

Date : 14 April 2024
Theme : Guarding our covenantal relationship with God
Topic : Knowing the magnanimous Father heart of God
Key passage : *Deuteronomy 28: 1 - 14*
Key verse : *...If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all His commands I give you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. All these blessings will come upon you and accompany you if you obey the Lord your God... Deuteronomy 28:1,2 niv*

Introduction

Today, in our study of *Deuteronomy 28*, we will see the contrast in the Lord's language between His blessings and curses. How He uses superlatives to describe His blessings.

1. What are the Lord's simple conditions for blessings?
2. How does the Lord God speak of His magnanimous blessings?
3. What are some common misunderstandings regarding the God's faithfulness?

With the loss of family values over the past 50 years, especially that of relating to fathers, many adults who become Christians carry into their relationship with Father God, a distrust and an inability to focus on the love and good intentions of the Lord God. Many indeed find it hard to grasp the magnanimity of God's heart when it comes to His blessings with His covenantal people. The book of *Deuteronomy*, which we have been our focus of study, pulsates with the Father heart of God. In it, God is revealing His love and appealing to the hearts of His children.

Is the Lord really generous with us? Have we misunderstood the Lord as one waiting to 'whack' us for mistakes we make?

Blessings always carries conditions. So *Deuteronomy 28* begins with **IF**. This **IF** appears in various places in *Deuteronomy 28*.

1. What are the Lord's simple conditions for blessings?

a) The Lord uses **IF** (I Fully) which is repeated 4 times in this chapter

- i) *...if fully obey*
- ii) *...follow all... Deuteronomy 28:1*
- iii) *...listen, pay attention, heed... Deuteronomy 28:13*
- iv) *...not turn aside (from any word of the Lord)... Deuteronomy 28:14*

b) Remember His Words

These words (commandments) shall be in your hearts (= retain, repeat, reproduce) *Deuteronomy 6:6*

c) Choose *Deuteronomy 11:26 - 28*

*...Behold I set before you today a blessing and a curse...
...the blessing, if you obey the commandments...
...the curse, if you do not obey.*

2. How does the Lord God speak of His magnanimous blessings?

a) The Lord speaks in superlatives.

The word **all** is repeated again and again.

The Lord desires that we experience **all** His blessings.

Do count the number of times **all** is used in this passage.

*The Lord will set you high **above all** nations...*

***All** these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you... Deuteronomy 28:1, 2*

*...The Lord will command the blessings on you in your storehouses and in **all** to which you set your hands,... Deuteronomy 28:8*

*...bless **all** the work of your hand.... Deuteronomy 28:12*

b) The Lord demonstrates His magnanimity and is active in the work of blessing us.

His 7-fold acts are:

i) Set you high above all nations *Deuteronomy 28:1*

ii) Grant you (dedicate) – victory against enemies *Deuteronomy 28:7*
– abundant prosperity (productive fruits)

iii) Send a blessing on everything you do. *Deuteronomy 28:8*

iv) Establish you as His Holy people *Deuteronomy 28:9*

v) Bless you in the land; send rain, bless all the work of your hand *Deuteronomy 28:12*

vi) Open the heavens (all 3 of them); His bountiful storehouse *Deuteronomy 28:12*

vii) Make you the head, not the tail; always the top, not the bottom *Deuteronomy 28:13*

c) The Lord's blessings are extensive:

i) Everywhere you go, in the city or countryside *Deuteronomy 28:3*

ii) Every direction you take, coming in or going out *Deuteronomy 28:6*

iii) Everything you do. *Deuteronomy 28:8, 12*

iv) Always at the top, never at the bottom *Deuteronomy 28:13*

3. What are some common misunderstandings regarding the God's faithfulness?

a) If the Lord is such a magnanimous Blessor, is this for real?

The prophet Isaiah's advice to his skeptical country men was *...Look to Abraham... Isaiah 51:2*

Didn't God fulfil these blessings in his life?

- We cannot experience His abundance without faith in His promises.

b) If the Lord is faithful, does that mean no curse for me, and only blessings will come my way?

In His faithfulness, He will bless covenant keepers.

(He is also faithful to "reward" covenant breakers in the form of curses).

c) Why does the Lord spell out more curses than blessings?

The Lord wants us to experience His magnanimous blessings. He knows what carnal attitude and sin will void or block the flow of blessing. This is why *Deuteronomy 28* lists 53 curses as warnings. By paying heed to the warnings, we can take hold of the blessings.

d) Does the Lord bless or curse arbitrarily?

No! It's actually our choice that determines the result of blessing or curses.

Application

Why do we face difficulties in believing in the Lord's magnanimous offer to bless us?

a) We want the blessings without the Blessor

- We neglect to keep a Father-son relationship with the Lord.

We forget the Lord's blessings come from relating with Him.

Like the children of Israel, our relationship with the Lord, from start to finish, is governed by grace – when He redeemed them from Egypt by His great power, followed by giving them the land as a gift, in keeping with His ancient promises.

(Deuteronomy chapters 1 - 4 gives an account of God's gracious treatment of Israel in their journey).

- We do not sense the Father's heart.

3 picture phrases are used to depict the Lord's fatherly responsibility to those He calls His own.

- His care for us all the way...*as a father carries his son, all the way until you reach this place...*

Deuteronomy 1:31

- His chastening (=to bring up, to discipline) is for character-training.

...know then... that as a man chastens his son, so the Lord your God chastens you... Deuteronomy 8:5

- His pride in His sons...*chosen you...for Himself...a special treasure. Deuteronomy 14:1, 2*

(as a father the son He delights in... Proverbs 3:12). Our lives will showcase His glory.

b) We cannot see the Lord as a God of blessing because of our sin.

While Deuteronomy confronts us with the Lord who is not like us (for He is zealous for holiness, terrifying in His judgements, yet profoundly gracious to His covenantal people), the book also confronts us with ourselves – our sin, our tendency to idolatry, empty boasts and inability to keep God's laws and not walk in His ways.

c) We do not like the warnings

But warnings are necessary so that we avoid the roadblocks to blessings. For instance, as part of the covenant we pledge to serve God. So in Deuteronomy 28:45-47, warns us that if we refuse to serve Him in times of our prosperity, we will end up serving our enemies in dire poverty.