

Moses Explains

August 30, 2014

If any Catholic seeks an in-depth explanation of the on-going madness in Gaza, he should read Moses in the Old Testament. For instance, if the Israelites do not keep the commandments of God, they will be stricken with “madness and blindness and fury of mind” (Deut. XXVIII, 28), among many other curses. As Fr Meinvielle said, the Jews are a theological race, and they cannot escape their theological destiny – they are bound to God like no other people on earth.

In *Deuteronomy* Moses is giving to the Israelites their last solemn instructions before they enter the Promised Land, and before he dies. In Chapter 28 (paralleled by Levit. XXVI) Moses makes very clear the mind of Jehovah (or Yahweh), the God of the Old Testament, identical with the God of the New Testament: the Jews will be specially blessed (v.1–14) if they obey the one true God, they will be specially cursed (v. 15–68) if they disobey him. Either way, they are a special race being given a special knowledge of the one true God for a special mission that they must fulfil for him, with a special reward or punishment from him, depending on how they fulfil that mission.

No wonder Jews think they are special! Among the blessings listed here by Moses, God will raise them “higher than all nations” (v.1); “to be a holy people unto himself” (v.9); to be “the head and not the tail” (v.13). But in every one of these three verses it is noteworthy how Moses makes the Israelites’ superiority depend on their obedience to God: if they will “hear the voice of God and keep all his commandments” (v.1); if they “hear his commandments and walk in his ways” (v.9); if they will “hear the commandments of God and keep and do them” (v.13).

On the other hand if the Israelites try to be that superior

nation on their own terms, disobeying God (v.15), then a multitude of curses will come upon them (v.16–68), and they will be scorned, hated and trampled upon by all other nations: they will be “scattered throughout all the kingdoms of the earth” (v.25); they will be stricken with “madness and blindness and fury of mind” (v.28 – think of Gaza!); the stranger with whom they live will “rise up over” them, he will be the head and they will be the tail (v.43–44); their enemy will put an “iron yoke” upon their neck (v.48); the Lord God will afflict them with all kinds of sufferings (v.59–61), and they will be “taken away from the land which they will go in to possess” (v.63). And all of this they will suffer because of not keeping and fulfilling the words of God’s law (v.58).

Alas, did all these blessings and curses announced by the great Moses avail to make the Israelites recognize and serve their Messiah and Incarnate God when he came, as also prophesied by Moses (Deut. XVIII, 15–18)? No, they crucified him instead, which has for now nearly 2000 years brought down on their heads all of Moses’ curses. They made themselves into the most despised and downtrodden nation on earth, and they lost their right to the Promised Land, being driven out and scattered everywhere else from the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

Nor does their regaining possession of the Holy Land mean that the curse is being lifted, because they are doing it on their own terms and not on God’s, so that the very re-possession turns into part of the curse. As Plato said (*Georgias*), it is better to suffer than to commit an injustice, and therefore in spiritual reality, the Israelis are more to be pitied than the Palestinians. Patience. We “all have sinned and do need the glory of God” (Rom. III, 22–23).

Kyrie eleison.