

Deuteronomy 29-31

Bible Study

- Chapter 29-30 contains Moses' third and final sermon before he dies...
- Chapter 31 contains several speeches regarding the appointment of Joshua and the writing of the Torah

Review

Chapter 26—Three declarations by Moses

- 1) Presenting the first fruits to God and declaring what He has done for Israel
- 2) Obedience to the 3rd tithe year...the poor and needy not be forgotten
- 3) Israel and God as willing partners of the covenant
(Moses' words ratifies the covenant—the ceremony will take place in the future)

Chapter 27—Moses looks to the future

- An event in the future: covenant renewal and curses
- The future covenant renewal ceremony described—build an altar of stones for burnt offerings and peace offerings
- Blessing and cursing ceremony described at Mt. Gerazim and Mt. Ebal (Joshua 8)

Chapter 28—Blessings and cursing (finishes Moses 2nd sermon)

- Verses 1-14: Blessings for obedience
- Verses 15-68: Cursing for disobedience

Chapter 29

¹ These *are* the words of the covenant which the LORD commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the covenant which He made with them in Horeb.

A covenant is now being established with the new generation of Israelites, even though one had been established at Mt. Sinai/Horeb with the first generation

Covenant—a contract or agreement between two or more parties

- Chapter 29 will show that the covenant applies to future generations as well [v. 15, 29]

² Now Moses called all Israel and said to them: "You have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land--

³ the great trials which your eyes have seen, the signs, and those great wonders.

⁴ Yet the LORD has not given you a heart to perceive and eyes to see and ears to hear, to this *very* day.

v. 4 [last part] "this very day"

(Tyndale) "The phrase 'this very day' occurs six times in Deuteronomy with the sense that nothing has really changed, or is likely to do so."

v. 4 Tells us—they lacked a spiritual dimension...

▪ Without the Holy Spirit one can't really understand God's way

(Und. Bible Com. Series) "People can see the very works of God, hear the very voice of God, and yet still neither trust nor obey God.

The words also express a deeper truth, namely, that hearts understand, eyes see, and ears hear only through gift of God."

The significance of repeating past historical events:

⁵ And I have led you forty years in the wilderness. Your clothes have not worn out on you, and your sandals have not worn out on your feet.

⁶ You have not eaten bread, nor have you drunk wine or *similar* drink, that you may know that I *am* the LORD your God.

⁷ And when you came to this place, Sihon king of Heshbon and Og king of Bashan came out against us to battle, and we conquered them.

⁸ We took their land and gave it as an inheritance to the Reubenites, to the Gadites, and to half the tribe of Manasseh.

⁹ Therefore keep the words of this covenant, and do them, that you may prosper in all that you do.

v. 6

Israel did not have the means to make bread nor wine and yet God took care of them

v. 9 “keep the words of the covenant, and do them”

(Tyndale) “Understanding is contingent upon and framed by **doing**, all the words of the covenant.”

v. 10-15 The very essence of the covenant relationship

¹⁰ "All of you stand today before the LORD your God: your leaders and your tribes and your elders and your officers, all the men of Israel,

¹¹ your little ones and your wives--also the stranger who *is* in your camp, from the one who cuts your wood to the one who draws your water--

¹² that you may enter into covenant with the LORD your God, and into His oath, which the LORD your God makes with you today,

¹³ that He may establish you today as a people for Himself, and *that* He may be God to you, just as He has spoken to you, and just as He has sworn to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

¹⁴ "I make this covenant and this oath, not with you alone,

¹⁵ but with *him* who stands here with us today before the LORD our God, as well as with *him* who *is* not here with us today

v. 12 "the LORD your God makes with you today"

➤ The core of the covenant, the mutual commitment: between God and the people

"makes"= confirms

(Und. Bible Com. Series) "It is God who is making and sealing the covenant, in order to confirm (or establish) Israel as the people of God."

v. 15 "who is not here with us today"—does not refer to those who were absent for some reason...but had a forward view

➤ The benefits would extend to future generations but they also must abide by the covenant terms

v. 16-29 The results from covenant disobedience

¹⁶ (for you know that we dwelt in the land of Egypt and that we came through the nations which you passed by,
¹⁷ and you saw their abominations and their idols which *were* among them--wood and stone and silver and gold);

¹⁸ so that there may not be among you man or woman or family or tribe, whose heart turns away today from the LORD our God, to go *and* serve the gods of these nations, and that there may not be among you a root bearing bitterness or wormwood;

¹⁹ and so it may not happen, when he hears the words of this curse, that he blesses himself in his heart, saying, 'I shall have peace, even though I follow the dictates of my heart'--as though the drunkard could be included with the sober.

²⁰ The LORD would not spare him; for then the anger of the LORD and His jealousy would burn against that man, and every curse that is written in this book would settle on him, and the LORD would blot out his name from under heaven.

[v.18] "a root bearing bitterness" leads to:

[v. 19] "following the dictates of my heart"—a refusal to repent

(Paraphrase) "I shall prosper even though I follow my own stubborn way")

v. 20 God's anger "against that man"—indicates individual responsibility and accountability before God that each has

The one who refuses to repent

²¹ And the LORD would **separate him** from all the tribes of Israel for adversity, according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this Book of the Law,

²² so that the coming generation of your children who rise up after you, and the foreigner who comes from a far land, would say, when they see the plagues of that land and the sicknesses which the LORD has laid on it:

²³ 'The whole land *is* brimstone, salt, and burning; it is not sown, nor does it bear, nor does any grass grow there, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, which the LORD overthrew in His anger and His wrath.'

²⁴ All nations would say, 'Why has the LORD done so to this land? What does the heat of this great anger mean?'

²⁵ Then *people* would say: 'Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD God of their fathers, which He made with them when He brought them out of the land of Egypt;

²⁶ for they went and served other gods and worshiped them, gods that they did not know and that He had not given to them.

²⁷ Then the anger of the LORD was aroused against this land, to bring on it every curse that is written in this book.

²⁸ And the LORD uprooted them from their land in anger, in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as *it is this day.*'

v. 28 “and cast them into another land, as it is this day”

Words that are best understood as a future response of observers when all this would come to pass—deportation because of breaking the covenant

God reveals what is part of His plan and purpose

²⁹ The secret *things belong* to the LORD our God, but those *things which are revealed belong* to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.

“secret things belong”

(Companion) “The italics show that the Hebrew was not clear to the translators. They make good sense in English... Read: ‘The secret things, even the revealed things, [belong] to us and our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law’ i.e. the revealed things, and the secret things which have not been, but yet will be revealed.”

(NIV App. Com.) “Moses insertion of this statement provides a psychological buffer between the darkness of chapter 29 and the brilliance of chapter 30”

Chapter 30

Repentance and restoration

¹ "Now it shall come to pass, when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call *them* to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God drives you,

² and **you return to the LORD your God** and obey His voice, according to all that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul,

³ that LORD your God will bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations where the LORD your God has scattered you.

v. 1 "you call them to mind"—they come to their senses and there is a turning point



v.2 "you return to the Lord your God and obey His voice"—repentance and commitment to obedience
▪A quote from chapter 4: 30



v. 3 Regathering from the scattered state and restoration—yet in the future—a 2nd exodus (1st time in Bible)

The future redemption/restoration leads to conversion

- ⁴ If *any* of you are driven out to the farthest *parts* under heaven, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you.
- ⁵ Then the LORD your God will bring you to the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it. He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers.
- ⁶ And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.
- ⁷ Also the LORD your God will put all these curses on your enemies and on those who hate you, who persecuted you.
- ⁸ And you will again obey the voice of the LORD and do all His commandments which I command you today.

v. 6 “the LORD your God will circumcise your heart”—their future repentance (Deut. 10:16; Jer. 4:4)

(Tyndale) “For the first time in Deuteronomy, the Lord himself will carry out the renewal of Israel (circumcise your hearts)”



v. 8 Describes how the circumcision of the hearts would come about:

➤ The very commandments Moses gave Israel will be kept in the future

Blessings will follow obedience

⁹ The LORD your God will make you abound in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your land for good. For the LORD will again rejoice over you for good as He rejoiced over your fathers,

¹⁰ **if** you obey the voice of the LORD your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this Book of the Law, *and if* you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

v. 10 “If you obey...if you turn”

God through Moses reminded Israel and all in the future that we have a choice—choosing the right way leads to blessings and abundance

v. 11-14 God's covenant available to all

¹¹ "For this commandment which I command you today *is not too* mysterious for you, nor *is* it far off.

¹² It *is* not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?'

¹³ Nor *is* it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?'

¹⁴ But the word *is* very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.

v. 11 "not too mysterious for you"

(Zondervan Bible Backgrounds Com.) "Ancient Near Eastern wisdom literature found it impossible to discover the way to life. The Babylonians believed that mortals who dwell on earth could not attain the wisdom of the gods."

v. 14 Just as God is 'near' to Israel...the word (the covenant) is likewise very 'near'

➤ And in their mouths, minds and hearts—by reciting it they can commit it to memory

v. 14 "the word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart"

(Rom. 10: 8) Paul quotes—speaking of access to Christ upon conversion

Two paths of life to choose between

¹⁵ "See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil,
¹⁶ in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the LORD your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess.

¹⁷ But if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them,
¹⁸ I announce to you today that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong *your* days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to go in and possess.

¹⁹ I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live;
²⁰ that you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He *is* your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them."

v. 19 "I call heaven and earth as witnesses today"

- Moses repeats a statement from the ending of his first sermon (4: 26)—calling on heaven and earth as witnesses to testify that he has presented the options of life and death, blessing and cursing to Israel

v. 19 [last part] "therefore choose life"

(NIV App. Com.) "represents both the high point of Moses' final address and the climax of his preaching on the plains of Moab."

Chapter 31

Commissioning Joshua as Moses' successor

v. 1-6 Moses' encouragement to the people

¹ Then Moses went and spoke these words to all Israel.

² And he said to them: "I *am* one hundred and twenty years old today. I can no longer go out and come in. Also the LORD has said to me, 'You shall not cross over this Jordan.'

³ The LORD your God Himself crosses over before you; He will destroy these nations from before you, and you shall dispossess them. Joshua himself crosses over before you, just as the LORD has said.

⁴ And the LORD will do to them as He did to Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites and their land, when He destroyed them.

⁵ The LORD will give them over to you, that you may do to them according to every commandment which I have commanded you.

⁶ Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, He *is* the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you."

v. 6 "be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them"

➤ Reflects back to verses 3-5 that God will cross over destroy the Canaanite tribes, just as he took care of Sihon and Og

v. 6 "Be strong and of good courage"—spoken to Israel but echoes down through the ages for God's people (Heb. 13:5) Quoted the last part—"he will not leave nor forsake you"

v. 7-8 Moses' encouragement to Joshua

- ⁷ Then Moses called Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, "Be strong and of good courage, for you must go with this people to the land which the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall cause them to inherit it.
- ⁸ And the LORD, He *is* the one who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed."

v. 7 Moses encourages and commissions Joshua in the hearing of all the people—by doing this he publicly passes the mantle of command to his trusted assistant

"Be strong and of good courage" these words of Moses would be repeated by God to Joshua just before he would lead them into the promised land (Joshua 1:5)

v.9-13 Instructions to the priests and elders

- ⁹ So Moses wrote this law and delivered it to the priests, the sons of Levi, who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and to all the elders of Israel.
- ¹⁰ And Moses commanded them, saying: "At the end of *every* seven years, at the appointed time in the year of release, at the Feast of Tabernacles,
- ¹¹ when all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses, you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing.
- ¹² Gather the people together, men and women and little ones, and the stranger who *is* within your gates, that they may hear and that they may learn to fear the LORD your God and carefully observe all the words of this law,
- ¹³ and *that* their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God as long as you live in the land which you cross the Jordan to possess."

v. 9 Moses wrote this law (Torah)—was the author of the first five books of the Bible—and gave it to the priests

v. 10 Moses' instructions to the priests: the law to be read 'at the end of every seven years'...the 'year of release'—from debts and slavery...and it was to be read at the Feast of Tabernacles

v. 13 "their children, who have not known it"—future generations would be taught and learn to fear God by this means of instruction (Nehemiah 8)

v. 14-15 The inauguration of Joshua by God

¹⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, the days approach when you must die; call Joshua, and present yourselves in the tabernacle of meeting, that I may inaugurate him." So Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves in the tabernacle of meeting.

¹⁵ Now the LORD appeared at the tabernacle in a pillar of cloud, and the pillar of cloud stood above the door of the tabernacle.

v. 14-15 "tabernacle" (Companion) "The only reference to it in Deuteronomy"

▪It was a special occasion

v. 15 "pillar of cloud" "The only reference to it in Deuteronomy" (Companion)

v. 16-18 God predicts Israel's future apostasy

¹⁶ And the LORD said to Moses: "Behold, you will rest with your fathers; and this people will rise and play the harlot with the gods of the foreigners of the land, where they go *to be* among them, and they will forsake Me and break My covenant which I have made with them.

¹⁷ Then My anger shall be aroused against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide My face from them, and they shall be devoured. And many evils and troubles shall befall them, so that they will say in that day, 'Have not these evils come upon us because our God *is* not among us?'

¹⁸ And I will surely hide My face in that day because of all the evil which they have done, in that they have turned to other gods.

v. 16 After Moses' death "rest with your fathers"...God knew the people would eventually fall into idolatry "harlot with other gods"

v. 19-22 A warning/testifying of the coming judgment in—a song...(Ch. 32:1-43)

¹⁹ Now therefore, write down this song for yourselves, and teach it to the children of Israel; put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for Me against the children of Israel.

²⁰ When I have brought them to the land flowing with milk and honey, of which I swore to their fathers, and they have eaten and filled themselves and grown fat, then they will turn to other gods and serve them; and they will provoke Me and break My covenant.

²¹ Then it shall be, when many evils and troubles have come upon them, that this song will testify against them as a witness; for it will not be forgotten in the mouths of their descendants, for I know the inclination of their behavior today, even before I have brought them to the land of which I swore *to give them.*“

²² Therefore Moses wrote this song the same day, and taught it to the children of Israel.

v. 19 Moses was told **by God** to record a song that would foretell the future rebellion of Israel, and the song would serve as a witness against their breaking the covenant
(BKC) “The song of Moses was to be taught to Israel for use in the covenant-renewal ceremony”

v. 21 “will not be forgotten” (Companion) “This song quoted and referred to more than any other part of the Pentateuch”

v. 22 Moses followed God’s instructions and not only wrote it down (as part of the scriptures) but also taught the song to Israel (the song is in chapter 32)

v. 23 Official inauguration of Joshua

²³ Then He inaugurated Joshua the son of Nun, and said, "Be strong and of good courage; for you shall bring the children of Israel into the land of which I swore to them, and I will be with you."

God himself officially inaugurated Joshua to be the next leader of Israel using the same encouraging words that he had urged Moses to tell to Joshua (v.7)

God told Joshua: "I will be with you"
It was a smooth transition from one leader to another...and Israel obeyed during Joshua's leadership

v.24-29 Moses' final speech

²⁴ So it was, when Moses had completed writing the words of this law in a book, when they were finished,
²⁵ that Moses commanded the Levites, who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying:

²⁶ "Take this Book of the Law, and put it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there as a witness
against you;

²⁷ for I know your rebellion and your stiff neck. *If* today, while I am yet alive with you, you have been rebellious against the
LORD, then how much more after my death?

v. 24 "the words of this law in a book"

(BKC) "refers to Deuteronomy...It was to be placed beside the ark, not in it. Only the ten commandments were placed in the
ark."

²⁴ So it was, when Moses had completed writing the words of this law in a book, when they were finished,

(A History of OT Israel, Eugene H. Merrill) "Moses also composed Genesis and the rest of the Torah at this time."

v. 24-26

After Moses finished the words of this law the Levites placed it **beside** the ark of the covenant... (the ten commandments
were in the ark)

Cont. of Moses' final speech

3rd time in Deut. (4:26; 30:19; here) 32:1

²⁸ Gather to me all the elders of your tribes, and your officers, that I may speak these words in their hearing and call **heaven and earth to witness** against them.

²⁹ For I know that after my death you will become utterly corrupt, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you **in the latter days**, because you will do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger through the work of your hands."

v. 29 "in the latter days"—(4:30; Gen. 49:1)

(BKC) ""The latter days may refer to any time after the initial dispersions, but the ultimate reference is to the time when the Lord Jesus Christ will return to earth to establish His 1,000 year kingdom.

At that time a repentant Israel will finally seek the Lord...look for Him her heart and soul and will obey Him"

Moses looked to the future when descendants of Israel would be doing evil works, the ultimate fulfillment before Christ returns (Chapter 4: 30)

³⁰ Then Moses spoke in the hearing of all the assembly of Israel the words of this song until they were ended:

(Tyndale) "the song will testify against Israel as a warning and witness to their covenant unfaithfulness" (31: 21)

Lessons

“Yet the Lord has not given you a heart to perceive and eyes to see and ears to hear, to this very day”

➤ Lacking of a spiritual dimension

➤ The Holy Spirit is needed to really understand God’s way



“And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart”

➤ Describes conversion—which begins at baptism