



The Sinaitic Light

A Cruise to America

Study Article No. X

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This article uses the English terms for Elohim (God), Yah (Father) Yahoshua (Christ).

Objective and Learning Outcome

Objective:

The objective of this article is to effectively rebut the commonly held position asserted by some within so-called Hebrew Israelism, that the curses in Deuteronomy 28 are applicable to Black people, and have met its consummation in the American diaspora fulfilled within the black Hebrew Israelite corpus.

Learning Outcome:

Upon completion of this study, the reader will:

1. Understand when *most of the curses* of Deuteronomy 28 were fulfilled;
2. Understand how Deuteronomy 28:15-68 has *some relevance* and application to so-called Black Jews;
3. Understand what Deuteronomy 28:68 means historically and;
4. Understand what Deuteronomy 28:68 means lexically.

Given the remedial nature of this topic. This composition was not written as a study guide. It was written in response to overwhelming inquiries within the Israelite community which continues to embrace and propagate a doctrine that is biblically indefensible and unsustainable. It is the endeavor of this composition to assist those within the Hebraic society in acquiring the proper interpretation of Deuteronomy 28:15-68.

Introduction

For many years, so-called Black Hebrew Israelites have been using two books of the Bible as an attempt to reveal and argue their identity from a biblical perspective. These books and passages are Genesis 15:13-16 and Deuteronomy 28:15-68. Yet, upon close examination, the data that is submitted to argue this premise is sadly lacking and can not sustain a critical level of textual exegesis. The purpose of this composition is not to disparage or castigate those who believe that these passages are proof texts to the identity of the descendants of biblical Israelites. It is to assist those who have been enchanted by these verses under the leadership of those who lack proper expository skills to see them in their biblical context. Nothing more.

This composition will demonstrate to the reader that the curses of Deuteronomy have mostly been fulfilled and critical passages, often submitted as proof text for the American diaspora, are not within its revelatory context. The most notable verses used in the Bible are found in Deuteronomy 28:15-68. Moses tells Israel that they will be cursed by God and estranged from every nation in the world because they chose not to observe God's commandments. These curses will serve as a mark and a sign upon them and their children forever or it will serve as a perpetual sign upon all Israelites until the fullness of the Gentiles arrive. Moses says:

So, all these curses shall come on you and pursue you and overtake you until you are destroyed, because you would not obey the LORD your God by keeping His commandments and His statutes which He commanded you. They shall become a sign and a wonder on you and your descendants forever. Because you did not serve the LORD your God with joy and a glad heart, for the abundance of all things; therefore, you shall serve your enemies whom the LORD will send against you, in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, and in the lack of all things; and He will put an iron yoke on your neck until He has destroyed you (Deut. 28:45-48).

The Hebrew word for curse is *qēlalah* קִלְלָה and it means an “imprecation, to curse, to vilify, to make despicable.”¹ God would curse the nation of Israel making them a curse by vilifying them and making them debased in the eyes of the world. He would remove them from the land of Israel and make them servants to other nations as they would be carried to other nations in irons and chains.

Moses says that the Israelite nation would become a byword and something horrific amongst the nations. “You will become a thing of horror, a byword and an object of ridicule among all the peoples where the LORD will drive you” (Deut. 28:37). The nation of Israel would become a sharp-pointed saying, a byword, a negative, demeaning epithet amongst the people. These curses in Deuteronomy would serve as a sign, *owth* אוֹת, which means “a distinguishing

¹ Strong's, H7045, H7043.

mark, banner, standard or warning, a mark as a sign”,² until the nation of Israel is redeemed by God and restored to the land of Israel by His Messiah.

These curses would follow them wherever they went in the lands where they would sojourn; they would never be the head (great). They would always be the least (marginal), having no equality or equity extended to them in the lands they would be scattered to; neither would they have the power to change their conditions and circumstances as a nation. These curses were to come upon Israel until Israel was destroyed as a nation of people, not destroyed as an individual, but as a nation.

These so-called Black Jews believe that out of all the people of the earth, the only ones who can identify with these curses are Blacks, also referred to as Africans and African Americans. *Most* of these curses can be applied to other nations as well (at various points in their history). Still, no other nation has experienced these curses *in perpetuity* viz., till this present day, except for blacks. However, caution needs to be taken with this proposition because many of these curses were fulfilled during the various sieges (Assyrian, Babylonian, Greek and Roman). Thus, when one uses these passages, they first need to ascertain if they have been fulfilled biblically or historically according to the specificity of each passage. Failure to do so will yield a level of apologetic ignorance on behalf of the apologists who is trying to defend their nationality based upon these curses.

For example: Deut. 28:19 *cf.* 2 Chr. 15:1-5; Deut. 28:22 *cf.* Amos 4:9-10; Deut. 28:23-24 *cf.* Hag. 1:10; 1 Kin. 17:1. Deut. 28:25-26, *cf.* Jer. 7:33-34;15:3. Deut. 28:28-29, *cf.* Lam. 4:14; Is. 59:10. Deut. 28:30 *cf.* Jer. 8:10. Deut. 28:32-34, *cf.* Jer. 5:15-17; Lam. 1:18. Deut. 28:36, *cf.* 2 Kin. 17:1-41; 2 Kin. 24:8-20; Jer. 39:1-10. Deut. 28:38, *cf.* Is. 33:4. Deut. 28:39-40, *cf.* Joel 1:4; Mic. 6:15. Deut. 28:41 *cf.* Lam. 1:5. Deut. 28:43-44 (fulfilled by the Herodians).³ Deut. 28:48, *cf.* Jer. 28:14. Deut. 28:49, *cf.* Jer. 5:15; 48:40; 49:22; Hos. 8:1; Is. 39:3. Deut. 28:50-57, *cf.* Jer. 5:15-17; 2 Kin. 25:1-2; Lam. 4:10.

Deuteronomy 28:68 is the nucleus of the modern Black Israelite identity based upon the Septuagint (LXX) translation, and thus, the KJV translation of the passage. Yet grammar suggests that this passage was fulfilled prior to the *transatlantic slave trade* and has nothing to do with slaves being sold to other nations, esp. America. Lexically, the passage says that a person shall seek to enslave himself and no one will purchase him.

Moses writes according to the KJV, “And the LORD shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships, by the way whereof I spake unto thee, thou shalt see it no more again: and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy you” (Deut. 28:68). This passage has galvanized nearly every Hebrew in America and perhaps other lands to demonstrate that this curse is *applicable to them alone*. However, there is a textual variance in

² Strong’s, H226.

³ Herod rose up from amongst the Jewish populous and gained control of the economy. Thus, the Judean had to be subsidized by him who converted to Judaism and became a Jew. “Hyrcanus took also Dora and Marissa, cities of Idumea, and subdued all the Idumeans; and permitted them to stay in that country, if they would circumcise their genitals, and make use of the laws of the Jews; and they were so desirous of living in the country of their forefathers, that they submitted to the use of circumcision, and of the rest of the Jewish ways of living; at which time therefore this befell them, that they were hereafter no other than Jews (Ant. XIII. 9.1).

this text because the Masoretic Hebrew text says that Hebrews will sell themselves to their enemies. The Hebrew phrase is וְהִתְמַכְּרְתֶם veyhetmakartem. The root word or verb is *makar* which means *to sell*. The verb *makar* is modified by the Hithpael stem which is a reflexive voice, viz., the passage is referring to someone speaking about themselves or what they will do to themselves. Hence, they will sell or offer themselves to their enemy as a slave or servant. Therefore, other translations have translated it *properly* according to the Hebrew text. The NLT, ESV, and others read, “Then the LORD will send you back to Egypt in ships, to a destination I promised you would never see again. *There you will offer to sell yourselves to your enemies as slaves, but no one will buy you*” (Deut. 28:68, NLT) [emphasis added]. This curse says that Israelites would go into slavery and seek to have someone buy them, but no one will. In other words, Egypt will have enough slaves to address their needs, which will negate the necessity to procure more Hebrew slaves. No one will be interested in a Jew selling themselves to a buyer.

The slaves in the transatlantic slave trade, which nearly all Hebrew Israelite houses of worship reference as proof text to their identity, were sold to Europeans because there were buyers. These buyers were Americans, Brazilians, British, Dutch, Spanish, Portuguese etc. Thus, this passage *could not* be referring to the *transatlantic slave trade*. Therefore, it must be a reference to other slave trades into Egypt or *transports of Israelites into Egypt who wanted to sell themselves*. Several scholars discuss the latter. Dr. Jack R. Lundbom, Old Testament at Garrett-Evangelical Seminary writes:

But a return to Egypt is anticipated by Hosea (Hos 8:13; 9:3,6). Survivors will be brought there not as slaves, but simply as pitiful, destitute people prepared to offer themselves for sale on the Egyptian slave market, but no one will buy them. Moran says this is ‘surely one of the saddest lines of the Bible. These cannot be ‘slave galleys’ (Pace; Driver; Moran; Nelson), because the survivors will not be brought to the country as slaves; they will offer themselves as slaves once they arrive. But someone will be transporting them to Egypt in ships. Schley (1985) cites a reference from the Annals of Assurbanipal in which the Assyrian king, who at the time-controlled sea traffic in the eastern Mediterranean, compelled twenty-two kings and their armies by sea and by land, to ‘take the road to Egypt.’ Schley thinks the present verse is best understood in the context of the Assyrian’s dominance of the Syro-Palestinian mainland, the eastern Mediterranean seaboard, and the islands of the sea during the first half of the 7th cent. Judah then was an Assyrian vassal, and *Judahites could have been brought to Egypt in ships by Assyrians at their good pleasure*.⁴

British Biblical Scholar, Dr. Peter C. Craigie (1938 - 1985), notes that the meaning of the passage is spurious. “*Return to Egypt in ships*. The significance of these words is uncertain. . . Israelites under the curse would return to Egypt voluntarily and, once there, they would offer

⁴ Jack R. Lundbom, *Deuteronomy: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2013), 796-97 [emphasis added].

themselves for sale into slavery.”⁵ Walton et al., writes, “Assyrian kings of the seventh century coerced their vassals into supplying troops for their military campaigns. One way then for Israelites to return to Egypt in ships would be in the Assyrian campaigns launched from the Phoenician coast in which they were obliged to take part. This represents continued oppression by foreign enemies, as the curses have detailed. Another possibility would include falling victim to Egypt’s slave trade in Syro-Palestine, where the slaves were often transported by ship.”⁶

Using Deuteronomy 28:68 to demonstrate the fulfillment of this prophetic curse in America is historically and grammatically untenable. Nevertheless, to address arguments about Israelites literally entering into Egypt as slaves, based upon the LXX and KJV reading of the text, one can turn to extrabiblical sources such as 3 Maccabees and Josephus or scholars such as Münter and Schürer. The author of 3 Maccabees states how Ptolemy gathered Jews and transported them throughout various cities within Egypt in ships (3 Macc. 4:1-18). After the Fall of the Second Temple (70 CE) Josephus reports:

And now, since his soldiers were already quite tired with killing men, and yet there appeared to be a vast multitude still remaining alive, Caesar gave orders that they should kill none but those that were in arms, and opposed them, but should take the rest alive. But, together with those whom they had orders to slay, they slew the aged and the infirm; but for those that were in their flourishing age, and who might be useful to them, they drove them together into the temple, and shut them up within the walls of the court of the women; over which Caesar set one of his freed-men, as also Fronto, one of his own friends; which last was to determine every one's fate, according to his merits. So, this Fronto slew all those that had been seditious and robbers, who were impeached one by another; but of the young men he chose out the tallest and most beautiful, and reserved them for the triumph; and as for the rest of the multitude that were above seventeen years old, he put them into bonds, and sent them to the Egyptian mines. Titus also sent a great number into the provinces, as a present to them, that they might be destroyed upon their theatres, by the sword and by the wild beasts; but those that were under seventeen years of age were sold for slaves (*Wars*, VI. 9.2).⁷

Nearly fifty years after Titus besieged Jerusalem in AD 70, and destroyed the temple, Hadrian came to power, AD 118. He promised the Judeans that they could return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple, but he did not intend to fulfill his promise. In AD 132, the Judeans in various provinces revolted under the leadership of Joshua Ben Hananiah and Simon Bar Kokhba. Hadrian was able to suppress the Kokhba revolt after suffering many casualties at Betar, a farming village in the Judean highlands. When the Judeans were no longer able to fight, Hadrian

⁵ Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy (The New International Commentary on the Old Testament)*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1976), 352.

⁶ John H. Walton, Victor Harold Matthews, and Mark W. Chavalas, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament* (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 204.

⁷ Flavius Josephus, *Josephus: The Complete Works*, trans. William Whiston Nelson's Super Value Series (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998), 440.

gathered the Judeans that the Romans did not kill and exiled and deported them to different parts of the empire.

Friedrich Münter (1761 - 1830), German-Danish Scholar, Professor of Theology at the University of Copenhagen, orientalist, church historian, and archaeologist writes,

Now that Betar had been captured, everything came under Human control, while Palestine [Judah] was reduced to a desolate mound. Captives were sold into slavery in numbers too great to count. First, they were brought to the grand annual market at the Terebinth-Eloh tree in Hebron, or in the words of Hyranymous, to the Tent-Ohel of Abraham near Hebron. Each slave sold for the price of a horse. Those captives who were not sold there were brought to the market place in Azza [Gaza] which, because of the great multitudes of slaves who were sold there, was called Hadrian's market place. *And those who were still not sold there were herded into ships and were taken to Egypt.* Many died in transit, whether by starvation or by shipwreck, while many also were killed by cruel masters.⁸

Emil Schürer (AD 1844 – 1910), German theologian and scholar in first century Judaism writes,

The victory was won indeed at a very heavy cost. So great were the losses that Hadrian in his letter to the Senate omitted the usual introductory formula, that 'he and the army were well.' Still more grievous than this direct loss of men was the desolation of the fruitful and populous province. 'All Judea was well-nigh a desert.' Fifty fortresses 985 villages were destroyed, 580,000 Jews fell in battle, while the number of those who succumbed to their wounds and to famine was never reckoned. Innumerable was the multitude of those who were sold away as slaves. At the annual market at the Terebinth of Hebron they were offered for sale in such numbers that a Jewish slave was of no more value than a horse. What could not be disposed of there was brought to Gaza and there sold or sent to Egypt, on the way to which many died of hunger or by shipwreck.⁹

In reference to this matter, J.T. Bannister writes, "When Jerusalem was taken by Titus, of the captives who were above seventeen years, he sent many bound to the works in Egypt; those under seventeen were sold; but so little care was taken of these captives, that 11,000 of them perished for want. And we learn from St. Jerome, that after their last overthrow by Hadrian, many thousands of them were sold; and those who could not be sold, were transported into Egypt, and perished by shipwreck or famine, or were massacred by the inhabitants."¹⁰

⁸ Friedrich Münter, *Primordia Ecclesiae Africanae* (Andesite Press, 2017), 85f., 113 [emphasis added].

⁹ Emil Schürer, *A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*. (University of Michigan Library, 1890), 314.

¹⁰ J. T. Bannister, *A Survey of the Holy Land: Its Geography, History, and Destiny, Designed to Elucidate the Imagery of Scripture, and Demonstrate the Fulfilment of Prophecy (Classic Reprint)* (Forgotten Books, 2018), 505 - 506.

Closing

Deuteronomy 28:68 has nothing to do with the *transatlantic slave trade*, and to use this passage in this way is disingenuous, egregiously fallacious, and irresponsible because it ignores a wealth of historical and lexical data. Even to assert that the passage could range in meaning as an attempt to reconcile the transatlantic slave trade with Deuteronomy 28:68, is wrong. For instance, suggesting that Deuteronomy 28:68 is directly applicable to Blacks who are looking for employment (in America) and fail to become employed, as a direct result of Deuteronomy 28:68, is an extremely misleading and sloppy exegesis of the text. Deuteronomy 28:68 was fulfilled several times over prior to the transatlantic slave trade and has no bearing on the Black Jewish diaspora, as many Black Jews have propagated and continue to propagate today.

In summation, the curses are a part of Israel's identity in its *filling state* until it is lifted by Yah. The reality is that every nation of people (except) for the Blacks is represented on a national scale by ethnicity and nationality except for the so-called African Jew and the so-called African American Jew. These two classes have been disenfranchised, marginalized, debased, ridiculed, and humiliated in the lands where they have sojourned for thousands of years with little to no support from the governments that govern these lands because Deuteronomy 28:63-67 has prophesied it (not v. 68). In fact, the governments have played a part in the conspiracy to destroy "black Jews." This was one of the attributes of the curses God placed upon Israel. The curses should not be viewed as a single proof source (because many of them were fulfilled between the eighth century BC and second century AD) but used in conjunction with what historians, archeologists, anthropologists and scientists have revealed to the populous within academia about the identity of so-called black Jews.

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