

## The Flow of Blessings and Curses – Deuteronomy 11:1-32

**Introduction** – As Moses concludes this expanded commentary on the first commandment, Paul's words come to mind: *"For me to write the same things to you is not tedious, but for you it is safe,"* (Phil 3:1). We will never plumb the depths of the character of God, His law, nor His redemption, to the bottom – even on our best days. Secondly, most days we must be reminded again and again of our struggle against sin and temptations, the smooth-tongued lies of false gods.

**Loving God is Keeping His Commandments** (v1) – The law that is kept reveals the god who is loved. Worship, love, and obedience are always wrapped up together. Obedience is simple and not burdensome (1 John 5:3) because it flows from faith and is a grace of God. We must avoid simple and manipulative disobedience. Delayed obedience, reinterpreted obedience, and grumpy obedience are all disobedience. They all reveal the heart of one who does not love Yahweh.

**Deliverance from Those Outside and Inside** (vv2-7) – The chastening of Yahweh referred to here is both positive and negative discipline. The deliverance from Egypt was a positive discipline. The wandering in the wilderness while being protected and cared for by Yahweh was a mixed discipline. The rebellion of Dathan and Abiram (Num 16) was a negative discipline. Yet even in the rebellion there was deliverance for Israel, this time from within her midst, not just from faithless teaching, but from the full judgment of God (Num 16:45). Paul refers to this incident when false teachers challenge his authority and teaching (2 Tim 2:14-19), and John refers to the antichrists who are culled out of our midst (1 John 2:18-19). The Ephesians were warned of false teachers from outside and inside who would seek to devour the flock (Acts 20:25-31). Again, the law that is kept reveals the god who is loved. It is often when looking back at the chastisement that the Lord begins to reveal to us its meaning and significance.

**Water from Heaven** (vv8-17) – These verses will challenge your *"natural law"* or *"mother nature"* sensibilities. Moses directly challenges again the claims of Dathan and Abiram (Num 16:13) who claimed Egypt was the land flowing with milk and honey. We are to keep God's commands with one eye on the clouds. Egypt received its water by the work of man; the Promised Land receives its water from heaven. God cares for the land (v12) – and notice the application – therefore, we should obey God. This does not mean that we should be like Job's friends, attributing every trial to a specific sin. At the same time, the Word teaches us how to live and how God normally and regularly brings blessings and curses (i.e. Prov 6:10-11).

**Established Homes, Educated Children, in the LORD** (vv18-25) – Returning to the themes of Chapter 6, Moses calls on the people to cultivate a worldview where we see God actively sovereign in every area of our lives and over generations woven together in lives of faith, worship of Him, and obedience. This means we are required to give our children an extensive Christian education. Blessings of protection and the advancement of the kingdom of God follow because of the obedience and attention we pay to this (vv22-25).

**Blessings and Curses** (vv26-32) – How would you like your life here on earth to go for you? Moses wants to make it as clear and foundational as this: Obedience brings blessing and disobedience brings curses. And this is not anti-gospel, for the fundamental obedience has always been to love God and to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ (John 6:29). Memorials were to be established to visibly and ritually remind the people of their covenant with God.

**The Flow of Blessings and Curses** – They were to stand in the valley between these two mountains, facing East, and see the flow of blessings to their right down Mount Gerizim and the flow of curses to their left down Mount Ebal. The heart of a wise man inclines to the right (Eccles 10:2) which means he follows the path of obedience by faith rightly expecting the blessing of God. The fool is to be warned and reminded that the disobedience to his left will flow down upon him as well.

**Prolong Your Days in the Land** – We are to seek the blessing of the Lord here, in these days and upon this land as a good thing. We are to pursue long life, not out of a fear of death, for when we die in the Lord, it is only more blessing (Phil 1:21). We are to pursue long life because God loves to do so (v9), that we might receive blessing from the land and in turn be a blessing to His people and the work of His kingdom. Obedience means that days will be multiplied (v21); disobedience means that we will perish quickly (v17).

**Have No Other Gods Before You** - Cholesterol levels, food-processing, weight control, and yoga are not mentioned as foundational for prolonging life; obedience to God's law and corporate worship of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ are. Military might, body scanners and immigration policies are not foundational to safety from enemies; obedience to God's law, a solid Christian education for your children, and love for Yahweh are. And we should learn that climate change, food production and distribution, even the supply of oil, are to be understood by the Christian as fundamentally tied to the bowing of the knee to Jesus in glad-hearted submission. To mess with other causes as though they were primary is to fiddle around with the trifles and seek other gods.

**Pursue Your Blessing** – It is right and proper to seek out blessing from the Lord, but remember the words of Jesus: *"Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness..."* – then all these things will be added unto you. Or, as it says at the beginning of this chapter: *"love the LORD your God, and keep his charge...always."*