

## **Deuteronomy 28:1-14 – Faithful Living; Fruitful Living**

Having just passed through Advent season and coming now to a brand new year, 2012, you probably prayed that you and your children will have a good life in this year. And why not? You are God's child and you have a right and a need to go to him and ask for things that are good for yourself and others. And as God would have it, today I want to tell you the sure way of having that good life for which you have prayed - a life that is fruitful and successful life - for you and your family.

Of course you must keep in mind that God's promises are covenantal. That means that it is for the community as a whole. For example, when God said that if children honor their parents, they would live long in the land, he was not saying that every single person will live long if he honors his parents. Usually you will live long if you do this, but not always. The promise to live long in the land was a promise to the community of Israel. If the Israelites honored their parents and continued in the doctrines God gave them, they would inherit spiritual and earthly blessings.

Our headings are: The **Stipulations for Covenant blessings** and The **Specifics of Covenant Blessings**.

Our goals are: That you will be **motivated, as a blood-bought child of Jesus Christ, to endeavor with Christ's help, to live faithfully to the Lord so that he will be praised and you will be blessed.**

### **Stipulations For Covenant Blessings**

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. 2 "And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the LORD your God:

1. You must obey the voice of God. This command is reiterated command throughout Scriptures. Jesus himself said: Seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all other things shall be added to you! This condition for blessing is repeated in the middle (V9) and at the end (V14) in our text. Repetition is for emphasis.
2. But what kind of obedience does God expect from you? Would 70% faithful obedience, 20% so-so obedience, and 10% no- obedience please him?
  - a. He says that you must obey diligently...carefully...not turning aside to the right or to the left...not being distracted ...not following superstitions, or profanations of God's law.
  - b. He says you must obey him totally...all his commands. Not equivocating模棱两可...making excuses...not trying to make up for bad things by doing a few extra good things... That's Roman Catholic, that is Muslim...that is not the way the true God expects you to live. And when you do fail, that you plead for forgiveness on the basis that Jesus Christ obeyed perfectly for you!
3. If you obey the Lord diligently and totally, you can expect blessings to overtake you and overwhelm you. Now it is true that most people try to just catch up with blessings...but if you diligently and totally obey God, his blessings will catch up with you and overtake超过you. It is a war reference!
4. Before we examine these covenant blessings, however, you must ask yourselves this question: Why does God give all these covenant blessings to his children? There are 2 reasons God gives these covenant blessings to you:

- a. God wants you to see his goodness so **you will worship him better.**
- b. God wants to encourage so **you will do your work he has assigned to you.**

## **Specifics of Covenant Blessings**

3 "Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the country. 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.  
5 "Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl."

1. God will **provide** material things for those who diligently and fully obey his covenant conditions.

a. Man often thinks great wealth and good health are the only indicatives of "blessedness." While money and good health are blessings from God, God is not so limiting – so small. His blessings are immense. Health and wealth are only the beginning of his blessings. And health and wealth are only the beginning of his earthly blessings to his obedient children.

b. These blessing will be for all of God's people - those in the country or in the city.

c. These blessing will be blessings on everything: Their children, crops, animals...

It is stated in perfect order. Covenant keepers were promised with having many children... first and foremost... and children were a true blessing for an agricultural society. Children were free labor. And they were good for a society with no standing army. They were free soldiers. You get a fuller sense of these full blessing, however, when you see Canaan describe as a land flowing with milk and honey. You would have children... and you will have good food to feed them.

d. These blessings will be continuous. Blessings of the field will come to their homes. Their food basket, in which they kept bread and fruit, will never be empty – as long as they remained faithful to the Lord. Can you find a society where people are truly faithful to the Lord and starving?

6 "Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out. 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."

2. God will **protect** the Israelites from all their enemies. The forces of the enemy, though they conspire together, will be entirely routed, and flee in 7 ways. Armies only flee when defeated... So God was saying that there would be no successful invasion of Israel by a foreign force. And isn't this kind of protection you would want for your children in this new year... and wouldn't you ask for this from your heavenly Father?

Let me illustrate: Weren't you happy when you could fix your child's toy... or catch him when he was falling? So won't your heavenly Father desire to do the same for you and your children? And you live at a time when dangers are real and present. Mr. McGinty wants your 4<sup>th</sup> grader to learn... to role play being perverts... to rat on their parents... to reject God's sovereignty... to revere the environment rather than God... and yet your children are replete with debts. So the enemy is not only a foreign power, the enemy comes with a suit and tie... and with a "professor" in front of his name... or "Premier" in his title. You need God to protect you! The enemy is subtle and will try to trap you, but God is always with his children, and in his children, inside or outside the home, for greater is he who is in you that he who is in the world. So obey. Don't fear.

All enemies of God's children must flee when God's children live faithfully.

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.

3. God will **prosper** your labors. The Christian is like a tree that has roots in God... and from God he gets all nourishment to produce fruit. But there is an implication of work by the Covenant keeper... "all to which you set your hand" There is no room for idle Christians.

Proverbs 10:4, 22 He who has a slack hand becomes poor, But the hand of the diligent makes rich. The blessing of the LORD makes one rich, And He adds no sorrow with it.

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.

4. God will **keep precious fellowship** with his people. One writer describes our fellowship with the Lord this way: "You are called by his sovereign grace, separated by his cleansing blood, established in his risen Son, reconciled to himself, and transformed into his own image." This is why you have this precious fellowship you enjoy with the Creator. And what a great privilege this is! And all of this comes true through: Emmanuel-God with us.

Colossians 2:6-7 - As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

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.

5. God will **promote his people** in the eyes of the world with material and spiritual prosperity. Every sheaf will bow to Christ's people. Christians will be so considerable that all men would be afraid of them and not treat them with contempt. (What great designs God has for his kingdom. Too bad some Christians just think we will be a tiny minority.) Why would the peoples bow down to you? Because you are a child of the king! You have his name. You are joint heirs of God... with Christ. More, Christians are like precious ointment that must be poured out to the world to bless it... you are the tree that gives men shade... You are the light of the world, so let your light shine before men... that they may glorify the Father in heaven.

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. 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.

6. God **secures your posterity** 后代. God's treasure is more than having money to go to buy things at Canadian Tire and Wal-Mart. There are things of greater value, like keeping a godly line of children – the fruit of your body. This is a promise for your children that you must daily claim. And these children will be blessed from heaven and will ever lend but never borrow. Of course this means you will work hard and you will wisely spend your money!

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.

7. God will **promote you in his own eyes.** The Lord shall make Covenant keepers the head of society. The head gives law to others, exacts tribute, and arbitrates all controversies. This is a promise that

was only partly fulfilled...and we pray that it will come true in full. (Don't give up hope.) The implication is that we have not fulfilled the conditions of these blessings. So how are you becoming the head today? Through the rule of Christ in heaven, through evangelism, through discipleship, through teaching your family...through being involved socially and politically...

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.

8. Finally, you see the summary of conditional covenant Blessings. Are you getting the message? Obedience to God is the true and only basis for success in life.

### **Conclusion:**

God loves you, his church, and blesses you with eternal life, but he wants to give you more. He confirms that he will give you all things you need and more as you serve him. He will protect you from your enemies. He will bless the work of your hands. He will have close fellowship with you so you are not alone. He will make the whole world will recognize his people. He will bless your multiplication – your children. And finally, he give you spiritual advancement提升 now and forever. The only condition he sets is that you follow his path that leads to life... faith in Christ and then follow his law...

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: What blessings! What a God! Remember 3 lessons:

1. Don't be frustrated if you can't get your baby registered in the "correct" nursery school before he is born. Don't panic that you didn't get enough folic acid before you were pregnant. Don't worry that you didn't play classical music for your children in the womb...and have his room painted in the right color. Teach your children God's law, the first of which is "receiving by faith what Christ has done for him." And teach him to obey God's 10 laws. And he will receive God's blessings. This is costly but free info.

2. But what if your child died and did not enjoy blessings in this world, does it mean that God failed? If he died God is not robbing him but blessing him with a more glorious blessing that health, wealth, children, and protection than he could ever want! He is skipping the small gifts and enjoying heaven.

3. When you obey God's law you show your love to Christ and you will show you depend upon Christ. And you show your love for your neighbor. You owe love to the one who saved you and yet he rewards you for loving him! Say Hallelujah.

Finally, if you are not a Christian, remember how the Christian got these blessings in the first place: he received by faith the life and death of Jesus Christ. Do you personally know this Jesus who obeyed and died so you could receive his credit? If you don't know him personally, you will find that your lack of a credible substitute (since you are unable) to keep God's laws will leave you in hell. I plead with you today...come to Christ...and let him save you from hell.