

Rain or Drought? Blessing or Curse?

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[0 : 0 0] 36.9. No, it's not the run rate. Australia's currently batting against New Zealand, although it's getting close.

36.9. That's all it is, actually. Very low figure, in fact. 36.9. Front page of the age every day. Well, it was Saturday's figure.

36.9. That's how full Victoria's dams are. 36.9%. That's all. And falling. Despite the rain that we've had in the past week, it is still falling.

Well, what's the problem? Is the problem just that it's part of an El Nino cycle that's about to break, and we don't really need to worry because the rain's on the way, and it'll all be corrected and reversed in due time.

It's just part of a natural cycle that we just live through, and we just happen to be at the trough, and it'll pick up, and then it'll come another trough in a few years' time. Is that the problem?

[1 : 0 4] Or is it that we're spending far too much time on having showers because we're all falling for the glamour stakes or whatever it is? Not spending enough on deodorant or something?

Or is it more likely the government's fault? They haven't acted quickly enough. That seems to be the current talk around the town. Or is it the industry's fault? Or as I suspect it actually is, it's gardener's fault.

See, here's my self-justification. I have not watered a thing in my garden for at least a year. It might be two or three.

I really can't remember the last time I watered anything in my garden. See, it's gardener's fault. That's why we're running out of water. If your gardeners gave up trying to plant English cottage gardens and rather had Australian natives that don't seem to need any water or rather used plastic flowers that absolutely don't need any water, then we wouldn't have a drought.

Sure, it's the gardener's fault. Don't blame the government. It's the gardener's, I reckon. Or is it the hand of God? Is God involved in this?

[2 : 1 3] Or is it something completely outside God's intervention? The blessing of rain, for a blessing it is, is in fact a gift of God the Creator.

It is a covenant blessing promised in Deuteronomy 11, today's passage before us, to ancient Israel. And as such, for ancient Israel, the blessing of rain was a reward for their future obedience in the land that is promised for them.

How does this, if at all, apply to us today? Different country? Different hemisphere? Different millennium? Is it relevant to us at all?

Well, let's see what Deuteronomy 11 actually says before we try and work out how we find some connection between it and us. Chapter 11 of Deuteronomy is a summary sort of chapter.

It ends the first big section of the book of Deuteronomy, in effect. Speaking simply, it brings together the themes of chapters 1 to 10. It looks back into the history, as we'll see in the verses that follow, back to the exodus from Egypt, the wilderness years, and coming to where they are on the verge of the promised land under the leadership of Moses.

[3 : 36] It looks forward to their conquest and entry and settlement into the land and beyond, lying into the future. In a sense, Deuteronomy 11 more directly flows from chapter 10, verse 12, which we touched on briefly on Wednesday night in the last Wednesday Bible study.

That is, this final summary come exhortation in chapters 1 to 11 actually began back in Deuteronomy 10, verse 12, where Moses, bringing it all to a head, said, Deuteronomy 11 is transitional, because it looks forward and leads into a smooth transition into chapters 12 onwards, which are the laws for Israel to keep, chapters 12 to 26, the heart or the center of the book of Deuteronomy.

So it's a chapter that is summarizing the first 10, but it's transitioning into the detail and the content of the laws of chapters 12 to 26 before some of the themes of chapter 11 get recapitulated in chapters 27 to the end of the book, more or less.

In effect, the laws that follow flesh out what it means to love the Lord your God, to serve him, to fear him, the sort of summary statements that chapter 10, verses 12 and 13 have given us, and indeed not the only verses that have given us those sorts of summaries of loving the Lord, fearing him, cleaving to him, serving him, et cetera.

Throughout chapter 11, a bit like a drumbeat or a heartbeat through this chapter is the call to obedience to keep the commandments.

[5 : 38] It's flowing on from that exhortation of chapter 10, verses 12 and 13. And every segment or paragraph virtually in chapter 11 begins or ends with this drumbeat, a reminder of the need to obey.

So that's how it begins. You shall love the Lord your God, therefore, and keep his charge, his decrees, his ordinances and his commandments always. Not that we need to determine is this a command or a decree or an ordinance.

Deuteronomy's language often piles on synonyms. So we don't have to say, well, this is a command and that's a decree and that's an ordinance. They're just overlapping meanings of words to emphasize the need for obedience.

That's how the chapter begins. It's a similar verse to a number of others scattered throughout the book of Deuteronomy. And it leads into in this first section a looking back. A summary statement almost like a hymn in a way looking back to God's past acts of power.

A sort of recital of what God has done. Very much not just the history of Israel but what God has done for the people of Israel. So see verse, the end of verse 2.

[6 : 51] You must acknowledge his greatness, his mighty hand, his outstretched arm, his signs, his deeds that he did in Egypt to Pharaoh. Going back to the bulk of the center early part of the book of Exodus which recalls a number of plagues that God did through Moses to Pharaoh and to all Egypt which ultimately led to their rescue and redemption from slavery in Egypt.

And then verse 4. What he, God, did to the Egyptian army to their horses and chariots. How he made the water of the Red Sea flow over them as they pursued you so that the Lord has destroyed them to this day.

That moves on in the book of Exodus to chapter 14 and thereabouts where the people of Israel passed through the waters of the Red Sea to escape from Egypt and the waters came over the armies of Pharaoh that were chasing the Israelites.

What God did. And then verse 5. What he did to you in the wilderness until you came to this place. That is summarizing what we saw last Sunday night in chapter 8 and the story of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers which is what God did both by way of provision and punishment.

Discipline and testing through the nearly 40 years of the wilderness to this point. And then verse 6. What he did to Dathan and Abiram. We haven't got time to go into that incident now.

[8 : 17] It's back there in Numbers chapter 16. Their rejection of Moses' leadership and therefore in the sense of God's leadership of the people and God's punishment of them. They were the sons of Eliab, son of Reuben.

How in the midst of all Israel the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up along with their households, their tents and every living being in their company. Now there's a brief recital of past history.

I hope you've picked up who the subject of it is. What he did, what he did, what he did, what he did, what he did. From the early part of the book of Exodus right up to this very day, 40 years span of history, what he did, what God did.

It's because of what God did that Israel is to obey. And that's the connection from verse 1 into verse 2 onwards. Remember today that it was not your children who have not known or seen the discipline of the Lord your God but it is you who must acknowledge his greatness, etc.

They've experienced some of it. The audience of Moses at this point, some of them would have been children during the Exodus and the others would have been born during the wilderness years.

[9 : 27] None at this point probably over the age of 60 with exceptions of Moses and Joshua and Caleb. The emphasis is on you've experienced this, you've seen it.

Verse 2 is picked up again at the end of the paragraph. It is your own eyes that have seen every great deed that the Lord did. He remains the subject all through the paragraph.

So this paragraph is arguing obedience to the commands, loving the Lord because of what he did for you. Both in provision and in discipline in rescue and redemption and so on.

That is, it's an ethic of gratitude in effect. Though the word gratitude or thanks is not actually there but the connection is there. Because of what God has done, therefore obey his commands.

Keep his laws, his decrees, his statutes and ordinances and so on. Or to lift it into New Testament language, we love because he first loved us.

[10 : 31] that's in effect what's being said in this paragraph. Because of what God has done for you in rescuing you and providing for you to this day, we are to love him by obeying him in response.

So that's the first section. And then the drumbeat of obedience comes back as the next paragraph begins, at least as the paragraphs are divided in our versions. Keep then this entire commandment that I'm commanding you today.

Again, this drumbeat of obedience that pounds its way through this chapter. But this time it's forward looking, not backward looking. Now it's a different connection.

Yes, there is to be obedience because of what God has done. But now we turn and face the future from verse 8 onwards. Keep then this entire commandment that I'm commanding you today so that two things.

you may have strength to go in and occupy the land that you're crossing over to occupy. And secondly, so that you may live long in the land that the Lord swore to your ancestors to give them to their descendants, a land flowing with milk and honey.

[11 : 43] Strength to occupy it and a long life having settled in it. The conquest and the settlement in effect. Obedience for the sake of the future now, not because of gratitude for the past.

And as if to add an incentive to obedience, something we've already seen in chapters 6 and 8, the land is described not just as a land flowing with milk and honey, which are summary terms for all sorts of fruits and animal products for eating that are good for you, but then see how it's described from verse 10 to 12.

The land that you're about to enter to occupy is not like the land of Egypt from which you have come, where you sow your seed and irrigate by foot like a vegetable garden.

The picture is that you've got to somehow channel the water. Some people actually argue, some scholars, that maybe this is actually a euphemism for urinating to actually irrigate your crops, that is, by foot.

I'm not quite convinced by that argument, but certainly there's manual labour in order to get water for the crops is the point of you. Hard work. But, in contrast, the land that you're crossing over to occupy is a land of hills and valleys.

[13 : 00] Egypt is pretty flat. And they are watered by rain from the sky. Literally, they are drinking up the rain from the sky or from the heaven.

A land that the Lord your God looks after as though he's the gardener. The eyes of the Lord your God are always on it from the beginning of the year to the end of the year.

It's looked over lovingly by God. Obedience for the sake of the future. John Piper, the theologian, calls this future grace.

It's not a term that I particularly like. It's not a biblical term, future grace. But in a sense, this structure of this paragraph is along the lines of what he calls future grace.

We obey for the sake of the grace that God will give us in the future. I prefer to simply say we obey for the sake of the promises God makes in the future. That is, our trust of promises leads to, the flip side, obedience.

[14 : 03] Trusting in the promises that God will give us in the future. That is, we don't only obey as gratitude for the past, that's the first paragraph, though we do do that. We also obey as an act of trust that God will fulfill the promises that he makes for us for the future.

So obedience is two directional. Looking back, looking forward. Both of them are reasons, grounds for obedience, what God has done and what he promises to do.

And our trust of the future is grounded in confidence because of what God has done in the past. That's why we can have faith in God's promises for the future, because we look back and realize how strong, powerful and faithful God has been in the past.

Well then the drumbeat sounds again, again echoing back to chapter 10 verses 12 and 13. Now in verse 13, if only you will heed his every commandment that I'm commanding you today, loving the Lord your God and serving him with all your heart and with all your soul.

A clear echo of that section of chapter 10 verses 12 and 13. It's the echo, the drumbeat, the heartbeat of this chapter that keeps sounding.

[15 : 21] Again, it links obedience with love. Sometimes people say, as I've said in a previous study or sermon in this series, that really, as Christians, what matters is the spirit of the law, not the letter of the law.

But it's an artificial dichotomy because the spirit of the law, if that's love, is demonstrated by keeping the letter of the law. We don't choose how to love.

God gives us the detail of that. And chapters 12 to 26 spell it out in abundant detail how we're to love God, or at least how ancient Israel was to love God.

And now, as if to pour incentive upon incentive, further reason to obey and heed every commandment, we go to a further description of the future land in verse 14 and 15.

He will give, God will give, rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the later rain. Two major periods of rain in ancient Israel, unlike Australia, at least where we live.

[16 : 23] the early rain and the later rain and you will gather in your grain your wine and your oil and he will give grass in your fields for your livestock and you will eat your fill.

That is, it's a picture of abundance. Enough rain, sufficient rain, plentiful rain, so that there are plentiful crops and fruits and grains and water for animals and so on.

And you will eat your fill. It echoes the pictures of plenty that we saw in chapter 6 and chapter 8 in recent weeks. In a sense, it's wanting us to say, I'm prepared to obey because this picture sounds so good.

I'm prepared to do anything so that I can be part of this great picture of the land and its flowing abundance in the future. Yes, I'll obey God's commands, every one of them, for the sake of the future.

That's the incentive that's being painted in these verses 14 and 15. That's the point of them. And then a warning follows, which, though negative, functions also as an added incentive to keep the commands and the laws.

[17 : 30] It's a warning that we're very well used to if you've been following this series of Deuteronomy. It keeps recurring throughout the book. It's the major warning, the major danger, the major temptation.

That is the threat of idolatry. Verses 16 and 17. Take care. We've seen that before because it's so easy not to take care. Our natural tendency is to drift into idolatry and wrong practices.

Take care or you'll be seduced into turning away. It's a theme through the Bible, actually, not just Deuteronomy. That is, we are prone to seduction.

We have to take care that we're not seduced into the worship of wrong gods, even today. Take care or you'll be seduced into turning away, serving other gods and worshipping them for then the anger of the Lord will be kindled against you and he will shut up the heavens.

That is, no more rain and the land will yield no fruit and then you'll perish quickly off the good land that the Lord your God is giving you. That is, you can't presume upon grace.

[18 : 37] This picture of the future, abundance and rain and crops and animals and having your fill is not, in a sense, a guarantee regardless of your behaviour. If you are seduced into idolatry, then God will just shut up his heavens and the rain will stop and the consequences will flow rather than the rain flowing.

You see, loyalty to God precludes idolatry. The covenant relationship that God's people have with God is an exclusive one like a marriage relationship as we've also seen in recent weeks.

You can't be in a relationship with God and flirt with other gods. God is a jealous God. It's an exclusive relationship. But there's irony here.

Indeed a mockery here as well. Because the gods of the land, the gods of the Canaanites, the Baal gods as they were called, were very much fertility gods. They were gods that were worshipped in order to bring rain so that there would be crops and animals and food and they were fertility gods in order to bring children as well.

And indeed one of the ways you worshipped those gods as I think I mentioned in one of these talks in recent weeks was to engage in sexual prostitution with the temple prostitutes or whatever so that somehow you'd spur the gods on to give you a child or to give you rain or crops or animals or whatever.

[20 : 01] An immoral religion. Hence part of its appeal and seduction of course. But these verses are mocking that. You see it's saying if you go after the fertility gods the one who the people in the land think bring the rain and the crops and the animals and having your fill.

If you go after those gods what's going to happen? Actually the opposite the exact opposite of what you want that is fertility God will shut up his heavens. You see it's making a mockery of those other gods the Canaanite gods it's saying who's in control in the land the God of Israel is in control in the land.

To part of the temptation for Israel at this point is to think the God whom we've worshipped so far is the God of the wilderness the God who's brought us from Egypt but now we're about to cross into another border so we transfer our allegiance no God says not at all.

Those gods are nothing gods they're not fertility gods God is the one who controls the heavens and if you go after those gods he'll shut up the heaven.

Well the next paragraph returns to that drumbeat of call to obey it echoes part of the verses we saw a few weeks ago in chapter 6 verses 6 to 9 you shall put these words of mine in your heart and soul and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand and fix them as an emblem on your forehead the key here is to get them in your heart and soul the things that follow are to show how important and urgent that is and we've seen last Wednesday night in particular the focus and concentration on the heart of God's people needing to be changed and the dangers of the heart that drift into pride into fear or into self-righteousness those three dangers come in chapters 7 8 and 9 hence the call in chapter 10 verse 16 to circumcise your heart we come back now to that issue where it says in effect get these words commands laws etc of God into your heart how do we do that somebody asked that question at the end of the study on Wednesday night by concentrating on God's word meditating on it thinking about it reflecting upon it by teaching it to our children by conversing about it when we're at home and when we're away when we're up and when we're down and all those sorts of things as we saw in chapter 6 and so here in this paragraph as well talking about them when you're at home when you're away when you lie down when you rise write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates that is make sure that at every key aspect of your life

[22 : 39] God's word is having an impact on you so that it'll get into your heart it's a powerful word it'll change our heart that's the thrust of it but also notice here this passing it on to the children you see just because this generation of Israel has experienced the wilderness does not sort of absolve from responsibility the next generation from keeping God's commands they too whilst not experiencing and seeing the events of the wilderness by the passing on of the scriptures of Deuteronomy and earlier that Moses writes down they are under the same responsibility because they are also beneficiaries of God's acts the acts of verses 3 to 7 that we just saw before in this chapter they might in one sense apply experientially to the current generation but their children are its beneficiaries as well that is you don't have to see in order to believe and we too of course are the beneficiaries of God's saving acts in the past we weren't there we didn't see it we don't need to see it we've got the words that testify to it and that's why we're to respond to God's word just as previous generations were that is this passing on to the children shows the abiding validity and authority of God's word generation to generation whatever our experiences are and then we come back to the theme again in verse 22 if you will diligently observe this entire commandment that I'm commanding you loving the Lord your God walking in all his ways and holding fast to him again the echoes of chapter 10 verses 12 and 13 it's as though that's the beginning of this exhortation and the theme keeps recurring like a symphony or something like that it's still forward looking now the focus is not so much on the land itself like the previous paragraphs descriptions have been now the focus is on the conquest of the land in the future remember that way back in chapter 1 the reason why

Israel is not already in the land is because of their fear their fear of the inhabitants their strength their might the fact that they are giants or at least some of them are and the fact that they've got fortified cities and strong armies now looking forward into the future obeying for the sake of the future again the focus is the conquest and see what verse 23 onwards say then the Lord will drive out all these nations before you you'll dispossess nations larger and mightier than yourselves every place on which you set foot shall be yours your territory shall extend from the wilderness to the Lebanon from the river the river Euphrates to the western sea no one will be able to stand against you the Lord your God will put the fear and dread of you on all the land on which you set foot as he promised you obedience for the sake of the promise of God in the future is again what this paragraph is about and you see faithful obedience to God's promises has no room for the paralyzing fear that Israel had 40 years previously at the border at Kadesh Barnea well now poised on the border

Israel faces a clear choice do we obey or not obey that is do we trust or not trust it's one and the same choice in effect trust and obey or don't trust and don't obey it's a clear divergence of path the paths end in completely opposite places it's a very significant juncture I remember some years ago going for a drive well for five weeks I went for a drive and on the second day I got a little just out of Port Augusta now sometimes in Melbourne if you miss an intersection and turn it doesn't really matter you can take the next one this one's a little bit more crucial because if you miss this one you end up in Perth and if you take it you end up in Darwin and they're a fair way apart and we didn't miss it that is this is the one intersection that you've really got to pay attention to turn right and you go up the Stuart Highway to Alice Springs and Darwin and if you keep going on the other way you end up in Perth completely opposite directions and thousands of kilometres apart basically you can't just take the next turn to the right there isn't one for hundreds of miles if I remember rightly well here's the same sort of thing this is a key decision do you take the path of trust and obey or not and they're the options that are held out now for Israel poised on the border verse 26 see

I'm setting before you today a blessing and a curse they're the options the blessing if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I'm commanding you today the curse if you do not obey the commandments of the Lord your God but turn from the way that I'm commanding you today to follow other gods you see blessing and curse it's really a test of obey or not obey or trust or not trust the promises of God that's a choice before ancient Israel the latter chapters of Deuteronomy will make it clear it's not a simple choice that Israel sort of free and easy to make that is because of full and human nature we don't naturally incline to make the right choice we tend towards not trusting and not obeying and that is the prognosis of Israel especially clearer in chapters 27 to the end of the book but you'll have to wait till later in the year till we get to that part of Deuteronomy the blessing and the curse verse 29 goes on to anticipate something that comes in more detail later in the book when the Lord your God has brought you into the land that you're entering to occupy you shall set the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal two mountains close together in the middle of which was the city or town of Shechem literally it means shoulder on the shoulder of these two mountains they form a very large sort of amphitheatre thing but a couple of kilometres across

Mount Ebal is to the north of Shechem and Gerizim to the south and as you know they are beyond the Jordan some distance to the west in the land of the Canaanites who live in the Arava opposite Gilgal beside the oak of Moreh just a few sort of Melway's directions so they make sure that they get to the right place the details of all of this and what it means comes in chapters 27 later in the book after the details of the law it's describing a ceremony it's an appropriate place because Shechem if you remember your early part of the Bible is the place where the land promise was made initially Abram was told just go to the land I'll show you no promise of land there when he got to the land that God showed him to Shechem Genesis 12 verse 6 God promised him the land that he saw so to go now into the land to Shechem roughly in the centre of the land is an appropriate place for a ceremony once they've conquered the land it recalls the promise and by setting up a blessing and a curse on opposing mountains it's in a sense a ceremony where they will pledge covenant allegiance to God that happens in Joshua 8 although the way the details flow in Deuteronomy 27 which we'll see later in the year in a sermon here the implication is it'll be a future of curse not blessing for ancient Israel

[30 : 28] Deuteronomy 11 finishes where it began the drumbeat of obedience in verses 31 and 2 when you cross the Jordan to go to occupy the land that the Lord your God is giving you and when you occupy it and live in it you must diligently observe all the statutes and ordinances that I'm setting before you today it's a wide scope in this chapter from the past to the future but at every paragraph there is this beat of calling to obedience and love of God same thing in effect 36.9 where does all of this leave us in our thinking about the drought that we have experienced in this state and in this country God's promise of the blessing of rain here in Deuteronomy 11 is anchored in time and space it is anchored in the 1400

BC period when Moses was about to die and the people were in the plains of Moab overlooking the promised land it is anchored in space because it is a promise of rain and blessing blessing of rain in the promised land bordered by the Euphrates the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River and the Negev Desert and so on it's anchored in time and space it is also anchored in a particular theological context where the gods of that land were as I've said fertility gods who people believed produced the rain so it's anchored with that particular polemic against those so-called fertility gods and the god alone the god of Israel is the god who produces rain and closes up the heavens it is also anchored in a context where the people of god is a national entity the people of Israel descended from Jacob ultimately back to Abram but not all of Abram's descendants if we blindly lift out from passages like this the promise of rain and say then that the shutting up of heavens is God's judgement against the nation

Australia then I think we've made a quantum leap too far in applying this passage to Australia today that is why are we lifting out that from this chapter but we're not actually heading off to Ebal and Gerizim to have a little ceremony for example and we're not picking up our swords to fight the inhabitants of that land for example that is it's anchored in time and space in a particular place in Old Testament and ancient Near Eastern history we need to be careful in our interpretation to today now in an earlier study when we looked at Deuteronomy chapter 7 I used a model whereby from Old Testament context we lift out the principles that are being made in the law or the promise and we see how those principles are modified if at all in the light of Christ in the New Testament and then we reapply the principles to today some of the principles get severely modified

God's people is no longer a nation today that is God's people belong as inhabitants of all the nations deliberately by God scattered amongst all the nations of the world we're not a national entity like ancient Israel was nor are we actually inhabiting the promised land of the Old Testament period our inheritance is a heavenly inheritance that's what we've got to fight for and strive for and stand for our entry for a heavenly inheritance guarded for us by God the blessing of rain is one of many in a package of blessings in the Old Testament focusing on that particular land and that particular people the people of God in the Old Testament in some that package of blessings is about living in the land in peace and prosperity rain is part of that and its curses are in effect in the end exile from the land defeat and even death however some principles do still hold and the key one is that

God remains sovereign over the heavens and the earth and all nations it is God of the Bible Old and New Testaments who opens or closes the heavens at his will that is God is not bound by El Nino whoever El Nino is or was but God doesn't in a sense quite deal simply with national entities like in the Old Testament to an extent he deals with all the nations and all the peoples in both Old and New Testament times but his people is no longer confined to one particular national group or national place in New Testament or post New Testament times in which we live our land is basically a pagan land a secular land so what do we do with 36.9 is the drought in Australia God's judgment on us or not

[36 : 06] I don't know that the scriptures actually can give us a definitive answer on that it is clear that God is sovereign over the rain and for whatever reason has withheld the rain it may be that that is an act of punishment against our nation as a whole but I'm not sure that the threads of connecting that with Old Testament Israel quite work to be honest but after all most of our nation stands under the judgment of God they're non-believers they're pagans is the drought a call for the Christian church to repent it may be but it may not be you see in a sense as we saw last Sunday night in chapter 8 whatever the circumstances we face good or ill deprivation or plenty poverty or wealth in any of those circumstances we are individually and as a church and maybe even as a nation I'm less convinced about that asking God what am I to learn from this how am I to grow from this are you teaching me something from this let me give a slightly different example when we're sick

I think it's a right thing to pray to God are you wanting to teach me something here it may be reliance dependence it may be repentance of some sin it may not be though we're at least got to ask the question that is God uses circumstances to draw people to himself maybe to convert them maybe to strengthen our faith and our discipline it may be that the drought has a particular lesson for some people who are Christians but not necessarily for others I'm not convinced that it's a national thing but having said that of course the principle that God is the one who opens and closes the heavens still stands and therefore one response surely must be we pray for rain if God is the one who produces rain then pray for it but pray for it alert to what

God may be teaching us to what God may be disciplining us for some it may be one thing for some it may be another ask God to show us if there is something as I say there may not be but there may be ask God to use the drought to bring people to himself in our secular pagan nation so I'm not sure that our first prayer ought to be God give us rain but rather God make us more like Christ and God bring people to yourself through this drought the danger of simply transferring Old Testament blessings to us today in the end leads to a prosperity gospel that whenever we don't quite have the abundance of wealth and prosperity that the picture of blessings as a package shows us in Deuteronomy for example then we somehow think there's some deep sin that's a problem but of course as believers in Christ living after the New

Testament we realise that the blessing package of the Old Testament is actually a shadow actually of a greater blessing package for in Christ we've already received every spiritual blessing as Paul makes clear in Ephesians chapter 1 our inheritance is heavenly perfect eternal it's a heavenly land not an earthly land we're citizens of it already by grace through faith for the sake of what God has done in the past let us obey his commandments with faith for the sake of what he promises us in the future let us obey his commandments with faith amen to amen