

Deuteronomy 7:12-16

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Moses tells the Israelites that obedience to God's precepts leads to blessings. These blessings will be expressed in population growth and prosperity such as abundance of animals and foods, good physical health, and absence of barrenness.

Having exhorted Israel to observe all the commandments of their Suzerain (Ruler) God (7:7-11), Moses now spells out the various blessings promised by God to those who faithfully obey Him. He said to Israel, "*Then it shall come about, because you listen to these judgments and keep and do them, that the LORD your God will keep with you His covenant and His lovingkindness which He swore to your fathers.*" Obedience to God's precepts will cause Israel to maintain their fellowship with God and to enjoy His blessings to their fullest.

Israel will experience the blessings of God's gracious love. God's love is constant, as Israel is *His own possession*. But to experience the benefits, the rewards of Israel's relationship with their God requires obedience. God now begins to enumerate some of the blessings they will experience if they walk in obedience. The first blessing mentioned is population growth. As Moses said to Israel regarding God, "*He will love you and bless you and multiply you.*" Population growth has and continues to be the primary engine of economic growth and national prominence. Part of this promise is divine, and part appears to be practical. Rejecting Canaanite fertility cult practices, including child sacrifice, while maintaining sexual relationships between husbands and wives will naturally lead to larger families, and expanded population.

Population growth was also an element of God's promises to the patriarchs ([Genesis 12](#), [15](#), and [26](#)). God promised to make Abraham a "great nation" ([Genesis 12:2](#)) which requires population growth as well as economic prosperity. God's blessing was also expressed in terms of economic growth. In Israel's case this economic growth took the form of abundance of animals and foods, as well as children. Moses declared, "*He will also bless the fruit of your womb, which would lead to population growth, and the fruit of your ground, your grain and your new wine and your oil, which would refer to agricultural productivity. Moses also promised the increase of your herd and the young of your flock, in the land which He swore to your forefathers to give you, which would be a promise of productivity of their livestock operations.*

Part of this would be a natural consequence of Israel following God's commands. The exercise of self-governance as outlined in the Ten Commandments creates an environment that maximizes opportunity and incentives for economic growth. The respect of private property and the rejection of stealing means efforts and energy can be focused on production rather than protection. Rejecting greed and envy translates to security for those who work and earn a profit. Security that the fruits of their industry will not be stolen. Telling the truth means honest dealings, which leads to expanded trade, another driver of economic growth.

But part of the promise depends on other factors, such as rainfall, and protection from predatory behavior from surrounding nations.

To emphasize the abundance of God's blessing, Moses said that God would prevent the Israelites from being barren or sterile. This would likely be accomplished, in part, by living in a culture that avoided sexual promiscuity and fertility cult practices, which would certainly lead to sexually transmitted diseases that lead to infertility. But it seems a portion is also a promise of divine blessing. He said, "*You shall be blessed above all peoples; there will be no male or female barren among you or among your cattle.*" This is an incredible promise, that Israel will be *blessed above all peoples* if they walk in obedience. Not only would the Israelites not be *barren*, even their livestock would multiply without fail.

In ancient times, human barrenness was regarded as one of the greatest adversities. We can observe the angst of Abraham and Sarah desiring to have a child yet failing to conceive ([Genesis 15:2](#)). Similarly, Rachel expressed the same emotional desire when she stated, "Give me children, or else I die" ([Genesis 30:1](#)). Therefore the Israelites were probably very relieved to hear that God would bless their fertility if they were obedient.

Moses promised that the Israelites would also be blessed with good physical health if they walked in obedience. Moses said, "*The LORD will remove from you all sickness; and He will not put on you any of the harmful diseases of Egypt which you have known, but He will lay them on all who hate you.*" Obedience to God would be the means by which the Israelites could be free from diseases such as those that plagued Pharaoh and the Egyptians ([Exodus 7-10](#); [Exodus 15:26](#)). This again is likely partly practical, as the Egyptian behaviors (such as those outlined in [Leviticus 18](#)) would lead to many diseases. And the dietary, health, and sanitation laws God gave Israel would avoid many diseases, as we now know ([Leviticus 11, 13, 15](#); [Deut](#)

23:12-14). But this healthiness is also divine, as God promises a special blessing.

The LORD will not allow His people to be afflicted with such plagues or diseases. Rather, He would *lay them on all who hate you*. This, too, is in line with God's promises to Abraham recorded in [Genesis 12:1-3](#), where He said, "I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse." Those who hate Israel will have to deal with Israel's Suzerain ruler, the One True God. Moses commanded the Israelites to eliminate those non-vassal peoples. He said, *You shall consume all the peoples whom the LORD your God will deliver to you*.

God promised to be with Israel and *deliver* them from harm. But God left the task of judging the Canaanites to Israel. God instructed Israel not to *pity them*. God also forbade them to *serve their gods*. God gave a reason to avoid serving *their gods, for that would be a snare* to the Israelites. Serving the heathen gods would deprive Israel of the blessings and positive outcomes of following the constructive, beneficial commands of God. And it would also remove the supernatural blessing.

Biblical Text:

¹² Then it shall come about, because you listen to these judgments and keep and do them, that the Lord your God will keep with you His covenant and His lovingkindness which He swore to your forefathers. ¹³ He will love you and bless you and multiply you; He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground, your grain and your new wine and your oil, the increase of your herd and the young of your flock, in the land which He swore to your forefathers to give you. ¹⁴ You shall be blessed above all peoples; there will be no male or female barren among you or among your cattle. ¹⁵ The Lord will remove from you all sickness; and He will not put on you any of the harmful diseases of Egypt which you have known, but He will lay them on all who hate you. ¹⁶ You shall consume all the peoples whom the Lord your God will deliver to you; your eye shall not pity them, nor shall you serve their gods, for that *would be* a snare to you.