

Lesson 62

So we'll be on verse 15 of chapter 28. We're going to start the cursing section tonight.

(Opening prayer)

Again the context just to review - this section of Deuteronomy (chapter 27, 28 and part of 29), has to do not with the exhortation section, not with the case law, not with the Ten Commandments; it has to do with the sanctions. We've been working our way through those sanctions. Your outline says chapter 38; it's chapter 28 - no such thing as chapter 38 in the book.

Chapter 27 you remember is the protocols that Moses outlines that need to be done when the treaty is re-ratified here in Shechem, Mt. Gerizim, and Mt. Ebal. That happened historically after this discussion of Moses in Joshua 8.

That again gives you an idea of the terrain where this ceremony took place. You can see these aren't mountains; but they're pretty good sized hills because if you look down here you see the Valley of Shechem which by the way is where Jacob's well is. That's the rough terrain.

Now in chapter 27 we found out that's the passage where there are cursings - the oath of malediction over and over and over again. The particular sins that are mentioned there are all private sins. You want to watch this when you go through the Old Testament and you're in that theocratic period because what we're looking at when we look at this 9 century period of time in the Old Testament - this is an actual time when God's work in history was being explained contemporaneously. That means it becomes a laboratory of source material in how God works in history. That's why this is such valuable material which is often mostly neglected - hardly ever hear it taught. It's important because we get our views of history from a secular education system that is not informed about how God works. So this is a purging exercise in getting rid of all that stuff from a secularized view of history.

The cursings and the blessings, as I pointed out in the handout the blessings and the cursings that are in this book are also in the book of Leviticus; and they are also in most treaties at this point in history. When Pharaoh would make a treaty with Canaanite kings, they would set up a suzerain-vassal type treaty; and it would have cursings and blessings. But here's the difference. In all the pagan treaties, the cursings and the blessings were military threats. In other words, if the vassal did not obey the suzerain (in this case it would be Pharaoh or in the case of Babylon the king of Babylon) if those lesser kings failed then the king (the big guy) would come beat him up. But you'll notice that that kind of cursing is purely political. It's purely military. It's purely a human response to another human.

When you come to these blessings and cursings, you'll see that they're comprehensive. They're not the result of some maneuvers, some political military type thing that's going on. Rather it shows you the totality of how God can bless and the totality of how He can curse.

Tonight we'll go into the cursings; but we're not going to get done with them because I want to spend quite a little time here pointing out the implications for understanding history. So on your first sheet you'll see where it says the implied view of history. So what we're trying to pick up here is something we don't ever get in our education. We want to see how real history works. How does God work? We have this vague notion of how God works in history; but it's only when you come to a set of revelation where history is being explained.

The only person that can explain history ultimately is God. Historians can look at history. They can try to draw conclusions. They can look at the economic structures, the social structures, the political structures and back out of that some cause-effect. But as far as where history is going and why those cause-effects work, they can't do it because they are approaching history inductively. They are looking at the data, creating hypothesis about the data and trying to come up with an explanation. That's the inductive approach. The problem with that is you're not getting signals from the God who is controlling that history.

For example take our own national history. What happened on 9-11? We haven't got a clue as far as God telling us because we don't have any living prophets to tell us. Had we been a theocracy, we probably would have had a living prophet who could have interpreted that event and said, "Look at the message God is sending."

We can kind of guess at that, but the reason we can kind of guess at it is only because we first have this 9 century period of human history where we have a control; that is we have instructions coming to us in verbal revelation.

(point 1) This 9-century period was a laboratory demonstration. It demonstrated three things. It could have demonstrated more, probably did. For our sake tonight we'll talk about three. That is what we emphasized last time that existence has rationality to it versus the pagan notion that existence is ultimately chaotic and unknowable. That is a fundamental idea - fundamental.

Finite man is incapable of infinite chain of reasoning. So therefore he has to speculate. The problem is that in history outside of Israel they either had the cyclical view of history (summer, fall, winter, spring) - the agriculture cycle. That's Baalism. Or, if you read more of the ancient Near Eastern mythological literature, they believed that in fall and winter as they saw the leaves turn as they saw the climate get colder; they took that as a belief that the gods were dying and that in order to come to spring again to fruitfulness. Remember the agriculture economy; in order to come to fruit again they would have to in some way kick start the season. This is where they got into all kinds of religious orgies and everything else because the idea was that out of the chaos of winter you must have the orderliness of a fruitful season. So you had to from chaos get order. That was all through Babylon and Egypt too. So you have - that was the pagan view that history kind of fell apart and then it spontaneously started again. Then it fell apart and then it spontaneously started again. It wasn't going anywhere; it was going cyclically.

Now we take for granted the idea that history is going somewhere. Even Karl Marx the communist argued that there had to be progress in history; but that was a borrowed idea. It wasn't Karl's idea. Karl got it from Hegel and Hegel got it from the Book of Daniel. That was a stolen premise off of the Bible.

Outside of the Bible there is no concept that history has a purpose, rationality. But rationality we mean you can think about it and you can come to conclusions about it. The pagan was so depressed intellectually and religiously that he gave up. He didn't bother to think about where anything was going.

Here's why this isn't just speculation and abstract reasoning here. Here's the practical bottom line to all this. If history doesn't have rationality, your life doesn't. If the whole doesn't have meaning and purpose, then how can the parts have meaning and purpose? So this is a battle basically over the lives, personal individual lives have meaning. They can't have meaning if the whole doesn't have meaning. So that's what's going on here. Existence has rationality. That was a powerful thought in world history. We've mentioned that several times and will again. So the pagan idea is it's chaotic and if it's chaos it's unknowable - very simple. Those two adjectives go together.

(Then b) The rationality wasn't utopian scientific machine program type rationality. It was personal. Rationality is revealed in a personal ethically based written contract of specific consequences for defined behavior - an ethically based cause-effect not an environmentally based cause-effect or and economically based cause-effect or a politically based cause-effect. That's how the unregenerate man likes to think of it; that of all these cause-effects somehow he has borrowed the idea of rationality that he has really stolen from the Bible but then he attaches it to economics or some other thing. But in the nine centuries that we're looking at - in particular this address, the basic historic address of Moses here, we're looking at history as having a reasonable predictability to it; but it's based on what man does before God. This is offensive - this is very offensive to the unregenerate mind.

That's why I have (point c) comes out of Rushdoony. He had a very nice way of stating this in his book, The Mythology of Science. He says - watch this quote. I think this is so neat.

History shows movement in terms of forces beyond man and in judgment over man. History rides heavily over man is inescapably ethical and shows a continuing conflict between good and evil and clearly...

And this is why I like his word picture here.

... shows man to be the actor, not the playwright and the director and this man hates.

I think that is very succinctly put that man knows and realizes that he's part of a drama; but he can't control the drama. The playwright controls the drama. To have the control in somebody else's hand than his is profoundly disturbing because it reminds us of our ultimate responsibility before our Maker. We don't want to be reminded. I mean collectively as

the human race we don't like to be reminded of that. We flee that because we don't want the idea of having to live with the consequences of our choices.

The reason why point c is so important is this. Point c underlies all anti-Christian philosophy. Anti-Christian philosophy is not a case of an intellectual problem. Anti-Christianity is the result of an ethical rebellion that leads to an intellectual problem. Don't get snookered by somebody that sounds slick and educated and tries to tell you he has an intellectual problem with the Bible. Ultimately he has an intellectual problem with the Bible because he has an ethical problem with the Bible. The ethics precede in cause-effect here. It's clear in Deuteronomy 28 that that's the case. It's an ethical trigger that leads to consequences in how we think.

Again, to remember how that works with a simple picture, think of Genesis 3. Adam and Eve hide in the bushes. What have they done with the divine attribute of omnipresence - 5 minutes after they sinned? They've reconstructed it. Why would you think you could hide from an omnipresent God behind some leaves? The only reason that you thought you could hide behind an omnipresent God with the leaves is He's no longer omnipresent. So sin immediately causes a theological transformation. This is automatic. This happens that way. This is what we're fighting here as we go try to go through the text of Deuteronomy 28. We're coming against the unbelieving view of history.

(Point 2) This 9-century period of history, this Old Testament period of history, challenged pagan culture to rework its mythological and irrational reconstructions of history to render existence safe from God's judgments upon human responsibility. In other words for years and years and years, for centuries between Noah and the Tower of Babel when everything fell apart spiritually from that point through the time of Abraham's call, Isaac, Jacob, the stay in Egypt. Finally we get a nation. Those centuries between Noah and Moses were centuries when globally the human race defected from the knowledge they carried originally out of the ark. We all got off the same boat, but every people group went its own way. Every people group, because they're fallen, lost, suppressed, and forgot the revelation with Noah. They went into polytheism.

Schmidt who was a Jesuit in the 19th century - I believe he was a Jesuit. He was a Roman Catholic scholar-anthropologist. Schmidt went around the world and gathered mythologies from all around the world - found some fantastic mythologies in northern California by the way where the Indians in northern California had remembered ex nihilo creation. It's one of the rare times when this was ever detected. What Mueller points to is all this was happening before Christian missionaries. The Indians didn't get that idea from Christian missions. They never heard the gospel. The missionaries never got there. What you see, these little jewels of truth, is all that was left over from the vast amount of information that must have been passed down through Noah, Shem, Japheth and so forth.

But within centuries that corpus of divine revelation was diluted, suppressed, forgotten and perverted. That was the rise of mythology. It seems like they preserved things like sacrifices; they preserved things like priests. They seemed to have priests. Of course that's probably

again a mythological distortion of the genuine priests like Melchizedek that the Bible talks about. Remember Abraham? In Abraham's day he met a gentile priest and probably Melchizekek represents the legitimate left over surviving elements from Noah down. What you see there in the Melchizedek-Abraham narrative is the passing of the baton to the Jewish family. That's the situation.

Now after 9 centuries starting here in Deuteronomy with Moses going all the way through the prophets in the Old Testament prior to the exile when the Jews in the Diaspora spread out from Israel maybe before that the only communication, transportation and business and commerce with Israel during the days of Solomon probably a lot of the Jewish ideas leaked out.

After all if you look at a map of the world, what is crucial about the location of Israel? Let's think about that. Israel is in the middle of three continents: Asia, Europe and Africa. The trade routes all went through Israel. Now is it any wonder why God would erect a theocracy in a small nation right on the world's major trade routes if He didn't want the truths of that theocracy to be spread with business people and traveling businessmen? So Israel had some sort of effect on the ancient world. Point two is talking about that particularly down toward the end of its history because at the end of its history Israel fell. We're going to look at the cursings tonight. At the end of its history, Israel fell. Israel collapsed. Israel became a no-nation. But even that process, the process of national failure and collapse, testified to reason. How did it do that? Because the prophets said why.

"This is happening to you because of your ethical choices. You see, your ethical choices lead to consequences. Look at this. Your nation has been destroyed. It is self destroyed because of choices that it made in its relationship to God."

That lesson was surely transmitted throughout the world. So that's why point 2 says it challenged pagan culture to rework its mythological and irrational reconstruction. Thus by the sixth century the old cosmological myths and magic priesthoods had to rework such that man is exalted now above self-contradictory priestly traditions and becomes his own religious thinker and authority.

I show you this slide again because it's remarkable. It is remarkable. I've never heard a comment about this until one of my sons was taking a course in you know that thing you get in the mail - Great Courses or something where they take key professors from around the United States. He's taking a history course and all of a sudden the guy says and he used the name (and I forgot the name) but he saw this thing and wondered about it. I'm so glad to hear someone else wondering about it.

Look at all the dates here. Do you ever think about the fact that all these religions shot up within a 100 years of the Diaspora? What's going on here? This is a worldwide global phenomenon that's taking place here. Every one of these new religions is cropping up - usually has one man who starts it - the idea that somebody can think his way. Confucius says he could think his way through this. Buddha even though he wound up with a bellybutton type religion it was thinking about that religion that led to

Buddhism. You have the reformation in Hinduism. Even in Judaism it settles out into a law-centered thing.

Then we have this quote, which we studied last week, which is again - you can't get enough of this because this is an unexplained factor - a major factor in history.

Alfred North Whitehead the great philosopher at the beginning of the 19th -20th century said, "All western history is a footnote to Plato."

What he meant by that was that Plato and Aristotle thought through all the basic questions. The last 2,000 years man has not raised any new significant questions.

That's why Frances Chafer used to say, "If you master four or five of the basic ideas, you've got it nailed because all the other ideas are permutations and variations of these."

One of the features that is such a mystery about the rise of the Greeks that everybody in school thinks is so great is how come they have this attitude. Why did no one else have this attitude? Why is it the Greeks suddenly think this way?

Early Greek philosophers proceeded with a preposterous boldness and entirely unproven assumption. They held (and here is the key) universe is an intelligible whole.

That is new. The pagan world did not believe that. Where did Plato get that from? I submit to you on his trips to Alexandria there was a big Jewish community down there that was translating the Bible from Hebrew into Greek. I think he ran into the Jews.

They held that the universe... In other words they presumed that a single order underlies the chaos of our perceptions and furthermore we are able to comprehend that order.

So this is the big break through. I'll bet you those of you who had a philosophy course nobody has ever explained it. It would be an abrupt appearance of this idea. The only other place in the world that preceded this is the Old Testament.

Now we are about ready to see one more thing. I want to show you this slide. This gives you an idea of why in the West when we go into the paganism of The Enlightenment... The so-called enlightenment isn't an enlightenment. The enlightenment is the time when they're overthrowing Christian influences from the medieval age. They like to call it the Dark Ages. The Dark Ages weren't dark. Don't buy into that silly title. The Enlightenment is a period when men become more and more autonomous. They begin to think more and more rationally in the sense that the idea is coming out of man's head.

In the middle of this they were floundering around one foot in the Christian faith, the other foot in this in rising paganism. So here they are split like this between the boat. The thing they lacked was a purpose and progress to history.

Then comes Darwin. Darwin as the modern atheists say - he allowed an unbeliever to become intellectually respectable.

But here's a statement by George Bernard Shaw, the Fabian guy who started the socialist party of England. Notice what he says. Now this is his caricature of us. This is why unbelievers are so gung-ho Darwin. There is a religious element to it. It is not science. It's a religious element that's driving it.

"If you can realize how insufferably the world was oppressed by the notion that everything that happened was an arbitrary personal act of an arbitrary personal god of dangerous jealous cruel and personal character; you will understand how the world jumped at Darwin."

This guy is a world-renowned playwright. George Bernard Shaw had a tremendous cultural influence in England and from England all throughout the West. So here you have one of the so to speak Hollywood stars of his time saying this. He is expressing in this the anger, frustration and hatred that the unregenerate mind has to a sovereign Lord of history.

He said, "It is such a relief to have Darwin. Thank God for Darwin."

...except he wouldn't thank God for it. Darwin was a relief to these people. That's why evolution is so religious. That's why when you raise your hand or in a conversation, you begin to suggest to somebody you don't believe in evolution all fury breaks loose. They take you so seriously.

Why is it like you touch a third rail here and the thing blows in your face? Why do people react so terribly emotionally about creation and evolution? This! Because in creation God is the Lord of history and with Darwin man can enjoy the fact that there is no ultimate responsibility. He is purely a victim of the molecules. It is such a relief to the unregenerate mind. You're not fighting an intellectual battle here; you're fighting a spiritual ethical battle.

Now we want to go to Deuteronomy 28:15. We're going to see the first section here - it's going to be parallel to verses 1 to 6 of the blessings. Verses 15 to 19 do the same thing that verses 1 to 6 do with the blessings. Remember back in verses one to six what we said was the theme there is a contingency of the blessing. That is it's contingent on what people are going to do in response to the Lord. It's also extent in the sense it permeates all their social life. All of their life is involved in this. Remember nephesh means all of your life.

Now in 15 through 19 it's the same language that you see back up in verses 1 to 6. There are a few adjustments in it; but let's look at verse 15.

Frankly as I study through this cursing, it's kind of scary because we see these kinds of things in our own nation right now. We're not locked in a Deuteronomic covenant with God; but you can start going through these curses; and it doesn't require a PhD to spot the analogies with our own history at this moment in time.

NKJ Deuteronomy 28:15 " But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you:

The emphasis there is overtaking means overwhelming.

"You will not be able to escape My cursing," says God. "It will overwhelm you."

It says here:

if you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today

There again it's that same Hebrew expression we've seen so often in Deuteronomy. Moses has the gall, if you will, to say that his words equal God's words. That's inspiration of Scripture.

Much to the embarrassment of liberal pastors that speak of inspiration of Scripture and they mean, "Well it's just sorta the authors of the Bible. They were religious people and they had this kinda you know this kinda this idea of God and they thought this stuff up hoping it would fit with this idea of God."

Not that at all. The Bible in inspiration is saying that God speaks propositional revelation from His mind to man's mind such that you can have a verse like 15. Verse 15 makes no sense if you don't have an inerrant verbal inspired Scripture. Why with all of history including the climate respond to a nation that was merely disagreeing with Moses? How does that work? There's something wrong with that picture.

But here you begin to have the areas now.

NKJ Deuteronomy 28:16 "Cursed shall you be in the city, and cursed shall you be in the country.

It means both urban and rural culture will be affected. There will be no escape geographically. You can't move out into the country and escape. You can't move from the country to the city to escape. It will get you whether you're rural or you're urban.

NKJ Deuteronomy 28:17 "Cursed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl.

That's food scarcity just like it was food blessing before. That's nephesh. That's the whole source of our life. The food basket, that's the grocery store.

NKJ Deuteronomy 28:18 "Cursed shall be the fruit of your body and the produce of your land, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks.

There's a point that we made back with the blessings. It's triple blessing or triple cursing. The outcome of the human race, reproduction, children - either not having children which is a curse in the sense of the

country not having children growth rate going below 2.1 which northern Europe is doing - east coast, west coast US is doing which is a death sentence. Society simply cannot survive with a birthrate less than 2.1. So as the society is crippled this way, it's part of God's cursing.

Exactly opposite to the environmentalist that says, "Don't have babies because they have carbon footprints."

The Bible is saying, "Go ahead and have babies God has provided for you."

and the produce of your land

So now it's botanical. That deals with plants.

the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks.

That's zoological.

So now do you see how comprehensive this is? There is no escaping this. God is controlling the botanical processes. He's controlling the zoological processes. He is controlling the human body, the physiological processes. He's doing it in the country. He's doing it in the city. There is no escape. That's the message of doom that this cursing section gives you. It's scary.

Then it says in verse 19:

NKJ Deuteronomy 28:19 "Cursed shall you be when you come in, and cursed shall you be when you go out.

It's talking about indoor and outdoor activity. So there is no escape from it hours of the day.

"You're still living in the middle of this mess," God says.

Now we begin in verse 20. We won't work all the way to verse 68. We'll go down to part way through this tonight. Verses 20 to 24 - if you look at verse 20, let's skim through verses 20 to 24. See if you can kind of grab the scope of this.

NKJ Deuteronomy 28:20 " The LORD will send on you cursing, confusion, and rebuke in all that you set your hand to do, until you are destroyed and until you perish quickly, because of the wickedness of your doings in which you have forsaken Me.

21 "The LORD will make the plague cling to you until He has consumed you from the land which you are going to possess.

22 "The LORD will strike you with consumption, with fever, with inflammation, with severe burning fever, with the sword, with scorching, and with mildew; they shall pursue you until you perish.

23 "And your heavens which are over your head shall be bronze, and the earth which is under you shall be iron.

24 "The LORD will change the rain of your land to powder and dust; from the heaven it shall come down on you until you are destroyed.

That's a real encouraging passage. I think you can sum it up by saying that this is a destruction of the nation through physical processes. This isn't just politics. This isn't some bad ruler or something with a bad policy. This is talking about climate change. You can see right there in verses 23 and 24 talking about climate, weather, weather patterns.

Let's hold the place there and turn to I Kings 8. The reason I'm going to show you some of the passages later in the Old Testament is because I want you to realize as you've gone through Deuteronomy how powerful information you've gotten here and exposure to this text because this sets you up for the entire rest of the Old Testament. I know many of us have not really read too much in the Old Testament because you get discouraged. It's so big and it's so hard some times to understand. But once you get your feet wet, once you get settled in the book of Deuteronomy, Leviticus, and those books; now you've got the structure to move forward in the Old Testament because it is all the outworking of this.

So in 1 Kings 8 we come to the prayer of Solomon. Here he is and he's dedicating the Temple to God. Here is God's very Shekinah glory coming down to the Temple. So Solomon makes this request. Remember Solomon is the Leonardo Da Vinci of his time. He is the Renaissance man. He's good at everything he does - brilliant in architecture. This temple must have been tremendous physical building. .

NKJ 1 Kings 8:34 "then hear in heaven, and forgive the sin of Your people Israel, and bring them back to the land which You gave to their fathers.

NKJ 1 Kings 8:35 " When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain because they have sinned against You,

See what he's doing? Solomon is rearticulating Deuteronomic theology. This isn't new. Solomon isn't making this up. He just knows that's the covenant; that's the contractual arrangement between Yahweh and the nation.

when they pray toward this place and confess Your name, and turn from their sin because You afflict them,

NKJ 1 Kings 8:36 "then hear in heaven, and forgive the sin of Your servants, Your people Israel, that You may teach them the good way in which they should walk; and send rain on Your land which You have given to Your people as an inheritance.

From your reading of the Old Testament what dramatic story centers on climate change? Remember? One of the prophets. Elijah, remember what happened when it started raining what he did to the prophets? See that story is often taught in Sunday school as a story by itself. The problem with learning - that's what I call the hop, skip and jump approach to the Bible. The weakness of that approach to the Bible is that when you get older and when you encounter more sophisticated unbelief you're trying to meet the challenge with a bunch of lose marbles because you haven't got them framed together.

But if you think now, "Wait a minute. If there's a drought going on, Elisha is a prophet. The drought must be caused by ethical problems, not carbon..."

They didn't burn fossil fuels and cause a problem in Elijah's day. It was an ethical problem that altered the climate because God was judging them. The reason why it rained is because the ethical problem was resolved. So see that's how this works out.

I want to take you to another passage since we are running around in the later Old Testament. Go to the last book of the Old Testament, Malachi - just before Matthew. Look at Malachi 2:2

People read this and that's why I have that little box on your notes right under chapter where I have that note. I put that note in there because if you take a college course in religions, you're going to get hit with that. If you have children that are going to take college courses, they're going to get hit with that. If you're listening to the media; you're going to get hit with that.

Deuteronomy establishes a framework for the prophets that write the rest of the Old Testament. Liberal scholars who build upon an unbelieving reconstructed Old Testament keep exalting Old Testament prophets as their models of social justice.

Sojourners Magazine - I was in the magazine store today and I noticed the liberal left wing evangelical magazine Sojourners. It's out there to try to influence people - social justice, social justice. It's Marxism in a Christian vocabulary. Their argument is these prophets were ministers and models of social justice.

"They were radicals, the prophets of the Old Testament. They were the ones that went against society. They were the ones who stood up to the leaders."

Like they invented this! Like the prophets were the guys who started this whole social justice movement. Nonsense! As I point out here the prophets were not radical progressives; they're reactionaries - exactly opposite to what the liberals were saying. Those prophets were reactionaries that were going back to the Mosaic Law Code and enforcing the Mosaic Law Code.

That's because see these guys they don't read the Bible. They read a few passages in it and make these social pronouncements.

Okay, so Malachi 2:2. This is addressed now to the priests.

NKJ Malachi 2:1 "And now, O priests,

See, Malachi is a prophet.

this commandment is for you.

NKJ Malachi 2:2 If you will not hear, And if you will not take it to heart, To give glory to My name," Says the LORD of hosts, "I will send a

curse upon you, And I will curse your blessings. Yes, I have cursed them already, Because you do not take it to heart.

NKJ Malachi 2:3 "Behold, I will rebuke your descendants And spread refuse on your faces, The refuse of your solemn feasts; And one will take you away with it.

In the Hebrew it's a lot rougher, believe me, than it sounds in the English. Here's a prophet; and he's talking about cursing. He's not inventing the curse. Malachi is simply repeating what is said in the book of Deuteronomy. See the rationality? Do you see the self-consistency? So you see that each of these prophetic books is tied in with the totality of this law code.

Okay going back then to Deuteronomy 28:23-24, the heavens and the earth are affected. Verses 21 and 22 are more physical affect.

NKJ Deuteronomy 28:21 "The LORD will make the plague cling to you until He has consumed you from the land which you are going to possess.

NKJ Deuteronomy 28:22 "The LORD will strike you with consumption,

Talking about public health - A breakdown in public health.

People say, "Oh well. There's a lot of bacteria around, a lot of viruses."

Yeah, but what's the reason for that?

What Moses is saying here is the reason for these epidemics and pandemics that would take the nation down, and we have reports of that in Isaiah. We have reports of that in the prophets where all of a sudden sickness go on. David encountered a problem with this; but David and these prophets when they saw a pandemic they didn't think like we would in medical terms.

They thought, "Wait a minute. It's got to be ethically caused somehow."

This is sort of I think a tip off that when we in our modern day...we don't have the Mosaic contract so we don't have a tight one-to-one cause-effect thing like Israel did. But I think it behooves us to think that how much of our sickness and adversity is due to God's discipline. Normally we don't think about that. We think about going to the doctor and getting a pill to get around it. It's nice to do that. But before we do that we might think about - is this discipline or is it just a trial? I'm not saying it's always a discipline thing; but it could be. We need to examine why.

"Maybe I'm doing something wrong here, Lord. Maybe You're trying to get my attention."

So much for verses 20 to 24... This is the destruction and clearly you notice in each clause:

"I will do it until you are consumed. I will do it until you are perished."

So this is the totality of this sort of destruction. It's coming about through God's control botanically, zoologically, anatomy of the human physiology. He's doing it through the climate. See the total control? See how these are different than the pagan cursings? In the pagan cursings it was the army that was going to come in to defeat you. This is a lot more than the army. This is talking about the whole total environment is going after them.

Now we start with 25 through 37. Now we have clearly a political-military dimension. But it's more than just a political military thing; it's also an economic thing that's going on here. Let's look at verse 25,

NKJ Deuteronomy 28:25 "The LORD will cause you to be defeated before your enemies; you shall go out one way against them and flee seven ways before them;

See that's the reverse of the blessing that we studied last week.

and you shall become troublesome to all the kingdoms of the earth.

NKJ Deuteronomy 28:26 "Your carcasses shall be food for all the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and no one shall frighten them away.
27 "The LORD will strike you with the boils of Egypt, with tumors, with the scab, and with the itch, from which you cannot be healed.

28 "The LORD will strike you with madness and blindness and confusion of heart.

29 "And you shall grope at noonday, as a blind man gropes in darkness; you shall not prosper in your ways; you shall be only oppressed and plundered continually, and no one shall save you.

See what I am talking about? What a depressing section of Scripture this is. And this is by the Lord who saved them - please notice. This is a saved nation; but it's saved into a relationship with God. God holds His children and the people in relationship with Him to this standard. It's kind of scary as we look through this.

Obviously verse 25 is talking about military defeat. The carcasses of the bodies - they may not be able to pick it up in verse 26 because obviously they're retreating so fast they can't pick up the bodies of the dead soldiers.

The LORD will strike you with the boils of Egypt

Now isn't it interesting that no other nation is named here except Egypt. Where did they come from? Egypt, the boils of Egypt, - when was the last time in the text we heard about the boils of Egypt? The Exodus... Exodus. So what's happening here? It's almost as though this is a reverse exodus.

God is saying, "Do you remember what I did to Pharaoh? Do you remember I dealt with the superpower of the time? I showed My glory to Pharaoh by beating down every area of Egyptian society where they had an idol they worshipped."

"Now," God says, "because you've acted like you did in Egypt, now because you've become idolatrous; I am going to do the same thing to you. I'm going to show My glory; and I'm going to do it by beating you down the same way I beat down the Egyptians."

This is a humbling passage here.

"Lord, you're going to do with us what you did to the Egyptians? Man!"

28 "The LORD will strike you with madness and blindness and confusion of heart.

If you'll hold the place a second. go to Jeremiah 4; and you'll see again these elements reappear in all the prophets to follow. This book sets us up for the whole rest of the Old Testament.

In Jeremiah 4:9 Jeremiah is predicting. Remember he's ministering to the nation just before the exile, just before they're going to be kicked out of the land.

So Jeremiah says in Jeremiah 4:9:

NKJ Jeremiah 4:9 "And it shall come to pass in that day," says the LORD, "That the heart of the king shall perish, And the heart of the princes; The priests shall be astonished, And the prophets shall wonder."

And what he's getting at there is the same kind of thing as the confusion, this groping around back in Deuteronomy 28:29. It appears that language means and refers to confusion on the part of national leadership. In other words the leaders of the society (the kings, the prophets) become confused. They do not know how to manage the crisis. So you have a collapse of national leadership here on top of all the rest of it that's going on.

Then we have in verse 30 we have language beginning here. If you'll hold the place and turn to chapter 20:5-7 we covered this passage. Remember? This is the passage where we're talking about principles of governing warfare, the voluntary army of Israel. And when young men would come out to volunteer to fight for Yahweh, you'll notice in verse 5 of chapter 20 there was that filter, a policy filter, so that volunteers for the army would have to be interrogated and pass these tests.

In verses 5, 6, and 7 Yahweh is saying to the army recruits, "You don't have to fight for Me. I appreciate the fact you volunteered for military service, but you have some obligations. I don't have to fight for me if you haven't first enjoyed My blessings because when you go out there and fight I want you to fight having appreciated what I've done for you."

Notice in verses 5, 6, and 7:

NKJ Deuteronomy 20:5 "Then the officers shall speak to the people, saying: 'What man is there who has built a new house and has not dedicated it? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man dedicate it.

6 'Also what man is there who has planted a vineyard and has not eaten of it?

You are talking years there.

Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man eat of it.

NKJ Deuteronomy 20:7 'And what man is there who is betrothed to a woman and has not married her? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man marry her.'

See that's Yahweh's love. That's His grace. He isn't expecting young men to give their lives in battle if they haven't enjoyed His blessings. You're supposed to do that out of gratitude, not out of sheer duty.

Now - remember that language now.

Now watch what happens in verse 30. Now we come over to the cursings. Look what happens.

NKJ Deuteronomy 28:30 "You shall betroth a wife, but another man shall lie with her; you shall build a house, but you shall not dwell in it; you shall plant a vineyard, but shall not gather its grapes.

31 "Your ox shall be slaughtered before your eyes, but you shall not eat of it; your donkey shall be violently taken away from before you, and shall not be restored to you; your sheep shall be given to your enemies, and you shall have no one to rescue them.

32 "Your sons and your daughters shall be given to another people, and your eyes shall look and fail with longing for them all day long; and there shall be no strength in your hand.

The exact reverse of God's blessings! And it's a tragedy. This whole passage is depressing. It's a travesty. The enemies - look at what verse 31 says there. Think when you see donkeys and oxen and vineyards - think of a business. You've invested in business. You've made risk capital. You've deployed the risk capital. You are starting to set up your business

"You're not going to get any profit out of it," God says.

Really nasty stuff....

32 "Your sons and your daughters shall be given to another people,

Obviously talking about the parents.

and your eyes shall look and fail with longing for them all day long; and there shall be no strength in your hand.

Total depression because you've lost your children; you've lost your business. You've seen your country go down. This again is under God's hands because history is driven by ethical choices. These are the horrifying consequences of messing around with what God has done. People don't realize this. This is a revelation in one sense of the holiness of

God. So in the New Testament when we're talking about the Bema Seat - same kind of thing is going on here. It's why the author of Hebrews - remember he says, "It is a fearsome thing to fall in the hands of a fiery God." This is what he's talking about right here.

A nation, in verse 33, is talking about a foreign power. The emphasis here isn't on the domestic geophysical disturbances happening in climate. This is an actual invasion and dominance by a foreign nation, a pagan nation at that.

NKJ Deuteronomy 28:33 "A nation whom you have not known shall eat the fruit of your land and the produce of your labor, and you shall be only oppressed and crushed continually.

Then it says:

NKJ Deuteronomy 28:34 "So you shall be driven mad because of the sight which your eyes see.

There is where there's psychological depression. These people are in total abject shock by what's going on. See how harshly God can treat His own people

NKJ Deuteronomy 28:35 "The LORD will strike you in the knees and on the legs with severe boils which cannot be healed,

No medical help works in this situation.

and from the sole of your foot to the top of your head.

Then it says:

NKJ Deuteronomy 28:36 "The LORD will bring you and the king

And here it anticipates the exile, ultimately centuries down the line.

whom you set over you to a nation which neither you nor your fathers have known, and there you shall serve other gods.

There is sarcasm here that you see in the translation.

-- wood and stone

In other words He's saying, "You don't like to serve me. I'll tell you what. You can go and have an extended vacation in another society that worships other gods. And you know what - all they are are piles of stone and wood. Would you like that? Like that better than serving Me?"

You can see in the Hebrew it's an emotional thing here. God is passionate about His being forsaken.

NKJ Deuteronomy 28:37 "And you shall become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword among all nations where the LORD will drive you.

Remember before we said that Israel back in the blessings would be the head and everybody else would be the tail.

People would look to Israel and they'd say, "Wow! Look at this country. This is a fantastic nation. Look at the prosperity in their country."

Now it's exactly reversed.

Now in the cursing section they are going to look at - what a mess.

But I would submit to you in verse 37 which is the last verse we're going to look at in this section tonight; that is a concluding remark that means that the unsaved gentile nations will look at the Jewish collapse, the destruction of the state of Israel and they will draw a conclusion. They will draw a conclusion that these people did something wrong. Again it's rationality.

In kind of a strange way, they walk away with, "Yeah there is a reason behind this. Boy this is so obviously something to do with what these people did with their God. You don't want to mess with Israel's God."

Now I want to conclude by turning to Amos 4. Go over to...after the Psalms you get to Daniel, Hosea... Amos here is coming up after the Joel thing. Amos 4 Again all we are doing is citing little instances here. Look at verse 6

Amos wasn't a high falutin guy in the society of his day. Amos was an ordinary lay guy, a small businessman - maybe a large businessman. I don't know. He isn't one of the priests. God called him to be a prophet. Again, is Amos inventing this? Is Amos reading Sojourners magazine and suddenly becoming a left wing social justice guy? Not at all! Amos is simply implementing through God's initiative in his life, he's implementing the sanctions of the Deuteronomic code.

So here in Amos 4:6:

NKJ Amos 4:6 " Also I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities. And lack of bread in all your places; Yet you have not returned to Me," Says the LORD.

You see he started discipline and He doesn't see an ethical response to the discipline.

NKJ Amos 4:7 "I also withheld rain from you, When there were still three months to the harvest. I made it rain on one city, I withheld rain from another city. One part was rained upon, And where it did not rain the part withered.

8 So two or three cities wandered to another city to drink water, But they were not satisfied; Yet you have not returned to Me," Says the LORD.

9 "I blasted you with blight and mildew. When your gardens increased, Your vineyards, Your fig trees, And your olive trees, The locust devoured them; Yet you have not returned to Me," Says the LORD.

Do you see the ethical thing here? God is trying to get their attention and they don't get it.

He said, "Look, you know I've tried to deal with you guys."

It's like a parent frustrated with their kids. You know you discipline; and they don't get it. So you have to escalate the consequences here. So as your notes say at the end here tonight in the conclusion when you read Revelation 2 and 3 and the Lord is disciplining those churches and you look in Hebrews 12 and He's disciplining us personally as believers; I think maybe in Deuteronomy 28 we get an idea of how ferocious God can be when He gets ticked. The kind of suffering that He put His people through and, they're still living under the shadow today. It's a very serious thing.

What can we apply to our country? I don't know because we're not locked into a covenant with specific stipulations and sanctions. But if you take God's character and say from Acts 17 that He sets the times before appointing the bounds of their habitations based on their response to Him ethically; America has had plenty of light and now we begin to see economic difficulties, we see an attack on our land; 9-11 caused more casualties than Pearl Harbor did. You have this kind of situation. It really makes - at least it makes me think about the degree to which God is disciplining this nation right now because this nation collectively in its attitude toward God. We can only speculate. I am not a prophet. I'm not trying to pretend to be one. But I learned how my God works in history from these Old Testament passages. It's hard for me to believe that He is just hands off to the nations.

(Closing prayer)

Any questions?

Well obviously you have the gospel corrections to that where the Lord Jesus - remember the blind man and they drew the inference that in that particular case that with particular blind man it must have been the sins of his parents or something he did; and Jesus said it wasn't that at all. You can't make it one-to-one like that. It doesn't work. The only justification you would actually have of pronouncing a particular suffering to be a discipline of God would be if you were a prophet - if God told you that was the case. I wouldn't feel qualified to say that; and I don't think most pastors would. The person has to meditate in their heart and look if there's any confession needed for some sin situation or something you're not checking into. It's always good to check; but there are 7 or 8 other reasons why we suffer.

Question

Johnnie Erickson Tada is a good case. In her case look at the ministry she's had and what horrendous suffering. Now she has breast cancer or something. Poor lady! I mean gosh here she is a total invalid then has breast cancer on top of it.

All you can say is, "Boy God must have confidence to say Johnnie Erickson Tada can withstand those kinds of trials and bless His name while she's doing it."

It's hard to say, " Gee God, thanks for the suffering. It's a compliment."

This is the fallen world. This isn't heaven. This isn't the eternal state. You saw in that passage in Amos, the last one we had, where God has increased the suffering.

He says, "Are you getting it yet? I did this to you; are you getting it yet? I did this to you; are you getting it yet?"

Clearly it's an escalating process that He's using.

Question

That's George's theory of reverse sanctification.

Question

Is that a basis for Christian Science? I don't think Mary Patterson Glover Eddy thought that through that carefully. She was kind of her own thing. It's related to it in the sense that obviously no one likes suffering and obviously suffering is not normative to what the image of God in our hearts tells us. We are made in God's image. Strip it all out and every single human being is made in God's image and knows darn well what abnormality is like. This is why there is a horror over death. Why do we make - does your dog make an issue over death of his buddy like we do? There is something about death, sickness and sorrow that strike us. I think it's because we were made in God's image not for this world. This is not the kind of universe, this is not the kind of history that God designed us for.

Question

In Deuteronomy...

It's partly confusion from that. The idea is as you are saying that the Deuteronomic passage is national. What's the covenant? Was the covenant just individuals? The covenant is between God and the nation so this gets back to when you get into a contract - always go to the last page and look at the fine print. This is between God and the nation.

Remember, what was that nine-century period of human history all about? To show the human race a micro-picture of what the coming kingdom of God is going to be like and the demands that the coming kingdom of God will place on the human race. We are talking about when Jesus Christ comes back. This is the Tribulation...you know the Millennial Kingdom starts out with believers and winds up a mess.

People are probably going to say at the end of the Millennial Kingdom, "Gee that wasn't a very successful thing."

Well, same thing in Israel.

You could say, "Gee, that wasn't very successful. In 586 the whole thing went down the tubes."

But what was it? It was a demonstration of whose glory? Who kept the terms of the contract? God did. And who violated the terms of the contract? Man did. That shows that is a living 900-year testimony to the integrity of God. He is not going to compromise His integrity - period. That's why we have a gospel of Jesus Christ dying for our sins.

We don't say, "Ooo! I've got 15 ⚡ merits and that's going to be my good works."

That compromises His integrity. So I think the big message to pull away from Deuteronomy is it is a very sobering passage.

You see it and think, "That's My God; and He isn't going to change. That's the way He is."

Question

Okay she brings up an interest point. As you are reading through the suffering of the Old Testament prophets like Ezekiel in one sense it gives hope because it's predictable. See this is the problem.

The child psychologist tells you this problem. Every parent knows what happens when kids get to be two years old - the terrible twos. It happens all the time - maybe it happens at 3 or 1 ⚡ with some kids. But that's when the kid looks at you, you tell them not to do something (Don't touch that.) and they will look right at you and put their hand out to touch it.

You say, "For crying out loud. What's with this?"

It's because they're testing whether you mean what you say. Psychological studies by child psychologists have pointed out that if you don't follow through at that moment and show the child that you mean what you say; you breed in his soul a tremendous amount of insecurity because they are now living in an unpredictable environment. You can't erase predictability and have stability. That's what you're saying here.

There was hope in the sense that, "I understand now how we got here and I understand how we can get out of it." (The nation I'm talking about here.)

That's why someday in the future Israel is going to say, "Gee after all the mess of the Tribulation I think we need to check out Isaiah 53. We might have missed something back there."

They do that and Jesus comes back. See that's the hope that thank God He's predictable. Yes He suffers like this. Yes He's that kind of God; but it's not like it's random.

If we lived in Ur when Abraham lived in Ur, the way... if you read the documents of the ancient world - the stories like Gilgamesh Epic and these others. If you haven't done that sometime and you're curious how it all works out, go to the library and get out Gilgamesh Epic or get out Enuma Elish Epic and read that. What you'll see is that they sit there and they go through the cities.

Visualize you're in Ur. The city is flooded. The city is invaded. The city is destroyed by another city. Let's call it City B. The interpretation that the ancient pagan would give that crisis would be that the god of Ur lost out in the divine councils to the god of City B. That might be an explanation for it; but it doesn't help me. It doesn't, give me hope, does it because I can never tell who's going to lose out in the vote next Tuesday. See, there's no predictability. That's the world the pagans lived in. That's the world that thinking pagan's still live in today.

The world of the Bible is totally different. We have a predictable God. He's fierce. It is precisely His integrity that is the basis of stability. It's ironic.

Any other questions?

Because all worldviews are religious because they are total worldviews. In other words, what they're doing is they're defining religion to be Judeo-Christianity. Nothing else counts as a religion except Judeo-Christianity.

Question

On what do they base their science? Where are they getting the logic that supports that methodology? Where are they getting the uniformity such that on last Monday I do an experiment - next Monday I do the experiment and I can be assured that the laws of nature have not changed?

Question

Because we have a finite data set. It's limited. Not within our domain of observation. That still doesn't answer the question about $n+1$. You see the point of empiricism is that all knowledge is contingent. You're always waiting for the next shoe to drop. You have no reason - none whatsoever to argue that the $n+1$ data is going to fit the n pieces of data. None!

Because if you retreat back and you say, "Well, it's because it never has," that is begging the question. That's simply saying yes because you are assuming there is uniformity. But that's the question under discussion. Is there uniformity? All empirically based knowledge is contingent. It is not guaranteed.

The guy that developed this isn't even a Christian. The man who critiqued empiricism is an atheist, Briton, by the name of David Hume. David Hume argued that you can't know anything about nature. It's just the impressions you're getting up here in your mind and that you have no right to draw from those sequence causality. It was a tremendous thing that David Hume did. David Hume was a lethal thinker that way.

The only man that answered him was Immanuel Kant. David was in the U. K. and Immanuel Kant was over in Germany. Kant got so upset by what he saw in David Hume. Kant was a cosmologist before he was a philosopher. He realized when David Hume said what David Hume did; he said, "Man I have to answer this guy or all science falls apart."

The best that Kant could do is to make science a positing of the human mind.

Question

Well, what they argue - they've got a problem. Evolutionists have an internal contradiction. On the one hand they are arguing that all came from chance. They have to argue this way because otherwise it would be to confess a sovereignty. So they can't allow a sovereign. So they have got to deny the sovereign which leaves them in a sea of chaos. Out of chaos we somehow got order. So, we've had an evolutionary process. That alone would make us still an accident, a meaningless accident. We have no real knowledge and understanding of why this corresponds to that - why ideas correspond to nature. If nature is all there is and it's chance source and the neurons in my brain are a chance source, where do I get correspondence? Now I can observe correspondence; but I can't explain it on an evolutionary basis.

Then what happens is now the evolutionists are saying, "Oh well, but man has evolved so good that now man is in charge and man can determine things."

This actually is the Tower of Babel all over again.

Question

The problem we have here is that the atheists are disbelievers only in the God of Christianity. They are not disbelieving the god of nature. They resent being told they are religious because they have in their minds that religion is only Judeo-Christian.

The reason why their position is religious is because they're reinventing the attributes of God. They've got to have the attributes of God. They've got to have stability. They've got to have immutability. So they simply move the attribute of immutability from God to the creation. That's what Paul means when he says you worship the creature. You invest nature and your created entity with divine attributes. You have to do that because you can't subsist without it. So this is why idolatry has to have them.

This is the thing we are doing; in fact Andrea is going to do it Sunday with the environmental movement. The environmental movement is a fantastic modern example of religion in the public schools. Here we object to the students carrying a Bible in the public school and then we're talking about the green movement religion. Suddenly nature becomes valuable. Where did we get that? Nature is holy. Oh, now we've got the attribute of holiness. So we're bringing into the classroom by subterfuge and deceitfulness the attributes of God and we're only keeping them out when the Christians bring them in. But the atheists can bring them all en masse.

We have shot our time tonight but it's been a good discussion.