

LESSON TWENTY-ONE 27:1—28:68

III. THE THIRD DISCOURSE

Future of Israel Foretold (27:1—30:20)

A. ALTAR TO BE BUILT UPON MOUNT EBAL FOR THE RECORDING OF GOD'S LAW

(27:1-8)

And Moses and the elders of Israel commanded the people, saying, Keep all the commandment which I command you this day. 2 And it shall be on the day when ye shall pass over the Jordan unto the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee, that thou shalt set thee up great stones, and plaster them with plaster: 3 and thou shalt write upon them all the words of this law, when thou art passed over; that thou mayest go in unto the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee, a land flowing with milk and honey, as Jehovah, the God of thy fathers, hath promised thee. 4 And it shall be, when ye are passed over the Jordan, that ye shall set up these stones, which I command you this day, in mount Ebal, and thou shalt plaster them with plaster. 5 And there shalt thou build an altar unto Jehovah thy God, an altar of stones: thou shalt lift up no iron *tool* upon them. 6 Thou shalt build the altar of Jehovah thy God of unhewn stones; and thou shalt offer burnt-offerings thereon unto Jehovah thy God: 7 and thou shalt sacrifice peace-offerings, and shalt eat there; and thou shalt rejoice before Jehovah thy God. 8 And thou shalt write upon the stones all the words of this law very plainly.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 27:1-8

465. Read Joshua 8:30-35 for fulfillment of the promises made here.
466. What was to be written upon the stones? How much of the law? How large were the stones?
467. Was the altar the same as the stones upon which was written the laws of Jehovah? Cf. Joshua 8:31, 32.
468. What specific purpose or purposes were served in fulfilling these instructions?

AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 27:1-8

And Moses with the elders of Israel commanded the people, Keep all the commandments with which I charge you today.

2 And on the day when you pass over the Jordan to the land which the Lord your God gives you, you shall set you up great stones, and cover them with plaster.

3 And you shall write on them all the words of this law, when you have passed over, that you may go into the land which the Lord your God is giving you, a land flowing with milk and honey, as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has promised you.

4 And when you have gone over the Jordan, you shall set up these stones, which I command you this day, on Mount Ebal, and coat them with plaster.

5 And there you shall build an altar to the Lord your God, an altar of stones; you shall not lift up any iron tool upon them.

6 You shall build the altar of the Lord your God of whole stones, and offer burnt offerings on it to Him;

7 And you shall offer peace offerings, and eat there, and rejoice before the Lord your God.

8 And you shall write upon the stones all the words of this law very plainly.

COMMENT 27:1-8

See also Josh. 8:30-35 where we have these instructions carried out.

SET THEM UP GREAT STONES (v. 2)—These were to be unhewn stones, v. 5, Ex. 20:25. Hewn and engraved stones were associated with idolatry. Thus graven images were forbidden, v. 15, 4:16ff. Recall Aaron in making the golden calf "fashioned it with a graving tool" (Ex. 32:4). The whole stones would contrast to the idolator's hewn and graven ones. Compare memorials set up in the Jordan (Josh. 4:8, 9), and Gilgal (Josh. 4:20). Perhaps for this (as well as other reasons), no iron tool was used on the temple premises (I K. 6:7).

PLASTER THEM WITH PLASTER (v. 2)—Some believe the Hebrew is better read, *cement them with cement*. Smith has "white washing them with lime". But regardless of the mixture used, its purpose is apparent: to serve as a binder and provide a relatively smooth surface for writing (we suppose before it hardened).

WRITE UPON THEM ALL THE WORDS OF THE LAW (v. 3)—Are *all the words of Moses* meant? The laws of the book meant? The laws of the book of Deuteronomy just given? Surely not the entire Penta-

teuch! Nor is there any valid reason for supposing only the decalogue to be meant. Clarke suggests that "the (. . . *Torah*) law or ordinance in question simply means the *blessings* and *curses* mentioned in this and the following chapter; and indeed these contained a very good epitome of the whole law in all its promises and threatenings, in reference to the whole of its grand moral design."

But it seems difficult to understand "all the words of this law" (v. 3, 8) as not referring to a legal code. And in view of the ability of the Hebrew language to say much in a few words, we would tend to believe that at least the *legislative* portion of Deuteronomy—"this law" is meant. It may have been condensed or abbreviated. Note especially Josh. 8:32, where it is called "a copy of the law of Moses," which is distinguished from "the book of the law of Moses," (v. 31). As we are not told the size of the monument, no problem exists concerning making it *large* enough for a lengthy inscription.

IN MOUNT EBAL (v. 4)—On the side of this mount the stones were to be set up. It was the mountain of curses, 3,075 feet, and stood to the north and directly opposite mount Gerizim, the mountain of blessings, 2,850 feet. Between them lay a vale, and the town of Shechem—a city of ancient origin (Gen. 12:6, 33:18), before which lay a relatively wide plain.

AND THERE SHALT THOU BUILD AN ALTAR (v. 5)—Not a different structure from the memorial, but the same one, Josh. 8:31, 32.

B. CURSES TO BE REPEATED FROM MT. EBAL (27:9-26)

9 And Moses and the priests the Levites spake unto all Israel, saying, Keep silence, and hearken, O Israel: This day thou art become the people of Jehovah thy God. 10 Thou shalt therefore obey the voice of Jehovah thy God, and do his commandments and his statutes, which I command thee this day.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 27:9, 10

469. In what sense was Israel becoming a people of Jehovah? Why were they not before this time?
470. Is there some distinction between commandments and statutes?

AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 27:9, 10

9 And Moses and the Levitical priests said to all Israel, Keep silence, and hear, O Israel; this day you have become the people of the Lord your God.

10 So you shall obey the voice of the Lord your God, and do His commandments and statutes, which I command you today.

COMMENT 27:9, 10

THIS DAY THOU ART BECOME THE PEOPLE OF JEHOVAH (v. 9)—The normal sense of "this day" in Deuteronomy is "at this time" (26:16-18). But in a very wondrous and real way, the *could* then say they were "the people of God"—a *nation*, a country, and they had finally arrived at their home! The impressive ceremony of Josh. 8:30-35 must certainly also have been a very emotion-filled one, as Israel officially "claimed" the land.

11 And Moses charged the people the same day, saying, 12 These shall stand upon mount Gerizim to bless the people, when ye are passed over the Jordan: Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Joseph, and Benjamin. 13 And these shall stand upon mount Ebal for the curse: Reuben, Gad, and Asher, and Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali. 14 And the Levites shall answer, and say unto all the men of Israel with a loud voice,

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 27:11-14

471. Why the choice of the tribes to bless?

472. What impression was this whole ceremony to make upon Israel?

AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 27:11-14

11 And Moses charged the people the same day, saying,

12 These [tribes] shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people, when you have passed over the Jordan: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph's [sons], and Benjamin.

13 And these [tribes] shall stand upon Mount Ebal to pronounce the curse [for disobedience]: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali.

14 And the Levites shall declare with a loud voice to all the men of Israel:

COMMENT 27:11-14

On the sides of these two mountains the people were to be placed, half on one and half on the other, while in the vale between (with Shechem to one side) stood the ark, with the Levites. Those who stood on Gerizim responded to the blessings, those on Ebal to the cursings, as these were spoken "with a loud voice" by the Levites. (Apparently the acoustics were good—Jotham later spoke to all Shechem by standing "on the top of mount Gerizim," Jud. 9:7.* See also 11:26-32.

Adam Clarke, following Dr. Parry, positions the tribes of Israel as follows:

NORTH EBAL	<i>Strangers</i> Naphthali Dan Zebulun Asher Gad Reuben <i>Levites</i> PRIESTS	EAST	<i>Strangers</i> Benjamin Joseph Issachar Judah Levi Simeon <i>Levites</i> PRIESTS	SOUTH GERIZIM
		<i>Blessings</i>	<i>Curses</i>	
		ALTAR		
		ARK		
		WEST		

According to the Talmud, six tribes went up towards the top of Gerizim and six towards the top of Ebal. The priests and Levites stood beneath the two with the ark. They then turned their faces towards Mount Gerizim and pronounced the blessings (see ch. 28). To this

*"In consequence of the dispute which arose over the marriage of Manasseh, who belonged to the high-priestly family, with a daughter of Sanballat the Horonite (Neh. 13:28), a temple was built on Gerizim as a rival to that in Jerusalem (c 432 B.C.)," (I.S.B.E.). This was the beginning of the schism between Jew and Samaritan which lasts to the present day. According to Josephus, however, Sanballat, with the sanction of Alexander the Great, built a temple for the Samaritans on Mt. Gerizim, of which Manasseh became high priest. At any rate, by the time of Jesus the Samaritan woman could very truthfully say, "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain" (Jn. 4:20). Jacob, a common ancestor of both nations (Jn. 4:12), worshipped either on or near it, Gen. 33:20.

both sides responded with "Amen!" As the scripture reads, however, the "Amen" was to come after each curse.

15 Cursed be the man that maketh a graven or molten image, an abomination unto Jehovah, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and setteth it up in secret. And all the people shall answer and say, Amen.

16 Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen.

17 Cursed be he that removeth his neighbor's landmark. And all the people shall say, Amen.

18 Cursed be he that maketh the blind to wander out of the way. And all the people shall say, Amen.

19 Cursed be he that wresteth the justice *due* to the sojourner, fatherless, and widow. And all the people shall say, Amen.

20 Cursed be he that lieth with his father's wife, because he hath uncovered his father's skirt. And all the people shall say, Amen.

21 Cursed be he that lieth with any manner of beast. And all the people shall say, Amen.

22 Cursed be he that lieth with his sister, the daughter of his father, or the daughter of his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen.

23 Cursed be he that lieth with his mother-in-law. And all the people shall say, Amen.

24 Cursed be he that smiteth his neighbor in secret. And all the people shall say, Amen.

25 Cursed be he that taketh a bribe to slay an innocent person. And all the people shall say, Amen.

26 Cursed be he that confirmeth not the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 27:15-26

473. Try to imagine the great attraction of idolatry. There must have been some rationalization, attempt to express it.
474. What is meant by the use of the word "light" as used in vs. 16?
475. Are we to believe a man could be put to death for changing a property line?
476. Why would anyone be so cruel as to mislead a blind man?
477. Kindness and generosity was a very prominent part of Israel's morality. Why?

478. Why mention "his father's skirt" in the case of adultery with the wife of the father?
479. Was morality so lax in Israel, or was there some other reason for these regulations?
480. What is involved in the word "confirmeth" in vs. 26?

AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 27:15-26

15 Cursed be the man who makes a graven or molten image, an abomination to the Lord, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and sets it up in secret. All the people shall answer, Amen.

16 Cursed be he who dishonors his father or his mother. All the people shall say, Amen.

17 Cursed be he who moves (back) his neighbor's landmark. All the people shall say, Amen.

18 Cursed be he who misleads a blind man from his way. All the people shall say, Amen.

19 Cursed be he who perverts the justice due to the sojourner or the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. All the people shall say, Amen.

20 Cursed be he who lies with his father's wife, because he uncovers what belongs to his father. All the people shall say, Amen.

21 Cursed be he who lies with any beast. All the people shall say, Amen.

22 Cursed be he who lies with his half-sister, whether his father's or his mother's daughter. All the people shall say, Amen.

23 Cursed be he who lies with his mother-in-law. All the people shall say, Amen.

24 Cursed be he who slays his neighbor secretly. All the people shall say, Amen.

25 Cursed be he who takes a bribe to slay an innocent person. All the people shall say, Amen.

26 Cursed be he who does not support and give assent to the words of this law to do them [as the rule of his life]. All the people shall say, Amen.

COMMENT 27:15-26

It is quickly seen that most of these curses have been discussed in previous chapters.

GRAVEN OR MOLTEN IMAGE (v. 15)—See 4:15-19, notes, 5:8-10.

AND SETTETH IT UP IN SECRET (v. 15)—Lest his fellow-Israelite or leaders discover his sin. (Like Rachel, who hid the teraphim under the camel's saddle without even her *husband's* knowledge, Gen. 31:32-35). But "the eyes of Jehovah are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good" (Prov. 15:3). He "seeth under the whole heaven" (Job 28:24). Cf. II Chron. 16:9, Prov. 5:21.

HE THAT SETTETH LIGHT BY HIS FATHER OR HIS MOTHER (v. 16)—"he who is making light of his father and his mother" (Young's Literal); "he who dishonors his father or his mother" (R.S.V.); "he who insults his father or mother" (Torah). "Setteth light by" is a rendering of the Heb. verb *Kalab*, which Baumgartner's Lexicon defines as "treat with contempt." See Lev. 20:9, Ezek. 22:7, and our previous discussion under Deut. 21:18-21.

HE THAT REMOVETH HIS NEIGHBOR'S LANDMARK (v. 17)—See 19:14, notes.

THAT MAKETH THE BLIND TO WANDER (v. 18)—See also Lev. 19:14. It is difficult to conceive of one so inhumane as to mistreat or deceive the blind, but in our own generation we have witnessed such in the sadistic and cruel treatment of elderly men and women who are robbed, abused or beaten on the streets.

JUSTICE DUE THE SOJOURNER, FATHERLESS, AND WIDOW (v. 19)—Cf. 1:16-18, 10:17, 18; 16:19, 24:17, 18, notes: Ex. 22:21-24.

HE THAT LIETH WITH HIS FATHER'S WIFE (v. 20)—See 22:30, notes.

HE THAT LIETH WITH ANY MANNER OF BEAST (v. 21)—See 23:18, notes. Cf. Ex. 22:19, Lev. 18:23, 20:15.

HE THAT LIETH WITH HIS SISTER (v. 22)—This curse applies to half sisters as well as full sisters. See Lev. 18:6-18, esp. v. 9. Also Lev. 20:17.

HE THAT LIETH WITH HIS MOTHER-IN-LAW (v. 23)—See also Lev. 20:14. A careful reading of Leviticus, chapters 18 and 20, will show how God abhorred *any* kind of incest, adultery, or fornication, under the Mosaic code. And surely this fact is clear from the many condemnations of these sins we have found in *this* book.

HE THAT SMITETH HIS NEIGHBOR IN SECRET (v. 24)—See 4:41-43 and especially 19:1-13, notes. The reference *here* is obviously to premeditated murder.

HE THAT TAKETH A BRIBE TO SLAY AN INNOCENT PERSON (v. 25)—Compare 10:17-19, 16:18-20; 25:1; Ex. 23:1-3, 6-8.

CURSED BE HE THAT CONFIRMETH NOT THE WORDS OF THIS LAW TO DO THEM (v. 26)—Compare 26:16-19. Again and again the necessity of *doing* the words of the law is emphasized. This was a prerequisite of God's fullest blessing. But this very truth pointed up the need of a Redeemer. The fact that *no* one (save the Lord Jesus) kept the law completely and perfectly, meant that the law itself served as their condemning agent. Thus Paul affirms, "For as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them. Now that no man is justified by the law before God, is evident: for The righteous shall live by faith; and the law is not of faith; but, He that doeth them shall live in them. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us . . ." See Gal. 3:9-14.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

Moses commands the people to write the law upon stones, when they shall come to the promised land, 1-3. And to set up these stones on Mount Ebal, 4; and to build an altar of unbewn stones, and to offer on it burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, 5-7. The words to be written plainly, and the people to be exhorted to obedience, 8-10. The six tribes which should stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people, 11, 12. Those who are to stand upon Mount Ebal to curse the transgressors, 13. The different transgressors against whom the curses are to be denounced, 14-26.

C. BLESSINGS TO BE REPEATED FROM MOUNT GERIZIM (28:1-14)

And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of Jehovah thy God, to observe to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that Jehovah thy God will set thee on high above all the nations of the earth: 2 and all these blessings shall come upon thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of Jehovah thy God. 3 Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. 4 Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy beasts, the increase of thy cattle, and the young of thy flock. 5 Blessed shall be thy

basket and thy kneading-trough, 6 Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out.

7 Jehovah will cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thee: they shall come out against thee one way, and shall flee before thee seven ways. 8 Jehovah will command the blessings upon thee in thy barns, and in all that thou puttest thy hand unto; and he will bless thee in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee. 9 Jehovah will establish thee for a holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee; if thou shalt keep the commandments of Jehovah thy God, and walk in his ways. 10 And all the peoples of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of Jehovah; and they shall be afraid of thee. 11 And Jehovah will make thee plenteous for good, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which Jehovah sware unto thy fathers to give thee. 12 Jehovah will open unto thee his good treasure the heavens, to give the rain of thy land in its season, and to bless all the work of thy hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow. 13 And Jehovah will make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if thou shalt hearken unto the commandments of Jehovah thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do *them*, 14 and shalt 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.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 28:1-14

481. What specifically is promised in the expression: "Set thee on high above all the nations of the earth"? "On high" in what respect?
482. What is a synonym for the word "Blessed"? As used in vs. 3, 4, 5.
483. What would cause the enemies of Israel to flee before them? The fierceness of Israel's appearance? The military ability of Israel or what?
484. Itemize the relationships of Jehovah to Israel if they were obedient.
485. List the specific promises, material and Spiritual, promised by God to Israel.
486. God assumes faith and demands what?

AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 28:1-14

If you will listen diligently to the voice of the Lord your God, being watchful to do all His commandments which I command you this day, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth,

2 And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you heed the voice of the Lord your God.

3 Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the field.

4 Blessed shall be the fruit of your body, and the fruit of your ground, and the fruit of your beasts, the increase of your cattle, and the young of your flock.

5 Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading trough.

6 Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out.

7 The Lord shall cause your enemies who rise up against you to be defeated before your face; they shall come out against you one way, and flee before you seven ways.

8 The Lord shall command the blessing upon you in your storehouse, and in all that you undertake; and He will bless you in the land which the Lord your God gives you.

9 The Lord will establish you as a people holy to Himself, as He has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of the Lord your God, and walk in His ways.

10 And all people of the earth shall see that you are called by the name [and in the presence of] the Lord; and they shall be afraid of you.

11 And the Lord shall make you have a surplus of prosperity, through the fruit of your body, of your livestock, and of your ground, in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers to give you.

12 The Lord shall open to you His good treasury, the heavens to give the rain of 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 And the Lord shall make you the head, and not the tail; and you shall be above only, and you shall not be beneath, if you heed the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day, and are watchful to do them.

14 And you shall not go 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.

COMMENT 28:1-14

The blessings here recounted are *not* those that God sends "on the just and the unjust" (Matt. 5:45). They are the blessings promised

to an *obedient Israel*, and withheld if they are disobedient as in 7:12-26, Lev. 26:3-13.

THY BASKET AND THY KNEADING-TROUGH (v. 5)—a rendering to be preferred over the A.V., "thy basket and thy store," as also in v. 17. Both when they *gathered* produce (grain) would they be blessed, and when they proceeded to *use* it by baking, would God be with them.

The basket (Heb. *tene*) was large and deep, and in it grain or other products of the field were carried home and kept. Cf. 26:2 ff. They were variously made of willow branches, palm leaves, or rushes.

COME OUT AGAINST THEE ONE WAY, AND SHALL FLEE SEVEN WAYS (v. 7)—Indicating the utter confusion and consternation of a routed enemy. Note v. 25 where *Israel* is described as fleeing in the same way. The simple promise of God was *victory* over the enemy with obedience, *defeat* with disobedience. And the defeat is described as being just as cataclysmic as the victory would be glorious.

AND ALL THE PEOPLES OF THE EARTH SHALL SEE (v. 10)—Note the two blessings promised here: 1. Foreign nations shall see Israel's greatness as coming from Jehovah God, and that his name is held high in the land. 2. They shall fear Israel. Cf. 2:25, 11:25.

JEHOVAH WILL OPEN UNTO THEE HIS GOOD TREASURE THE HEAVENS, TO GIVE THE RAIN OF THY LAND IN ITS SEASON (v. 12)—The early and latter rains (See 11:11-17, notes), were the very "life of the land" in Israel. Every kind of blessing was dependent upon their regular appearance. Without them, the land very literally became cursed. See v. 24 of this chapter. Because the manna also came from above (Ps. 78:23, 24), and because godly people of all ages have known that "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above (Jas. 1:17)," many blessings are included when God speaks of opening up the windows of heaven (II K. 7:2, 19, Mal. 3:9-12), although this expression originally had specific reference to rain (Gen. 7:11). So here God's "treasure the heavens" is specifically rain, but because a million blessings followed a well-watered Palestine, the "treasure" included much more than *water!*

THOU SHALT LEND TO MANY NATIONS . . . NOT BORROW (v. 12)—See 23:19, 20, note.

Before you leave this section, reread vv. 1-14 and note the "ifs". All the promised blessings were Israel's to have and enjoy *IF* . . .

D. FEARFUL CONSEQUENCES OF DISOBEDIENCE FORETOLD (28:15-68)

15 But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of Jehovah thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day, that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee. 16 Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field. 17 Cursed shall be thy basket and thy kneading-trough. 18 Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, the increase of thy cattle, and the young of thy flock. 19 Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 28:15-19

487. What is the meaning of the word "cursed" as here used?

AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 28:15-19

15 But if you will not obey the voice of the Lord your God, being watchful to do all His commandments and His statutes which I command you this day, then all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you:

16 Cursed shall you be in the city, and cursed shall you be in the field.

17 Cursed shall be your basket and your kneading trough.

18 Cursed shall be the fruit of your body, of your land, of the increase of your cattle and the young of your sheep.

19 Cursed shall you be when you come in, and cursed shall you be when you go out.

COMMENT 28:15-19

These verses stand in obvious contrast to those blessings just promised to the obedient nation. Contrast v. 17 with v. 5, v. 18 with v. 4, v. 19 with v. 6. See Lev. 26:15 ff.

20 Jehovah will send upon thee cursing, discomfiture, and rebuke, in all that thou puttest thy hand unto to do, until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly; because of the evil of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken me. 21 Jehovah will make the pestilence cleave unto thee, until he have consumed thee from off the land, whither thou goest in to possess it. 22 Jehovah will smite thee with consumption, and with

CONSEQUENCES OF DISOBEDIENCE 28:15-24

fever, and with inflammation, and with fiery heat, and with the sword, and with blasting, and with mildew; and they shall pursue thee until thou perish. 23 And thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron. 24 Jehovah will make the rain of thy land power and dust; from heaven shall it come down upon thee, until thou be destroyed.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 28:20-24

488. Jehovah was going to interfere and interrupt the daily life of the people of Israel. Does He have less interest in His people today?
489. List the influences of God as to: (1) work, (2) sickness, (3) weather, (4) politics.

AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 28:20-24

20 The Lord shall send you curses, confusion, and rebuke in every enterprise to which you set your hand, until you are destroyed, perishing quickly, because of the evil of your doings, by which you have forsaken me [Moses and God as one].

21 The Lord will make the pestilence cling to you until He has consumed you from off the land, which you go to possess.

22 The Lord will smite you with consumption, with fever, and inflammation, fiery heat, sword and drought, blasting, and mildew; they shall pursue you until you perish.

23 The heavens over your head shall be brass, and the earth under you shall be iron.

24 The Lord shall make the rain of your land powered soil and dust; from the heavens it shall come down upon you until you are destroyed.

COMMENT 28:20-24

Now, and increasingly as we proceed in this chapter, the curses take on the form of a concrete *prophecy*. And although in several cases we can see *many* instances of fulfillment, in others we can be more concrete and specific.

The Amplified O.T. renders v. 20 well: "The Lord shall send you curses, confusion, and rebuke in every enterprise to which you set your hand, until you are destroyed, perishing quickly, because of the evil of your doings, by which you have forsaken me [Moses and God as one]."

UNTIL THOU BE DESTROYED (v. 20. Cf. v. 48)—“destroy” is the English rendering of a number of different Hebrew words—in the Old Testament, in this book, and in this chapter! Normally, *utter* destruction is not meant unless that is the translation—(as the Heb. word *charam* is rendered in 2:34, 3:6 [twice], etc.) The Hebrew word used here (*shamad*) is, indeed, also sometimes rendered “utterly destroy,” but the idea is not the annihilation or total extinction of the Hebrew peoples from the face of the earth. This truth is well illustrated in 4:25-31, where “utterly destroy” is used synonymously with “scatter you among the peoples.” With reference to Israel, (as is seen below) the term simply has reference to a nation *cursed of God*—unproductive, unhappy, and ruled by a foreign power. So in v. 33 we are told they shall be “only oppressed and crushed away”—Not quite rooted out as the Canaanites and Amalakitcs were, and of which no traces now remain.

PESTILENCE (v. 21)—Heb. *deber*, “bobopest, plague” (Baumgartner).

FIERY HEAT (v. 22)—Is this a reference to the weather conditions of the land, or an individual's state of fever? Gesenius defines the Heb. word (*charchur*) “inflammation, burning, fever.” The LXX has *erethismos*, irritation.

THE SWORD (v. 22)—this is the normal rendering of the Heb. *chereb*. However, some manuscripts, because of a different pointing of the Hebrew consonants, have *choreb*, drought, waste. This reading is found in the Samaritan text, and is rendered similarly in the Vulgate, Arabic, and most of the modern versions.

HEAVEN . . . SHALL BE BRASS . . . EARTH THAT IS UNDER THEE SHALL BE IRON (v. 23)—i.e., the heavens would not bring forth rain (Contrast v. 12) and the earth would be sterile and unproductive. (Remember too that dry ground tends to *harden* and does not respond readily to cultivation.) See Lev. 26:19, 20.

JEHOVAH WILL MAKE . . . DUST (v. 24)—Contrast again with v. 12. As the *rain* was formerly given in response to their righteousness, so God also can be the source of powder and dust (or sand)—which of course may also move through the sky carried by the winds. “The allusion is probably to those clouds of dust and sand which often fill the air in Palestine, when the heat is intense and there has been no rain for a vehement sirocco, and the air is filled with sand and dust, and is like the glowing heat at the mouth of a furnace.”*

*The quote is from Pulpit Commentary. But see also the vivid description of this wind and dust in Thomson's *Land and the Book*, pp. 295, 536, 537.

25 Jehovah will cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies; thou shalt go out one way against them, and shalt flee seven ways before thee: and thou shalt be tossed to and fro among all the kingdoms of the earth. 26 And thy dead body shall be food unto all birds of the heavens, and unto the beasts of the earth; and there shall be none to frighten them away. 27 Jehovah will smite thee with the boil of Egypt, and with the emerods, and with the scurvy, and with the itch, whereof thou canst not be healed. 28 Jehovah will smite thee with madness, and with blindness, and with astonishment of heart; 29 and thou shalt grope at noonday, as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways: and thou shalt be only oppressed and robbed alway, and there shall be none to save thee. 30 Thou shalt betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her: thou shalt build a house, and thou shalt not dwell therein: thou shalt plant a vineyard, and shalt not use the fruit thereof. 31 Thine ox shall be slain before thine eyes, and thou shalt not eat thereof: thine ass shall be violently taken away from before thy face, and shall not be restored to thee: thy sheep shall be given unto thine enemies, and thou shalt have none to save thee. 32 Thy sons and thy daughters shall be given unto another people; and thine eyes shall look, and fail with longing for them all the day: and there shall be nought in the power of thy hand. 33 The fruit of thy ground, and all thy labors, shall a nation which thou knowest not eat up; and thou shalt be only oppressed and crushed alway; 34 so that thou shalt be mad for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see. 35 Jehovah will smite thee in the knees, and in the legs, with a sore boil, whereof thou canst not be healed, from the sole of thy foot unto the crown of thy head.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 28:25-35

490. Consider the map as to the location of Israel. How would the geographical location of Israel relate to the promise, "tossed to and fro among all the kingdoms"?
491. List the personal bodily afflictions here promised. When were these promises fulfilled?
492. List the domestic tragedies.
493. Where and when and by whom were these words first fulfilled? With what result?

AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 28:25-35

25 The Lord shall cause you to be struck down before your enemies; you shall go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them, and you shall be tossed to and fro and be a terror among all the kingdoms of the earth. [Fulfilled, 2 Chron. 29:8.]

26 And your dead body shall be food for all birds of the air and beasts of the earth, and there shall be no one to frighten them away.

27 The Lord will smite you with the boils of Egypt and with the tumors, the scurvy and the itch, of which you cannot be healed.

28 The Lord will smite you with madness and blindness and dismay of [mind and] heart.

29 And you shall grope at noonday, as the blind grope in darkness, and you shall not prosper in your ways; and you shall be only oppressed and robbed continually, and there shall be no one to save you.

30 You shall betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her; you shall build a house, and not live in it; you shall plant a vineyard and not gather its grapes.

31 Your ox shall be slain before your eyes, and you shall not eat of it; your donkey shall be violently taken away before your face, and not be restored to you; your sheep shall be given to your enemies, and you shall have no one to help you.

32 Your sons and daughters shall be given to another people, and your eyes shall look and fail with longing for them all the day, and there shall be no power in your hands to prevent it. [Fulfilled, 2 Chron. 29:9.]

33 A nation which you have not known shall eat up the fruit of your land and of all your labors; and you shall be only oppressed and crushed continually.]Fulfilled, Judg. 6:1-6; 13:1.[

34 So that you shall be driven mad by the sight which your eyes shall see.

35 The Lord will smite you on the knees and on the legs and a sore boil that cannot be healed, from the sole of your foot to the top of your head.

COMMENT 28:25-35

AND THOU SHALT BE TOSSED TO AND FRO AMONG THE KINGDOMS OF THE EARTH* (v. 25)—“a ball for all the kingdoms to play with” (Shultz). If any nation on earth has fulfilled these words, Israel has.

*A number of modern translators have rendered this phrase “a horrible spectacle to all the kingdoms of the earth” or similarly.

She has been a literal "football" for centuries. Perhaps that period of history immediately after the conquest of Alexander the Great best illustrates these verses. Palestine then lay between the kingdom of the Ptolemies in Egypt and the Seleucidae in Syria. These royal families and their kingdoms were constantly at one another's throats, and Israel became a literal battlefield for their wars—Sometimes held by one power, sometimes by the other. (How ridiculous, then, the later defense of the Jews—"We are Abraham's seed, and have never been in bondage to any man" (Jn. 8:33))!

BOIL OF EGYPT (v. 27)—The A.V. has *botch of Egypt*. Compare also v. 35, 60, Ex. 9:9, 10, though these may not all refer to the same affliction. Whatever kind of boil or inflammation it was, it is hard to imagine one that was pleasant!

EMEROLDS (v. 27)—Heb. *ophel*, probably hemorrhoids or piles.

MADNESS, BLINDNESS, etc. (v. 28)—Note how these diseases are either of the head or mental, while the previous ones were basically bodily afflictions.

MADNESS (v. 28)—Heb. *shiggaan*, a form of which also appears in v. 34. Baumgartner says it is derived from an Arabic word which was used of the continuous cooing of a male pigeon, (apparently one in *distress*). But the Hebrew word always refers to a distressed *individual*, a madman.

BETROTH A WIFE . . . ANOTHER SHALL LIE WITH HER (v. 30)—This, as well as other statements in vv. 29, 30, show the unstable and insecure social conditions that would exist in Israel—especially an Israel continually threatened, invaded, or dominated by heathen nations. Law, order, morality, respect for the rights of others, respect for private property—these are lacking when evil dominates, for "Righteousness exalteth a nation; But sin is a reproach to any people" (Prov. 14:35).

36 Jehovah will bring thee, and thy king whom thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation that thou hast not known, thou nor thy fathers; and there shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone. 37 And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all the peoples whither Jehovah shall lead thee away. 38 Thou shalt carry much seed out into the field, and shalt gather little in; for the locust shall consume it. 39 Thou shalt plant vineyards and dress them, but thou shalt neither drink of the wine, nor gather *the grapes*; for the worm shall eat them. 40 Thou shalt have olive-trees throughout all thy borders, but thou shalt

not anoint thyself with the oil; for thine olive shall cast *its fruit*. 41 Thou shalt beget sons and daughters, but they shall not be thine; for they shall go into captivity. 42 All thy trees and the fruit of thy ground shall the locust possess. 43 The sojourner that is in the midst of thee shall mount up above thee higher and higher; and thou shalt come down lower and lower. 44 He shall lend to thee, and thou shalt not lend to him: he shall be the head, and thou shalt be the tail. 45 And all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed; because thou hearkenedst not unto the voice of Jehovah thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded thee: 46 and they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed for ever.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 28:36-46

494. Consider the chronology involved in verse 36. How many years for the conquest? How many years in the period of Judges? How long before the nation of Israel was taken into captivity?
495. Which captivity is prophesied here?
496. We should learn the oft repeated lesson: what is so many times referred to as "good luck" is actually God's blessing; what is called "bad luck" is God's chastizement.
497. Read Jer. 16:13; 44:17-19 for one fulfillment.
498. There is a contrast in verses 15 and verses 43 and 44. What is it?
499. According to verse 46 what was to be a sign to the nation of Israel?

AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 28:36-46

36 The Lord shall bring you and your king whom you have set over you, to a nation which neither you nor your fathers have known, and there you shall [be forced to] serve other gods, of wood and stone. [Fulfilled, 2 Kings 17:4, 6; 24:12, 14; 25:7, 11; Dan. 6:11, 12.]

37 And you shall become an amazement, a proverb, and a byword, among all peoples to which the Lord will lead you.

38 You shall carry much seed out into the field, and shall gather little in; for the locust shall consume it. [Fulfilled, Hag. 1:6.]

39 You shall plant vineyards and dress them, but shall neither drink of the wine nor gather the grapes, for the worm shall eat them.

40 You shall have olive trees throughout all your territory, but you shall not anoint yourself with the oil; for your olive trees shall drop their fruit.

41 You shall beget sons and daughters, but shall not enjoy them; for they shall go into captivity. [Fulfilled, Lam. 1:5.]

42 All your trees and the fruit of your ground shall the locust possess. [Fulfilled, Joel 1:4.]

43 The transient (stranger) among you shall mount up higher and higher above you, and you shall come down lower and lower.

44 He shall lend to you, and you shall not lend to him; he shall be the head, and you shall be the tail.

45 All these curses shall come upon you and shall pursue you and overtake you, till you are destroyed, because you do not obey the voice of the Lord your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which He commanded you;

46 They shall be upon you for a sign [of warning to other nations] and for a wonder, and upon your descendants for ever.

COMMENT 28:36-46

A NATION THAT THOU HAST NOT KNOWN, THOU NOR THY FATHERS; AND THERE SHALT THOU SERVE OTHER GODS, WOOD AND STONE (v. 36)—What nation in history that has conquered and carried away Israel, best fits this prophecy? But before we proceed further, we must ask the question, Is God always referring to the *same nation* in this chapter, or are his words at times *general* in scope, with perhaps a *number* of specific fulfillments? We must *immediately* answer that the last statement is at least *true so far as history is concerned*: history will show a *number* of nations that meet the requirements of *most* of these scriptures, such as Persia, Babylonia, Assyria, Greece and Rome. And who is to say these nations were not instruments in the hand of God. (Dan. 4:31, 32, 35; Jer. 1:10, 18:5-9)? Some are overwhelmingly convinced that the Babylonian seige and captivity, and that *only*, was in the mind of God throughout these verses. We could not deny this in such verses as 36, but in vv. 49, 52, and 53 the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman legions so perfectly fits the description that it surely can be called *one* fulfillment of the prophecy. And this writer would be hard pressed to deny the claim of one who argued that the atrocities and wholesale murders of the Jews by the Germans before and during World War II was another fulfillment of several statements in Deut. 28. The atrocities were cruel, inhuman, and malicious on the part of the Germans, but *so are those described here!*

As a *general* rule we may say that vv. 36-46 better describe the Babylonian siege and captivity, and vv. 47-57 the Roman. Compare this first section with 4:25-31 and note the promise of returning to their *homeland* when they returned to *God*. This, of course, was especially true of the seventy-year Babylonian captivity.

Since 1948 Israel, as a result of the Zionist movement, has again been officially recognized as a nation. In the summer of 1967 they won an important victory over the Arabs, regaining the Arab sector of Jerusalem and other important territory to the south. But what of Israel's future? As long as she continues to reject the *Messiah* her prosperity can only be temporary.

A NATION THAT THOU HAST NOT KNOWN (v. 36)—with reference to the Babylonian captivity, Jeremiah said, "therefore will I [God] cast you forth out of this land into the land that ye have not known, neither ye nor your fathers; and there shall ye serve other gods day and night . . ." (Jer. 16:13). "The Hebrew exiles, with some honourable exceptions, were seduced or compelled into idolatry in the Assyrian and Babylonish captivities (Jeremiah 44:17-19). Thus, the sin to which they had too often betrayed a perverse fondness, a deep-rooted propensity, became their punishment and their misery" (J.F.B.).

The nation described in v. 49, on the other hand, was not only "from far," but had a language foreign to the Hebrews. Compare Dan. 3:6, 7. Babylon would fulfill the "not known" requirement, but their language was a kindred one to the Hebrews'. See v. 49.

Note here too that Israel's *king* was to be taken in this captivity—which was true of the *Chaldean* conquest, not the Roman.

THEY SHALL GO INTO CAPTIVITY (v. 41)—True of the Northern ten tribes to some degree (II K. 17:6, 18:11, 12) but more literally fulfilled when Jerusalem was sacked by Nebuchadnezzar, II K. 24:14, 25:11, II Chron. 36:20, Jer. 22:24-28. Henry Cooke (N.S.I.B.L.) adds, "Besides the captivities recorded in the Old Testament, the destruction of Jerusalem after [during] the Christian era was accompanied by the captivity of many thousands of all ages and sexes, and their exposure to sale and slavery."

THE SOJOURNER THAT IS IN THE MIDST OF THEE SHALL MOUNT UP HIGHER AND HIGHER (v. 43)—Especially well illustrated in the case of the Assyrian infiltration, then domination, of the ten northern tribes (II K. 15:19, 29, 17:1-6). Perhaps the Seleucid domination even better depicts this description. The conquests of Alexander the great

of Macedonia, at least as far as its immediate effect, was benign, in that it relieved the Jews of the galling yoke of the Persians. But upon Alexander's death Palestine became part of one of the five divisions of the empire. Ruled from Syria by the hated Seleucid dynasty even into Roman times, the Jews finally revolted under the leadership of the Macabees in 166 B.C.

HE SHALL LEND TO THEE (v. 44)—Contrast v. 12, 15:6. And remember that borrowing often inferred subjection, Prov. 22:7.

AND THEY SHALL BE, etc. (v. 46)—a better rendering is, "They shall serve as signs and proofs against you and your offspring for all time." (The Torah)

47 Because thou servedst not Jehovah thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, by reason of the abundance of all things; 48 therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies that Jehovah shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee. 49 Jehovah will bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand; 50 a nation of fierce countenance, that shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favor to the young, 51 and shall eat the fruit of thy cattle, and the fruit of thy ground, until thou be destroyed; that also shall not leave thee grain, new wine, or oil, the increase of thy cattle, or the young of thy flock, until they have caused thee to perish. 52 And they shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fortified walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land; and they shall besiege thee in all thy gates throughout all thy land, which Jehovah thy God hath given thee. 53 And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, whom Jehovah thy God hath given thee, in the siege and in the distress wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee. 54 The man that is tender among you, and very delicate, his eye shall be evil toward his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the remnant of his children whom he hath remaining; 55 so that he will not give to any of them of the flesh of his children whom he shall eat, because he hath nothing left him, in the siege and in the distress wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in all thy gates. 56 The tender and delicate woman among you, who would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil toward the husband of her bosom, and toward her son, and toward

her daughter, 57 and toward her young one that cometh out from between her feet, and toward her children whom she shall bear; for she shall eat them for want of all things secretly, in the siege and in the distress wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 28:47-57

500. Joyfulness and gladness are an essential ingredient for acceptableness with Jehovah; Why?
501. Who put a yoke of iron upon the neck of Israel?
502. Note the three characteristics of the nation brought in by God to oppress Israel.
503. Notice the progressive nature of the siege; list the steps.
504. War makes animals of men. Why?
505. Is there no one who will remain true to his standards of ethics regardless of circumstances? Discuss.

AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 28:47-57

47 Because you did not serve the Lord your God with joyfulness of [mind and] heart [in gratitude] for the abundance of all [with which He had blessed you],

48 Therefore you shall serve your enemies whom the Lord shall send against you, in hunger and thirst, in nakedness, and in want of all things; and He will put a yoke of iron upon your neck, until He has destroyed you.

49 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 shall not understand;

50 A nation of unyielding countenance, who will not regard the person of the old, or show favor to the young.

51 And shall eat the fruit of your cattle and the fruit of your ground, until you are destroyed; who also shall not leave you grain, new wine, oil, the increase of your cattle or the young of your sheep until they have caused you to perish.

52 They shall besiege you in all your towns, until your high and fortified walls, in which you trusted, come down throughout all your land; and they shall besiege you in all your towns throughout all your land, which the Lord your God has given you.

53 And you shall eat the fruit of your own body, the flesh of your sons and daughters, whom the Lord your God has given you, in the siege

and in the (pressing) misery with which your enemies shall distress you, [Fulfilled, 2 Kings 6:24-29.]

54 The man who is most tender among you, and extremely particular and well-bred, his eye shall be cruel and grudging of food toward his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward those of his children still remaining;

55 So that he will not give to any of them any of the flesh of his children which he is eating, because he has nothing left him in the siege and in the distress with which your enemies shall distress you in all your towns.

56 The most tender and daintily bred woman among you, who would not venture to set the sole of her foot upon the ground because she is so dainty and kind, will grudge to the husband of her bosom, to her son, and to her daughter,

57 Her afterbirth that comes out from her body and the children whom she shall bear; for she will eat them secretly for want of all else in the siege and distress with which your enemies shall distress you in your towns.

COMMENT 28:47-57

These verses, while in certain instances aptly describing the Babylonian and other invaders and their treatment of Israel, are especially descriptive of the Roman siege of Judea and Jerusalem. In 66 A.D. the Jews openly rebelled against the Roman rule and violence, and gained control of Jerusalem. Rome's first counter was to send, late in the summer of 66 A.D. 40,000 soldiers from Antioch under the Roman legate in Syria, Cestius Gallus. But he was thoroughly routed by the Jews in and around Jerusalem, and retreated minus 6,000 of his men. Word of Gallus' sorry failure was hurried to Rome, and Nero now chose his greatest general, Titus Flavius Vespasian, to put Palestine, and Jerusalem particularly, into its proper place. By the spring of 67 A.D. he had 50,000 troops massed at Ptolemais on the coast north of Mount Carmel. Bit by bit, he successfully crushed opposition in the areas of Samaria, Peraea, and Idumaea. But in June of 68 Nero died and Vespasian himself was placed upon the throne. The Jewish war was abandoned for almost two years. Finally, in the spring of 70, another sizeable Roman army was organized, this time at Caesarea, and its command entrusted to the emperor's own son, Titus. Many of the statements of this chapter describe his conquest of Jerusalem as perfectly as if it was written some 1500 years later.

BECAUSE THOU SERVEST NOT, etc. Read v. 47 slowly and carefully through again, and note v. 48 begins "THEREFORE . . ." Here is the verse upon which all the prophecies of doom in this entire chapter are pedicated! Israel did not serve Jehovah with a full, rich, glad heart EVEN THOUGH HE BLESSED THEM WITH "THE ABUNDANCE OF ALL THINGS!" Therefore they would get a "WANT OF ALL THINGS" (v. 48). Oh that this passage could be burned into the heart and emblazoned across the consciousness of every professing Christian! If such heartfelt and joyous service was part and parcel with a faithful keeping of the Mosaic law, how much *more* our devotion to *Christ* and our faithful service to *Him!* As we saw so plainly in 6:4 ff., the *law* demanded more than mechanical, perfunctory, stoical observance of precepts. If it was so then, how much more now, when under the gospel everything is dependent upon our right relationship with that One who promised "He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it"?

Never—never in the history of the world has God accepted service to Him that was not earnest, sincere, and spontaneous. He never will. And here the rebuke is levelled at a nation who failed to give God such service in spite of prosperity and plenty from his very hand. Frequently they "feared Jehovah, and served their own gods," and "did secretly things that were not right against Jehovah" (See II K. 17).

AND HE SHALL PUT A YOKE OF IRON UPON THY NECK, UNTIL HE HAVE DESTROYED THEE (v. 48)—See our previous discussion of "destroy," v. 20. The Babylonian domination and captivity was called an "iron yoke" (Jer. 28:13, 14). And that captivity may be symbolized here. But, as a good many expositors have pointed out, iron was symbolic of the rule of Rome, who employed that metal in their armies far more than any previous nation. Daniel used the metal to symbolize this empire, Dan. 2:40-43, 7:7.

A NATION AGAINST THEE FROM FAR, FROM THE END OF THE EARTH, AS THE EAGLE FLIETH; A NATION WHOSE TONGUE THOU SHALT NOT UNDERSTAND (v. 49)—This particular verse would appear to rule out the Babylonians, for their language, at least at the time of their conquest of Judah (586 B.C.) had marked similarities to the Hebrew. Probably because of the widespread migrations of the Aramaeans, by the year 1000 B.C. Aramaic was spoken extensively in the land of Babylon. This language became somewhat of a *lingua franca* (hybrid language) of the whole Tigris-Euphrates valley. Thus Senna-

cherib, king of Assyria, could communicate (through Rabshakeh) to the leaders of Israel "in the Syrian language (*literally, Aramean*), II K. 18:26, though at that time *most* Israelites could not understand it (Isa. 36:11). And Artaxerxes, king of Persia, received a communication from the enemies of Israel in the same language, Ezra 4:7. The Hebrews also used Aramaic increasingly after the exile, and in all probability learned it in Babylon. Daniel and his friends, for example, were taught "the learning and tongue of the Chaldeans" (Dan. 1:4), and the Syrian language was in vogue (2:4). "Aramaic is like Hebrew and Arayan, a North Semitic tongue, standing in a manner between them . . . before the reign of Tiglath-pileser Aramaic was the general speech for commerce and diplomacy all over S.W. Asia . . . generally understood from Asia Minor on the north to the Cataracts of the Nile on the south, and from the mountains of Media on the east to the Mediterranean on the west" (I.S.B.E.).

Thus we look for an invader outside the Near East for this prophecy's fulfillment. Rome, whose capital was some 1500 miles from Jerusalem as the crow flies certainly qualifies as one "from far, from the end of the earth". And her Latin languages, so totally different from the Hebrew, certainly was "a tongue thou shalt not understand." A Hebrew could no more understand Latin than an American can understand Chinese.

AS THE EAGLE FLIETH (v. 49)—"as swift as the eagle flies" (R.S.V.) or "swooping down upon you like an eagle".* The Roman standard was an eagle, which has been called "the appropriate emblem of their soaring pride, their far-sighted cupidity, their swift descent, and their insatiable rapacity" (Cooke, N.S.I.B.L.).

A NATION OF FIERCE COUNTENANCE (v. 50)—The verses to follow illustrate this truth. The conquering nation then, is to be distinguished by three characteristics:

1. It was to come "from far, from the end of the earth".
2. Its language was to be one not understood by Israel.
3. It was to be unmerciful and ruthless to all classes of persons.

Such were the Romans, whose devastating conquests were to come a millenium and a half after these utterances;

*Some render the Heb. word *Nesher*, ("a tearer with the beak") *vulture*. But the context of the most passages where the word occurs almost demand "eagle": II Sam. 1:23, Prov. 30:19, Isa. 40:31, Obad. 4. It should also be mentioned that the flight and ways of the eagle are also used to describe Babylon's conquest, Isa. 8:8.

AND THOU SHALT EAT THE FRUIT OF THINE OWN BODY (v. 53)—See also Lev. 26:27-29, II K. 6:29, also Jer. 19:9, where the Babylonian siege is referred to. Such atrocities describe conditions of great famine, or a people who are being starved out by the enemy. See II K. 6:24-29, describing conditions as Ben-hadad of Syria besieged Samaria (Israel). Also, in anticipation of the Babylonian siege, see Lam. 2:20, 4:10. Starving people are *desperate* people! Josephus, describing the Roman siege, tells how parents seized morsels of food from their children (though they were perishing) and how old men who held on to their food were beaten. “. . . and if women hid what they had within their hands, their hair was torn for so doing; nor was there any commiseration shown either to the aged or to the infants, but they lifted up children from the ground as they hung upon the morsels they had gotten, and shook them down upon the floor.”*

He later describes a starving woman who slew and roasted her own son, a babe still sucking at her breast. “. . . she slew her son, and then roasted him, and ate the one half of him, and kept the other half by her concealed.”**

AND THE MAN THAT IS TENDER AMONG YOU, AND VERY DELICATE, HIS EYE SHALL BE EVIL (v. 54) . . . THE TENDER AND DELICATE WOMAN (v. 56)—War and starvation will turn them into ravenous animals—though they normally be refined and reserved. In the case cited above, for example, Josephus reports that the woman, upon being discovered by a group of fellow-Jews, said, “. . . Come, eat of this food; for I have eaten of it myself! Do not you pretend to be either more tender than a woman or more compassionate than a mother . . .”

58 If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, JEHOVAH THY GOD; 59 then Jehovah will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance. 60 And he will bring upon thee again all the diseases of Egypt, which thou was afraid of; and they shall cleave unto thee. 61 Also every sickness, and every plague, which is not written in the book of this law, them will Jehovah bring upon thee, until thou be destroyed. 62 And ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude; because thou didst not hearken unto the voice of Jehovah thy God. 63 And it shall come to pass, that, as Jehovah rejoiced over you to do you

*Wars of the Jews, Book V Ch. X, #3.

**Ibid, Book VI, Ch. III, #4.

good, and to multiply you, so Jehovah will rejoice over you to cause you to perish, and to destroy you; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest in to possess it. 64 And Jehovah will scatter thee among all peoples, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou nor thy fathers, even wood and stone. 65 And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, and there shall be no rest for the sole of thy foot: but Jehovah will give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and pining of soul; 66 and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear night and day, and shalt have no assurance of thy life. 67 In the morning thou shalt say, Would it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would it were morning; for the fear of thy heart which thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see. 68 And Jehovah will bring thee into Egypt again with ships, by the way whereof I said unto thee, Thou shalt see it no more again: and there ye shall sell yourselves unto your enemies for bondmen and for bondwomen, and no man shall buy you.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS 28:58-68

506. How is the word "fearful" in verse 58? How is the word "wonderful" used in verse 59?
507. Please remember there are two sides of God's character: wrath and love. Israel was promised in great detail both the benefits of His love and the punishment of His wrath. Who was responsible for what they received?
508. When was the promise of verse 64 fulfilled?
509. Israel's second bondage in Egypt was to be worse than their first bondage. How so?

AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 28:58-68

58 If you will not be watchful to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may (reverently) fear this glorious and fearful name [and presence], THE LORD YOUR GOD;

59 Then the Lord will bring upon you and your descendants extraordinary strokes and blows, great plagues of long continuance, and grievous sickness of long duration.

60 Moreover He will bring upon you all the diseases of Egypt, of which you were afraid, and they shall cling to you.

61 Also every sickness and every affliction which is not written in the book of this law, the Lord will bring upon you, until you are destroyed.

62 And you shall be *left few in number, whereas you had been as the stars of the heavens for multitude; because you would not obey the voice of the Lord your God.

63 And as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you, so the Lord will rejoice to bring ruin upon you and to destroy you; and you shall be **plucked from off the land which you go to possess.

64 And the Lord shall scatter you among all peoples from one end of the earth to the other; and there you shall [be forced to] serve other gods, of wood and stone, which neither your nor your fathers have known. [Fulfilled, Dan. 3:6.]

65 And among these nations you shall find no ease and there shall be no rest for the sole of your foot; but the Lord will give you there a trembling heart, failing of eyes [from disappointment of hope], fainting of mind and languishing of spirit.

66 Your life shall hang in doubt before you; day and night you shall be worried, and have no assurance of your life.

67 In the morning you shall say, Would it were evening! and at evening you shall say, Would it were morning! because of the anxiety and dread of your [mind and] heart, and the sights which you shall see with your [own] eyes.

68 And the Lord shall *** bring you into Egypt again with ships, by the way about which I said to you, You shall never see it again; and

*The informed reader scarcely needs to be reminded of how literally fulfilled have been many of these predictions of evil made against the chosen people because of their idolatry and rebellion against God. Such verses as 25, 32, 33, 36, 38, 41, 42, and 53, foretell historical facts now recorded in Jewish history both sacred and secular. Here verse 62 foretells how the Jewish race "has been thinned, and kept down, again and again."

**[The Roman Emperor] Hadrian issued a proclamation forbidding any Jews to reside in Judea, or even to approach its confines (*Gray and Adams' Commentary*).

***"Observe the contrast, you came out from bondage by God's high hand, monuments of His grace and power; you shall be carried back into bondage in men's slave-ships. This was literally fulfilled under [the Roman emperor] Titus, and also under Hadrian" (*Gray and Adams' Commentary*). The curses . . . were also fulfilled in a terrible manner during the middle ages, and are still in a course of fulfillment, though frequently less sensibly felt (*Lange's Commentary*). "Here, then, are prophecies delivered above 3,000 years ago, and yet being fulfilled in the world at this very time . . . I must acknowledge, they not only convince, but amaze and astonish me beyond expression; they are truly as Moses foretold (vs. 45, 46) they would be, 'a sign and a wonder for ever'" (Bishop Newton, quoted in *Jamieson, Faussett and Brown Commentary*).

there you shall be sold to your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy you. [Hos. 8:13.]

COMMENT 28:58-68

The prophecy now once again takes on a more general character, as in vv. 20-35.

ALL THE DISEASES OF EGYPT WHICH THOU WAST AFRAID OF (v. 60)—How many and what kind these were, we can only guess—But doubtless an oppressed and abused slave people had their share. Cf. v. 27, 7:14, 15; Ex. 15:25, 26.

ALSO EVERY SICKNESS, AND EVERY PLAGUE, WHICH IS NOT WRITTEN IN THIS BOOK (v. 61)—In other words, diseases and afflictions of every description and of every kind will be the lot of a disobedient Israel.

v. 63—A better rendering perhaps is, ". . . as it was agreeable to the Lord to make you prosper and multiply, so it will be agreeable to the Lord to make you perish, and He will glory in your destruction . . ." God's glory, greatness, and dignity shall remain, regardless of the response men make to his divine will. But he takes no delight in the punishing of the wicked (Ezek. 18:21-32, I Tim. 2:3, 4, II Pet. 3:9).

YE SHALL BE PLUCKED FROM OFF THE LAND (v. 63)—See Jer. 12:14, where the Babylonian attack is again anticipated. Note II K. 24:10-14, 15:11, 12. The phrase also describes conditions following the Roman devastation: "Hadrain issued a proclamation forbidding any Jews to reside in Judea, or even to approach its confines" (Gray and Adams).

SCATTER THEE AMONG ALL PEOPLES (v. 64)—What peoples in *all history* have been more completely dispersed throughout the world? And they certainly have not always kept their national religion, even in the modernized form gaining ascendancy with Jews in this country. But the immediate reference here appears to be further back in Israel's history.

JEHOVAH WILL BRING THEE INTO EGYPT AGAIN WITH SHIPS, BY THE WAY WHEREOF I SAID UNTO THEE, THOU SHALT SEE IT NO MORE AGAIN (v. 68—See also Jer. 4:11-14, 26-28, Hos. 8:13, 9:3, 11:5. Josephus speaks of Titus, after the Roman victory, reserving the stronger and abler ones of the city for the triumphal march, and killing

the aged and infirm. ". . . and as for the rest of the multitude that were above seventeen years old, he put them into bonds, and sent them to the Egyptian mines."*

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

The blessings which God pronounces on the obedient, 1-6. Particular privileges which the faithful shall receive, 7-13. The curses pronounced against the ungodly and idolatrous, 14-19. A detailed account of the miseries which should be inflicted on them, should they neglect the commandments of the Lord, 20. They shall be smitten with the pestilence, 21; with consumption, fever, &c., 22; drought and barrenness, 23, 24; they shall be defeated by their enemies, 25, 26; they shall be afflicted with the borch of Egypt, 27; with madness and blindness, 28, 29; they shall be disappointed in all their projects, 30; deprived of all their possessions, and afflicted in all their members, 31-35; they and their king shall go into captivity, 36, and become a by-word among the nations, 37. Their land shall be unfruitful, and they shall be the lowest of all people, 38-44. All these curses shall come on them should they be disobedient, 45-48. Character of the people by whom they should be subdued, 49, 50. Particulars of their dreadful sufferings, 51-57. A recapitulation of their wretchedness, 58-63. The prediction that they shall be scattered among all the nations of the earth, 64-68.

QUESTIONS, LESSON TWENTY ONE (27:1—28:68)

OVER CHAPTER 27

1. Describe the monument to be set up on mount Ebal, including as many details as possible.
2. Why no iron tools used in its construction?
3. What purpose(s) did it serve?
4. There is a "common denominator" in the origin of *most* of those tribes receiving the curse, and again among *most* of those receiving the blessing. What is it in each case?
5. Describe the setting of this event: Where are Ebal and Gerizim? What lay between them? How were the people arranged? Where were the Levites? What did they do?
6. How did the idolator cursed in the verses "set up shop"?
7. Who is one that "setteth light by" his father or mother?
8. The final curse of Cha. 27 is rather all-inclusive. Do you remember it.

*Wars of the Jews, Book VI, Ch. IX, # 2.

OVER CHAPTER 28

9. What is the blessing of "thy basket" (v. 5)?
10. What are two effects Israel's righteousness and prosperity would have on the surrounding nations?
11. What is heavenly treasure, specifically and generally?
12. Israel is to "be destroyed . . . perish . . . crushed away . . ." In view of the fact that there are many Jewish people in the world today, did this prophecy fail?
13. What is signified by a brass sky? Iron earth? (v. 23)
14. Israel was to be "tossed to and from among all the kingdoms of the earth" (v. 25). Cite at least three obvious ancient examples and one modern one.
15. Can you recall three indications of the unstable and dangerous conditions which would exist in an Israel oppressed by a foreign power?
16. As a general rule, we may say vv. 36-46 best describe the _____ conquest, vv. 47-57 best describe the _____.
17. Why say "as a general rule"?
18. Which nation(s) best fits the phrase, "whose tongue thou shalt not understand," and why *not* Babylon?
19. Recall several phrases or statements of this chapter that describe a *desperate* and starving people.
20. What is "this glorious and fearful name"?
21. What country's diseases will afflict them?
22. How many other plagues and sicknesses?
23. How extensively would Israel be scattered?
24. Unto what country would they return which they had previously left, and by what means?