

BIBLE BRIEFING

“So what?!”

DEUTERONOMY 28-29

Introduction

Lon Solomon is a pastor and Bible teacher in the southern United States. He’s developed an interesting preaching technique. He’ll read a passage, then give the background and culture and history. When he’s done giving his audience the necessary context, he invites them to say, loudly and in unison, “*Lon, So what?!*” It’s his way of reminding them that the Word of God is meant to be applied, to make a difference.

Moses might be at the point in Deuteronomy where the audience could shout out, “*So what?!*” Moses was done reciting the Law of God; so what should the response be?

The “*So what?!*” of Chapter twenty-eight is that obedience to God’s Law would bring blessing, while disobedience would bring a curse.

Chapter Twenty-eight

First, the blessings of obedience:

Deuteronomy 28:1 “Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the Lord your God will set you high above all nations of the earth.

Deuteronomy 28:2 And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the Lord your God:

Deuteronomy 28:3 “Blessed *shall you be* in the city, and blessed *shall you be* in the country.

Deuteronomy 28:4 “Blessed *shall be* the fruit of your body, the produce of your ground and the increase of your herds, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks.

Deuteronomy 28:5 “Blessed *shall be* your basket and your kneading bowl.

Deuteronomy 28:6 “Blessed *shall you be* when you come in, and blessed *shall you be* when you go out.

Deuteronomy 28:7 “The Lord will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before your face; they shall come out against you one way and flee before you seven ways.

Deuteronomy 28:8 “The Lord will command the blessing on you in your storehouses and in all to which you set your hand, and He will bless you in the land which the Lord your God is giving you.

Deuteronomy 28:9 “The Lord will establish you as a holy people to Himself, just as He has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of the Lord your God and walk in His ways.

Deuteronomy 28:10 Then all peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the Lord, and they shall be afraid of you.

Deuteronomy 28:11 And the Lord will grant you plenty of goods, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your ground, in the land of which the Lord swore to your fathers to give you.

Deuteronomy 28:12 The Lord will open to you His good treasure, the heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season, and to bless all the work of your hand. You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow.

Deuteronomy 28:13 And the Lord will make you the head and not the tail; you shall be above only, and not be beneath, if you heed the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you today, and are careful to observe *them*.

Deuteronomy 28:14 So you shall not turn aside from any of the words which I command you this day, *to* the right or the left, to go after other gods to serve them.

Blessings shall come upon you and overtake you. I like that. It’s as if you were trying to get away from them, there were so many, but they ran you down!

Three things to note:

1. There was a **condition** to be kept – **obey** and **observe**; and that you avoid covetousness, which leads to idolatry (v14).
2. The blessings were **comprehensive**, involving your entire life and living. These listed are merely representative.
3. The **context** of these blessings is the nation of Israel in their land. They cannot be transferred to you, in Hanford or elsewhere.

Now, the curses:

Deuteronomy 28:15 “But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes

which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you:

These are called curses, but they are not the kind we normally think about. They are caused by disobedience – brought upon yourself. You can't outrun them, either!

All aspects of life and living was within the scope of the curse:

Deuteronomy 28:16 “Cursed *shall you be* in the city, and cursed *shall you be* in the country.

Deuteronomy 28:17 “Cursed *shall be* your basket and your kneading bowl.

Deuteronomy 28:18 “Cursed *shall be* the fruit of your body and the produce of your land, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks.

Deuteronomy 28:19 “Cursed *shall you be* when you come in, and cursed *shall you be* when you go out.

Specifically, there would be calamities in nature:

Deuteronomy 28:20 “The Lord will send on you cursing, confusion, and rebuke in all that you set your hand to do, until you are destroyed and until you perish quickly, because of the wickedness of your doings in which you have forsaken Me.

Deuteronomy 28:21 The Lord will make the plague cling to you until He has consumed you from the land which you are going to possess.

Deuteronomy 28:22 The Lord will strike you with consumption, with fever, with inflammation, with severe burning fever, with the sword, with scorching, and with mildew; they shall pursue you until you perish.

Deuteronomy 28:23 And your heavens which *are* over your head shall be bronze, and the earth which is under you *shall be* iron.

Deuteronomy 28:24 The Lord will change the rain of your land to powder and dust; from the heaven it shall come down on you until you are destroyed.

There would be conflict in war, and its aftermath:

Deuteronomy 28:25 “The Lord will cause you to be defeated before your enemies; you shall go out one way against them and flee seven ways before them; and you shall become troublesome to all the kingdoms of the earth.

Deuteronomy 28:26 Your carcasses shall be food for all the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and no one shall frighten *them* away.

Deuteronomy 28:27 The Lord will strike you with the boils of Egypt, with tumors, with the scab, and with the itch, from which you cannot be healed.

Deuteronomy 28:28 The Lord will strike you with madness and blindness and confusion of heart.

Deuteronomy 28:29 And you shall grope at noonday, as a blind man gropes in darkness; you shall not prosper in your ways; you shall be only oppressed and plundered continually, and no one shall save *you*.

Deuteronomy 28:30 “You shall betroth a wife, but another man shall lie with her; you shall build a house, but you shall not dwell in it; you shall plant a vineyard, but shall not gather its grapes.

Deuteronomy 28:31 Your ox *shall be* slaughtered before your eyes, but you shall not eat of it; your donkey *shall be* violently taken away from before you, and shall not be restored to you; your sheep *shall be* given to your enemies, and you shall have no one to rescue *them*.

Deuteronomy 28:32 Your sons and your daughters *shall be* given to another people, and your eyes shall look and fail *with longing* for them all day long; and *there shall be* no strength in your hand.

Deuteronomy 28:33 A nation whom you have not known shall eat the fruit of your land and the produce of your labor, and you shall be only oppressed and crushed continually.

Deuteronomy 28:34 So you shall be driven mad because of the sight which your eyes see.

Deuteronomy 28:35 The Lord will strike you in the knees and on the legs with severe boils which cannot be healed, and from the sole of your foot to the top of your head.

There would be conquest and the horrors of being besieged:

Deuteronomy 28:36 “The Lord will bring you and the king whom you set over you to a nation which neither you nor your fathers have known, and there you shall serve other gods—wood and stone.

Deuteronomy 28:37 And you shall become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword among all nations where the Lord will drive you.

Deuteronomy 28:38 “You shall carry much seed out to the field but gather little in, for the locust shall consume it.

Deuteronomy 28:39 You shall plant vineyards and tend *them*, but you shall neither drink *of* the wine nor gather the *grapes*; for the worms shall eat them.

Deuteronomy 28:40 You shall have olive trees throughout all your territory, but you shall not anoint *yourself* with the oil; for your olives shall drop off.

Deuteronomy 28:41 You shall beget sons and daughters, but they shall not be yours; for they shall go into captivity.

Deuteronomy 28:42 Locusts shall consume all your trees and the produce of your land.

Deuteronomy 28:43 “The alien who *is* among you shall rise higher and higher above you, and you shall come down lower and lower.

Deuteronomy 28:44 He shall lend to you, but you shall not lend to him; he shall be the head, and you shall be the tail.

Deuteronomy 28:45 “Moreover all these curses shall come upon you and pursue and overtake you, until you are destroyed, because you did not obey the voice of

the Lord your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which He commanded you.

Deuteronomy 28:46 And they shall be upon you for a sign and a wonder, and on your descendants forever.

Deuteronomy 28:47 “Because you did not serve the Lord your God with joy and gladness of heart, for the abundance of everything,

Deuteronomy 28:48 therefore you shall serve your enemies, whom the Lord will send against you, in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, and in need of everything; and He will put a yoke of iron on your neck until He has destroyed you.

Deuteronomy 28:49 The Lord will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, *as swift* as the eagle flies, a nation whose language you will not understand,

Rome, known as the iron kingdom, fulfilled the prediction. Rome, coming all the way from the West, spoke a language that was entirely different from Hebrew. Our English is based on Latin and the European languages, but Hebrew is a language that is related to the Asian and African and Oriental languages. It is altogether different. God says the conquerors would be *whose tongue thou shalt not understand.*” It is interesting that Rome carried standards bearing the emblem of the eagle.

Deuteronomy 28:50 a nation of fierce countenance, which does not respect the elderly nor show favor to the young.

Deuteronomy 28:51 And they shall eat the increase of your livestock and the produce of your land, until you are destroyed; they shall not leave you grain or new wine or oil, *or* the increase of your cattle or the offspring of your flocks, until they have destroyed you.

Deuteronomy 28:52 “They shall besiege you at all your gates until your high and fortified walls, in which you trust, come down throughout all your land; and they shall besiege you at all your gates throughout all your land which the Lord your God has given you.

Deuteronomy 28:53 You shall eat the fruit of your own body, the flesh of your sons and your daughters whom the Lord your God has given you, in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you.

Deuteronomy 28:54 The sensitive and very refined man among you will be hostile toward his brother, toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the rest of his children whom he leaves behind,

Deuteronomy 28:55 so that he will not give any of them the flesh of his children whom he will eat, because he has nothing left in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you at all your gates.

Deuteronomy 28:56 The tender and delicate woman among you, who would not venture to set the sole of her foot on the ground because of her delicateness and sensitivity, will refuse to the husband of her bosom, and to her son and her daughter,

Deuteronomy 28:57 her placenta which comes out from between her feet and her children whom she bears; for she will eat them secretly for lack of everything in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you at all your gates.

While we can be glad we are not Israel, under the Law, still there are spiritual blessings for obedience; and there is spiritual barrenness for disobedience.

Chapter Twenty-nine

The “*So what?!*” of Chapter Twenty-nine is to rededicate yourself to the Lord.

Deuteronomy 29:1 These *are* the words of the covenant which the Lord commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the covenant which He made with them in Horeb.

The covenant had first been made many years ago. These people would have been children and teenagers when they witnessed these things. The oldest people in the nation would have been about sixty years old after wandering through the wilderness since the failure at Kadesh-Barnea. Only Joshua and Caleb remained of the old generation. With the passage of time, and the advance of the new generation, there needed to be a rededication.

Rededication is something folks take to extremes:

1. Some Christians are rededicating their lives at every service – every chance they get.
2. Others would not think of ever going forward, to make a rededication.

The truth is, all of us need to rededicate ourselves, in some manner, at different times. One of the most well-taught, on-fire, seeker friendly Churches in the New Testament was at Ephesus. But Jesus called upon them to renew their commitment to Him through repenting and returning to their first love.

The first step in any rededication or recommitment is **confession** – especially, confessing what great things God has done:

Deuteronomy 29:1 These *are* the words of the covenant which the Lord commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the covenant which He made with them in Horeb.

Deuteronomy 29:2 Now Moses called all Israel and said to them: "You have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land -

Deuteronomy 29:3 the great trials which your eyes have seen, the signs, and those great wonders.

Deuteronomy 29:4 Yet the Lord has not given you a heart to perceive and eyes to see and ears to hear, to this *very* day.

In spite of seeing all the signs, they still did not perceive. Paul in Romans deals with the modern blindness of Israel: (*According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;*) unto this day (Romans 11:8).

The miracles in and of themselves could not accomplish anything in the heart of Israel. If God did not send His Spirit to change their hearts, then the greatest wonder imaginable would not make a difference.

God says that he just left these people as they were. They had no intention to turn to Him. They had broken communication with the living and true God. Therefore, God would just leave them in their state of unbelief.

Deuteronomy 29:5 And I have led you forty years in the wilderness. Your clothes have not worn out on you, and your sandals have not worn out on your feet.

Deuteronomy 29:6 You have not eaten bread, nor have you drunk wine or *similar* drink, that you may know that I *am* the Lord your God.

Deuteronomy 29:7 And when you came to this place, Sihon king of Heshbon and Og king of Bashan came out against us to battle, and we conquered them.

Deuteronomy 29:8 We took their land and gave it as an inheritance to the Reubenites, to the Gadites, and to half the tribe of Manasseh.

Deuteronomy 29:9 Therefore keep the words of this covenant, and do them, that you may prosper in all that you do.

Each of these *great wonders* has a spiritual counterpart in our lives. In the wilderness of this world, God provides *clothes* for us (Revelation 3:18), He gives us *shoes* (Ephesians 6:15), He gives us

bread and wine to drink (1 Corinthians 11:23-26), in Him we *conquer* our enemies (Romans 8:37), and can take the *land* of our spiritual enemies (2 Corinthians 10:4-5).

Deuteronomy 29:10 "All of you stand today before the Lord your God: your leaders and your tribes and your elders and your officers, all the men of Israel,
Deuteronomy 29:11 your little ones and your wives - also the stranger who *is* in your camp, from the one who cuts your wood to the one who draws your water -
Deuteronomy 29:12 that you may enter into covenant with the Lord your God, and into His oath, which the Lord your God makes with you today,
Deuteronomy 29:13 that He may establish you today as a people for Himself, and *that* He may be God to you, just as He has spoken to you, and just as He has sworn to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
Deuteronomy 29:14 "I make this covenant and this oath, not with you alone,
Deuteronomy 29:15 but with *him* who stands here with us today before the Lord our God, as well as with *him* who *is* not here with us today

The descendants of this nation assembled before the LORD and Moses were also included in the covenant.

Deuteronomy 29:16 (for you know that we dwelt in the land of Egypt and that we came through the nations which you passed by,
Deuteronomy 29:17 and you saw their abominations and their idols which *were* among them - wood and stone and silver and gold);

After confessing God, **Commit!** Moses called upon the people to commit in five ways:

First – Be faithful:

Deuteronomy 29:18 so that there may not be among you man or woman or family or tribe, whose heart turns away today from the Lord our God, to go *and* serve the gods of these nations, and that there may not be among you a root bearing bitterness or wormwood;
Deuteronomy 29:19 and so it may not happen, when he hears the words of this curse, that he blesses himself in his heart, saying, 'I shall have peace, even though I follow the dictates of my heart' - as though the drunkard could be included with the sober.
Deuteronomy 29:20 "The Lord would not spare him; for then the anger of the Lord and His jealousy would burn against that man, and every curse that is written in this book would settle on him, and the Lord would blot out his name from under heaven.

Deuteronomy 29:21 And the Lord would separate him from all the tribes of Israel for adversity, according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this Book of the Law,

Deuteronomy 29:22 so that the coming generation of your children who rise up after you, and the foreigner who comes from a far land, would say, when they see the plagues of that land and the sicknesses which the Lord has laid on it:

Deuteronomy 29:23 'The whole land *is* brimstone, salt, and burning; it is not sown, nor does it bear, nor does any grass grow there, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, which the Lord overthrew in His anger and His wrath.'

Deuteronomy 29:24 All nations would say, 'Why has the Lord done so to this land? What does the heat of this great anger mean?'

Deuteronomy 29:25 Then *people* would say: 'Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers, which He made with them when He brought them out of the land of Egypt;

Deuteronomy 29:26 for they went and served other gods and worshiped them, gods that they did not know and that He had not given to them.

Deuteronomy 29:27 Then the anger of the Lord was aroused against this land, to bring on it every curse that is written in this book.

Deuteronomy 29:28 And the Lord uprooted them from their land in anger, in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as *it is* this day.'

Faithfulness can be so boring! In a marriage, unfaithfulness is often the result of wanting to break out of the ordinary, mundane, unromantic nature of your relationship – only to end up there again with the partner of your sin. There are many lures and allurements in the world; they are the same things that have always been there, but much more slickly packaged and presented today than ever in history.

Second – Walk by faith:

Deuteronomy 29:29 "The secret *things belong* to the Lord our God, but those *things which are revealed belong* to us and to our children forever, that *we may do all the words of this law.*

The things God has revealed are all you need to know, to live a godly life. Along your way, there will be many mysteries – many unanswered questions, many hurts, many anguishes. God can be trusted; He will work all things together for good.

Chapter Thirty

Third – Be willing to Repent:

Chapter Thirty opens with a scene in which the people have been disciplined for failing to be faithful and walk by faith. But God remains faithful, and restore them; they need only repent (as it says at the end, in verse ten).

You should notice that there are no “if’s” in this chapter. There is nothing conditional here; only what God definitely will accomplish.

Deuteronomy 30:1 “Now it shall come to pass, when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call *them* to mind among all the nations where the Lord your God drives you,

Deuteronomy 30:2 and you return to the Lord your God and obey His voice, according to all that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul,

Deuteronomy 30:3 that the Lord your God will bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations where the Lord your God has scattered you.

This is the first recorded prophecy of the Second Coming of Jesus – although Enoch, in Genesis, had prophesied of it; it wasn’t recorded until the Book of Jude makes mention of it.

Deuteronomy 30:4 If *any* of you are driven out to the farthest *parts* under heaven, from there the Lord your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you.

Deuteronomy 30:5 Then the Lord your God will bring you to the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it. He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers.

Deuteronomy 30:6 And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.

Deuteronomy 30:7 “Also the Lord your God will put all these curses on your enemies and on those who hate you, who persecuted you.

Deuteronomy 30:8 And you will again obey the voice of the Lord and do all His commandments which I command you today.

Deuteronomy 30:9 The Lord your God will make you abound in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your land for good. For the Lord will again rejoice over you for good as He rejoiced over your fathers,

Deuteronomy 30:10 if you obey the voice of the Lord your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this Book of the Law, *and* if you turn to the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

Turn; repent, return, be renewed.

Fourth – Rely on the Spirit of God:

Deuteronomy 30:11 “For this commandment which I command you today *is* not too mysterious for you, nor *is* it far off.

Deuteronomy 30:12 It *is* not in heaven, that you should say, ‘Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’

Deuteronomy 30:13 Nor *is* it beyond the sea, that you should say, ‘Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’

Deuteronomy 30:14 But the word *is* very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.

God’s Word is God’s enabling. When He tells you to do something, it carries in it the ability to carry it out. You must only believe this to be true. The problem with God’s Word is never “*I can’t*”, but “*I won’t*.”

Fifth – Keep Romance Alive

Deuteronomy 30:15 “See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil,

Deuteronomy 30:16 in that I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the Lord your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess.

Deuteronomy 30:17 But if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them,

Deuteronomy 30:18 I announce to you today that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong *your* days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to go in and possess.

Deuteronomy 30:19 I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live;

Deuteronomy 30:20 that you may love the Lord your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He *is* your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.”

Yes, I said romance. The heart of this passage is your choice, your willing choice, to love the Lord. It’s a matter of the heart, first and foremost. God is (I think I can say this) romantic. It’s infectious, contagious, to realize the length, and depth, and breadth, of His love for you. It fires your romance.

Conclusion

“So what?!”

God was determined to reveal Himself to the world through Israel, either by making them so blessed, the world would know only God could have blessed them so; or by making them so cursed, that only God could have cursed them and cause them to still survive. The choice was up to Israel.

