

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Deuteronomy: Moses' Great Appeal For Israel To Obey God For Blessing

Part VI: Treaty Blessings And Cursings, Deuteronomy 27-28

B. Overcoming Our Vulnerability To Easy Sins

(Deuteronomy 27:14-26 et al.)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Any human being can struggle with temptation if secrecy, a lack of accountability or bad peer pressure makes it easy for us to sin, a fact we can readily illustrate (as follows):

(1) Secrecy can make committing a sin easy for us to do: The March 24, 2014 Republican-American lead story by Paul Singley, "Millions still missing", p. 1A, told how Oxford, Connecticut recently learned that its former Tax Collector, Karen Guillet, stole money over 30 years of being in office because she had access to covering her thefts through inadequate auditor activity. Yet, after stealing for three decades, secrecy still led this woman to continue to sin: in court, "Guillet, 64, pleaded guilty to first-degree larceny after admitting to stealing \$242,903" before it was learned that \$3.56 million is still missing from her department's accounts for the time she was in office!

(2) If a party lacks accountability in some realm of his experience, it is easy for him to sin there: The Wall Street Journal, March 24, 2014, p. A15 ran Ruchir Sharma's op-ed, "Putin's Potemkin Economy" that told how after "Mr. Putin became president in 2000, he began working to end the political turmoil and inflation that gripped Russia under Boris Yeltsin. He managed the economy responsibly, getting control of the government budget and retiring debts. Rising global oil prices and easy money did the rest . . . **But he grew complacent and cocky** . . . President George W. Bush told me in an interview, Mr. Putin in private conversations morphed from a leader who worried about Russia's debt to one who by 2008 taunted the U. S. for having too much debt. He went from saving oil profits in a rainy-day fund to spending them to cement his power . . ." [emphases ours]

Regardless of this shift in Mr. Putin's demeanor, no one has effectively held him accountable, so Mr. Putin has found it easy not only to run his own land in an increasingly self-serving, reckless way, but also to invade Crimea.

(3) Bad peer pressure makes it easy for one to sin as seen in the public's changing view on the issue of godless same-sex marriage, a marital state that is constantly pushed by the government and the mainstream media. The Wall Street Journal, Ibid., p. A4 (Matthew Dolan, "Same-Sex Marriages On Hold in Michigan"), noted: "In 2004, nearly 60% of voters approved a state constitutional ban on gay marriage. But a Michigan State University poll conducted in February found 54% of state residents favor the right to same-sex marriage compared with 36% opposed."

Need: *So we ask, "How can I not sin if secrecy, a lack of accountability or bad peer pressure make it easy to sin?!"*

- I. **The Deuteronomy 27-28 blessings and curses segment of the book of Deuteronomy, typical of ancient Near Eastern suzerain treaty formats, includes specific curses listed in Deuteronomy 27:14-26.**
- II. **This list OMITTS any BLESSINGS, but lists ONLY CURSES on sins committed either in SECRET, or with a LACK of ACCOUNTABILITY or due to BAD PEER PRESSURE, revealing GOD was CONCERNED at how THESE ATTENDING CIRCUMSTANCES could EASILY lead ISRAEL to SIN:**
 - A. Four of the curses deal with sins committed in **secret**: Deuteronomy 27:14-15 cursed one who committed idolatry in secret, verse 17 cursed one who secretly moved his neighbor's landmark, verse 24 cursed one who secretly committed murder and verse 25 cursed one who secretly hired another party to commit a murder.
 - B. Four of the curses deal with sins committed under **peer pressure**:
 1. Israel was about to enter Canaan where its pagans were notorious for many and great immoral vices (cf. Lev. 18:1-23, 24-25), so Israel would face great peer pressure to commit many great immoral deeds.
 2. Thus, Deuteronomy 27:20, 22-23 cursed one who committed incest with his stepmother or with his sister or with his mother-in-law, and verse 21 cursed one who committed bestiality.
 - C. Four of the curses deal with sins committed with a **lack of accountability**: Deuteronomy 27:16 cursed one who dishonored his parents, what one does if he fails to learn to respect them, verse 18 cursed one who misled a blind person who was helpless to hold the one leading him accountable to lead him aright, verse 19 cursed one who perverted justice for aliens, orphans and widows, people with little or no ability to insure they got justice in a patristic society and verse 26 cursed one who in complacency failed to heed the entire law.
- III. **To COMBAT the impact of the presence of SECRECY, a LACK of ACCOUNTABILITY and BAD PEER PRESSURE that made it easy for one to sin, the CONTEXT presented a FORMAT for OVERCOMING TEMPTATION:**

- A. First, **GOD'S** call that Israel state *curses* in the ritual taught her she was *not hidden from but exposed to HIM, not immune from but vulnerable to HIM and not helpless but equipped by HIM to overcome temptation*:
1. Speaking a **curse** in the Ancient Near East signaled a **divine disciplinary** action, *Ibid.*, *Z. P. E. B.*, p. 1045.
 2. So, by the **curses** on secret sins, Israel was to know **God** was *omniscient*, knowing all things (Ps. 139:1-6) and *omnipresent*, existing everywhere at once (Ps. 139:7-13), so secret sins were **NOT secret to HIM!**
 3. So, by the curses on sins via lack of accountability, Israel was to know **God** was *omnipotent*, all-powerful (Gen. 18:14), and *sovereign* (Ps. 115:2-3), that she was *infinitely vulnerable and accountable to Him!*
 4. So, by the curses on sins done due to bad peer pressure, Israel was to know God was **greater than all bad peer groups** (Jer. 1:18-19), so **all** were **responsible to trust Him** to handle **bad peer pressure**, Jer. 1:7-8.
- B. Second, the **directive** for **Israel's FUNCTION** in the blessings and curses **RITUAL** offers **PRACTICAL HUMAN ACTIONS toward OVERCOMING temptations to commit sins EASILY (as follows)**:
1. Israel was to **congregate** as a nation on Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal, Deut. 27:12-14. In like manner, we in the Church are not to forsake regular Church attendance for our mutual edification, Hebrews 10:25.
 2. Israel was to have the Levites, the **teachers of God's Word** (Mal. 2:7-8; Jer. 2:8), **proclaim** the curses in the valley between Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal for all to hear, Deut. 27:14; Joshua 8:33. Similarly, we in the Church are to have our spiritual leaders preach and teach God's Word unto us, 2 Timothy 4:1-2.
 3. All Israel's people were to **say "Amen"** when God's Word was proclaimed by the Levites, Deut. 27:14-26, affirming the Levites' proclamation of the Word and signaling their desire to apply it. In like manner, we in the Church are to consent to heed the spoken Word of God [saying the "Amen"], 2 Cor. 1:20 ESV, NIV.
- C. Third, though Israel did not have the *degree* of the Holy Spirit's ministry as we do today, the choice of this Deuteronomy 27 ritual near the oak of Moreh at Shechem (see our last sermon), thus recalling the Abrahamic Covenant that promised believers of the nations the gift of the Holy Spirit (cf. Galatians 3:13-14), signals that God wants believers in the Church era to rely on the Holy Spirit for victory over temptation, Galatians 5:16.
- D. Fourth, 1 Corinthians 10:13 also promises believers in the Church that God will not let us face any temptation that is too strong for us, but will with the temptation open up a way of escape so we can avoid committing sin!

Lesson: *To counter the secrecy, lack of accountability and bad peer pressure that make it easy to sin, God had Israel learn she was fully exposed, vulnerable and accountable to Him as Almighty God while also being equipped by Him to overcome all bad peer pressure. God also signaled that Israel's people were to meet with godly peers for the proclamation of Scripture besides relating to God in the heart to overcome temptation. For believers today, we add the need to rely on the Holy Spirit and to look for God's way of escape when facing temptation.*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Christ for salvation, John 3:16. (2) Then, may we combat the secrecy, lack of accountability and bad peer pressure that lead us easily to sin by applying the steps in the lesson section above!*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

Our need to congregate as a body for mutual spiritual edification in our Church's regular services as taught in Hebrews 10:25 in our sermon notes above ("III, B, 1") has recently been abundantly illustrated by the Lord:

(1) This past week, one of our Church members told me how a party associated with our Church who is now living in another state has come to face a situation where he both needs and wants Biblical information relative to that situation, and that information is available in lesson or sermon format that we have both already taught and posted on our Church web site. The Church member noted the need for this Church's ministry in this transplanted party's life.

(2) However, that need goes for **me**, too! Though I am expounding the book of Deuteronomy verse-by-verse, being thus bound by its content as to what subjects to address as I go from one sermon to the next, conversations I have with people in our body after each Sunday worship service **invariably** signal the direction **God** has for my application of the **next** Sunday's sermon content! (a) In one case, the March 16th worship service sermon I gave on peer pressure when I returned from vacation, which sermon had a big impact on a number of those present, was formed **directly** due to a conversation I had after the March 2nd worship service in Fellowship Hall just before I went on vacation with the very transplanted party noted in section "(1)" of this "Conclusion"! (b) Then, this very sermon I am giving right now was formed due to a conversation I had last week in Fellowship Hall after the worship service!

(1) May we put our faith in Christ for salvation from sin. Then, (2) may we heed GOD'S lesson of the blessings and curses ritual of Deuteronomy 27:14-26 to overcome every temptation to sin.