

## **The Handwriting Is On The Wall (2008)**

**Deuteronomy 28**

**John W. Ritenbaugh**

**Given 13-Oct-08; Sermon #FT08-01**

Saturday evening was not at all unusual in this area because the University of Missouri, which is perched right up the hill, and the football field up there as well, had a home game. The Missouri State University Tigers played Oklahoma State University. I do not know how many tens of thousands of people attended here. But, it affected those of us who were here for the Sabbath in that the people who were going to go to the game were parked anywhere they could possibly get.

We must be about a half-mile, maybe three-quarters of a mile from the stadium, but the cars were parked all the way down to here, and probably about a half mile below here too. There were automobiles parked on both sides of Route 63 and on both sides of the frontage road that goes along the Stony Creek Inn. The people began arriving before noon. The game was not until 7 p.m., but they began arriving before noon to make sure they got a plum spot.

I thought, "Well, they are right here, and when the game is over they will beat it to their car and they will be out just like so, and would miss the big traffic jams in downtown Columbia."

It did not quite work out that way as I found out the next morning.

Besides parking here on the streets, at the bottom of the hill is a very large parking lot, which they use for the games. It must be large enough to hold several hundred automobiles. That lot was filled up pretty early as well.

As you know, I generally go out in the morning and take a walk. So, the next morning I got up to take my morning walk, leaving the building here probably about 6 a.m. It was still dark. And what to my wondering eyes, but here were these automobiles still parked out in front of the building. I later determined, that between the street here and Route 63, there were at least 100 automobiles abandoned. I call them abandoned. They were waiting for their owners to show up.

There was probably some sensible explanation as to why those cars were still sitting there eight hours after the game was over, but there they remained, abandoned. Were their drivers drunk? Did they already have a designated driver appointed? I do not know, but those automobiles were not removed, until sporadically throughout the day, they began to disappear one by one.

The direction of my walk took me down the hill to that parking lot. The lights were still brightly burning because it was only a little past 6 a.m., and what my eyes saw there is not beyond description, but it was pretty terrible.

There were still 150 automobiles waiting for their owners to show up. The parking lot was strewn with paper plates, paper cups, plastic cups, plastic wrappers, and hamburger wrappers—just hundreds, maybe thousands of them, blowing in the wind. In addition to all of this were all kinds of beer bottles, beer cans, soft drink cans, soft drink bottles, and even diapers. You name it, there was everything you could possibly think of that people would throw away. There were even ice chests sitting there empty, like they, too, had been abandoned. They were just dropped wherever somebody could drop them or throw them away.

At any rate, the chaos that thing pictured me I, then, considered to be a snapshot of the general condition of the United States of America. To me, it showed some of the chaos in economic, political, and moral areas of life. The first thing was, "Why were those automobiles sitting there abandoned? What did the owners do all the while after the game was over?" I do not know.

In addition, the property owners along this street, including the Stony Creek Inn and the surrounding neighborhood, had all pounded poles into the ground, and strung rope along from pole to pole to pole all the way down as far as your eye could see. They did this in order to keep the parkers from driving onto their lawns, parking their automobile there, and leaving to go to the game. On Sunday morning all of that stuff was on the ground. People had pulled the poles out of the ground, just threw them, and drove right on through those areas. Those things were strewn from one end of the road as far as I could see, like it probably was done deliberately.

This is, in my mind, a pretty good idea of the American mind. What were those people thinking? That parking lot was used for a giant tail-gate party, and that is where all the debris came from. The idea, at least from the debris I saw lying there, was, "Eat it, consume it, and then leave it," as though they did not have a responsible thought beyond what they were doing at the moment.

Their minds were completely on their enjoyment of their situation right then, and so they left all this debris over the whole area, and then made somebody else come and clean it up.

I did get a picture of that parking lot. It looked to me like a combination of a used car sales lot and a garbage dump. In addition to that there was debris all along the road as well. When people returned to their automobiles they kept casting things aside. I have to tell you, I felt ashamed. It hit me that way. I felt ashamed, and the words that came to my mind were, "Filthy America!" The people did not have enough concern for the United States of America. They did not have enough concern for the University of Missouri. They did not have enough concern for the people in this area who live around here. They just did what they felt they needed to have done at that time in order that *they* might enjoy. To me it was a very clear example of self-indulgence with irresponsibility.

I do not know whether you understand it, but that same attitude flows into moral areas as well. This was just debris. It was just garbage. But when we get into moral areas, the same kind of thinking prevails within the carnal mind. And, the only thing that stops it is that in some people there is still a measure of responsibility to their nation, a responsibility to their neighbors, and a responsibility to God Himself.

But so many times an individual in any given situation—I will just go through five of the commandments—can say, "I will revolt against my parents because it is suitable to me at this time to do it. I need to do it. They are too strict. They are too hard on me. They do not understand. They are too old. They are out of it." All kinds of justifications can be made, but the kid who is doing this is thinking only of himself and feels no responsibility to his parents to support them, to honor them.

It can be done in terms of murder. "I am going to kill that person over there because he makes me angry and he is getting in my way. He will not let me do what I want to do, and so I if I just get rid of him, then I will be able to do what I want to do."

It happens the same way in terms of adultery and fornication. It does not matter what it is, but they feel, "Well, here is an opportunity for me to have some pleasure at this time. I do not care if that person is married. I do not care if that person already has children. I am the one who needs to be satisfied at this time. I am not responsible for this person's enjoyment of life."

The same thing occurs in terms of stealing. "Well, I need that thing over there more than that person needs that thing. I can use it, and therefore, because it is not nailed down or welded down, I will take it. They will never miss it."

We can do the same kind of thing in terms of the ninth commandment as well, and irresponsibly saying to ourselves, "Well, I am going to lie because it is going to make me look good. I am going to exaggerate this so that they understand what kind of a person, what kind of a big wheel I am," never thinking that they have a responsibility toward that other person or that they have a responsibility toward God.

To me the picture of that parking lot down there was just another subject—a snapshot of Deuteronomy 28 and "The handwriting is on the wall," because this is nothing but another picture of the direction that America is already well within, and it is ultimately going to lead to the destruction of this nation.

We are falling apart morally, and as we fall apart morally, it is going to affect economics. Is it affecting economics now? How about all the greed that has been at the bottom of the bankruptcy of the United States of America?

How about all the political arm-twisting that was going on that made these things possible? It was because those men in Washington, D.C. changed the banking regulations that made it possible for the banks to issue loans with interest rates that were so low.

The bankers knew already where this was going to head, but the pressure was put on by the administration: "Either you do this, or else." I mean, give loans to these people who were not going to be able to pay back their loans. It is the same kind of thinking that produced that mess down in the parking lot. It is just transferred into areas that there is somewhat of a delay before we actually see the debris that is being created. That happened overnight in that parking lot, but an economy of a whole nation does not fail over night, but it was set in progress and continued by the same kind of irresponsible thinking. The handwriting is on the wall.

I want you to turn to Deuteronomy 28. Everybody knows what is in Deuteronomy 28: The blessings and the curses. To give you a little bit of a background, Deuteronomy 28 is held by many commentators to be one of the most eloquent and moving passages in the Bible, so states the *Expositors Bible Commentary*. That same commentary goes on to quote S. R. Driver, who is one of the most noted of Hebrew scholars, as saying, "In sustained declamatory power, it stands unrivaled in the Old Testament." "Declamatory" means "to speak out."

Do you know what God was doing in that chapter, speaking out? Think of a father who loves you, but is also rather stern, you think. Do you know what God was doing? He was reading the law to His children. He was saying, "Go this way, and you are going to get hurt. Go this other way, and you are going to be blessed." God was saying, "Choose; but know that what I say is a certainty."

Please understand that Deuteronomy 28 is not prophetic. Did you hear that? It is not prophetic. Is God saying that these things *have* to happen? No. He said, "You are going to choose whether to *make* them happen." I think the picture I gave you is adequate. It is a Father telling His children, out of loving concern, "Go this way, and you are blessed. Go that way, and it is going to hurt." You are going to choose. So there is a word of threat there God is declaiming to His children.

The power of Deuteronomy 28 is derived at least partly from knowing that it is God Almighty—the Sovereign Creator—who is laying down the law. Its power really hits home when one understands the utter truth and certainty of what He says. The chapter makes very clear though His personal and loving intent for men. In it, the Sovereign God makes plain beyond a shadow of a doubt of uncertainty that righteousness produces blessings, and unrighteousness produces curses. These ends He personally guarantees because He is personally involved, personally overseeing, and personally carrying out these judgments described. Again, remember He is not prophesying they are going to occur. He is saying, "You are going to decide."

Now additionally, this chapter makes it as clear as any in the entire Bible that one must pay heed to the direction of one's life and all the steps that carry one towards life's goal. And why? Because each step matters to the consequences, and consequences matter to one's well being in life.

So the handwriting is on the wall every bit as much as it was in that fateful evening in 539 BC when Belshazzar was holding that big festival there, and those people stood in pop-eyed wonder as a hand appeared and began writing on the wall: "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin." It even says that Belshazzar's knees smote themselves together. I am paraphrasing a bit, but you get the idea. He was frightened.

This next passage applies to the United States of America. It applies to individuals. It matters not who you are. This is a principle that every one of us needs to understand.

**Proverbs 22:7** The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.

It is the second part of that verse that is important to this particular message. "The borrower is servant to the lender." America's economic crisis is exposing America's national greed. How many people involved in all of this have not considered the end before leaping into ventures that they ultimately could not afford? And now the piper must be paid, individually as well as nationally. Who, brethren, is going to be paying for this debt? ***You are*** through taxation, whether it is open or hidden. Regardless of who took the nation into the pit economically, all of us are going to be paying for that debt, and as the time goes on that long, our children are going to be paying for it too.

How many false economic decisions have been made by people that led to this situation? It was not one, it was not thousands, but it was millions and billions of decisions that were wrong—each one in a step directed by covetousness and the desire to have things before one actually had the money, the cash, to be able to pay for it. This is where gambling takes a people or a nation.

And so now the United States is fallen into slavery—economic slavery. Who holds the paper on those debts? Well, we could start with the Federal Reserve System, but they are not the only ones. You know the Chinese own much of that American debt. How much does India own of the American debt? These are prosperous nations right now, and they are buying into America. As they buy into

America they are buying corporations that you think are American corporations. But they are no longer American corporations, because these people are moving in and are taking over the country, business by business, by holding the paper on the debt that these people have.

General Motors is said to be collapsing economically. Chrysler is said to be collapsing economically. These two are trying to put themselves together, as one of the rumors is, but I do not know whether it will work. Now we find that Nissan is trying to buy out General Motors. I do not know whether that will be successful, but you can see what is happening. The big fish keep swallowing up the small fish, and sometimes the small fish have put themselves in that position where they become the victim.

What this points to is that Americans are not considering very clearly the end result of what they are doing. Far too many of us have gotten ourselves into this position by wanting things we should not ever buy until we have the cash on hand or the wherewithal to pay for it.

We Americans deal with God in much the same way. We accept, as a people, that God exists. We accept Him, as a people, that He is the Creator, but we have a very hard time accepting that He actively rules His creation, and that things have pretty much gone along on their own steam from the time that He actually created things. They basically think that He is up there, but that He is just observing what is going on, and that He is not really involved with His creation.

Tell me something. Maybe you do not know any inventors. Then again, maybe you do. Maybe you have invented something that you use around the house—a tool that you put together, or whatever. Do you just make new things, new creations from ideas that you have, and then after you make it you just toss it aside and do nothing with it? That is illogical. God made His creation to work in it, and He is using it for His purpose. He is not ignoring what is going on, and He is actively involved while we make these stupid decisions.

**John 5:17** But Jesus answered them, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working."

That verse is written in the past perfect tense. What Jesus said is that sometime in the distant past God began His work, and it has continued. He has never stopped working the work He began way in distant past, but it also gives the impression that He is never going to stop working, and right at this moment He is working, and Jesus said, "I am working right along with Him." The two of them together are working on bringing their ideas for this creation to pass. What am I saying? I am saying He is involved, but Americans do not seem to be aware of that.

I am going to show this to you in more places. The Apostle Paul said this when he was speaking to those people in Greece.

**Acts 17:26** And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their pre-appointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings;

It is God who moves multi-millions of people over a period of time from one place to another. They think they are doing that themselves, but God is putting the thought in their mind to move and go to a certain place.

**Acts 17:27** . . . so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us.

Paul was saying this to Gentiles, not Israelites. And so, here is Paul telling these unconverted Gentiles, "Hey! God is not way distant. He is right there."

This next passage takes us into a slightly different area.

**Deuteronomy 4:7** "For what great nation is there that has God so near to it, as the LORD our God is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon Him?"

That does not seem to me like the Bible shows God is out of touch, but the American thought is that God is out of touch, and the reason they say that is they are out of touch with God.

**Psalm 139:7-12** Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in the grave, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me. If I say, "Surely the darkness shall fall on me," even the night shall be light about me; indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, but the night shines as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to You.

This leads to the question: Can anything be hid from God? Is He unaware of what is going on in His creation?

You and I might build a little castle or something in the sand. Our eyes and our mind encompass what is right before us in that little area. We know it intimately because we put it together. A pat here, a pat there, moving things about, and we can step back and look at it. Can you think of God in somewhat similar fashion, that by His spirit He is in touch with every aspect of His creation, and that nothing can be hidden from Him? Paul said the same thing in Hebrews 4.

Let us go to one more line on this thinking. Now here is God speaking in the first person.

**Jeremiah 23:23-24** "Am I a God near at hand," says the LORD, "and not a God afar off?" "Can anyone hide himself in secret places, so I shall not see him?" says the LORD. "Do I not fill heaven and earth?" says the LORD.

How much clearer can this get? Let us take this one step further—one necessary step further in order to tie this into "The Handwriting Is On The Wall" that will deal with each of us personally in our relationship with God. Remember, God says that He is aware of what is going on. That is not a threat. He does not mean it to be a threat. He just wants us to know He is there.

**Romans 13:8** Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law.

Paul is not setting down a fiscal policy of paying cash for everything. He is talking about a Christian's social responsibility of not believing such a thing about God so that he feels he does not

have to treat his fellowman in an irresponsible way, because we are responsible to God. Therefore, there is a bit of warning here in that Paul is saying we owe God and man a debt of love. That is our responsibility.

Incidentally, this might be an aside, but it is an important one. To love God and fellowman is a debt that is continuous. Relationships inside the church can get pretty touchy from time to time. We are not always that easy to get along with. We offend, and we are offended. But in regard to this debt of love Paul is talking about, it is never paid. It is always owed. Regardless of circumstances, our responsibility to our fellowman is to treat them exactly the same way we want to be treated.

Now how about these people who left all this debris down there in that parking lot for the University of Missouri to clean up? Maybe the officials at the University of Missouri say, 'Well, that is just the cost of doing business.' That is not the point. The point is in God's eyes those people who parked in that lot down there should have cleaned up their area and left that area better than it was when they parked their automobile there. That is love.

That debt will never be repaid. It is always hanging out there for us to pay regardless of the situation. We think we can get away with offending somebody. No. We cannot get away with that because, in a sense, God has marked it down. We should have treated that person with more love, with more kindness, with more respect, with more tolerance, or whatever. Are you beginning to get the point?

Paul, in the next passage, is still on the same basic subject, but this time he spells it out a little bit more clearly.

**Romans 14:7** For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself.

No man is an island. We are always surrounded by people. We might even say we have a responsibility toward nature, because God created us to take care of it.

**Romans 14:8** For if we live, we live to the Lord; . . .

This is definitely directly pointed at the converted sons of God because we have been bought and paid for by the life of Jesus Christ, so now we belong to Him. Our responsibility now is to live to the Lord—to meet the qualifications He sets down.

**Romans 14:8-9** . . . and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

He is alive to change our lives toward living the same kind of life that He did, with the same kind of love that He did. Remember, He said, "I want you to love each other in the same manner, in the same degree that I loved *you*."

**Romans 14:10** But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

So we can judge another person and really cut them down, and forget at the same time we have to answer to God for what we just did in cutting that person down. There is logic to God's requirement of mankind that sets up our responsibility before Him and His Son that just cannot be circumvented.

**Romans 14:11** For it is written: "As I live," says the LORD, "every knee shall bow to Me . . . ."

This means that everybody is going to be submissive to Jesus Christ or they are not going to be in the Kingdom of God. And why will they not be in the Kingdom of God? Because they will not live life like He did. If He put them in the Kingdom of God they would be most uncomfortable being there because everybody else would be so nice by comparison it would really bore them to death. He is actually doing them a favor.

**Romans 14:11-12** For it is written, "As I live," says the LORD, "every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God." So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.

If we are going to understand Deuteronomy 28 correctly, we must know that its principles and its promises of blessings or curses do not stand alone, separated from either the remainder of the book of Deuteronomy nor to the rest of the Bible. One of those principles we must know and accept is, that because we belong to Jesus Christ, He makes demands of us. He owns us. Putting it bluntly, the Bible says we are now His slaves, because He died to give us life. But He is a loving slave-Master, and He is working for our good all the time to change us to be like He is so that we can live the way He lives. So we have gotten a very good deal.

But are we changing?

Regarding Deuteronomy 28, the blessings and the curses are indeed certain and sure, but understanding them correctly, in balance, they must be modified by truth found elsewhere in the Scriptures. In other words, these Scriptures do not stand alone. So if the balance is not sought, understood, and believed, one can easily turn Deuteronomy 28 into nothing more than a mere mechanically operating and very misleading prosperity gospel that is so popular these days. But what is lost without the balance is that Deuteronomy 28 is intended by God to be part of a loving personal relationship within the covenant. It is important you understand that.

Deuteronomy 28 is written to those who have made the covenant with God. When it was first written, the covenant was the Old Covenant. The covenant had been made with the nation of Israel. Israel still exists, but it is scattered all over the place. But there is a New Covenant, and so Deuteronomy 28 is now applied to those who have made the New Covenant with Him, and that is us. It involves a personal relationship within the covenant.

God is still working with Israel to some degree, but His major attention is less with them than it is with us. He is still working things out with Israel, but what we need to understand is that Deuteronomy 28 is now addressed to you and to me.

The concept that Deuteronomy 28 is merely a listing of blessings for moral goodness and punishments for evil doing is there, but it is shallow. There is more that needs to be considered. That reality exists, but there is a much deeper reality involved, here, which must be considered, because it is important, as Christians, to our understanding of our role in our relationship with God.

What I am going to tell you here is difficult to understand. I will admit that. This next passage will show why it is difficult in just a little bit. It has something to do with judgment.



**Deuteronomy 7:6-12** "For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. "Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments; [notice the qualification there] and He repays those who hate Him to their face, to destroy them. He will not be slack with him who hates Him; He will repay him to his face. Therefore you shall keep the commandment, the statutes, and the judgments, which I command you today, to observe them. Then it shall come to pass, because you listen to these judgments, and keep and do them, that the LORD your God will keep with you the covenant and the mercy, which He swore to your fathers.

In II Corinthians 6:1-2, the Apostle Paul said, "We are coworkers together with God." We are involved in operations with Him, and that operation is to assist Him in creating the image of Jesus Christ in us. What God is doing requires our cooperation. We must choose to cooperate with Him, to be responsible to the things He gives us to do. That is why He says in verse 11, "Therefore you shall keep the commandment, the statutes, and the judgments which I command you today, to observe them."

When we feed back to Him the love He has already given to us, and we respond to His love, "Then it shall come to pass, because you listen to these judgments, and keep and do them, that the LORD your God will keep with you the covenant and the mercy which He swore to your fathers (verse 12)."

Does not this run counter to the concept that Americans have that God has gone way off somewhere? Not on your life! He is working with us, in us, through us to complete a project that requires our cooperation, and our cooperation is to be responsible enough to carry out what He has asked us to do. Sometimes those things are hard. Sometimes there is a great deal of sacrifice involved in carrying out our part, but always remember that He is always right there with us because He wants us to succeed, not fail.

We have to be tested. We have to be put through disciplines. We have to be given tests. Any teacher gives his students tests. Why? So that the student and the teacher both understand where the teacher needs to teach, and to what level the student is now working. God is doing the same thing, except He is invisible. We live by faith. He is there. Those people down at that parking lot did not think God was there. They had no sense of responsibility toward Him. Zilch! They did not even show any sense of responsibility to the University of Missouri.

Let us start figuring this thing out. God is going to test us to see where we stand, and to help *us* to see where *we* stand. We are involved in this relationship with Him.

Let us think of our "father in the faith," Abraham. He was quite a man. And I think that I can guarantee you that as God dealt with Abraham, He is going to deal with us as well. Now what did God do with Abraham? First of all, it was God who initiated the relationship with Abraham. Abraham just did not suddenly decide, "Hey! I want to have a relationship with God." No. It was God who initiated the relationship with him, and He stirred up Abraham's mind to come to believe in

God. That began God's determined purpose with Abraham to build a nation through Abraham and his children.

Because God dealt with Abraham the way He did, we can begin to understand that because God's purpose in dealing with us individually, what happens in our life may differ totally with Deuteronomy 28. Let me give you an example.

Abraham is held out in the Bible to be a very obedient and righteous man. He was so righteous he was called, "The friend of God." That is pretty close company with the Creator, that God called him "My friend, Abraham."

Is it not true that Abraham had to endure a famine? Did that come on Abraham because he was a sinner? No, it did not. How about the time that Abraham found out that his nephew Lot had been kidnapped and all kinds of goods were taken from that area, including some of Abraham's stuff, and probably all of Lot's stuff, and many other peoples' by these five kings that went through the area and just stripped it clean. Did that come upon Abraham because God was cursing him? Not in the least.

Was God punishing Abraham, making him wait twenty-five years for a son? Or was God testing Abraham to see if he could wait for twenty-five years before God *gave* him a son? We know Abraham tried to do it his own way that one time. About half way through his faith got real creaky, and Sarah talked him into something that he should never had done, but there is not one indication that a curse came upon Abraham because of what he did there, and that he had to wait twenty-five years.

Are you beginning to see what I am saying here? We may be personally going through something in which we are being blessed. Our next door neighbor in the church, living in the same area, is going through something where the bottom has fallen out of his life, and it is very easy in such a time to say, "Look at that guy over there. He is a nasty guy. He is sinning like crazy, and therefore God is . . . *phfft*." This is what I meant when I said sometimes it is not easy to judge, and is one of the major reasons why Jesus said, "Do not judge," because we do not know exactly what is going on. Our life is hard enough all by itself to take care of besides pointing the finger of scorn at somebody else who is your brother.

I gave a series of sermons on Isaac. I mean, Isaac was one fine dude. I am not kidding you. The picture God paints of that man is that he was kind, he was generous, he was peace-loving, and man, did he have the trouble! His neighbors were constantly stealing from him, drying up his wells, taking the water away from him that he needed for his own stock. Was that because Isaac was a sinner? You begin to get the point here.

In understanding Deuteronomy 28, we must have the understanding that God is working individually with people. He knows where He is taking that person and what He wants that person to be doing in the future in His kingdom. So that person may need training and discipline he has to go through in order to prepare him for what God is preparing him. In the meantime we are skating along with nothing going on, and we think we must be the greatest and most righteous person God ever had in His family.

No. That is not the way it works.

It is very easy to look at Deuteronomy 28 as a simple cut-and-dried mechanical process: You do this and you will be blessed. You do that and you will be cursed. That is generally true, but with God's own children, it is not always true because they are going to be prepared to be doing things [in His kingdom]. So there are going to be inconsistencies between what a son of God is going to be going through and what Deuteronomy 28 says.

This next passage is exceedingly important for every one of us to understand. I am going to read the whole chapter.

**Deuteronomy 8:1** "Every commandment which I command you today you must be careful to observe, [because, it is important to God's purpose and our preparation for the Kingdom of God] that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers.

Our land is the Kingdom of God. Their land was the Promised Land—the land that became the land of Israel. But for us it is the Kingdom of God. God is preparing us for that.

**Deuteronomy 8:2-3** And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, [Why?] to humble you . . . [We need to be humbled or we will not submit to His purpose] and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, [God purposely allowed people to get hungry] and fed you with manna, which you did not know nor did your fathers know, [They never had any experience with it before] that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD.

There is a dimension to the Christian's life that the unconverted do not have in their life yet. It is coming to them, but not yet. Do you see what He is saying? Our life depends on how we respond to His word. Man lives by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord.

**Deuteronomy 8:4-5** "Your garments did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years. [God is taking care of us.] You should know in your heart that as a man chastens his son, *so* the LORD your God chastens you."

This does not necessarily mean spanking. Discipline is a good word. It includes spanking, but He puts us through the paces, as it were.

**Deuteronomy 8:6-10** "Therefore you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him. For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, that flow out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey; a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing; a land whose stones are iron and out of whose hills you can dig copper. When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land, which He has given you.

Has anybody ever been blessed like the United States of America has been blessed? Impossible. Nobody in all the history of man has been given such a land.

**Deuteronomy 8:11-17** "Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments, His judgments, and His statutes which I command you today, lest—when you have eaten and are full, and have built beautiful houses and dwell in them; and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold are multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied; when your heart is lifted up, and you forget the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; who led you through that great and terrible wilderness, in which were fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty land where there was no water; who brought water for you out of the flinty rock; who fed you in the wilderness with manna, which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do you good in the end—then you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth.'"

I have been heading through this whole chapter to get to verse 18.

**Deuteronomy 8:18** "And you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day."

We owe the wealth of the United States of America to God. We did not put the minerals in the hillsides. We did not put the oil in the ground. We did not put the great plains of the United States of America out there, with soil so rich you could just throw seeds anywhere and they would grow. You get the point. We did not put the wonderful weather patterns in action that our nation has. It is God who has made us wealthy. And what have we done? We scatter it all over parking lots, and never give Him a thought.

**Deuteronomy 8:19** Then it shall be if you by any means forget the LORD your God, and follow other gods, and serve them and worship them, I testify against you this day that you shall surely perish.

I do not know how long it is going to take, but we are well along the way. You see it everyday in your travels to work and home. You read it in the newspapers. You see it on television. We are making a garbage dump out of the United States of America.

Deuteronomy 28, correctly understood, is a powerful exhortation—actually an encouragement for those who make the covenant, to make every effort to protect and preserve and build the relationship by doing whatever it takes to make that relationship ever stronger.

I did not say this as I was going through Deuteronomy 8, but did you see that verse where it said, "It is the LORD your God who gives you power to make wealth"? Jesus put it very simply. He said, "Without Me, you can do nothing." This is where our responsibility lies. We get off the beam when we start focusing on other people and other things. The One we have to satisfy in life is Jesus Christ.

Brethren, I know that what I am saying is very difficult for us to actually put into practice, but it is the requirement of every person in this room. We have to love Him more than we love our self, and if we do, we will submit to Him, and He will make us wealthy beyond our wildest dreams. Not with money, but with character—a sense of responsibility that drives us to do the right thing regardless of the cost to our self.

Well, the handwriting is on the wall for this nation. I just want to go back to that thought about who owns the paper for these debts. You know who it is. It is in the papers all the time. The United States owes this number of billions of dollars to this nation or that nation, or whatever. I want you to consider this. Those nations could pull the plug. The only trouble is, they know if they do that, they are going to go down themselves. In fact that is prophesied in Revelation 18, that when the nation is destroyed, those who destroy it will "weep and wail." Do you know why? Because they realize, for a short period of time, "Boy! That was stupid." They will have just killed the greatest consuming nation that has ever existed on the face of the earth. They shot themselves in the foot. It is going to happen, but right now they do not want the United States as a land that they need to conquer and occupy and take things over. All they want is our wealth, and they are draining us dry, and the United States, step by step, is becoming enslaved.

We just read in Proverbs 22:7 that the one who borrows is the slave of the lender. Who is it, brethren, who is going to determine who works and who does not work? It is the one who owns the manufacturing plant. It is going to be the one who will say where the work is going to be done. "We don't want you Americans to work anymore. We are going to ship that work off to Brazil. We are going to ship it off to Nicaragua. We are going to ship it off to Venezuela."

My wife told me today that the Chinese have become so wealthy that they are now outsourcing work to other nations, which is leading to the demise of the United States of America. They are heading in the same direction, but right now they do not want us. All they want is our wealth, and so they are going to permit Americans to work where *they* want them to work, and on *what*.

Therefore we are seeing step-by-step things leading to the place where they determine who eats and who does not eat, because a slave has no choices. Somebody else determines for him. You know that is exactly what it says in Revelation 13. The United States is gradually being pushed into that position. Maybe we are seeing the Beast being formed right before our eyes.