

## Bible Study – Deuteronomy Chapter 27 – Renewing the Covenant

In our last study, we finished up the last of the statutes and ordinances that were given to the Israelites by God through Moses. Chapters 12-26 are an exposition of the Ten Commandments, given in specific laws, statutes, and ordinances that were to govern how the Israelites were to live, specifically with God and their fellow man. This was not only a path to righteous living and a way to obey God, but also a means to glorify Him. It was also to be a testimony to the surrounding nations so they could see the one true and holy God who is worthy of worship and praise. With these laws, we see the blessings that come with obedience and the curses and punishment that come with disobedience.

In our study tonight, we look at the next steps Israel is to take to 'seal' the covenant promises and to commit their lives to it.

### Read Deuteronomy 27:1-8

Moses and the elders of Israel command the people to keep the entire commandments that were given to them today and to set up large stones, plastered with plaster, and to write the words of the law on them in the town of Shechem. They are also to build an altar to the Lord God, where they were to offer burnt offerings and to sacrifice peace offerings to Him.

**Q. (1-4)** Read Deuteronomy 11:29-30. How are these verses connected with our passage today? What was the purpose for erecting these monuments on Mount Ebal (hint: think about signs)?

**Q. (5-8)** What do you think the purpose of the altar was at Mount Ebal (cf. Exodus 24:4-8)? What is the purpose of using uncut stones for the altar (cf. Exodus 20:24-25)? What is the significance of building an altar in this city (cf. Genesis 12:6-7)?

### Read Deuteronomy 27:9-26

Moses confirms the covenant with the people of Israel and then proceeds to separate the tribes of Israel into two groups, to be gathered on both Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal. Those on Mount Gerizim would stand for the blessings and those on Mount Ebal would stand for the curses. There are 12 curses that are pronounced, which are based on specific acts. These are the beginning of the curses that Moses lays on the people should they be disobedient.

**Q. (9-10)** How is oath taking by this current generation of Israel like the previous generation (cf. Exodus 19:8)? Why do you think this is significant for the current generation? How can we put this in context for Christians today (cf. Romans 10:9-10)?

**Q. (11-13)** Read Joshua 8:30-35 - When reading both passages together, what does this show us about God and Israel? What do you think the significance (if any) of the separation of the tribes of Israel to the two mountains (cf. Genesis 46:8-25)?

**Q. (14-26)** As you read the curses in these passages, identify each one to the corresponding Ten Commandment. Why do you think these acts were chosen? What do you think the unifying theme is amongst these violations?

**Q.** In verses 15-26, as the curses are read, the people of Israel say "Amen", as a way of acknowledging the law to be followed and the punishment for disobedience. As Christians, can we say "Amen" to all the commands that God has given us to live by? Which ones are the hardest to say "Amen" to?

God is refreshing his covenant with this generation of Israel. The monuments and altars are not just a symbol for the other nations around them, but also as a memorial for the people of Israel, to remember what was promised on this day. God, through the Levitical priests, pronounce curses to Israel, 12 in all, presumably one for each tribe of Israel. Though not specifically assigned to any one tribe, it is given as a reminder that all of Israel is to live in obedience to God's word. As we look at these acts of disobedience, whether we are alone or in public, the people of Israel (and to us Christians) are to live holy lives because God always sees how we act, and nothing is hidden from him.