasts</b></p>	<p><b>Sword</b></p> <p><b>Pestilence</b></p> <p><b>Famine</b></p>	<p><b>Exile / Desolate &amp; Devastated Land</b></p> <p><b>Land enjoys its Sabbaths</b></p>