

Homiletics Analysis: Deuteronomy 28

Content & Intent

This Text — Content:

Deuteronomy 28 is the covenant's great reckoning — the formal articulation of blessings and curses that constitutes the sanctions clause of the Mosaic covenant. The chapter divides cleanly into two asymmetric halves. Verses 1–14 set out the blessings that will attend Israel's obedience: agricultural abundance, military victory, national preeminence, and the visible presence of God among His people as their flourishing God. Verses 15–68 — occupying more than four times the space of the blessings — catalogue the curses that will descend upon Israel if she refuses to hear and obey the voice of the LORD her God. These curses escalate in severity from crop failure and disease (vv. 15–24) through military defeat and subjugation (vv. 25–37) to full national disintegration (vv. 38–57) and finally to something almost unimaginable: a reversal of the Exodus itself, Israel returned to Egypt in ships, no buyer for their lives (vv. 58–68). The curses are not merely punitive — they are covenantally structured reversals. Every blessing withheld becomes a curse administered; every promise inverted becomes a threat fulfilled. The chapter concludes not with a call to repentance but with a stark statement: this is what rejection of the covenant looks like, and it will be total.

This Text — Intent:

God is not here merely informing Israel of consequences. He is pressing upon Israel — and through Israel upon every reader — the absolute seriousness of covenant relationship with Him. The asymmetry of the chapter (14 verses of blessing, 54 verses of curse) is itself the sermon. God intends for the weight of consequence to function as both warning and motivation: Israel must see that life with God is not neutral ground, that covenant unfaithfulness is not a tolerable alternative with manageable costs, but a catastrophic undoing of everything God gave. At the same time, the chapter's canonical function — in light of what follows in Israel's actual history — becomes a prophecy that points to the covenant's failure under Israel's flesh, and thus forward to the One who must bear what Israel could not avoid. God intends, through this passage, to produce a holy fear of covenant infidelity, a desperate dependence on grace rather than self-generated obedience, and — in light of the full canon — a recognition that only the Mediator who absorbs the curse can secure the blessing.

Subject Sentence: The Mosaic covenant's blessings and curses — life with God or life under His judgment.

Primary Claim: God presses upon His people the absolute and weighty seriousness of covenant fidelity — not to drive them to despair, but to drive them away from self-sufficiency and toward the only ground on which blessing is possible: life lived in dependence on His grace, in fear of His name, and in the knowledge that no one escapes the covenant’s reckoning.

Interpretive Evaluation

The Conditionality Question — Blessings, Curses, and Human Responsibility:

The most significant interpretive issue in Deuteronomy 28 is the nature and function of its conditionality. Arminian/Wesleyan readers tend to read the chapter as evidence that the covenant’s outcome is substantially in human hands — that God has placed before Israel a genuine binary, and that the outcome depends on the quality of Israel’s response. On this reading, the curses are warnings that can be heeded, the blessings are genuinely achievable, and the chapter functions as a call to strenuous moral effort. This reading rightly honors the genuine “if/then” structure of the text and resists any flattening of human responsibility. It must be acknowledged as capturing something real: the chapter is addressed to Israel as responsible moral agents, and the covenantal logic is genuinely conditional at the historical-particular level.

However, the Arminian reading must be qualified by what the broader Deuteronomic context — and Israel’s actual history — demonstrates. Deuteronomy 29–30 and 31–32 make unmistakably clear that Moses does not expect Israel to obey. Moses sings a song of anticipated apostasy (Deuteronomy 32) before the people even cross the Jordan. The curses of chapter 28 are not merely possible — they are, in Moses’s own prophetic horizon, probable and indeed foreseen. Reformed reading of Deuteronomy 28 therefore does not flatten the conditionality but interprets it within the framework of the Mosaic covenant as a covenant of law, whose very structure — its impossible demands upon sinful flesh — functions to expose the need for a new covenant written on the heart (Jeremiah 31:31–34; Ezekiel 36:26–27). The conditionality is real; but the text’s canonical function is to drive Israel toward the recognition that no external covenant-keeping can produce what is needed.

Dispensational Reading — Israel/Church Distinction:

Dispensational interpreters read the curses of Deuteronomy 28 as applying specifically and exclusively to national Israel — including the remarkable detail of verses 64–68 (worldwide dispersion) — and see in the chapter’s historical specificity a reason to limit its applicability to the Church. On this reading, the chapter is primarily prophetic-historical, mapping the course of Israel’s national history from the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities through the diaspora. This reading rightly identifies the passage’s immediate

referent (national Israel under the Mosaic economy) and correctly resists over-allegorizing the specific curses into generic spiritual principles. Verses 49–52 and 64–68 have a historical specificity — Roman siege, worldwide scattering — that cannot be dismissed.

Reformed theology qualifies this reading by refusing the sharp Israel/Church partition. The blessings and curses of Deuteronomy 28 apply to Israel as the visible covenant community, and the Church as the covenant community of the new covenant era inherits the covenantal logic — not the specific national-geographic sanctions, but the principle that life within God’s covenant brings blessing and covenant infidelity brings discipline and judgment. Galatians 3:10 and 13 make this explicit: Paul applies the curse-structure of Deuteronomy to all people under law, and then to Christ who absorbs the curse to secure the blessing. The Reformed reading is not that the Church is subject to Deuteronomy 28’s specific national curses, but that the curse-logic of Deuteronomy 28 is the very logic Christ has exhausted on behalf of all who are in Him.

Prosperity Gospel Misappropriation:

A third, less formally systematic but practically widespread misreading applies Deuteronomy 28:1–14 as a direct promise of material prosperity to faithful Christians. On this reading, the blessings of the chapter are unconditional promises awaiting appropriation by faith. This reading must be refuted, not merely qualified. It severs the blessings from their covenantal framework (Mosaic, conditional, national, typological), ignores the asymmetric weight the chapter itself places on the curses, and reads the New Testament through the Old rather than the reverse. The New Testament consistently teaches that the people of God may suffer greatly in the present age (Romans 8:17–18; 2 Corinthians 4:17; Philippians 3:10) and that the blessings of Deuteronomy 28 are typological pointers to spiritual and eschatological realities secured in Christ — not a health-and-wealth checklist for individual believers. Any exposition of Deuteronomy 28 must explicitly refuse to allow its opening section to function as a prosperity proof-text.

Reformed Verdict:

Deuteronomy 28 is the Mosaic covenant’s sanctions clause, addressed to national Israel as the historical covenant community, functioning within a covenantal structure that Israel’s own history will demonstrate cannot be kept in the flesh. Its conditionality is real but does not reduce to Arminian contingency — it operates within divine foreknowledge and sovereign purpose. Its national specificity is real but does not confine it to Israel alone — the curse-logic the chapter articulates is the very logic Paul applies to all humanity and that Christ absorbs at Calvary. The chapter’s canonical function is to expose the insufficiency of law-keeping as a basis for covenant standing and to point forward, through the weight of its curses, to the One who must bear what Israel — and all humanity — cannot escape.

Key Canonical Support

- **Galatians 3:10, 13** — Paul explicitly invokes the curse-structure of Deuteronomy (citing Deut. 27:26 and 21:23) to argue that all who rely on law are under a curse, and that Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us. This is the New Testament’s definitive canonical commentary on Deuteronomy 28’s curse-logic.
- **Jeremiah 31:31–34** — God promises a new covenant “not like the covenant I made with their fathers” — explicitly because Israel broke the Mosaic covenant whose sanctions are articulated in Deuteronomy 28. The new covenant addresses the very failure the curses expose: a people whose hearts cannot sustain the obedience the blessings require.
- **2 Kings 17; 2 Kings 25** — The Assyrian deportation of Israel and the Babylonian deportation of Judah are the historical fulfillment of the specific curses of Deuteronomy 28:36–37, 48–57, 64–68 — demonstrating that the chapter is not merely theoretical but prophetically precise.
- **Romans 8:1–4** — “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” — Paul frames the Spirit’s work in terms of what “the law could not do, weakened as it was by the flesh.” The condemnation that Deuteronomy 28’s curse-structure represents has been fully absorbed by Christ on behalf of His people. The blessing of the covenant is secured not by obedience to the law but by the Spirit who fulfills the law’s righteous requirement in us.
- **Deuteronomy 30:1–10** — Positioned immediately after the covenant’s blessings and curses, this passage looks beyond the curses to restoration — God promising to circumcise the heart so that His people will love Him with all their heart and soul. This is the Mosaic covenant’s own anticipation of its successor: a covenant that produces from within what Deuteronomy 28’s external demands cannot generate.

Aim: To press upon the reader the absolute seriousness of covenant standing before God, and to drive them — through the unbearable weight of the curses — to desperate, grateful reliance on Christ, who has borne every curse and secured every blessing on behalf of His people.

Content Table

Verse(s)	Content	Notes
1–2	Condition stated: if Israel diligently obeys the LORD,	“Overtake” — blessings are pursued by the obedient;

Verse(s)	Content	Notes
	all these blessings will come upon them and overtake them	they catch up with them; not earned but given
3–6	Catalogue of blessings — city and field; offspring, ground, livestock; coming in and going out	Sixfold blessing covering all dimensions of daily life; comprehensive flourishing
7	Military victory — enemies defeated before Israel; flee seven ways	The enemy's rout is the LORD's act, not Israel's military prowess
8	The LORD commands blessing on storehouses and all undertakings; blesses Israel in the land He is giving	Blessing is commanded by God — it is an active divine act, not a natural outcome
9	The LORD will establish Israel as a holy people — if they keep His commandments	Holiness is the goal of the covenant relationship; Israel is to be what God is
10	The nations see Israel called by the name of the LORD and are afraid	Israel's covenant status produces a witness to the nations; Yahweh's reputation is at stake
11	Abundance in offspring, livestock, and ground — in the land the LORD swore to give their fathers	Connects back to Abrahamic promise; Deuteronomy 28 is the Mosaic specification of Genesis 12 blessing
12	The LORD opens His treasury, the heavens, for rain; Israel lends to nations, does not borrow	Position of preeminence among nations; covenant blessing has geopolitical dimension
13–14	Israel will be the head, not the tail; above, not beneath — if they obey and do not turn aside	Conditional restatement; the summary of the blessing section; v. 14 closes with the prohibition of idolatry
15	Condition reversed: if Israel does not obey, all these curses will come upon them and overtake them	Structural mirror of v. 1–2; “overtake” now applies to curses; the symmetry is deliberate
16–19	Mirror curses: city and field;	Exact structural inversion of

Verse(s)	Content	Notes
	offspring, ground, livestock; coming in and going out	vv. 3–6; each blessing has a corresponding curse
20	The LORD sends on Israel cursing, confusion, and frustration — until they are destroyed	The active agency of God in the curses; not merely the absence of blessing but God’s active opposition
21–22	Disease and pestilence — fever, inflammation, drought, blight and mildew	Agricultural and physical affliction; the land itself turns against Israel
23–24	The heavens become bronze, the earth iron; rain becomes dust and powder	Cosmic inversion — the creation that blessed now afflicts; the opened treasury of v. 12 slammed shut
25–26	Military defeat before enemies; carcasses left for birds and beasts, no one to drive them away	Reversal of v. 7; the shame of unburied dead; no one is left to intervene
27–29	Afflictions of Egypt — boils, madness, blindness, confusion of mind; oppressed and robbed continually	Israel brought back under the conditions of Egypt — the Exodus reversed in experience
30–33	Betrothal, house, vineyard, ox, donkey, sheep, sons and daughters — all taken or stolen; helpless watching	Every arena of life systematically stripped; the enjoyment of labor denied; impotence before enemies
34	Driven mad by the sights you see	The psychological dimension of the curse; the horror of watching covenant promises inverted
35	Grievous boils from sole to foot	Physical curse intensifies; comprehensive physical affliction
36–37	The LORD brings Israel and their king to a nation they have not known — to serve other gods; Israel becomes a horror, a proverb, a byword	The political dimension: exile of king; loss of national identity; Israel’s witness to the nations inverted — from a feared holy people (v. 10) to a byword of shame
38–44	Agricultural futility in detail	Systematic fruitlessness;

Verse(s)	Content	Notes
	— locusts, worms, grubs; the foreigner rises, Israel sinks	the productivity of vv. 8–12 entirely negated; the foreigner is now lender, Israel is borrower (reversal of v. 12)
45–48	Summary: curses come because Israel did not obey; served as signs and wonders on Israel; yoke of iron on the neck	The curses themselves are a testimony — to the watching nations, to history, to Israel’s own failure
49–52	A distant nation swoops like an eagle — a ruthless nation whose language Israel does not know; besiege Israel’s cities until walls fall	Historical specificity increases; the eagle-nation (Assyria? Babylon? Rome?) is an instrument of divine judgment
53–57	In the siege, Israel eats their own children; the most refined and tender men and women become cannibals in secret	The deepest horror of the curse section; the total breakdown of humanity within Israel; this occurred historically in the sieges of Samaria and Jerusalem
58–61	If Israel does not fear this glorious and awesome name — the LORD your God — further plagues beyond what is written in this book	The plague-escalation; the fear of God’s name as the pivot point; every disease of Egypt and more
62	Israel reduced from the stars of heaven in number to only a few — because they did not obey	Reversal of the Abrahamic promise (Genesis 15:5); the covenant people unmade by their own faithlessness
63	As the LORD took delight in prospering Israel, so the LORD will take delight in bringing ruin and destroying them	The severity of this verse: God’s delight in judgment mirrors His delight in blessing; justice is not reluctant
64–65	Scattered among all peoples from one end of the earth to the other — to serve other gods; no rest, no resting place; trembling heart, failing eyes, anxious soul	The Exile in its most comprehensive form; the restlessness that only covenant rest can cure

Verse(s)	Content	Notes
66–67	Life hanging in doubt; dread night and day; morning longing for evening, evening for morning	The existential horror of life under the curse; time itself becomes unbearable
68	The LORD brings Israel back to Egypt in ships — the way I said to you, “You shall never return that way again” — to sell yourselves as slaves; no buyer	The final and most devastating reversal: the Exodus undone; Israel offered as slaves with no taker; this is worse than Egypt — in Egypt there were buyers

Divisions Table

Division	Verses	Label
1	1–14	The Blessings of the Covenant: Life Flourishing Under God’s Favor
2	15–19	The Structural Mirror: Every Blessing Reversed into Curse
3	20–46	The Escalating Curses: Progressive Disintegration of Every Dimension of Life
4	47–57	The Instrument of Judgment: The Siege Nation and the Horrors Within
5	58–68	The Final Reversal: Exile, Dispersion, and the Undoing of the Exodus

Subject Sentence & Primary Claim (*restated*)

Subject Sentence: The Mosaic covenant’s blessings and curses — life with God or life under His judgment.

Primary Claim: God presses upon His people the absolute and weighty seriousness of covenant fidelity — not to drive them to despair, but to drive them away from self-sufficiency and toward the only ground on which blessing is possible: life lived in

dependence on His grace, in fear of His name, and in the knowledge that no one escapes the covenant's reckoning.

Applications (Five)

1. Reckon with the weight of covenant relationship. [Mind/belief] Deuteronomy 28 refuses to allow Israel — or any reader — to treat covenant relationship with God as a casual or manageable arrangement. The chapter's asymmetry is the message: four times as many verses about curse as about blessing, escalating in horror from crop failure to cannibalism to exile. The reader must sit with this asymmetry until they feel its weight. Modern Western Christianity tends to domesticate God — to treat Him as fundamentally affirming, slow to judgment, tolerant of half-hearted devotion. Deuteronomy 28 is a corrective to this domestication. The God who commands blessing in verse 8 also takes delight in bringing ruin in verse 63. This is not a different God from the God of the New Testament — it is the same God who did not spare His own Son so that the curse of this chapter could be absorbed rather than administered. To hear Deuteronomy 28 rightly is to cease being casual about covenant standing before God.

2. Diagnose the idolatry of self-sufficiency — the root beneath covenant failure. [Affections/worship] The curses of Deuteronomy 28 are not triggered by spectacular wickedness but by a specific failure: not hearing and not obeying the voice of the LORD (v. 15, v. 45, v. 62). But beneath the failure to obey lies something deeper — the turn toward other gods that Moses prohibits in verse 14 and that the curses systematically expose as futile. Israel's covenant failure was not primarily moral failure in the abstract — it was idolatry: the trust that fertility, military power, foreign alliances, and their own national vitality could sustain them without continued dependence on God. Every modern parallel follows the same structure. The reader who turns to achievement, financial security, relational approval, or national identity as the ground of their flourishing has turned aside to other gods. Deuteronomy 28 diagnoses what is happening beneath the surface: the curse is not merely punishment — it is the stripping away of every false substitute until only the LORD remains.

3. Fear the name of the LORD — not in terror, but in orientation. [Affections/worship] Verse 58 identifies the pivot point of the entire passage: "If you are not careful to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may fear this glorious and awesome name, the LORD your God." The fear of the name of the LORD is not abject terror but a comprehensive reorientation of the self toward the one who is the source of all life, all blessing, and all judgment. The contemporary church has lost this — not through rebellion but through a diet of comfort-shaped Christianity that reduces God to a life-enhancement program. The exposure to Deuteronomy 28 should produce a recalibration: a return to what the Puritans called "the fear of the Lord" as the beginning of wisdom, the ground of obedience, and the posture of a soul who rightly understands what covenant with the living God actually involves.

4. Stop living as though your obedience is sufficient — run to the One who bore the

curse. [Will/behavior] The canonical function of Deuteronomy 28 is not to produce harder self-effort but to make self-effort obviously and overwhelmingly impossible. Galatians 3:10 says “all who rely on works of the law are under a curse” — and Galatians 3:13 says “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.” The reader who understands Deuteronomy 28 and then hears Galatians 3 should feel the relief of a prisoner whose sentence has been served by another. But many Christians live as though they must still generate their own covenant standing through sustained moral performance — as though Christ’s absorption of the curse was partial or conditional on their continued contribution. Deuteronomy 28 makes the curse large enough that such a posture becomes obviously impossible. The concrete behavior called for here is not “try harder” but “stop trying to earn what Christ has already secured” — and then live from that secured standing rather than for it.

5. Read history — your own and the world’s — with covenant eyes. [Mind/belief]

Deuteronomy 28:46 says the curses “shall be a sign and a wonder against you and your offspring forever.” The curses, when they fall, are not random historical events — they are legible, covenantally structured. Israel’s historians (Kings, Chronicles) and prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel) read the events of their time through exactly this lens: siege, exile, dispersion — all recognizable as the fulfillment of what Moses had warned. The reader is invited into the same covenantal literacy. This does not mean crude application of specific curses to specific contemporary events — it means learning to see history as God-governed, that nations and individuals who build their lives on alternatives to God are not merely making poor choices but are living under the same logic that Deuteronomy 28 maps. This is not pessimism but realism — and it opens onto hope, because the same covenant logic that produces curse also, in Christ, produces blessing.

Theological Importance

Theological Importance: Deuteronomy 28 provides one of Scripture’s most comprehensive and structured expositions of God’s justice as covenant justice — not abstract retribution but the personal, specific, measured response of the covenanting God to covenant faithfulness and covenant infidelity. The chapter teaches that God is not a distant force but an actively engaged covenant partner whose character means that blessing and curse are both personal acts of the living God, not merely natural consequences. The asymmetry of the chapter — fourteen verses of blessing, fifty-four of curse — is theologically significant: it does not imply that God is more inclined to curse than to bless, but that the weight of the curse must be felt before the weight of grace can be truly appreciated. The chapter also teaches that covenant standing is not morally neutral — there is no middle ground between covenant fidelity and covenant infidelity, no managed partial obedience that escapes the curse-logic. Finally, the chapter teaches about God’s patience in relation to His justice: the curses escalate, they accumulate, they

arrive in stages — God does not immediately and finally consume, but pursues covenant accountability progressively, always leaving within the structure a possibility of return.

Reformed Theological Significance

Reformed Theological Significance: Deuteronomy 28 is one of the Old Testament's most important witnesses to the covenant of works/covenant of grace structure that underlies Reformed federal theology. The chapter demonstrates what law-keeping as a basis for covenant standing requires and what its failure produces — not as a hypothetical scenario but as a historical demonstration in Israel's life. The curses catalogue what every human being, not only Israel, stands under apart from grace: the wages of covenant faithlessness is comprehensive undoing. Reformed theology reads this chapter alongside Galatians 3 as establishing the dual movement that the gospel resolves: Christ enters the curse-field of Deuteronomy 28 in His passion (the darkness, the abandonment, the shame, the divine rejection — “my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” is Deuteronomy 28:20–21 experienced by the Son), absorbs every curse on behalf of His people, and in His resurrection inaugurates the blessing that no Mosaic obedience could secure. The believer in Christ is, therefore, on the right side of Deuteronomy 28 — not by performance but by imputation. This is the Reformed gospel: not “try harder to stay in the blessing column” but “Christ has moved you permanently from the curse column to the blessing column by bearing in Himself what you could not.”

Main Takeaway

Deuteronomy 28 refuses to let you be casual about your standing before the living God. The curse that fills fifty-four verses — disease, defeat, exile, the unspeakable horror of verses 53–57, the final indignity of verse 68 — is the wage of life lived apart from God. You cannot negotiate it, moderate it, or outrun it. But here is the gospel that this chapter demands: Christ walked into that curse, all of it, willingly — and He walked out the other side. Every verse of verses 15–68 was answered at the cross. If you are in Him, you are in the blessing of verses 1–14 — not because of your obedience but because of His. Stop trying to earn what He has already secured. Live from the blessing, not toward it.

Preaching/Teaching Pitfalls

- **Preaching the blessings without the curses — or the curses without the gospel.** The most common mishandling of Deuteronomy 28 in popular preaching is to focus on the blessing section as a promise to appropriate and treat the curse section as a cautionary note. This is structurally backwards: the chapter itself gives four times more weight to the curses. The blessings are real, but they function in the chapter's

own logic as the foil for the curses — what could have been, what was lost. Equally, a preacher who dwells on the curses without arriving at Christ absorbing them produces only dread, not transformation. Both halves of the error are fatal: prosperity preaching without judgment, and judgment without the gospel.

- **Applying specific curses to specific contemporary events.** Deuteronomy 28's curses are specifically and literally fulfilled in Israel's history — the siege of Jerusalem, the Babylonian exile, the Roman destruction of 70 AD, the worldwide dispersion. Preachers must resist the temptation to apply specific curse-categories (drought, disease, military defeat) to specific contemporary national events as though the Mosaic covenant's national-sanctions structure applies directly to modern nations. This is not to say God does not judge nations in the present age — He does — but the specific covenantal mechanism of Deuteronomy 28 belongs to the Mosaic economy applied to Israel as the covenant nation.
- **Treating this passage as a motivation for harder obedience rather than as a driver toward Christ.** The chapter's canonical function — confirmed by Moses's own anticipation of failure in Deuteronomy 29–32, and by Paul's use of the curse-structure in Galatians 3 — is not to produce better law-keeping but to expose the impossibility of law-keeping as the basis for covenant standing. A sermon that concludes “therefore, try harder to stay in the blessing column” has read the passage contra its canonical grain. The curses are meant to be unbearable — so that the hearer runs to the One who has borne them.
- **Missing the Christological center of the curse section.** The curse section of Deuteronomy 28 is not merely negative theology — it is prophetic anticipation of the cross. The language of verse 20 (“the LORD will send on you curses, confusion, and frustration”), verse 63 (“the LORD will take delight in bringing ruin on you”), and the motifs of abandonment, stripping, and exposure throughout are experienced by the Son of God at Calvary. Christ's cry of dereliction (Matthew 27:46, citing Psalm 22) is Deuteronomy 28 in its fullest experiential form. A preacher who does not connect the curse-section to Calvary has left the passage's most astonishing content unexploited.
- **Spiritualizing the blessings into mere metaphor while historicizing the curses.** Some interpreters accept the historical literalness of the curses (exile, famine, siege) while treating the blessings as merely spiritual or typological (reading “city and field” as generic metaphors for spiritual flourishing). This inconsistency should be refuted: both the blessings and the curses operate at the same level of covenantal literalness for national Israel. For the New Covenant believer, both are appropriated through the lens of typological fulfillment in Christ — the blessings as the new creation abundance secured in the Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23; Romans 8:32), the curses as exhausted at the cross.

- **Ignoring the function of verse 10 — Israel as witness to the nations.** Verse 10 makes explicit what is implicit throughout the blessing section: Israel’s covenant prosperity is not merely for Israel’s benefit but is a witness to the watching nations. “All the peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the LORD, and they shall be afraid of you.” The missionary dimension of covenant blessing is present in Deuteronomy 28, and its inversion in verse 37 (Israel becoming a byword and a horror among the nations) shows how catastrophically the failure of Israel’s witness has gone. This missional dimension should not be missed: the covenant people are always in view of the watching world, and their faithfulness or unfaithfulness is always a testimony — for God or against Him.