

Family Survival 101
A Prophecy and Promise for Every Family
Deuteronomy 29:10—30:10

February 20, 2011

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Text Introduction: We have said that Deuteronomy means “second law.” The main purpose of Deuteronomy is to give the law to the generation that is now ready to enter the Promised Land.

Deuteronomy can be organized around Moses’ three farewell sermons: 1-4; 5-26; and 29-30. The emphasis of these sermons is to “follow the terms of this covenant, so that you may prosper in everything that you do.” (Deuteronomy 29:9) This is not a covenant just for them, but for all who follow after them. (Deuteronomy 29:15)

We have used these sermons in Deuteronomy to help us to see some principles to build strong families. This morning I want to return as the book does to the basic requirements of the covenant to help us to see both a prophecy and a promise for every family.

Text: "All of you are standing today before the LORD your God—your leaders, tribes, elders, officials, all the men of Israel, ¹¹ your children, your wives, and the foreigners in your camps who cut your wood and draw your water— ¹² so that you may enter into the covenant of the LORD your God, which He is making with you today, so that you may enter into His oath ¹³ and so that He may establish you today as His people and He may be your God as He promised you and as He swore to your fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. ¹⁴ I am making this covenant and this oath not only with you, ¹⁵ but also with those who are standing here with us today in the presence of the LORD our God and with those who are not here today.

Introduction: You probably have heard that there has been a black bear sighting in several residential neighborhoods around Lafayette. This immediately caught my ear because I grew up on the street that the bear was first sighted. Now, the so-called experts say that black bears usually do not attack humans. There is one word of that sentence that concerns me: “usually.” So, I have been thinking, “What do you do if a black bear attacks?” Here is what one internet article said.

When a Black Bear Attacks

- Stand your ground; look big; scream and shout--flail your arms about! Do whatever you can to look aggressive and big. If you have a pack or bike or branch--anything--hold it over your head to look bigger. Black bears will usually bluff one or even several charges.
- Keep your feet on the ground; do not climb a tree! Black bears are excellent climbers.
- Fight back once the bear is upon you. Do not go quietly into the night. Think last stand, no holds barred. It is very unlikely things will get to this point, but if they do, use your fists, your feet, sticks and stones; bite his nose off if you have to! He's not going to leave you alone otherwise.

Well, I doubt any of us will have to employ that advice, but I am confident that all of us will face family survival. We have been learning that our survival is based upon our willingness to commit to God's plan for our families. Let's hammer home that point this morning as we consider a prophecy and a promise regarding our families.

Restating the Obvious

If your family ignores the covenant of God, God prophesies His Divine wrath.

Deuteronomy 28:15-19

¹⁵ "But if you do not obey the LORD your God by carefully following all His commands and statutes I am giving you today, all these curses will come and overtake you:

- ¹⁶ You will be cursed in the city and cursed in the country.
- ¹⁷ Your basket and kneading bowl will be cursed.
- ¹⁸ Your descendants will be cursed, and your soil's produce, the young of your herds, and the newborn of your flocks.
- ¹⁹ You will be cursed when you come in and cursed when you go out.

If your family follows the covenant of God, God promises His Divine blessing.

Deuteronomy 28:1-6

¹ "Now if you faithfully obey the LORD your God and are careful to follow all His commands I am giving you today, the LORD your God will put you far above all the nations of the earth. ² All these blessings will come and overtake you, because you obey the LORD your God:

- ³ You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the country.
- ⁴ Your descendants will be blessed, and your soil's produce, and the offspring of your livestock, including the young of your herds and the newborn of your flocks.
- ⁵ Your basket and kneading bowl will be blessed.
- ⁶ You will be blessed when you come in and blessed when you go out.

Jesus restated this principle in the Sermon on the Mount with a story about a wise man and a foolish man. The wise man, Jesus said, built his house upon the rock; the foolish man built his house upon the sand. The rains came, the floods came, the wind came, and beat upon both houses. You see wisdom and following God's plan for our families does not prevent the storms from coming. However, the foundation does matter as to our survival. Jesus said the wise man's house stood while the foolish man's house fell. For emphasis, Jesus said, "And great was its fall."

The Will of God has been revealed! (Deuteronomy 29:29)

We read in *The Daily Walk Bible*, “Don’t worry about the things in the Bible you don’t understand; worry about the things you do! And do whatever He tells you.”¹ Deuteronomy 29:29 indicates that the will of God has been revealed to us. As New Testament Christians, we even have more of the revealed will of God in the Bible. Isn’t it ironic that so many say they want to know God’s will for their lives, but ignore the will of God revealed for them in the Bible?

Revealing a Likely Outcome

What is hinted out in Deuteronomy 29 is actually confirmed in Deuteronomy 31:16—Israel will fail at keeping the covenant. They will turn their hearts from God. You might be tempted to say, “Then, what’s the use?” But, understand that this is a final way of caution and warning, because what is not revealed is the exact timing of the turning away from God. Every generation ought to live with this warning so that they might not be the generation that fails.

Recommitting to an Offensive Strategy

Remember we must be ready.

- Don’t ever forget the prophecy and the promises of God.

¹⁶ "Indeed, you know how we lived in the land of Egypt and passed through the nations where you traveled. ¹⁷ You saw their detestable images and idols [made] of wood, stone, silver, and gold, which were among them. ¹⁸ Be sure there is no man, woman, clan, or tribe among you today whose heart turns away from the LORD our God to go and worship the gods of those nations. Be sure there is no root among you bearing poisonous and bitter fruit. ¹⁹ When someone hears the words of this oath, he may bless himself in his mind, thinking, 'I will have peace even though I follow my [own] stubborn heart.' This will lead to the destruction of the well-watered [land] as well as the dry [land]. ²⁰ The LORD will not be willing to forgive him. Instead, His anger and jealousy will burn against that person, and every curse written in this scroll will descend on him. The LORD will blot out his name under heaven, ²¹ and single him out for harm from all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant written in this book of the law.

- Don’t ever give up the fight for your family.
²² "Future generations of your children who follow you and the foreigner who comes from a distant country will see the plagues of the land and the sicknesses the LORD has inflicted on it. ²³ All its soil will be a burning waste of sulfur and salt, unsown, producing nothing, with no plant growing on it, just like the fall of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim, which the LORD demolished in His fierce anger. ²⁴ All the nations will ask, 'Why has the LORD done this to this land? Why this great outburst of anger?' ²⁵ Then people will answer, 'It is because they abandoned the covenant of the LORD, the God of their fathers, which He had made with them when He brought them out of the land of Egypt. ²⁶ They began to worship other gods, bowing down to gods they had not known—gods that the LORD had not permitted them [to worship]. ²⁷ Therefore the LORD's anger burned against this land, and He brought every curse written in this

¹ *The Daily Walk Bible*, p. 237.

book on it.²⁸ The LORD uprooted them from their land in [His] anger, fury, and great wrath, and threw them into another land where they are today.'²⁹ The hidden things belong to the LORD our God, but the revealed things belong to us and our children forever, so that we may follow all the words of this law.

Nehemiah 4:14

¹⁴ After I made an inspection, I stood up and said to the nobles, the officials, and the rest of the people, "Don't be afraid of them. Remember the great and awe-inspiring Lord, and fight for your countrymen, your sons and daughters, your wives and homes."

- Don't ever give up hope.

¹ "When all these things happen to you—the blessings and curses I have set before you—and you come to your senses [while you are] in all the nations where the LORD your God has driven you, ² and you and your children return to the LORD your God and obey Him with all your heart and all your soul by doing everything I am giving you today, ³ then He will restore your fortunes, have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you. ⁴ Even if your exiles are at the ends of the earth, He will gather you and bring you back from there. ⁵ The LORD your God will bring you into the land your fathers possessed, and you will take possession of it. He will cause you to prosper and multiply you more than [He did] your fathers. ⁶ The LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the hearts of your descendants, and you will love Him with all your heart and all your soul, so that you will live. ⁷ The LORD your God will put all these curses on your enemies who hate and persecute you. ⁸ Then you will again obey Him and follow all His commands I am giving you today. ⁹ The LORD your God will make you prosper abundantly in all the work of your hands with children, the offspring of your livestock, and your soil's produce. Indeed, the LORD will again delight in your prosperity, as He delighted in that of your fathers, ¹⁰ when you obey the LORD your God by keeping His commands and statutes that are written in this book of the law and return to Him with all your heart and all your soul.

I want to conclude this morning with one final Scripture—Malachi 4:4-6. Actually, recognize these words as the final words of the Old Testament. ⁴ "Remember the instruction of Moses My servant, the statutes and ordinances I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel. ⁵ Look, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome Day of the LORD comes. ⁶ And he will turn the hearts of fathers to [their] children and the hearts of children to their fathers. Otherwise, I will come and strike the land with a curse."

When revival comes it will begin in fathers and spread to children. Don't ever give up hope.

Dr. H.C.G. Moule wrote: "There is no situation so chaotic that God cannot from that situation, create something that is surpassingly good. He did it at the creation. He did it at the cross. He is doing it today."