

In preparation to enter the promised land, Moses is warning the children of Israel about the consequences of disobeying the LORD. He sets the simple choice before them, obey and be blessed or disobey and be under the curse of God. It is the sinfulness of the human heart that so often causes us to choose to disobey the LORD and reap the consequences of our actions rather than simply choose the blessings that come from obedience.

In vs. 1-14 of chapter 28, Moses describes how the LORD will bless Israel if they are faithful to obey the voice of the LORD. They will be blessed with things like prosperity, good health and safety from their enemies. However, from v. 15 onward he describes what will happen if they do not obey the LORD and instead serve other gods. The opposite of the blessings described will happen to them and everything that could possibly go wrong for them will indeed go against them. Instead of being under the blessing of the LORD they will be under a curse. Moses continues describing the consequences of disobedience in vs. 63 and following.

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### Deuteronomy 28

63 And it shall come to pass, *that* as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the LORD will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it.

**“And it shall come to pass, *that* as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good”** – The LORD had already demonstrated that He wanted to bless Israel through the many miracles and great works that He’d already done for them. He had performed many great works in order to bring them out of Egypt and He had done many things over that past 40 years to supply their needs.

**“and to multiply you”** – The LORD had made them a mighty nation from a small family clan. This phrase could also include multiplying their prosperity as He had provided for them.

**“so the LORD will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought”** – Because of their disobedience, the LORD would show as much enthusiasm in their judgment as He did in blessing them. Instead of doing them good He would destroy them and instead of multiplying (in number and in terms of prosperity) them He would reduce their number and bring them to “nought” (nothing).

**“and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it”** – After bringing them into the land that He promised to them, the LORD would extract them from it. This later happens when He allowed the Assyrians and the Babylonians to defeat the people and carry them away into captivity because of their disobedience.

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64 And the LORD shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, *even wood and stone*.

**“And the LORD shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other”** – Today the LORD has allowed the Jews to be scattered to the ends of the earth due to their unbelief. There are few areas of the world where you cannot find Jews living. Only since 1948 when the United Nations re-established Israel as a nation have some Jews began to live again in the land that the LORD has promised them. However, there are still more Jews living outside of their land than inside.

**“and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, *even wood and stone*”** – Dispersed among the heathen, the Jews will be tempted or even compelled to worship the gods of the locals. They will be pushed farther away from the God of their ancestors. Even today most Jews are atheists, subscribing to the beliefs of those around them by worshiping the gods of science and man’s intellect. Since their idolatry is listed along with the other punishments, apparently the punishment for their disobedience is to be pushed into even more unbelief. This reflects the principle stated by Jesus in **Luke 8:18**: *“Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.”* The LORD rewards faith with more faith but rewards unbelief with more unbelief. Paul mentions this principle as well in **Rom. 1:28** when describing the characteristics of the wicked: *“And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.”*

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65 And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the LORD shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind:

**“And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest”** – When the Jews have been scattered to the ends of the earth, they will never find a place that they can call their own because they would always be strangers in a strange land. They could never find true rest because in their heart they know they belong in the land that the LORD promised to them. There would always be persecution and so they would have to frequently move to escape it. The psalmist expresses this feeling from captivity in Babylon: **Psalms 137:1-4** *“By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing the LORD’s song in a strange land?”*

**“but the LORD shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind”** – Notice that these things are not described as coming from the citizens of the nation that they find themselves in. It will be the LORD Who gives them a “trembling” (fearful) heart, failing of eyes (perhaps eyes that fail to look up in hope), and sorrow of mind (depression over their circumstances).

66 And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life:

**“And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee”** – As Jews, their lives could be in jeopardy at any time without warning. An example of this is when Haman tricked the Persian king Ahasuerus into passing a decree to destroy the Jews (Esther 3:8-11). Another is the Jewish holocaust in Nazi Germany.

**“and thou shalt fear day and night; and shalt have none assurance of thy life”** – They will never have the assurance that they are truly safe from those who would want to destroy them.

67 In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see.

**“In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning!”** – These words continue to paint a picture of the miserable state that disobedience will bring upon Israel. The fear of what the day may bring will cause them to wish for the end of it and fear of what might happen at night while they are asleep and not watching causes them to wish for the night to be over.

**“for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see”** – The driving force behind the desire for evening and morning are the fears, not only for what they can imagine might happen (“the fear of thine heart”) but also for the things they are seeing other Jews suffer that could also happen to them (“the sight of thine eyes”).

68 And the LORD shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships, by the way whereof I spake unto thee, Thou shalt see it no more again: and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy *you*.

**“And the LORD shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships, by the way whereof I spake unto thee, Thou shalt see it no more again”** – The LORD had freed the children of Israel from Egypt and had forbidden them from returning there. See **Deut. 17:16b** where Moses is warning that kings over Israel should not attempt to accumulate horses nor send people into Egypt to obtain them (“*forasmuch as the LORD hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way*”). However, the LORD tells them here that He would punish them for their disobedience by sending them back to Egypt as slaves.

**“and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy you”** – They will arrive in Egypt to be sold as slaves but no one would want to buy them. When the Roman general Titus destroyed Jerusalem in AD 70, he sent 17,000 Jews to Egypt as slaves, thus flooding the market with Jewish slaves. Jewish slaves were detested by the Romans and the law of supply and demand caused Jewish slaves to be worth even less.

### Deuteronomy 30

20 That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, *and* that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he *is* thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.

In verses 1-10, Moses gives Israel the promise that even after the LORD has poured out the judgments on them for their disobedience, the LORD would still have compassion and bring them back to the land so that He can bless them if they would repent. Verses 11-19 set a simple choice before the children of Israel: obey and be blessed or disobey and be under the curse of the LORD.

**“That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him”** – Moses urges the people to choose life so that they may live (v. 19) and so that they may love and obey the LORD. The choice is a “no-brainer” and yet we sinful human beings so often choose the death that results from disobedience.

**“for he is thy life, and the length of thy days”** – One benefit of obedience is that the LORD is their source of a long life. If they want to live a long and blessed life then they should obey the LORD.

**“that thou mayest dwell in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them”** – The result of obedience will be a long and blessed life living in the land that the LORD promised to their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The alternative is a short life expelled from the land and the blessings of God.