

A SHADOW OF GOOD THINGS TO COME

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Deuteronomy 28:1-12 contains a list of blessings that God promised to the physical nation of Israel as part of the Law of Moses. God promised to fulfill these promises if Israel fulfilled their part of the Covenant by keeping His commandments. “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: and all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God. Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store. Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out. The Lord shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face: they shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways. The Lord shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto; and he shall bless thee in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. The Lord shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, and walk in his ways. And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the Lord; and they shall be afraid of thee. And the Lord shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers to give thee. The Lord shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow.” The Lord also promised to bring curses, the exact

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(continued)

opposites of these blessings, if they did not obey (Deut 28:15-68).

The spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus

The ordinances of the Old Testament served as “a shadow of things to come” under the Law of Christ, the New Testament (Col 2:14-17). Hebrews 10:1 says, “For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things.” The New Covenant is a much “better testament” (Heb 7:22), established on “better promises” (Heb 8:6). Therefore, the New Testament does not contain the same promises of material blessings for obedience. In fact, the New Testament warns sternly against covetousness (Luke 12:13-34; 16:13-15; 18:18-25; 1 Tim 6:6-12). Rather, the glorious gospel of Christ contains spiritual parallels to the blessings that God gave to physical Israel. In the New Testament, the church of Christ is “the Israel of God” (Gal 6:16). We are a “spiritual house” (1 Pet 2:5) and a “holy nation” (1 Pet 5:9). God’s blessings for spiritual Israel are eternal in nature (2 Cor 4:18). We have been redeemed from the bondage of sin through the blood of Jesus Christ (John 8:31-36; Rom 5:6-11; Titus 2:11-14; Heb 2:14-18). Jesus Christ is our Passover lamb (1 Cor 5:7; 1 Pet 1:18-21), and through him we receive *eternal* redemption (Heb 9:12). And our promised land is Heaven (Heb 11:13-16; 13:14), which is our *eternal* inheritance (Heb 9:15; 1 Pet 1:3-5). And our food is the word of God (Matt 4:4), which is able to make us perfect (2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pet 1:3-4; 1 John 2:5), make us overcome sin (John 8:31-36; 17:17; Eph 6:10-17; 1 John 2:1), and save our souls (Jas 1:21). What God’s word does is eternal (Matt 24:35; 1 Pet 1:23-25). Not only this, but we have all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus (Eph 1:3). All of these great eternal riches in the New Testament are even greater demonstrations of what was promised to physical Israel in Deuteronomy 28.