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Deuteronomy 28:1-68

New Year's Lesson 2009

Seven Divine Blessings for Prosperous and Joyous New Year

Introduction

Moses decreed that when the Hebrews came into the land of Canaan they were to perform an elaborate covenant renewal of their commitment found in Exodus 24:3, 7-8. This ceremony was to be carried out by two groups of six tribes each. Mount Ebal on the west and Mount Gerizim on the east are named in the directions for the reading of the law in Deuteronomy 11:26-32. These two mountains stood over against each other. Moses commanded half the people to stand on one of the mountains and half to stand on the other. The Ark of the Covenant superintended by the Levites was placed in the valley between them. Then the whole law of Moses along with the "blessings and curses" was recited. Those who stood on Gerizim recited the blessings, while those on Mt. Ebal responded by reciting the curses. Joshua 8:30-35 records the fulfillment of this instruction given by Moses.

Blessings are conditional and are presented over against the certainty of judgment for disobedience and disregarding the law. It is Romans 6:23 again in picture form. The blessing all are conditional, as stated in Deuteronomy 28:1, "If hearing you indeed shall hear with a mind to obey . . ." It wasn't just a ritual that produced positive results, it was a call to OBEDIENCE, which is the operative word to receive the blessings of God.

1. A Blessed place to live in peace and security, 28:3 - The promise of a blessed place to live, is the city or in the country, is contingent on obedience of the law of God, v. 1-2. The first city was built by Cain as an act of rebellion, Gen 4:12-13, 14-17. Cities have always been centers of criminal activity. May we recommit ourselves to the blessing of godliness in our land in 2009 so that the phrase "one nation under God," is more than a slogan.
2. A Blessed fruitfulness in the home, 28:4-5, 8, 11-12 - Note that child bearing and increase of the work of your hands are tied together in verses 4 and 5, the "basket, and kneading bowl," see also vv. 8, 11-12 and cf. Mal 3:10. The antithesis is found in inverted order in 28:17-18. Immorality in our culture today is mind boggling but a sign of the times, see 2 Tim 3:1-9. May God bless and protect the sanctity of the home He established, of human life He created in His own image, in 2009.
3. A Blessed arrival and departure, 28:6 - Coming in and going out is an anachronism for the living of life and for all we do. In all things we are to ask God to guide and bless our comings and goings at the beginning, in the middle, at all other points, and at the end of life. Look at verse 19 for the antithetical. The curse of disobedience continues in verses 20-24. May God bless the beginning and the ending of 2009.

4. A Blessed triumph over enemy oppression, 28:7 - The psalmist said, "Blessed is the nation whose God is Yahweh!" Ps 33:12, see 33:6-12; Ps 96:5; 1 Chron 16:26. Our nation was founded by Christian men on Christian principles based on the Word of God. But, now we have become a nation in which Yahweh, the God of the Bible, and Jesus, His only son, are no longer welcome and no longer sanctioned. God promised that enemies would come united against the godly and flee in disarray, v. 7. The opposite appears in 28:25 where the disobedient flee from the ungodly. May we turn to God in repentance and faith in 2009.
5. A Blessed land in which to live, 28:8 - God will bless the land that He is giving you. When the people of any nation seek to serve the Lord, His blessing on that nation is evident to all. Note that 28:20-63 provides a long list of examples of what it meant to Israel or to any nation to lose the blessing of God on the land. The current crisis in the land is evident that God's blessing is not on the land. God is knocking at the door of churches today asking to be let in again, Rev 3:20. May we seek His face in repentance in 2009.
6. A Blessed testimony to the world, 28:9-10 - Do you know why our enemies and our friends abroad hate us? It is because we used to be a nation of morality, modesty, honesty, truth, integrity, unity, and righteousness. But we are no longer that nation. Too many of our elected officials are corrupt. Israel was a holy nation, but Israel strayed and was chastened by the hand of their enemies and taken captive. Only when they repented and returned to Him were they restored to the land. May God help us to repent of our sins and seek great spiritual revival we need in 2009!
7. A Blessed leadership role in world affairs, 28:13 - America has been a world leader because we stood for something good. We were good because we were about the ideals of God laid out in His Word. We are on the cusp of an era when it will most likely be illegal in our country to preach or teach against base forms of ungodliness, homosexuality, pedophilia, bestiality, and worse. Such a nation will be an "astonishment, a proverb, and a byword" among all nations, see 28:37 and 28:45-48. God help us in 2009 to reclaim the moral standards our nation once held.