



The First 40 Days

Seek God and Restore Everything

A 40-Day Journey with Glenn Beck

STUDIES 11-15

ELEVEN

BLESSINGS AND CURSES

Deuteronomy 11:26-32

See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you today, and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside from the way that I am commanding you today, to go after other gods that you have not known.

A blessing if you obey, a curse if you don't.

Maybe you're wondering, "I thought God was loving. Why would He curse anyone?"

Think of it this way: God designed the natural law of our world. If you jump off a cliff, you fall. If you eat a poisonous mushroom, you die. Is that gravity cursing you? Is the mushroom being vindictive?

They are only functioning as designed. They are obeying natural law.

Most of nature obeys natural law, except us. We rebel. We scrutinize God's commands asking, "Why?" But what we really mean is, "What's in it for me?"

Why can't we just live anyway we want to?

You will not do things the way we do them here today, where everyone does whatever in his own opinion seems right; because you haven't yet arrived at the rest and inheritance which The Lord your God is giving you.

DEUTERONOMY 12:8-9

God promises that one day we will have His instructions written on our heart and everyone will know God.

For this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days," says The Lord, "I will put my law within them and write it on their hearts; I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will any of them teach his fellow community member or his brother, 'Know The Lord'; for all will know me, from the least of them to the greatest; because I will forgive their wickednesses and remember their sins no more."

JEREMIAH 31:33-34

But, like Israel, we have not yet arrived. Many still don't know God, and most of us do whatever is "right" in our own minds. We play God. We assume we understand the complexities of the universe God created.

We think, "I know why God made that command. I know what he REALLY meant. I can ignore that law but not suffer the consequences." By doing so, we oppose God's natural law and set ourselves up for curses.

Metaphorically, we jump off a cliff. Then when we fall we say, "Why did God curse me?" When, in reality, we cursed ourselves.

In the book of Numbers is the story of Balaam the prophet. He was asked by an evil king (Balak) to curse the people of Israel. But every time he tried to curse them, he blessed them instead. When the king rebuked him, the prophet said,

How can I curse those whom God has not cursed?

How can I denounce those whom the Lord has not denounced?

NUMBERS 23:8

He couldn't curse them. But he could encourage them to curse themselves.

Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: you have some people who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to set a trap for the people of Israel, so that they would eat food that had been sacrificed to idols and commit sexual sin.

REVELATION 2:14

Balaam set up a trap for the people of Israel by enticing them to sin, thus cursing themselves.

God warns us about sin because he loves us; because he wants us to choose life.

I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live.

DEUTERONOMY 30:19

So that you may live! Like a parent who doesn't allow her baby to walk into a busy street (even when the baby really feels like he should be able to), God's commands are to save our lives.

In Deuteronomy 27, the people of Israel ascend both the mountain of blessing and the mountain of cursing.

As you read, notice that no one was assigned to stand in-between the two mountains. It was either blessings or curses. There was no neutral territory.

So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth.

REVELATION 3:16

 **Deuteronomy 27 and 28**

▶ **TOMORROW:** SIGNS AND WONDERS

Consider This.

Answer the questions below. Then, if you can, discuss your answers with a friend.

Why do you think more verses are dedicated to the curses rather than the blessings?

Be Honest.

What is your relationship to God's commands? Do you believe God institutes commands because he loves you or to restrict you?

Do you only keep God's commands to receive blessings in return or simply because you love God?

Is it necessary for you to understand the intent behind a command before you will keep it?

TWELVE

SIGNS AND WONDERS

In Genesis, God gave us signs to discern time.

God said, “Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to divide the day from the night; let them be for signs, seasons, days and years;

GENESIS 1:14

God described his work in Egypt as “signs and wonders.”

Even though I will increase my signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, Pharaoh will not listen to you.

EXODUS 7:3

The disciples of Jesus worked signs and wonders.

Everyone was filled with awe, and many miracles and signs took place through the emissaries.

ACTS 2:43

Signs and wonders are undeniably used by God and His people throughout the Bible, yet in the book of John, Jesus asks for faith without any signs or wonders.

 **John 4:46-54**

The man in this story believed Jesus before he went home and saw that his son was really alive. The lesson is the power of trust without witnessing any—not one single—sign or wonder in our lifetimes.

In fact, the Bible warns against the sway of false signs and wonders.

 **Deuteronomy 13:1-5**

(In some translations: Deuteronomy 13:1-6)

 **Matthew 16:1-4**

A wicked and adulterous generation looks for a sign but none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.

You may remember from our earlier studies that covenants come with signs. For example, the sign of Jonah pointed to the burial and resurrection of Messiah. But not all signs were supernatural.

God said to Abraham, “As for you, you are to keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you, generation after generation. Here is my covenant, which you are to keep, between me and you, along with your descendants after you: every male among you is to be circumcised. You are to be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin; this will be the sign of the covenant between me and you.

GENESIS 17:9-11

The Israelites are to observe the Sabbath, celebrating it for the generations to come as a lasting covenant. It will be a sign between me and the Israelites forever, for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.

EXODUS 31:16-17

In the case of circumcision and Sabbath, the sign of the covenant was obedience. Think of that. The people of the covenant were identified by their behavior. They were the sign.

That hasn't changed.

The “wicked and adulterous generation asking for the sign” neglected being the sign.

In Deuteronomy 13, God warned the Israelites of those who may lead them astray with signs and wonders. Even if the prophet or dreamer predicts the future accurately, still God says they are false if they draw you to disobedience—if they seduce you into acting in ways not authorized by God.

At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Messiah!’ or, ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you ahead of time.

MATTHEW 24: 23-25

Under what conditions can even the elect be deceived? How could they become so desperate for signs and wonders that even they go astray from God? What about the average person, how could they avoid deception?

If God’s people are identified by their obedience, can a non-believer identify you? Can they look at your life and see the faithfulness of God? Are you a living sign of God, or are you still looking for signs?

Maybe the “sign and wonder” someone needs to see today is your obedience.

► TOMORROW: LOOK DOWN

In The Word.

Read Matthew 7:15-23 and Journal Your Response.

You recognize others by their fruit but that is also how others recognize you.

Imagine someone is watching you on a typical day.

What “fruit” do they see you produce?

THIRTEEN

LOOK DOWN

Deuteronomy 29

I led you forty years in the desert. Neither the clothes on your body nor the shoes on your feet wore out. You didn't eat bread, and you didn't drink wine or other intoxicating liquor; this was so that you would know that 'I am Adonai your God.'...Therefore, observe the words of this covenant and obey them; so that you can make everything you do prosper.

DEUTERONOMY 29: 5-6

In the Bible, when you see a “therefore,” ask yourself, “What is it there for?” In this verse, “therefore” plays a crucial role.

At the top of the verse, God reminds His people to consider God's hand in their lives: “Look at all you've been through, yet your shoes are just fine. You think you did that by yourself?”

God brought His people through. They couldn't do it alone.

Neither can we.

Therefore, "Observe the words of this covenant and obey them."

God has sustained us; therefore we obey his commands—not because we believe doing so makes us good, but rather because God is good.

We obey His commands as a love response to a perfect God who sustains us in our own wilderness.

All of you are standing today in the presence of the Lord your God—your leaders and chief men, your elders and officials, and all the other men of Israel, together with your children and your wives, and the foreigners living in your camps who chop your wood and carry your water. You are standing here in order to enter into a covenant with the Lord your God...

DEUTERONOMY 29:10-13

The Hebrew word "ger," sojourner (see Day 8) appears again in this verse. Even the Gentiles living among the Israelites entered into this covenant.

Everyone in the presence of God had the opportunity, even the obligation, to enter into Covenant with Him. No matter their heritage, social status, occupation, or age; in this moment, they were one before God.

If there is such a person, when he hears the words of this curse, he will bless himself secretly, saying to himself, 'I will be all right, even though I will stubbornly keep doing whatever I feel like doing; so that I, although "dry," [sinful], will be added to the "watered" [righteous].' But The Lord will not forgive him. Rather, the anger and jealousy of The Lord will blaze up against that person. Every curse written in this book will be upon him.

DEUTERONOMY 29:19-20

We are all fighting the urge to do whatever we "feel like doing." But God is warning us that pride really does come before the fall. This is not God being vindictive (See Day 11). This is mercy. This is a warning.

Wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow is the road that leads to life, and only few find it.

MATTHEW 7:13

Fear of The Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Proverbs 9:10) but it is love that truly draws us to obedience.

We obey God because we look down and see our shoes have not worn out. We look down and remember that God is sustaining us.

But maybe you feel like you just can't obey God. Maybe you're afraid it's too much for you.

▶ **TOMORROW:** WHAT'S WITHIN YOUR REACH

Point, Counterpoint.

**Answer the question below using the Bible to make your case.
Then, also using the Bible, make the opposite case..**

Does this covenant apply to you?

FOURTEEN

WITHIN YOUR REACH

Deuteronomy 30


Embedded within this chapter is a “Big If.”

Then the Lord your God will make you most prosperous in all the work of your hands and in the fruit of your womb, the young of your livestock and the crops of your land. The Lord will again delight in you and make you prosperous, just as he delighted in your ancestors, if you obey the Lord your God and keep his commands and decrees that are written in this Book of the Law and turn to the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

DEUTERONOMY 30: 9-10

Let’s zero in on four words in this passage: “keep,” “turn,” “heart,” and “soul.”

The Hebrew word translated as “keep” is the word “shamar.” It means “to guard, watch, and preserve.” This is the job God gave to Adam in the Garden of Eden.



The Lord, God, took the person and put him in the garden of 'Eden to cultivate and care for it (shamar).'

GENESIS 2:15

“Turn” is the Hebrew word “shuv” which means “turn back” or “return.” This is the Hebraic conception of repentance: when you are walking down a bad path, turn and return to God.

“Heart” is much more than heart as we understand it. The word “lev” means “your heart, mind, will, and inner man.” It is everything inside of you that drives you forward and makes decisions. Like all of Hebrew, it’s not about just your feelings. It’s about what you do. Thus the heart isn’t the center of your emotions; it’s the center of your behavior.

Your “soul” – “nephesh” – is the spring of your desires, appetites, emotions, and very life. It’s everything you want and are.

In Deuteronomy, God is saying that He wants you to turn back, throw yourself at His feet, and offer Him everything you do and everything you are.

Yet, He says that isn’t too hard for you.

For this commandment which I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it far away. It is not in heaven, that you could say, 'Who will go up to heaven for us and get it for us, and proclaim it to us, so that we may follow it?' Nor is it beyond the sea, that you could say, 'Who will cross the sea for us and get it for us and proclaim it to us, so that we may follow it?' On the contrary, the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may follow it.

DEUTERONOMY 30:11-14

Not only that, He says that following Him and His commands is "the purpose of your life" (Deuteronomy 30:20).

Giving yourself completely to God is the reason you were born. You weren't born to be famous, successful, respected, admired, wealthy, or powerful. You were born to serve God, and you don't need to travel up to the stars or down into the ocean to do that.

When Jesus was asked when the Kingdom of Heaven was coming, he said,

The kingdom of God is not coming with signs that can be observed; nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or, 'There it is!' For behold, the kingdom of God is among you.

LUKE 17:20-21

You don't have to go anywhere to see the Kingdom of Heaven. You just have to give everything away—your mind, heart, desires, soul, passions, actions, will and life—and the Kingdom of Heaven will reveal itself to you.

▶ **TOMORROW:** A SONG, A WITNESS

Think Literally and Use the Bible as Your Source.

Consider this: The Bible often has literal and spiritual meanings at the same time, and one understanding doesn't cancel out the other.

What land and what people is God talking to and about at the beginning of Deuteronomy 30?

Has the reverse of the exile of God's people not happened yet? Is it happening currently? Or has it already happened?

Hint: The answer you propose may include one, two, or even all three of the above options.

FIFTEEN

A SONG, A WITNESS

The covenant God made with Abraham established a land and a people. Then the covenant with Moses taught the people how to relate to each other and to God. Unlike the covenant with Abraham, it came with conditions that must be met to remain in the covenant.

Although the covenant with Abraham remained intact, God foretold that the people of Israel would fall into disobedience and break the covenant made with Moses. Before his death, God told Moses what would happen in the future.

 **Deuteronomy 31:14-18**

The Bible says that Moses wrote down all the words in what is now the first five books of the Bible. He had it placed next to the Ark of the Covenant as a witness against the people, for Moses knew they would rebel against God's instructions after his death.

But there was another witness: a song which Moses taught the people of Israel before his death.

Deuteronomy 32

The song opens with beautiful prose, saying:

Hear, oh heavens, as I speak!

Listen, earth, to the words from my mouth!

May my teaching fall like rain.

May my speech condense like dew,

like light rain on blades of grass,

or showers on growing plants.

DEUTERONOMY 32: 1-2

After calling upon two witnesses—heaven and earth—God says, “I will meet you where you are.” If we are young in our walk of faith, like a small blade of grass, God's teaching falls like light rain. But as we grow, we will be showered—drenched— with His word.

Then God reminds us where true corruption lies:

He is not corrupt, the defect is in his children.

DEUTERONOMY 32:5

How many people see a person of God lie, cheat, or steal, and thus reject God on the account of man's sin? But God clarifies here that He is perfect; it's His people—all of us—who cause all the trouble.

Then he presents a solution to our corruption:

Remember how the old days were; think of the years through all the ages.

DEUTERONOMY 32:7

Jeremiah puts it this way:

Thus says the Lord, "Stand by the roads and look; ask for the ancient paths, Where the good way is; then walk in it, And you will find rest for your souls..

JEREMIAH 6:16

"Walk in the ancient paths" is another way to say, "Return to God." His commands—instructions—are the good way, and we walk together with God in love.

Later, the song takes a dark turn, warning us about the consequences when we break a covenant with God. It's an uncomfortable section, but Moses tells the people to "take it to heart." Not only that, but to teach it to their children.

The children need to learn about both the kindness and severity of God because, as God said to the people of Israel, the word of God is “not a trivial matter. It is your life.”

It was no doubt Moses’s life.

Deuteronomy 34

In Genesis God limited human life to 120 years.

My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years.

GENESIS 6:3

Moses lived as long as a man could live, and, as the Bible says, his vigor was undiminished. After dedicating his life to God’s service, He died with his boots on.

Yet, Moses does not enter the promised land but only sees it from a distance because, as the Bible says, he broke faith with God and failed to demonstrate God’s holiness to the people. Even Moses, the man seen standing next to Jesus himself on the Mount of Transfiguration (Luke 9:30) was held responsible for his disobedience.

Still, his life and legacy has imprinted itself into the collective consciousness of humanity. His name is still synonymous with freedom from tyranny and a deep connection to God. Moses's legacy shone so brightly amongst America's founding fathers that Benjamin Franklin proposed our national seal showcase an image of Moses parting the sea.

But Moses's story also draws us towards obedience—beckoning us to take our freedom, given from heaven, and give it right back again in total submission to God.

► **TOMORROW:** DAVID