

Deuteronomy 27

Side Notes

Chapters 27-28 explain the blessings and curses associated with the Law given on Mt. Sinai.

2-8
In Egypt, Israel had learned the method of putting white plaster on a stone so that it could be easily read. The writing was done on the stone (chiseled out) but the white background helped make it more visible.

3
All the words of the Law may refer to the entire book of Deuteronomy. It may have also referred to the 10 Commandments or even the blessings and cursings in Deuteronomy 27-28. The exact answer is uncertain.

4
Mt. Ebal was in the center of the Promised land, just North of the city of Shechem.

12
Mt. Gerizim was just south of Mt. Ebal and the city of Shechem was in the valley between them.

Mt Gerizim was the Mount of Blessings and Mt. Ebal was the Mount of Curses. The curses are in this chapter and the blessings in the next.

15-26
There are 12 behaviors listed that will bring a curse to an Israelite.

Commanded to Build an Altar

¹ Moses and the elders of Israel commanded the people: "Keep all these commands that I give you today. ² When you have crossed the Jordan into the land the LORD your God is giving you, set up some large stones and coat them with plaster. ³ Write on them all the words of this law when you have crossed over to enter the land the LORD your God is giving you, a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your fathers, promised you. ⁴ And when you have crossed the Jordan, set up these stones on Mount Ebal, as I command you today, and coat them with plaster. ⁵ Build there an altar to the LORD your God, an altar of stones. Do not use any iron tool upon them. ⁶ Build the altar of the LORD your God with fieldstones and offer burnt offerings on it to the LORD your God. ⁷ Sacrifice fellowship offerings there, eating them and rejoicing in the presence of the LORD your God. ⁸ And you shall write very clearly all the words of this law on these stones you have set up."

Israel the People of God (9-10)

⁹ Then Moses and the priests, who are Levites, said to all Israel, "Be silent, O Israel, and listen! You have now become the people of the LORD your God. ¹⁰ Obey the LORD your God and follow his commands and decrees that I give you today."

Stand on the Mountains (11-13)

¹¹ On the same day Moses commanded the people: ¹² When you have crossed the Jordan, these tribes shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph and Benjamin. ¹³ And these tribes shall stand on Mount Ebal to pronounce curses: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan and Naphtali.

Mount of Curses (14-26)

¹⁴ The Levites shall recite to all the people of Israel in a loud voice:

¹⁵ "Cursed is the man who carves an image or casts an idol--a thing detestable to the LORD, the work of the craftsman's hands--and sets it up in secret." Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

¹⁶ "Cursed is the man who dishonors his father or his mother." Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

¹⁷ "Cursed is the man who moves his neighbor's boundary stone." Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

¹⁸ "Cursed is the man who leads the blind astray on the road." Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

¹⁹ "Cursed is the man who withholds justice from the alien, the fatherless or the widow." Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

²⁰ "Cursed is the man who sleeps with his father's wife, for he dishonors his father's bed." Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

²¹ "Cursed is the man who has sexual relations with any animal." Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

²² "Cursed is the man who sleeps with his sister, the daughter of his father or the daughter of his mother." Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

In ancient days, property description was done by referencing landmarks or boundary stones. To move one of these was the same as theft.

²³ "Cursed is the man who sleeps with his mother-in-law." Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

²⁴ "Cursed is the man who kills his neighbor secretly." Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

²⁵ "Cursed is the man who accepts a bribe to kill an innocent person." Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

²⁶ "Cursed is the man who does not uphold the words of this law by carrying them out." Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"