

“Behold I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day; and a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known.” Deut. 11:26-28.

One New Testament version of this beautiful passage, from the lips of our dear Savior Himself, is found at John, chapter 14; to wit:

“He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings; and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father’s which sent me. These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” (Jn. 14:21-27)

Furthermore, Beloved, when engaged in wholesome pursuit of solid evidence to make our calling and election sure (see, 2 Pet. 1:10), a willingness – even a determination – to know and to do the will of God – also known as joyfully keeping His commandments – comes front and center; to wit:

“And hereby WE DO KNOW THAT WE KNOW HIM, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected; HEREBY KNOW WE THAT WE ARE IN HIM.” (1 Jn. 2:3-5)

It is interesting that some of the straightest, plainest, harshest talk in the whole Bible is found in the writings of John – the same John that leaned on Jesus’ breast at the Last Supper, and is known as the apostle of love. Also, John, even as he breathes out fire and brimstone – does so in the gentlest, simplest language. If you take a college course in New Testament Greek, you will first learn to translate the writings of John, and in this order; to wit: **1 John, 2 John, 3 John, the Book of John, and the Book of Revelation.** After that, it is irrelevant which New Testament Books come next, or in what order they come for translation. All as a testimony to the basic simplicity and hard-hitting nature of the writings of John; to wit: e.g.:

“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God; and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. BY THIS WE KNOW THAT WE LOVE THE CHILDREN OF GOD, WHEN WE LOVE GOD, AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous.” (1 Jn. 5:1-3)

Indeed, His blessed commandments are any thing but grievous, and are merely expressions of His holy will, for which we should pray every day; to wit: ***“Thy kingdom come, THY WILL BE DONE, on earth as it is in heaven.” Mat. 6:10.*** Never were kinder words of encouragement spoken to the weary soul than these by the dear Lord Jesus; to wit:

“Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (Mat. 11:28-30)

It would be well, Beloved, to keep this word-portrait of Christ before your eyes, as we deal herein with the blessings and curses of God; to wit: ***“Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people Israel, and the land which thou hast given us, as thou swarest unto our fathers, a land that floweth with milk and honey. This day the Lord thy God hath commanded thee to do these statutes and judgments; thou shalt therefore keep and do them with all thine heart, and with all thy soul. Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God”*** – (“For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death.” Psa. 48:14.) – ***“and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice; And the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments;”*** – (“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lust, we should live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope and glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself A PECULIAR PEOPLE, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.” Titus 2:11-15. ***“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priest-hood, an holy nation, A PECULIAR PEOPLE, that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light...Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.”*** 1 Pet. 2:9,11.) – ***“And to make thee high above all nations which he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honor; and that thou mayest be an holy people unto the Lord thy God, as he hath spoken.”*** Deut. 26:15-19.

This is a most remarkable passage of Holy Scripture, beginning with the spectacular invocation that pleads with God to look down from His Holy Habitation, from Heaven, and to ***“bless thy people”*** and to ***“bless the land which thou hast given us, a land that floweth with milk and honey.”*** And, immediately the issue of God’s blessings and curses arises, with ominous overtones.

To begin with, the novel term AVOUCHED is utilized two times in this passage – and, get this – NOWHERE ELSE IN ALL THE BIBLE. First, the creature is here AVOUCHING (swearing in the very strongest terms possible) that he will obey his Creator. Next, and most amazing, the Almighty Creator is here AVOUCHING that he will bless the miserable creature if he will obey. (Avouch. To state as a positive fact, especially in the face of contradiction, to vouch for, to affirm openly, to declare or assert with positiveness, to vindicate or justify, to make good, to establish a matter, to double-dog guarantee.) Deut. 26:17-19; to wit:

“THOU HAST AVOUCHED THE LORD THIS DAY to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice. AND THE LORD HATH AVOUCHED THEE THIS DAY to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments; And to make thee high above all nations which he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honor; and that thou mayest be an holy people unto the Lord thy God, as he hath spoken.” (Deut. 26:17-19)

And, to seal and secure the contract, which was created by each side, as it were, by each side AVOUCHING to the other side; a huge and elaborate monument and national ceremony was formulated, utilizing two mountains – GERIZIM to bless, and EBAL to curse – to be inaugurated immediately upon the crossing of the Jordan river for the beginning of the conquest of Canaan. See, Deut. 27:1 et seq.

Dr. Munsey's eloquent synopsis of the Gerizim/Ebal (i.e., Blessings/Curses) phenomenon is helpful in taking a very important – but complicated – Bible doctrine in full grasp; to wit: *“In Palestine there are two mountains, rising on steep and rocky precipices 800 feet high, on both sides of a narrow valley about 300 yards wide. They are called Ebal and Gerizim. God commanded the children of Israel by Moses when they entered the promised land, that six tribes of them should stand upon Mount Ebal, and the other six tribes on Mount Gerizim, and that the Levites should pronounce the curses and blessings of the law – the tribes on Mount Ebal responding “Amen” to the curses, the tribes on Mount Gerizim responding “Amen” to the blessings. THIS WAS DOUBTLESS THE GRANDEST CEREMONY IN THE HISTORY OF THE NATIONS. Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim are on every page of the Bible, and on every field of divine providence; and in the valley between them will sit the throne of the judgment – and to every blessing and every curse, all the people of Earth will say “Amen,” and all the universe shall acknowledge that eternal punishment of the wicked in Hell for ever is just and right.”*

Moses was not permitted to cross over Jordan and inherit the Promised Land with the children of Israel; and hence Moses had no first-hand experience with Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim. Nevertheless, Moses gave full instructions with regard to the mountains themselves, the huge signs to be erected thereon, and the everlasting message to be heralded therefrom in 70 languages so that all the world might be fully evangelized of the curses and blessings of God; to wit:

“And Moses with the elders of Israel COMMANDED the people, saying, keep all the COMMANDMENTS which I COMMAND you this day. And it shall be on the day when ye shall pass over Jordan unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, that thou shalt set thee up great stones, and plaster them with plaster; and thou shalt write upon them all the words of this law,” – (i.e., the Ten Commandments? The Pentateuch? Deuteronomy most of chapters 27 and 28?, or, other?) – *“when thou art passed over, that thou mayest go in unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, a land that floweth with milk and honey; as the Lord God of thy fathers hath promised thee. Therefore it shall be when ye be gone over Jordan, that ye shall set up these stones, which I command you this day in Mount Ebal, and thou shalt plaster them with plaster.”* – (Envision huge billboards, as may be seen at Times Square in New York; plastered over, as Gill says, that so words might be written upon them, and be more conspicuous, and more easily read; to wit: *“And the Lord answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.” Hab. 2:2.*) – *“And there shalt thou build an altar unto the Lord thy God, an altar of stones; thou shalt not lift up any iron tool upon them. Thou shalt build the altar of the Lord thy God of whole stones; and thou shalt offer burnt offerings thereon unto the Lord thy God; and thou shalt offer peace offerings, and shalt eat there, and rejoice before the Lord thy God. And thou shalt write upon the stones ALL THE WORDS OF THIS LAW VERY PLAINLY.” Deut. 27:1-8.* (Josephus says that when Moses was about to die, he ordered the blessings and the cursings to be written on the altar, on both sides of it.)

Beloved. The Lord our God is gracious, kind, and longsuffering toward and to His Elect – promising them the blessings of Mount Gerizim – even HEAVEN ON EARTH, whilst they dwell bellow if they love Him and faithfully serve Him – and in the world to come, everlasting life and a glorious inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for those who are kept by the power of God through faith, unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time – when they shall each be put into everlasting possession of a new body which is characterized by power, beauty, agility, impassibility (i.e., impervious to all pain and discomfort of mind or body), and spirituality. See, **1 Pet. 1:4,5**. The principle enunciated by the Savior at **Mark 10:27-31**, reflects Heaven's Jurisprudence; to wit:

“And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible. Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel’s, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, WITH PERSECUTIONS; AND IN THE WORLD TO COME ETERNAL LIFE. But many that are first shall be last; and the last first.” (Mark 10:27-31)

Beloved, sometimes I weep because of the persecutions this little flock is called upon to endure – but soon my tears are dried when I reflect upon the certainty of the heavenly reward awaiting them. Beloved. You have been the LAST here below; you will be the FIRST above. The Mount Gerizim blessings shall be yours; bestowed upon you in what has been called *"doubtless the grandest ceremony in the history of the nations."* Remember, Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal are on every page of the Bible, and on every field of divine providence; and in the valley between them will sit the throne of Final Judgment.

To recapitulate, ***“And Moses charged the people the same day, saying, These shall stand upon mount Gerizim to bless the people, when ye are come over Jordan; to wit: Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Joseph, and Benjamin; And these shall stand upon mount Ebal to curse; to wit: Reuben, Gad, and Asher, and Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali. And the Levites shall speak, and say unto all the men of Israel with a loud voice, CURSED be the man that maketh any graven or molten image, an ABOMINATION unto the Lord, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and PUTTETH IT IN A SECRET PLACE. And all the people shall answer and say, Amen. CURSED be he that setteth light by his father or his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen.” Deut. 27:11-16.***

(Here there follow 10 unique curses, amenable to heart-searching expositions; e.g., verse 16; to wit: ***“Cursed be he that setteth light by his father,”*** means to secretly despise them in his heart, and by looks and gestures mocks at them in a private manner, unseen by others, **Prov. 30:17**, ***“The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.”***) And the 10-verse section of this passage, concludes, uniquely as follows: ***“Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen.” (Deut. 27:26).*** There follow some 14 verses of BLESSINGS led off and characterized generally by **Dt. 28:1**; to wit:

“And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth.” (Dt. 28:1)

There follow some 53 verses of dreadful curses, at **Deut. 28:15-68**. This makes but 14 verses of blessings, compared with 65 verses of curses! Or, put another way, this study of Bible comparisons suggests that Bible preachers ought to preach four times as much on God’s curses (i.e., Hell, which is the Almighty’s ultimate curse), as on God’s blessings (i.e., Heaven, which is God’s ultimate blessing). Beloved. I cannot count the times some kissy-pooch, so called Christian has told me one can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar; and to which I have replied, I’m not in the fly-catching business; I’m in the Gospel-preaching business with the Bible as my only guide. Moreover, There still stand two mountains – today – Ebal and Gerizim – reminding all mankind of God’s eternal curses four times as often and as fearfully as His blessings. Check it out. Do your own comparison study. It is your duty to study and know as much about the Bible as mine or the members of Westboro Baptist Church. Your immortal soul is at stake. You cannot substitute taking cheap pot shots at WBC for heeding our message of repenting of your sins.

I love you, WBC. Amen.