**Consequences of Obedience and Disobedience**

“Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Give a cat a fish and he will eat for a week, maybe two, depends on the cat”. I’ll reword Bucky Katt’s quote as follows: Give a man a reward or a threat and he’ll respond, depends on the man. People respond to stimuli in different ways. Often dangling a reward in front of someone will result in the desired behavior but not always. Sometimes people are more motivated by fear than by the prospect of reward. The threat of punishment for failing to meet a standard is sometimes needed to motivate . Fear of losing one’s job is probably more powerful than the possibility of receiving a bonus. In our study of Deuteronomy chapters 27 & 28, Moses is coming near the end of his ministry. He concluded his sermons on Mosaic law and the last few chapters of Deuteronomy contain his final instructions and charge to the Israelites. He laid before them what would happen if the obeyed God and what would happen if they did not.

Chapter 27 begins with Moses commanding he people to erect a stone altar on Mt. Ebal after they crossed the Jordan River. Mt. Ebal is located in the West Bank area of Israel about 40 miles west of the Jordan River. He commanded them to keep all of the God’s commands and decrees he had given them. He told them that after they crossed the Jordan, they were to divide into 2 groups, one would go to the top of Mt. Gerizim to pronounce blessings and the other would go Mt. Ebal to pronounce curses. Note that the tribe if Levi is included and the tribe of Joseph rather than the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh. There are 12 tribes listed and 12 curses, 11 of which are repeats of previous laws stated by God and Moses. The 12th curse is a catch all noting that any man who does not uphold the words of the law would be cursed. The blessings are not recorded. Note that the curses are recited on Mt. Ebal which was the location of the altar. The 12 stones on Mt. Ebal are separate from the 12 stones that were taken from the Jordan River and placed as a memorial to God at Gilgal when they crossed into Canaan (see Josh. Chapter 4). The building of the altar on Mt. Ebal occurred after they had conquered Jericho and Ai (see Josh. Chapter 8).

In chapter 28, Moses told the people that God would et them high above all other nations and that His blessings would come upon them is they obeyed God. He then told of numerous blessings they would receive which were summed up in verse 11- God would grant abundant prosperity in their offspring, crops and livestock. He also told them that they would preeminent among nations, always a lender and not a borrower, always on top, never on the bottom. The blessing were conditional on their following God’s commands. The first 14 verses contain the blessings while the final 54 verses contain the various curses that would befall them if they did not follow all the commands and decrees.