

SESSION #63 (15 Nov 11)

I. INTRODUCTION & REVIEW

1:1-5	Introduction to God's spokesman, the 1 st Prophet Moses
1:6-4:40	1st Exposition of the Torah = <i>motivation</i> to obey from (1) <u>past gracious actions</u> of Yahweh and (2) sovereign <u>destiny</u> of the nation (<u>future gracious actions</u> of Yahweh)
4:41-49	Editorial comment on context of 2 nd Exposition of the Torah
5:1-26:19	2nd Exposition of the Torah = <i>proper response</i> to Yahweh in heart and soul
27:1-29:1	3rd Exposition of the Torah = <i>inauguration of the covenant</i> in the land
27:1-26	Contract renewal commits everyone to obey privately as well as publically (showing how the law condemns and doesn't save)
28:1-14	Contingent blessings social, economical, climate, and military
28:15-29:1	Contingent cursings social, economic, climate, and military

Chapter 27 protocols at Shechem (Josh. 8):

God's holiness—uncompromising so that male-diction oaths over “private” sins would condemn everyone to judgment! So Paul picks up on this in **Gal. 3:10-14**.

Lesson on “works” throughout the pagan world:

- (1) Asian “karma” works-system → man must work off accumulated debts from past actions until Nirvana can be attained;
- (2) Western works-system → utopian revolutions (French, Russian, Fabian & Frankfort movements, Progressivism);
- (3) Middle East works-system → Muslim Shariah

All have a false view of reality: Nature is “all there is”, so we're only dealing with man and his social arrangements, but this section of the biblical historical record (none centuries of theocracy) present a completely different view of reality; man is in [constant] relationship with God—in enmity or harmony so the issue always is that relationship and God's response throughout all reality.

Chapter 28 blessings/cursings stipulations of the contract

- Suzerainty-vassal treaties invoked enforcement sanctions—military & economic threats from the Suzerain and his gods—all confined to what the great king, the suzerain, can do.
- These threats from Yahweh over the 900 year theocracy *aren't* limited to a human leader can do—they include a [total threat] from every part of reality.
- These sanctions establish the perspective from which to view the rest of the Old Testament

II. ENUMERATION OF THE CURSINGS (28:20-68)

Instead of a chiasm in this section, there seems to be a gradual progression from initial decay all the way to exile from the land.

A. Destruction from the physical environment (28:20-24)

God controls all reality.

Repetition of the thoroughness of discipline upon the nation that has oathed perfect obedience to Yahweh—note the repetition of the words “until you are destroyed, until you perish, until you are consumed”

B. Destruction from foreign nations in a “reverse Exodus” (28:25-37)

A reversal of their Exodus experience that utterly opposes their purpose in history → profound disappointment and despair.

28:34 driven mad. . .

Psychological breakdown.

28:36 king you set over you. . .serve other gods. . .

Cf. **Jer. 39:1-9** “serve other gods” = live outside God’s “sacred space” where pagan culture’s values and myths dominate all of life.

Cf. **1 Sam 26:19** (David living in Philistia); **Jer. 16:13** (Israel in exile without the theocratic blessings)

wood and stone. . .imagined nature deities that create the great cultural myths to pervert true history and blunt God’s historical cause-effect.

28:37 a proverb. . .among all nations. . . .

C. Destruction of all social and economic efforts to produce a life-affirming culture (28:38-46)

28:38 much seed. . .gather little. . .

28:39 neither drink nor gather

28:40 olives shall drop off

28:41 shall be yours

28:42 locusts shall consume

28:43 alien. . .higher. . .you . . .lower

Discrimination in God’s cursings between Israelites and resident Gentile aliens! Reverse to the exodus and blessings. Strange economic event!!

28:45 until you are destroyed. . .

The text here omits the grammar of contingency—either to emphasize the horror of the cursings or perhaps hint at inevitability.

28:46 sign and wonder

Jews will be marked out for their suffering in history (but one day they will be honored as the nation that brought about global peace at the return of their Messiah).

28:47 not serve. . .with the abundance of everything. . .

Yahweh had done His part in blessing but they failed the prosperity test (**Deut. 8**). Sunk back into a pagan view of reality—nature is all there is. Thus any accomplishments come from human effort alone.

28:48 therefore you shall serve your enemies. . . in hunger, in thirst, and in need of everything. . .

Experience reality without God’s blessing—see how effective your works are now!

yoke of iron. . .until he has destroyed you. . .

Your human works will be all squeezed out of you.

D. Destruction by military siege & exile (28:49-57).

28:49 nation from afar. . .whose language you will not understand

Rod of discipline—a pagan nation (Babylon eventually).

28:50 fierce countenance. . .not respect elderly. . .young. . .

Totally sinful character as a contrast to Yahweh's character shown in His statutes and judgments toward the elderly and the young.

28:51 until . . . destroyed. . .

Total invasion throughout the promised land

NOTE:

Pagan interpretation of military defeat = our gods or goddesses have failed (chaos of history)

Bible interpretation of military defeat = our God, as Lord of history, is punishing us (rationality of history)

28:52 besiege you. . .all your gates. . .high and fortified walls in which you trust

Entire experience of discipline is to refute the false notion of historic reality = same as the pagans = trusting in man and his works independently of God (erasure of the Creator/creature distinction and replacement of the Continuity of Being).

land which Yahweh your god has given you

Even the valuable Temple and its implements will be taken

28:53-57 eat the fruit of your flesh

Cf. **Jer. 19:9; Lam. 2:20; 4:10.** Read Josephus' **Wars of the Jews.**

End of all pretense of civilization—every one for himself or herself.

E. End-state of Israel under Yahweh's discipline (28:58-68)

28:58-59 if you do not. . . .Yahweh will bring upon you. . . .

Choice & consequences. Yahweh-centered ("fear His glorious and awesome name") history—not economic-centered, sociologically-centered, politically-centered.

28:60-61 bring back. . .

Forsaking God and His Word always results in regression backward to paganism.

Some brought back through secondary causes (e.g., stress-related diseases, stds, nutritional diseases); some primarily caused by God's control over bacteria and viruses.

28:62-63 few in number. . .stars of heaven. . .

Reversal of their entire existence!

from the land which you go to possess

Emphasis upon the privileged position they have under God's promises.

28:64 scatter you. . .serve other gods. . .

Every culture enshrines religious values and gods. Simply living within a culture is tantamount to serving the gods of that culture. David living in Philistia (**1 Sam 26:19**) and Israel in exile (here and **Jer. 16:13**).

wood and stone. . .

sarcasm—you had a blessed relationship with the "living" God; now you're serving the speculations of man!!

28:65-67 no rest. . .anguish of soul

"wondering Jew" never able to assimilate permanently

evening. . .morning. . .

unending sense of being "out of place"

28:68 back to Egypt

Egypt became the home to Jews. Jesus parents took Him there, too.

III. CONCLUSION TO THE 3RD EXPOSITION—THE RENEWAL COVENANT (29:1)

In the Hebrew Bible 29:1 = 28:69. Apparently translators want to make the coming text a "second covenant" besides the Mt. Sinai covenant. Problem: Shechem Covenant is actually a

“second covenant”. What follows isn’t the text of a formal covenant, but an exposition of the outworking of the land promise of the Abrahamic Covenant now that the nation Israel exists.
29:1 Moab. .Horeb.

IV. CONCLUSION

Contract & Administration of the Contract → revelation of the true picture of how history “works” → major conflict with modern historiography based upon naturalism

1. Naturalist, secular history (neo-pagan view):

- Nature is all there is; no supernatural reality [_responsible_]_ for it
- No meaning or purpose to nature; it’s up to [_man_]_ to give it meaning and purpose
- An ending mix of “good” (pleasant) and “evil”(unpleasant); it’s up to man and his works to suppress the unpleasant.

2. Biblical view of history:

- Creator/creature distinction means that nature and man are [_derivative]_ and dependent realities responsible to God
- Personal Trinity (eternal personal relationships) prior to creation, source of meaning and purpose eternal (final) life
- Genuine good and evil exist now but evil is [_"bounded"]_ and they will be one day eternally separated forever.