

Introduction: The good and perfect Creator God made people His final very good creation SO He could bless them in a continual close relationship with them. As long as people recognize He is the source of all that is good, they are blessed by The Covenant God. *** The ‘fly in the ointment’ that opposes God’s intention for creation is that people worship God’s creation, what they see, rather than the invisible Creator God (*Romans 1:25; Hebrews 11:24-27; 2 Corinthians 4:13-18; 5:7*). They have become futile in their reasoning and their foolish heart is darkened. (*Romans 1:21*). *** Forsaking God by worshipping idols leads to experiencing His curses rather than His blessings. The sad truth is: the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light (*John 3:19*). *** Today’s passage in Deuteronomy begins a long list of curses that come upon people who forsake God to follow after other ‘gods’ and idols. An idol is anything in our lives that distracts us from single-minded focus on God so we no longer love and obey Him with all that is in us. Every curse we heard reverses a blessing for living in obedient faith to God in the preceding section (*Deuteronomy 28:1-13*). *** The list of curses (*Deuteronomy 28:15-68*) is four times longer than the list of blessings. Many people believe God made the list of curses longer because the natural human tendency to forsake God and rebel against Him is stronger than the commitment to follow Him in daily taking up The Cross with Him. We all need to surrender our lives to Jesus The Redeemer who came as The Great Light to people walking in a land of deep darkness (*Isaiah 9:2; Matthew 4:12-17; Luke 1:76-79*). Let us examine our passage before looking into a prophet and an apostle:

I. Those who do not obey The Covenant God will be cursed and perish because they have forgotten Him. (Verses 15-21)

A. Those who do not keep all God’s commandments will be cursed in four ways. (*Verses 15-19*)

Context: The final blessing concluded with a warning not to go after other ‘gods’ to serve them. (*Verse 14*)

This would include not worshipping idols. (*Exodus 20:3-4; Deuteronomy 5:7-8*)

Disobedience: If they will not listen to Yahweh to keep all His commandments and statutes, these curses will come upon and overtake them. (*Verse 15*)

Cursed: A cursed person is bound up and excluded from blessing, brought low to abasement.

The curse comes upon the person from a more powerful person.

1. They will be cursed in the city and in the field. (*Verse 16*)

Everywhere: There is no place of escape. Where can I flee from Your Presence? (*Psalm 139:7-10*)

2. Their (bread) basket and kneading bowl will be cursed. (*Verse 17*)

Food: They will not even have the basic food of bread. (*Matthew 6:11; Luke 11:3*)

3. The fruit of their body, ground and animals will be cursed. (*Verse 18*)

Future: Without children, food or animals they have no future hope.

4. They will be cursed both in their coming in and going out. (*Verse 19*)

Activity: Every activity will be cursed, they will have no purpose or meaning in life.

B. Yahweh will send curses because you have forsaken Him until He has consumed you from the land. (*Verses 20-21*)

1. Yahweh will send on you curses, confusion and rebuke in all you do, until you are destroyed and you perish quickly because of your evil works because you have forsaken Me. (*Verse 20*)

Forsaking God: They have departed from the presence of God: neglecting and abandoning Him.

2. Yahweh will bring a plague upon them until He has consumed them from the land they were entering to possess. (*Verse 21*)

Consumed: They would be literally ‘eaten (alive)’, that is their body would waste away.

II. Yahweh will smite His idolatrous people in every way until they grope in darkness, continually oppressed – without a savior. (Verses 22-29)

A. They will be smitten by disease, nature and people – to death. (*Verses 22-26*)

1. Yahweh will smite them with consumption, fever, inflammation, and burning heat. (*Verse 22*)

Disease: First, Yahweh will strike their bodies with destroying disease.

2. Heaven over your head will be bronze, earth under you iron; Yahweh will make rain (to be) powder and dust from heaven will come down on you until you are destroyed. (*Verses 23-24*)

Nature: God will undo the fruitfulness of creation, devastating them to destruction.

3. Yahweh will have them stricken by their enemies; they will go out to them only to flee seven ways. (*Verse 25*)

People: Finally, Yahweh will give His people over to other people.

4. Their dead body will be food to birds and beasts. (*Verse 26*)

Death: The first result of Yahweh’s smiting them in judgment will be death to some.

B. They will be smitten in the body, mind and heart to darkness, continually oppressed – without a savior. (*Verses 27-29*)

1. Yahweh will smite them with the plague of boils of Egypt, hemorrhoids, and itchy scabs that cannot be healed. (*Verse 27*)

Body: Yahweh will also bring painful conditions over all the skin on their body.

2. Yahweh will smite you with madness. (*Verse 28a*)

Mind: He will overtake their mind with wild, helpless panic. Two examples are: Jehu’s chariot driving as he was wiping out Ahab’s line (*2 Kings 9:20*) and when David sought to escape from King Achish (*1 Samuel 21:14-15*). Here, Yahweh will make the mind of idolaters frantically useless.

3. And He will make them to have a bewildered heart. (*Verse 28bc*)

Heart: A healthy heart gives life to the body (*Proverbs 14:30*); but, when understanding is darkened and the heart is blind (to God) people become alienated from Him (*Ephesians 4:18*).

4. They will grope at midday as in darkness and will not prosper but only be oppressed and continually robbed. (*Verse 29a-c*)

Darkness: This paragraph graphically describes the curse of darkness on idolaters.

Idolatry brings the curse of darkness from God

5. And NO savior! (*Verse 29d*)

Un-saved: They had turned their back on The ONLY One who could save them from these curses.

Since we all worship false 'gods' we all need The Savior, Jesus, to redeem us from the curse.

We all need redemption from the curse

III. The Redeemer in the prophets and the apostles.

Prophets and apostles: We must remember the words spoken by the prophets and the apostles of The Lord (*2 Peter 3:1-2*).

The Church is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Jesus Christ as the chief cornerstone (*Ephesians 2:19-20*).

A. In love and mercy Yahweh redeems His people, even after they rebel and grieve Him. (*Isaiah 63:7-17*)

1. The prophet will remember Yahweh's steadfast LOVE given to Israel in His compassion. (*Verse 7*)

Grace: Steadfast LOVE, goodness and compassion are all gracious gifts from God to His children.

2. He became Savior to His people, afflicted in their affliction, to redeem in love and pity. (*Verses 8-9*)

Redemption: God's people needed redemption for the curse for idolatry because they were exiles.

We all need redemption from the curse

3. They rebelled against His Holy Spirit, and He fought them as their enemy; they remembered the days of Moses and asked where is the wonder working God? (*Verses 10-14*)

Rebellion: By the time of divided kingdom all but a remnant of Israel's children forsook Yahweh.

Memory: But God's Spirit made them remember the wondrous redemption from slavery under Moses.

Where is God?: Their questions were misguided. God never moves. They're not where they belong.

4. The prophet asks Yahweh to see from His holy place and questions His compassion and zeal; then calling Him Redeemer he confesses His people do not resemble the patriarchs; why did You harden us to stray from Your way, return for Your servants' sake and restore Your Sanctuary. (*Verses 15-18*)

Petition: Isaiah requests Yahweh see His people's plight and desires to experience His compassion.

Redeemer: By calling Him Redeemer, he is requesting redemption for His wayward people.

Turn: He is asking Yahweh to turn, and return, to them so they may turn to Him in repentance.

5. We have become like those you never ruled, and You Name is not on us. (*Verse 19*)

Dark heart: Their hard, dark hearts cannot submit to God's rule and they have lost their Covenant relationship with Him. They confess they deserve the curse because they serve other 'gods' and idols.

Idolatry brings the curse of darkness from God

B. Being fixed on grace IN Jesus Christ delivers from lust by redemption with His Blood. (*1 Peter 1:13-24*)

1. Be sober, hope in the grace brought of The Savior, not being conformed to former lusts. (*Verses 13-14*)

Warning: As all people, these people now IN Christ by grace were living before in all the lusts of darkness, serving whatever their hearts desired. They were cursed of God.

Idolatry brings the curse of darkness from God

2. Because God who called you is Holy, you are to live in holiness as He is Holy. (*Verses 15-16*)

Be holy: As our world becomes more evil, we must be holy as God is Holy by standing for and promoting life and morality. Then we will be light in darkness, just as our Savior is Light in darkness.

3. As we call on the Father who judges impartially, we must fear, knowing we are redeemed from our useless way of life by The Blood of The spotless Lamb, The Messiah. (*Verses 17-19*)

Blood redeems: We are redeemed by surrendered, obedient, faith in the death of The Savior for us.

We all need redemption from the curse

4. He was foreknown before Creation, but revealed in The Church Age to those who believe in God who raised Him from the dead, so that our faith and hope is in God. (*Verses 20-21*)

Faith and hope: Anyone who believes in himself is a fool! The ONLY One to have faith and hope in is The Covenant Creator God who became human to save us from the darkness that is in our hearts.

5. Our souls being purified in the obedience of The Truth, we must earnestly love one another from innocent hearts because we've been born again by the living, enduring Word of God. (*Verses 22-23*)

Word: The Holy Spirit gave God's Word so people may be redeemed by receiving new birth into faithful obedience to God. Until redeemed we are under the curse on people giving in to ungodly lust.

We all need redemption from the curse

6. Life without God's redemption dries up and falls away like flowers and grass of the field. (*Verse 24*)

Wither away: This is where our Deuteronomy passage ended. On our own we are inclined to serve other 'gods' and idols in the darkness of our hearts. This leaves us cursed of God.

Idolatry brings the curse of darkness from God

CALL: Are you sure you have received God's redemption from rebellion and lust bought by the life-blood of The Savior Jesus?

If not, you must recognize the darkness in your heart and admit you need God. Then you must decide you want to live for God and His desires rather than you and your desires. Then, you must be convinced God sent Jesus to die for you in your place and He rose from the dead to give you His life. Next, admit your failure to God, tell Him you want to live His way, and ask to be forgiven and cleansed by Jesus' death to receive His resurrected life. Ask Him to help you live in surrendered obedient faith every day of your life.

Conclusion: All who do not obey The Covenant God will perish because they have forsaken Him with idols. They will be smitten in every way, cursed to grope in darkness without a Savior.

Idolatry brings the curse of darkness from God